

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Fidel Castro: 'Che's ideas are absolutely relevant today'

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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MARCH 11, 2024

## Workers face crush of price rises as bosses boost profits

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In spite of falling prices overall, and claims by the president's backers in 2024 that "Bidenomics" is a smashing success, working people continue to be hammered by high prices for groceries and other necessities. This occurs as a current uptick in the U.S. economy gives workers more confidence we can use our unions to fight to improve wages, and the living and working conditions we face.

"It's Been 30 Years Since Food Ate Up This Much of Your Income," headlined a Feb. 21 *Wall Street Journal* article. In 2022 the "average" person in the U.S. spent 11.3% of their income on food, reported the Agriculture Department. But there are no "average" people. People are divided into two main competing social classes — workers and bosses. Workers have to spend a far higher percentage of our wages to feed and house ourselves and our families.

In suburban Chicago, Lisa Wister, an occupational therapist, told the *Journal* Continued on page 11

## New protests against Hamas as Israeli forces make progress

BY SETH GALINSKY

An Israeli victory over Hamas — a group financed, organized and armed by Tehran that exists to kill Jews and drive them out of the Middle East — will be a blow to reactionary forces that promote Jew-hatred across the region, in the

**SWP campaign: Join the fight against Jew-hatred!**

—p. 11

United States and worldwide. Getting out the truth about Hamas' murders, torture and rapes during its Oct. 7 pogrom remains central to advancing the fight against it and those who offer it support.

Most of the capitalist media either obscure the character and extent of the long-planned attack that Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine carried out, or barely mention it at all.

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## Socialist Workers Party joins actions demanding Moscow out of Ukraine!



Militant/Eric Simpson

Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate Margaret Trowe joined car caravan in San Francisco Feb. 24 backing Ukraine's independence fight against Moscow's invasion. Inset, Trowe addresses the rally.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Campaign supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Leagues in Canada, Australia and the U.K. built and joined the tens of thousands worldwide who marched and rallied to protest Moscow's war on Ukraine Feb. 24, marking the second anniversary of Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion. The Ukrainian World Congress tallied 1,023 ac-

tions supporting Ukraine, in 746 cities in 69 countries, on every continent, including Antarctica.

Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, opened her campaign in San Francisco Feb. 24, by joining several hundred people in an 80-vehicle car caravan and rally in support of victory for Ukraine.

Trowe addressed the rally, saying she Continued on page 5

## Worldwide protests back Ukraine battle to defend its independence



Václav Šálek/CTK

Thousands rally in Prague, Czech Republic, Feb. 24 supporting Ukraine after two years of Moscow's invasion. Placard, center right, says in Ukrainian: "We will not forget our heroes, we will not forgive our enemies." Similar protests took place all around the world.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Many tens of thousands of working people in Ukraine and supporters around the world of their struggle for independence took to the streets Feb. 24 to mark two important anniversaries. The first was two years since the murderous invasion of Ukraine by Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime. And it is 10 years since millions of workers and youth fought and toppled pro-Moscow dictator Viktor Yanukovich during the Maidan uprising across Ukraine.

The determination of Ukrainian working people today to fight Moscow's invasion draws strength from what was accomplished during that revolt. The Putin regime intensified its efforts to wipe out Ukraine's sovereignty ever since the Maidan, starting with the seizure of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk the same year. His regime's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has accelerated the crisis of the imperialist "world order," as Washington and other capitalist

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## Pathfinder books win widespread interest at Havana Int'l Book Fair

BY NAOMI CRAINE

HAVANA — The Pathfinder stand at the Havana International Book Fair was a center for nonstop discussion, as it has been for a quarter century. Hundreds of people came looking for

books about the crisis-racked capitalist world today, the history of the Cuban Revolution, and the challenges and opportunities facing working people in Cuba, the United States and worldwide. They talked with communist workers from the U.S., United Kingdom, Canada and Australia volunteering at the stand, who described how they use books published by Pathfinder Press in their work to build revolutionary working-class parties in their countries.

Among the titles that drew the most interest and highest sales were the new, expanded edition of *Che Guevara on Economics and Politics in*

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## Democrats' partisan drive against Trump deals blows to rights working class needs

BY TERRY EVANS

Even before Donald Trump was elected president in 2016, Democrats were frantic to defeat him and turned to the FBI to cook up a "Russian collusion" frame-up and slander campaign. When that failed, Democratic Party-led congressional committees and special prosecutors joined their FBI allies in congressional impeachments and other attacks to try to drive him out of office.

Over the last year Justice Department prosecutors and local Democratic Continued on page 11

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Teamsters on first strike ever at Molson Coors in Fort Worth

Hospital workers in London strike for withheld pay

# Debate over Jew-hatred is a central issue in UK election

BY HUGO WILS

ROCHDALE, England — The Labour Party withdrew its backing from its candidate here, Azhar Ali, in a Feb. 29 by-election after Ali upheld poisonous Jew-hating conspiracies. Communist League campaigners have joined discussions among working people about this development, the roots of Jew-hatred and the need to fight against it.

At a meeting last year, Ali claimed that Israel “deliberately took the security off” on Oct. 7, letting Hamas slaughter some 1,200 people. The Israeli government “allowed that massacre and that gives them the green light to do whatever they bloody want,” he said. When Ali’s remarks became public he apologized, acknowledging that in fact “Hamas’ horrific attack was the responsibility of Hamas alone.”

Labour’s leadership accepted the apology, claiming Ali had fallen for an “online conspiracy theory.” But a few days later he was reported to have made a further Jew-hating slur. Ali had opposed the suspension of Labour Party member Andrew McDonald, claiming it was the work of “people in the media from certain Jewish quarters.” Labour then withdrew its backing from Ali and the party will have no candidate in the by-election.

Days later Graham Jones, Labour candidate for Hyndburn, Lancashire, was suspended for saying British people who fight in the Israel Defense Forces “should be locked up.”

“Several of my workmates wanted to discuss what lay behind Ali’s com-

ments,” said Peter Clifford, the Communist League’s candidate for nearby Manchester Central in the general election later this year. Clifford is a rail worker at Manchester Piccadilly station. His campaign presents a road to unify working people against the ruling capitalist class and points to the necessity of combating all expressions of Jew-hatred.

“What the Labour candidate said, that Israel deliberately allowed Oct. 7 is wrong,” Sean Nunan, a conductor at the station, told Clifford. “Is it the internet that feeds these views?”

“There was no internet in the 1930s and ’40s, but this kind of conspiracy theory was key to recruitment for the Nazis in Germany,” Clifford replied. “It takes the fire off the capitalist rulers, divides us and justifies massacres against Jews. The capitalist class will take us on the same road as the crisis of their system deepens, toward reaction and war. That can only be prevented by workers fighting to take power into our own hands.”

Clifford and campaign supporters have presented the CL’s program in working-class neighborhoods here. “Like many towns in the north of England, those living in Rochdale face a deep social crisis,” he told the *Militant*. “Many workers are looking for ways to sustain families, get better wages and affordable housing. They’re curious why the question of Jew-hatred has taken center stage.”

Truck driver Adrian Lawrence told Clifford he was taking his contractor bosses to court after they failed to pay



Militant/Cliff Williams

Peter Clifford, right, Communist League candidate for Parliament in Manchester Central, campaigner Hugo Wils, left, pose need to fight Jew-hatred with Farooq Adnan in Rochdale Feb. 18.

him for waiting time on his job. “They always try to cut us short,” he said.

“Union fights taking place today open greater chances for workers to act together,” Clifford said. “Not just over our work conditions but on political questions. What Labour’s candidate said is a deadly threat to that course. It takes our eyes off what we need to fight for.” Lawrence is one of four new *Militant* subscribers in the area.

Labour’s withdrawal of its backing for Ali means that what was considered a safe Labour seat is now largely contested between two former Labour MPs. Simon Danczuk is standing for the Reform Party, backed by prominent Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage.

George Galloway is standing for the Workers Party. He seeks to appeal to the 30,000 Muslims in the area, claiming that a vote for him is a vote for Palestinians in Gaza. Galloway has a long record of promoting hatred toward Jews. While he was a member of Parliament for Bradford he called for the city to become an “Israel-free zone,” barring visitors from there.

Today he demands Israel immediately implement a cease-fire, leaving Hamas intact to carry out more massacres of Jews, as it has pledged to do.

Clifford and campaign supporters spoke with workers in the predominantly Muslim area of Deepdish, Roch-

dale. “Many people would initially say they backed the Palestinians but were keen to discuss the issues at stake in Israel’s war to defeat Hamas,” he said.

“Isn’t Israel carrying out genocide in Gaza?” Farooq Adnan asked this reporter. Adnan had recently moved to Rochdale from Pakistan. No, I replied, pointing to Hamas’ Oct. 7 pogrom, the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. “What’s happening now is a fight to defend Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews.” After some discussion Adnan decided to get a copy of the *Militant* and the CL’s campaign flyer.

Clifford met Sophian Khan, a young office worker who was pleased to hear about recent rail workers strikes. Khan got the *Militant* after Clifford pointed to its coverage of the response of working people in East Palestine, Ohio, to the derailment and burn-off of toxic chemicals there a year ago. When Clifford asked him about issues raised during the by-election campaign, Khan said, “Jews have been through terrible times for centuries, we have to understand that’s why they set up Israel. We can’t change that.”

Not everyone agreed with the CL campaigners. Further down the road a young construction worker, Mo Khalid, told Clifford, “I’m backing Galloway. He seems a good guy.”

## THE MILITANT

Back ‘app’ drivers fight for rights, higher wages!

In the first nationwide strike by Uber, Lyft and DoorDash drivers, thousands demonstrated in more than 12 cities in the U.S., as did drivers in Canada and the U.K., protesting cuts in pay and conditions. The ‘Militant’ joins in solidarity and gives voice to these workers.



Militant/Ilona Gersh

Uber, Lyft, DoorDash drivers rally in Chicago Feb. 14 in first nationwide strike.

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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Teamsters on first strike ever at Molson Coors in Fort Worth

FORT WORTH, Texas — Over 100 spirited Teamsters Local 997 strikers lined the pavement in front of the Molson Coors plant here, which the bosses recently fenced off. The workers went on strike Feb. 17 after failing to reach a new contract with the company. This is the first strike for some 420 members of the union.

Molson Coors has a brewery, packaging line and warehouse here, as well as a power plant. The plant is the company's only brewery for the entire Western region.

The plant is known in Fort Worth as the Miller Brewing Company, Rich Miedema, secretary-treasurer of Local 997, told the *Militant*. Molson Coors makes Miller beer, as well as its own line of beers, Yuengling, Pabst, Topo Chico hard seltzer and Simply Juices.

"The strike is over economics, dignity and respect," he said. "We want pay raises and the elimination of two-tier health care and retirement benefits. Some 80% of the membership has the lower tier of health care, vacation, and retirement," Miedema said. "The company wants us to leave the Teamsters health care plan and go to a substandard plan of their choosing. They're offering a \$1 per hour wage increase a year over a three-year contract. That does not even keep up with inflation."

The *Dallas Morning News* reported Molson Coors raked in \$103 million in the fourth quarter and \$1.3 billion for last year. In October the company announced a \$2 billion stock buyback for the shareholders.

Courtney Hartley and two other members of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants union were on the picket line in solidarity. Over 500 American Airlines APFA workers picketed at the airlines terminal here Feb. 13 demanding higher wages, and that the company cover all the hours they work, as well as more humane schedules and safer work conditions. Strikers said this is the second time flight attendants have been to the picket line.

Hartley explained that there are 13 separate wage tiers at American, and flight attendants in tier 13 haven't had a wage increase since 2018.

"Solidarity is important. We're all part of the whole labor movement, not just airline or brewery workers as individuals," she said. "It's important for all of us to support each other. Corporate greed is ruining the lives of working people."

— Josefina Otero

## Hospital workers in London strike for withheld pay

LONDON — Hospital workers, members of the Unite union, held a lively strike picket line here Feb. 20 on the busy main road by the entrance to the Royal London Hospital, part of the Barts NHS Trust chain, the largest in the U.K. The NHS is the government's National Health Service.

The three-day strike, from Feb. 19-21, demanded payment of the lump-sum amount NHS workers were promised when they kept working through the COVID pandemic. The workers involved in the walkout included most nonmedical workers crucial to keeping the hospital running.

A significant number of the strikers had been involved in a previous strike battle when their jobs were outsourced to Serco.

"When I started we were part of the NHS. Then they outsourced us to Carillion, then they moved us to Serco," Gill Kearsley, who has worked in food service for 34 years at both the Royal London Hospital and Barts, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent. "Last year they moved us back in to the NHS, but after the cutoff date for the COVID payment, so they won't pay us the lump sum. It's not right."

Recent strike action by Unite members in the East Kent NHS Trust won payment of the lump sum, worth 1,655 pounds (\$2,100), making the Barts Trust workers even more determined.

Ebrima Sonko, who works at Royal London, got a copy of the *Militant*. "It's good to know about other people's

## Flight attendants rally in Dallas for higher wages, full pay



Militant/Josefina Otero

Hundreds of flight attendants and supporters picketed the American Airlines terminal at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport Feb. 13 in a fight for a new contract with higher wages, full pay for time on the job and better working conditions. The workers, members of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA and Transport Workers Union Local 556, were part of protests in over 30 airports across the U.S. and worldwide.

Rochelle Owl has worked for American Airlines for 11 years and still doesn't get top pay. She works a second job to make ends meet. "Our sisters and brothers are united and that gives us the power over corporate greed," she told the *Militant*.

"We're working under wages that were negotiated back in 2014," Association of Professional Flight Attendants National President Julie Hedrick told the rally. She said flight attendants showed their support for autoworkers and screenwriters on strike last year, and their actions helped steel flight attendants' determination to fight for a better contract.

— VIVIAN SAHNER

struggles and learn from them," he said.

Dozens of hospital workers held a spirited rally Feb. 21 outside the Department of Health in Westminster, waving mops, blowing horns, banging metal bowls and holding union flags. They are considering further strike action.

— Pamela Holmes

## Bus drivers strike in Virginia for higher wages, safety on the job

FAIRFAX, Va. — Over 600 bus drivers and mechanics, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689, went on strike here Feb. 22 against Transdev, a contractor for Fairfax Connector bus company.

The strikers have been fighting for a

new contract since last October. Their demands include retirement security, more sick leave, higher wages and increased safety protection on the job.

"We start at 3:15 a.m. and the last bus goes out at 12:15 the next day. We have six to seven hours in between the morning and night shift we aren't paid for," Wills Burke, an operator for 11 years and a shop steward, told the *Militant*.

"Inflation is a big part of why we're fighting," operator Marcella Johnson said. "My rent has been raised twice but we still haven't had a raise. I have to work a part-time job on the weekend and now I'm thinking about a third job or a roommate. I'm supposed to be able to have a life, I've heard a rumor that's still a thing."

Several drivers mentioned how they felt their strike was part of all the other labor fights in the U.S. over the past year. "We were inspired by fights by transit workers in San Francisco, New York and Boston, who fought for better compensation because of the mental health crisis they face on the job and won," 40-year driver Tony Blue said.

Mark Philhower, a Metro mechanic who was part of the 84-day strike of ATU Local 689 drivers in 2018-2019, came to show solidarity. "The value of unions is becoming clearer as everywhere they try to cut wages and fire people unjustly."

Troy Barnes, organizer for ATU Local 689 and a Metro employee for 27 years, said Transdev was awarded a lucrative contract by Fairfax County, but has refused to raise wages or improve conditions for workers. "The company said, 'We're here to make profits. The workers were making peanuts before, they can keep making peanuts.'"

The strikers welcome visits to their picket lines. Contributions to the ATU 689 Strike Fund can be sent to 2701 Whitney Place, Forestville MD 20747, messages of support to kbullet@atulocal689.org.

— Stanley Votto

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



### March 15, 1999

WASHINGTON, D.C. — With every seat taken, and the aisles filled to capacity, some 450 farmers and their supporters packed the federal courthouse here for a day-long hearing on a proposed settlement in a class-action discrimination lawsuit filed against the U.S. Department of Agriculture by farmers who are Black.

From beginning to end, farmers put their collective stamp on the deliberations. Their mass presence and repeated applause for those who protested the proposed settlement altered the usual court decorum.

Linn Hamilton, a retired dairy farmer from Washington, Pennsylvania, said he supported the Black farmers' call for a complete redress of their long oppressive and unjust treatment by federal agencies. "The Black farmers are the most focused on what they want. They can set an example for the rest of us farmers who are white."



### March 15, 1974

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Support for the Wounded Knee defendants is growing despite the attempts of the federal government to isolate the American Indian Movement through the frame-up trial now in progress here. Some 1,500 people jammed a meeting hall at the University of Minnesota Feb. 27 in a rally for defendants Dennis Banks and Russell Means.

John Trudell, national chairman of AIM, said, "We view the United States government as the number one enemy. Corporations run the country. If you don't obey their system, they're going to put you out." He said AIM had been "condemned" for being militant, although its members have never killed anyone. "But many of our people have died. Many have been locked up."

As the trial continues, more mass support will be needed. "Drop the Charges!" and "Stop the Frame-ups!" should become a national rallying cry.



### March 14, 1949

An event of great revolutionary significance took place in China when railroad and bus transportation workers at Shanghai went out on strike and suffered brutal repression by troops of the local garrison.

Though hemmed in by martial law and an edict against strikes which carries the penalty of death for disobedience, these workers nevertheless walked off the job, demonstrating once again the fighting courage of the proletariat and its tremendous power as a revolutionary striking force.

There can be no doubt that this — the first reported action by any section of the Chinese working class in the present political upheaval — is highly symptomatic of a growing revolutionary situation. It confirms that China's workers, like the rural toilers, want to destroy capitalist rule. They are ready to march on to the field of revolutionary action.

# Defend Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page

governments prepare for increased competition and new wars.

The Feb. 24 demonstrations in support of Ukraine's fight to defend its independence, including by significant numbers of Russians in exile opposed to the war, took place in 746 cities in 69 countries. From Berlin to Stockholm, Chicago to Warsaw, Poland, tens of thousands turned out.

A week after Moscow's 2022 invasion, "a statement by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes hailed the courageous Ukrainian resistance and called for the defeat of Putin's invading forces," John Studer, the SWP national campaign director, told the *Militant* Feb. 27. "Our party stands on our communist continuity with V.I. Lenin's proletarian course of defending national self-determination, including for Ukraine, as part of the 1917 socialist revolution across Russia and the former czarist prison house of nations," Studer said.

The SWP's statement explains that Washington and its allies "shed crocodile tears over Ukraine's national sovereignty and the plight of its people. High-flown phrases aside, their only real concern is to protect their own profits and strategic political interests." That remains true of President Joseph Biden's administration today.

Alongside demonstrations marking the war's second anniversary, an international solidarity conference at the House of Trade Unions in Kyiv was organized Feb. 22 by the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) and the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU). Several top international union figures participated. Because of the challenges of traveling to Kyiv today most of the delegations joined by teleconference.

The two Ukrainian union federations made a joint appeal for labor solidarity. They said the Putin regime's drive for territorial expansion is "an attempt to revive the 'Russian Empire'" that has "turned into the largest war in Europe since the Second World War."

Hryhoriy Osovy, president of the FPU, described the war's devastating toll, including the deaths of thousands of civilians, the loss of 5 million jobs

and the millions forced to flee their homes. Many more now live under Moscow's occupation. He said Ukraine's population has gone from 42 million to 27 million since Russia's invasion.

Compounding the effects of the war has been the anti-union drive by Ukrainian bosses, backed by the government of President Volodymyr Zelensky, that has erased many protections of workers' rights and conditions. The membership of the FPU has been reduced by 50%.

The joint KVPU/FPU appeal notes the invasion was a continuation of the Kremlin's use of its troops based in Crimea to seize the peninsula in February 2014 from Ukraine. This was met by mass protests by Crimean Tatars. Putin then sent troops disguised as Ukrainian separatists to occupy parts of the Donbas in eastern Ukraine.

Putin claims, "Ukraine is an artificial state," which should be part of Russia. But Ukraine's people know otherwise, showing determination to defend its independence and refute Putin's lies, despite all obstacles. Coming after centuries of struggle against Moscow's domination, their resistance has won the support of millions across the world.

Kryvyi Rih, a city at the heart of Ukraine's iron ore and steel industry, not far from the frontlines, is under constant bombardment.

Yuriy, whose apartment there was hit by a Russian missile last year, told the BBC he questioned the reason for the war.

But when asked if he thinks Ukraine's government should swap territory for peace, he replied: "Definitely not. A lot of people died for those territories. There is no point in giving them up."

Valeriy, in his 80s, told the BBC, "We must fight; we won't tolerate anything else. People are so angry now."

Andriy Kuprianov, a sergeant in the Ukrainian army who fought in Avdiivka, told the *Wall Street Journal*, "We'll fight as long as it takes. Two more years, or 20 more. We'll keep going because we know the price of failing to do so."

The 600-mile frontline in eastern Ukraine hasn't changed much over the past year. President Zelensky said Feb. 25 that 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have died in two years of war.

## Moscow: huge losses

The Kremlin hides the staggering scale of its losses among troops it treats as cannon fodder. The dead and severely wounded are put at a third of a million.

Though ethnic Russians comprise the majority of these deaths in absolute terms, Russia's non-Slavic minorities and indigenous peoples suffer disproportionate casualties. Buryats, a Mongolic ethnic group native to southeastern Siberia, have a casualty rate almost four times their proportion of the population.

Ukrainian forces, running out of artillery shells, withdrew from the fiercely contested town of Avdiivka outside the Russian-occupied city of Donetsk Feb. 17. Gen. Oleksandr Syrsky said this was "to avoid encirclement and preserve the lives and



Paper independent media

Artist Elena Osipova protests Feb. 24 in St. Petersburg, Russia, with a painting in memory of Alexei Navalny, outspoken critic of Putin and his Ukraine invasion, killed Feb. 16 in Arctic prison. Under Navalny's image and name it reads "Stop Putin's [special military] operations."

health of the soldiers?"

Avdiivka is the Kremlin's first gain since the capture of Bakhmut, last May.

"For the ruins of Avdiivka, Russia paid with more military lives than the Soviet Union did in 10 years of war in Afghanistan," Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba said Feb. 23.

These losses, five times greater than Ukraine's, are causing sharp discord within the Kremlin's pro-war camp.

Andrey Morozov, a Russian soldier, wrote online Feb. 19 that Moscow's army lost 16,000 soldiers and 300 armored vehicles during four months of intense combat for Avdiivka.

He was accused of "slandering the Russian Defense Ministry" by Kremlin propagandists. His Russian commander forced him to delete his posting. He committed suicide two days later.

In two years of war, Russian courts have convicted over 4,600 soldiers for desertion or refusing orders at the front. The "vast majority," Mediazona reports, receive suspended sentences so they can be sent back to the front lines.

## Navalny: a threat to Putin in death

Since the start of this year, protests against the murderous regime in the Kremlin and its war have widened.

In January, over 200,000 people lined up in cities across the country to nominate Boris Nadezhdin, an anti-war candidate in the March presidential elections. He was then barred from the ballot. The same month, in Bashkortostan, thousands protested at the imprisonment of a young fighter for Bashkir ethnic rights who opposes the war.

At a protest outside the Kremlin organized by The Way Home, a group of wives and mothers of mobilized soldiers, cops detained four people

Feb. 24. The group has been winning support for their weekly protests demanding that soldiers be rotated out of the carnage.

Officials claim mobilized soldiers get salaries well above the national average. "People say, 'Well, you get payments,'" the wife of one conscript told the *Moscow Times* Feb. 24. "I'm very upset to hear that — it's not the money. I only want the father of my child back home."

The death of Alexei Navalny, Putin's main bourgeois political opponent, Feb. 16 in a remote Arctic gulag prison triggered protests by thousands across the country and around the world. The Solovetsky Stone, a Moscow monument to victims of political repression in the Soviet Union, was covered in floral tributes. It also fueled the turnout for the Feb. 24 actions worldwide.

Lena, 31, spoke to the *New York Times* as she placed a sticker at the monument quoting Navalny, "Don't give up!" She said the authorities were "scared of Navalny in jail," and now "they are scared of dead Navalny. They are scared of the people who bring flowers here to the stone."

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Manchester

Second Anniversary of Putin's Invasion of Ukraine; 10th Anniversary of the Maidan Uprising — An Eyewitness Account. Speaker: Catharina Tirsén, Communist League, took part in *Militant* reporting trips to Ukraine in 2014 and 2015. Sun., March 10, 2 p.m. Donation: £3. 329 Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Tel.: (0161) 312-8119.



Militant/Bernie Senter

Hundreds protested in Los Angeles Feb. 24 in solidarity with Ukraine's determined resistance against Russian President Vladimir Putin's two-year-long invasion. Russian protester above pointed to need for alliance of Ukrainian, Russian working people to defeat Putin's war.

## "I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism."

— V.I. Lenin, 1922

In 1922 and 1923 Lenin waged his last political battle. At stake was whether or not the revolution would remain on the proletarian internationalist course that had brought workers and peasants to power.

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## Lenin's Final Fight



\$17

SPEECHES & WRITINGS  
1922-23

# SWP: Moscow out of Ukraine!

Continued from front page

was the SWP vice presidential candidate, a factory worker and trade unionist. She noted the decadeslong record of her party in support of self-determination for Ukraine, and got a burst of applause when she said the Socialist Workers Party calls for “Russia out of *all* of Ukraine, including Crimea.”

She said supporters of Ukraine’s fight should have no confidence in the Democrats and Republicans, explaining both parties represent the U.S. billionaire families who act only in their own capitalist class interests in Ukraine, as they do everywhere.

When Trowe said her campaign supports the “related fight against Jew-hatred — a crucial question facing working people everywhere — and for Israel’s right to exist and defend itself in the wake of the Tehran-backed Hamas Oct. 7 pogrom,” many nodded and some thanked her afterward.

Wearing a button supporting flight attendants fighting both airline bosses and the government’s anti-union Railway Labor Act for new contracts, Trowe circulated among rally participants. She discussed her campaign and showed people the *Militant*, the voice of the Socialist Workers Party campaign that reports weekly on the central questions facing working people.

The campaign’s central message, she said, is the need for workers to organize independently of the bosses’ parties on the road to taking political power in their own hands. She pointed to the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution, led by Fidel Castro.

Trowe told Ukrainian-born Maria Volynets, 24, the SWP had supported the Maidan mobilizations of millions

that ousted the pro-Moscow regime, and *Militant* reporters went there days afterward to get out the truth about what it accomplished. Trowe said, unlike our party, most who call themselves socialists argue the Maidan was fascist.

“Anyone who thinks Maidan is fascist doesn’t know anything about it,” Volynets said. “I fought in the Maidan when I was 14 to establish Ukraine as an independent country.”

Trowe pointed to growing working-class opposition in Russia to Putin’s war, noting protests after Putin’s murder of political prisoner Aleksei Navalny Feb. 16 and the 200,000 people who braved repression to line up across the country to put anti-war candidate Boris Nadezhdin on the ballot. She said workers there, who have no interest in Putin’s war, are the most important potential allies of Ukrainian workers.

Volynets was unpersuaded and told Trowe her grandfather, Mykhtod Volynets, born in 1926, was a lifelong fighter against the oppression of Ukraine in Stalin’s prison house of nations. Trowe said the SWP was as well, and its co-thinkers in Russia, supporters of the Bolshevik Revolution overthrown by Stalin, were also killed or thrown in prison. Volynets decided to get a subscription to the *Militant*.

The SWP campaign table was a hub of discussion and debate. Thirty people bought copies of the *Militant*, and four subscribed. Participants bought three copies of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon, a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by party leaders Jack Barnes, Steve Clark and Mary-Alice Waters; the three-volume *History of the Russian Revolution* in Russian by Leon Trotsky and contributed \$34 to the campaign.

The SWP’s support of Ukrainian’s fight to defend their independence is documented in a statement issued March 3, 2022, on the heels of Moscow’s invasion. It stands strong today and is available on the *Militant*’s website.

## ‘Ukraine will prevail’

In Los Angeles a car caravan of 500 people, chanting “Ukraine will prevail,” drove to City Hall Feb. 24, the site of a solidarity rally of more than 1,000.

The SWP campaign table drew interest, with rally participants getting two subscriptions to the *Militant*, 10 single copies and one copy of *The Jewish Question*.

Oles Navrotskyi, a member of a volunteer military unit in Ukraine who is in Los Angeles for medical care, told SWP member Bernie Senter that more military aid from the U.S. and Europe



Caisa Rasmussen/TT

Thousands rally in Stockholm, Sweden, Feb. 24 to support independence for Ukraine on second anniversary of Moscow’s invasion. Actions took place in hundreds of cities worldwide.

was needed. “The U.S. government has its own strategic and political interests in Ukraine, different than those of the people of Ukraine,” Senter said. “While Ukraine has a right to get military aid from wherever it can, in reality the U.S. military is a mortal enemy of working people here and everywhere in the world.”

Hundreds turned out at the Philadelphia Museum of Art Feb. 25 to stand in solidarity with Ukraine. The Socialist Workers Party table, with its signs in support of Ukraine and the fight against Jew-hatred, caught peoples attention, with many taking pictures and saying thanks for the support.

“I don’t have any confidence in Washington,” Anna Kaschak, a Ukrainian living in Horsham, Pennsylvania, told SWP campaigner Chris Hoepfner. “We have no choice but to keep fighting, our families depend on us.”

“Working people need to break with the capitalist parties and fight to take power,” Hoepfner said. “Our unions are starting to fight and make some gains. We need to build on that.”

During the action 10 participants bought the *Militant* and one picked up *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

Over 1,000 defenders of Ukraine’s independence rallied in Washington, D.C., at the Lincoln Memorial Feb. 24.

Eugene Zharovtsev from Krasnodar, Russia, a recent refugee and supporter of Navalny, and Michael Serebrennikov, who has lived in Falls Church, Virginia, for the last 10 years, participated. They carried signs in Russian and English, “Putin is a killer” and “No Putin, no war.”

“Many Russians support Ukraine in the country and it is growing,” Serebrennikov told SWP campaigners they met there. After looking it over, he bought a copy of the *Militant*.

“ Hamas is a terrorist organization which committed a horrendous crime Oct. 7. This paper is different from other socialist ones I have seen,” he said.

SWP campaigners took part in other pro-Ukraine actions across the U.S., as did Communist League members in Montreal, Sydney and London.

To join SWP or CL members campaigning, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 10.

Andrea Morell in Oakland, California; Bernie Senter in Los Angeles; and Arlene Rubinstein in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

## Further reading

pathfinderpress.com

## Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2024!

Campaign for what you are *for*, not who you’re against!

- I want to endorse the Socialist Workers Party ticket of Rachele Fruit for president and Margaret Trowe for vice president.
- I want to join in campaigning or host a house meeting for the candidates. Please contact me.
- Here is my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help spread the word. (Make checks to Socialist Workers National Campaign)
- Send me a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly. (\$5 enclosed, checks payable to the *Militant*.)

Send in along with your name, address, phone # and e-mail address to:  
Socialist Workers Party 2024 Campaign, 306 W. 37<sup>th</sup> St., 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, NY, NY 10018. Tel: 347-871-0282 ✉ Email: socialistworkers2024@gmail.com

## SWP campaigns on the docks in Miami

MIAMI — Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, spoke to dockworkers, members of International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1416, here outside their union hall Feb. 25. The sign on her campaign table read, “Safety on the job and the fight against Jew-hatred are union questions.”

“We are asking you to support our working-class campaign against the Democrats and the Republicans. Just as we need our unions to fight the employers, we need our own party in the political arena,” Fruit said.

Many workers greeted volunteers on the team. Supporters of the *Militant* have been campaigning here for years. Some made a point of welcoming us saying “Shalom,” acknowledging the party’s support for the existence of Israel as a refuge for the Jewish people and for the fight against Hamas.

Crane operator Henry Reagan, an ILA worker on the docks for 40 years, told Fruit that what Hamas did to the Jews was murder. “The world today is in chaos,” he said. Fruit said that the capitalist rulers must be replaced or there will be no end to the wars we see unfolding today.

“The witch hunt by the Democratic Party against Donald Trump is an attack against the millions of workers who want to vote for him,” she said. “Trump will be on the ballot,” Reagan said, adding he would read in the *Militant* he bought about the SWP program and activities, and “really give it some thought.”

This *Militant* worker-correspondent spoke with a porter who stopped by the table. He picked up a copy of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon. “I can’t believe how they came in and murdered those people in Israel,” he said. I explained how Leon’s book traces the history of the Jews from biblical times to the onset of the Holocaust in the 1940s, when Leon was captured by the Nazis and killed in the Auschwitz concentration camp. He bought the book, along with *February 1965: The Final Speeches* by Malcolm X.

— STEVE WARSHALL

# Havana International Book Fair

Continued from front page

the *Transition to Socialism* by Cuban author Carlos Tablada; *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon; *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; and *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution* by Cuban leaders Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos and Yolanda Ferrer.

Two librarians from the University of Computer Science in Havana were visiting different stands to stock their library with new titles. At the Pathfinder booth they chose several books, including the book by Tablada. “It’s important for our students to be knowledgeable with what Che said about socialism,” Yaylín Montoya said. “I like this edition, because it gives you sources for all the quotes by Che.”

Her co-worker, Maylen Viñes, picked up *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*. She wanted to read what it said about struggles by workers in the U.S. against dangerous job conditions and brutal work schedules. Viñes said a Cuban friend of hers had moved to the United States and got a construction job. “He says he’s constantly working and has almost no free time.”

Other visitors to the booth also had relatives among the more than 400,000 Cubans who have migrated to the U.S. the last two years, and had similar stories. They spoke about the shock of their family members at how bosses there push them to work faster, unsafely and for longer hours.

## Interest in U.S. class struggle

Yuriatl Masó, a candymaker and baker for a state company, was interested when Gerardo Sánchez, a member of the Socialist Workers Party and the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union in Texas, used one of the photo displays in the booth to illustrate solidarity activity he’s been helping to organize between striking members of his union in Memphis, Tennessee, and sugar cane workers in the Dominican Republic.

“I’m for friendship between the U.S. and Cuba,” Masó told this *Militant* correspondent. “But I don’t like Donald Trump.” This was a frequent comment we heard from Cubans.

I pointed out that, in their fren-

zied partisan drive to stop Republican Trump from being reelected, the Democrats are leading an attack on him that deals blows to free speech, due process and other rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. “Both the Democratic and Republican parties, both Joseph Biden and Donald Trump, represent the capitalist rulers,” I said. “Every U.S. administration since 1959 has maintained Washington’s economic war against the Cuban Revolution.”

The SWP and our candidates explain that workers need to organize independently of both, on a road to taking state power, I said, “like workers in Cuba did. We need to defend democratic rights to organize and act, rights working people have won in struggle and have fought to defend for some 250 years.”

“That’s for sure,” Masó replied.

Andrea Reynaldo, a pre-university student, bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, another of the best sellers, and *Socialism on Trial*. This book reprints then SWP National Secretary James P. Cannon’s testimony in a federal courtroom in 1941. Cannon and other SWP leaders were framed up for leading labor opposition to Washington’s drive to enter World War II to advance the U.S. rulers’ imperialist interests.

“I want to know the history of the United States from the point of view of the working class and the oppressed,” Reynaldo said.

Many discussions revolved around economic pressures faced by Cubans as a result of the world capitalist crisis, exacerbated by Washington’s unrelenting determination to punish the Cuban people for making and defending a socialist revolution.

A biotechnology scientist who bought *Che Guevara on Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* said that in her workplace, due to the U.S. embargo, they don’t have the equipment they need, much of which has to be imported. She and her co-workers work together to find ways around the difficulties. “We joke that we’re performing alchemy,” she said.

Nanchy López, who works for a publishing house in Pinar del Río province, came back to the booth for several discussions with Andrés Mendoza, a member of the Communist League in the U.K. “I’m worried some young people in Cuba are becoming



Militant/Naomi Craine

Visitors crowd into central bookstore for Cuban publishers at Havana International Book Fair Feb. 24. Foreign and other Cuban publishers had stalls elsewhere around the book fair grounds.

more selfish. I educate my son on the values and principles of the revolution,” López said, which are the alternative to where capitalism is headed.

Mendoza pointed out that the absence of revolutionary advances in the world today weighs heavily on working people in every country, including the imperialist centers. A new and advancing socialist revolution would give a big political boost to working people, from the U.K. to Cuba. “That’s what my party fights to do, and why the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution is so important to workers everywhere,” he said.

## Discussions on world politics

Fabián Acosta, a farmer from a vegetable cooperative near Alquizar, a town southwest of Havana, said he’s visited the book fair for many years. Farmers in Cuba today are seriously hampered by shortages of fuel and fertilizer, he said, a result of global capitalist conditions and Washington’s draconian sanctions. These punitive measures are designed to strangle Cuba’s access to credit and hard currency in the world market and impose great hardships on the Cuban people.

“We sell half our produce to the state, which now has to pay us by credit card or bank transfer because of the shortage of cash,” Acosta said. “But it’s cash that we need for most of our purchases.”

Acosta left the Pathfinder stand with *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and an issue of the *New Internationalist* magazine featuring “Our Politics Start with the World,” both by Jack Barnes. “I know our future is bound together with that of working people the world over,” he said.

There was a lot of interest in *New Internationalist* articles such as “The Opening Guns of World War III” and “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun.” These books help in understanding capitalism’s growing world instability — from escalating U.S.-China trade conflicts, to the election of self-described “anti-establishment” politician Javier Milei as Argentina’s president, to the renewed arms race among major capitalist powers. Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine opened the first major land war in Europe since the second imperialist world war.

Dozens of people bought *The Jewish Question*, whose author, Abram Leon, was a young Jewish communist who died at the end of World War II in the Nazi gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Many who picked it up said they wanted to understand the roots of persecution of Jews, and there were many thoughtful exchanges on the question.

Volunteers at the stand explained what Leon develops in his book. As the deepening crisis of the capitalist system increasingly spawns instability, breakdowns and wars, the bourgeoisie foment Jew-hatred to divert the anger of desperate middle-class layers and some sections of workers get caught up in this. It is the working class and our unions who are the real target, however. The entire history of the imperialist epoch has shown this.

In the deepening capitalist crisis that led to World War I, pogroms against Jews were unleashed across Russia and Eastern Europe — and it was only the victory of the October Revolution in Russia when the working class took power under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party that centuries of oppression of Jews throughout those lands was brought to a halt. But in capitalist Europe the Nazi Holocaust, which killed 6 million Jews, showed what awaits Jews everywhere — including in the Middle East — without socialist revolution.

The Oct. 7 massacre of Jews in Israel was a pogrom orchestrated by Hamas. The organization’s founding charter calls for the eradication of Jews and the state of Israel. It’s a manifestation of the imperialist crisis today helping fuel the rise in Jew-hatred worldwide.

A number of visitors wanted to discuss the multifront war in the Mideast now centered in Gaza. Many thought it was an unjust war by Israel aimed at annihilating the Palestinian people, with a few insisting Hamas was a national liberation movement. Some were horrified by the Oct. 7 slaughter. A few thought Israel has a right to exist as a refuge for Jews from persecution.

Many others said they didn’t know much about these questions and wanted to find out more. “I bought this book [*The Jewish Question*] to get more information,” said artist Michel Meulenert.

## Pride in Cuban Revolution

Interest in books on the fight for women’s emancipation was high. One of the first titles to sell out was *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed and Mary-Alice Waters. Others included *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the*

Continued on page 7



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Volunteers at Pathfinder stand, Vincent Auger, left, and Linda Joyce, third from left, discuss books, politics with Cuban working people Feb. 25. They expressed interest in titles on Cuba’s socialist revolution, workers’ struggles in the U.S. and the road to women’s equality.

# Fidel Castro: ‘Che’s ideas are absolutely relevant today’

The following excerpts are from the speech by Fidel Castro on Oct. 8, 1987, at the main ceremony marking the 20th anniversary of the death of Ernesto Che Guevara, held at the newly completed electronic components factory in Pinar del Río. It is reprinted from the new Pathfinder edition of *Che Guevara on Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Carlos Tablada. The book is discussed in *Fidel’s talk*. Copyright © 2024 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BY FIDEL CASTRO

Our revolution is an example of what faith in man means because our revolution started from scratch, from nothing. We did not have a single weapon, we did not have a penny, even the men who started the struggle were unknown. And yet we confronted all that might, we confronted their hundreds of millions of pesos, we confronted the thousands of soldiers, and the revolution triumphed because we believed in man. Not only was victory made possible, but so was confronting the empire and getting this far, only a short way off from celebrating the twenty-ninth anniversary of the triumph of the revolution. How could we have done all

## Havana book fair

### Continued from page 6

*Revolution and Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara.

“Women have made huge strides in Cuba,” said Mayte González, a University of Havana student. “But there is greater pressure on women to think that beauty is something that can be painted on. It’s a consequence of the economic changes of recent years that have increased the influence of the capitalist market,” she said. “It’s what Karl Marx called ‘commodity fetishism,’ material objects that seem to take on magical powers and have a negative impact on relations between people.”

González said she appreciated the quality of Pathfinder’s books, and the fact that thanks to donations from workers in other countries they were being sold here at prices accessible to most Cubans.

As during book fairs in Havana going back to the 1980s, many visitors to the Pathfinder stand expressed pride in the country’s socialist revolution. Ramón Rivero Santana, who got *Che Guevara on Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, said he had served as a volunteer doctor in Angola and Venezuela. “In Africa we saw a lot of AIDS, malaria and other diseases that we don’t have much of here,” he said.

Andrés López, a cook, pointed to a photo in the same book of Ukrainian children arriving in Cuba in 1991 to receive free medical treatment after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. López works at the Tarará medical facility outside Havana where the Ukrainian youth had stayed.

“Che and Fidel taught us about the importance of internationalist solidarity,” López said. “Our experience with the ‘children of Chernobyl,’ which was initiated by Fidel, was one of our most beautiful expressions of internationalism.”



Havana, November 1961. Che Guevara, minister of industry, gives “Territory Free of Illiteracy” banner to workers at paint factory. “We’re not trying to set a world record,” he said. “We’re teaching people to read and write so you can learn other things, and combine study and work.”

this if we had not had faith in man?

Che had great faith in man. Che was a realist and did not reject material incentives. He deemed them necessary during the transitional stage, while building socialism. But Che attached more importance — more and more importance — to the conscious factor, to the moral factor.

At the same time, it would be a caricature to believe that Che was unrealistic and unfamiliar with the reality of a society and a people who had just emerged from capitalism.

But Che was mostly known as a man of action, a soldier, a leader, a military man, a guerrilla, an exemplary person who always was the first in everything; a man who never asked others to do something that he himself would not do first; a model of a righteous, honest, pure, courageous man, full of human solidarity. These are the virtues he possessed and the ones we remember him by.

Che was a man of very profound thought, and he had the exceptional opportunity during the first years of the revolution to delve deeply into very important aspects of the building of socialism, because, given his qualities, whenever a man was needed to do an important job, Che was always there. He was truly a many-sided man and, whatever his assignment, he fulfilled it in a completely serious and responsible manner.

He was in INRA [National Institute of Agrarian Reform] and managed a few industries under its jurisdiction at a time when the main industries had not yet been nationalized and only a

few factories had been taken over. He headed the National Bank, another of the responsibilities entrusted to him, and he also headed the Ministry of Industry when this agency was set up.

Nearly all the factories had been nationalized by then and everything had to be organized, production had to be maintained, and Che took on the job, as he had taken on many others. He did so with total devotion, working day and night, Saturdays and Sundays, at all hours, and he really set out to solve far-reaching problems. It was then that he tackled the task of applying Marxist-Leninist principles to the organization of production, the way he understood it, the way he saw it.

He spent years doing that; he spoke a lot, wrote a lot on all those subjects. And he really managed to develop a rather elaborate and very profound theory on the manner in which, in his opinion, socialism should be built leading to a communist society.

Recently, all these ideas were compiled, and an economist wrote a book that was awarded a Casa de las Américas prize. The author compiled, studied, and presented in a book the essence of Che’s economic ideas, retrieved from many of his speeches and writings — articles and speeches dealing with a subject so decisive in the building of socialism. The name of the book is *The Economic Thought of Ernesto Che Guevara*. So much has been done to recall his other qualities that this aspect, I think, is largely unknown in our country. Che held truly profound, courageous, bold ideas, which were different from

many paths already taken.

In essence — in essence! — Che was radically opposed to using and developing capitalist economic laws and categories in building socialism. He advocated something that I have often insisted on: Building socialism and communism is not just a matter of producing and distributing wealth but is also a matter of education and consciousness. He was firmly opposed to using these categories, which have been transferred from capitalism to socialism, as instruments to build the new society.



If there is something left to say tonight it’s that despite our problems; despite the fact that we have less hard currency than ever before, for reasons we’ve explained in the past; despite the drought; despite the intensification of the imperialist blockade — as I see our people respond, as I see more and more possibilities open up, I feel confident, I feel optimistic. And I am absolutely convinced we will accomplish everything we set our minds to! [Applause]

We’ll do it with the people, with the masses. We’ll do it with the principles, pride, and honor of each and every one of our party members, workers, youth, peasants, and intellectuals!

I can proudly say that we are giving Che well-deserved tribute and honor, and if he lives more than ever, so will the homeland! If he is an opponent of imperialism more powerful than ever, the homeland will also be more powerful than ever against imperialism and its rotten ideology! [Applause]

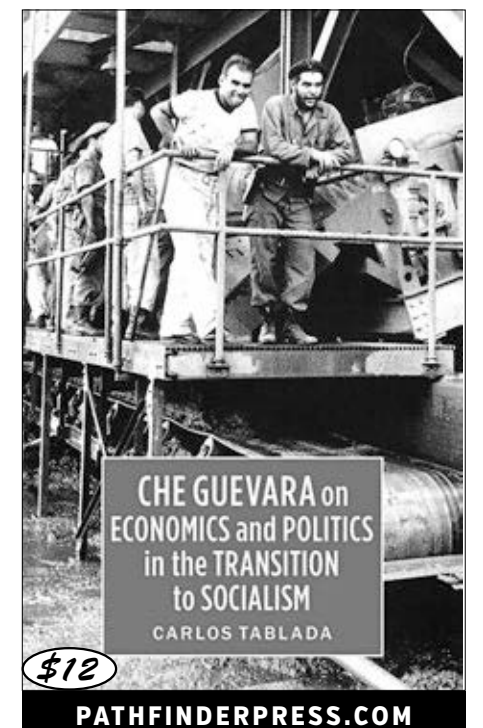
And if one day we chose the path of revolution, of socialist revolution and of communism, the path of building communism, today we are prouder to have chosen that path because it is the only one that can give rise to men like Che and can forge a people made up of millions of men and women capable of being like Che! [Applause]

As [José] Martí said, whereas there are men without dignity, there are also men who carry inside them the dignity of many men! We might add that there are men who carry inside them the dignity of the world, and one of those men is Che!

*Patria o muerte!* [Homeland or death]

*Venceremos!* [We will win] [Ovation]

## New expanded edition



Che Guevara on housing construction brigade, February 1961. Che advocated voluntary labor.

Liborio Novak

# New protests against Hamas

Continued from front page

With 1,200 dead, more than 5,000 wounded and over 250 taken hostage, the October Hamas-led attack on a dance party and farm communities in Israel is the largest anti-Jewish pogrom since the Nazi Holocaust. Dozens of Arab, Thai, Nepalese, Filipino and African workers were also murdered, wounded and taken hostage for working with Jews.

Hamas uses civilians as human shields and built tunnels and command centers underneath and inside hospitals, schools, mosques and apartment buildings. But growing numbers of Gazans openly blame Hamas for the death and destruction that are a by-product of Israel's efforts to destroy the group.

Hundreds of Palestinians in Rafah and Jabalya in Gaza took to the streets Feb. 21 and 22 to protest against Hamas, blaming it for the war with Israel. Israel's advances are helping working people in Gaza lose their fear of Hamas, which has ruled the territory with an iron fist for the last 17 years.

## 'Killers are Hamas, not Israeli army'

In a video filmed during a Feb. 22 nighttime protest in Jabalya, one man said Hamas "got us into a war we don't want. We want peace. We want our children to go to school. Our children shouldn't be displaced. They should not live in the streets. Who is responsible for all these things?"

"[Yahya] Sinwar, it is you that is killing us, not the Israeli army," he said.

At one action that took place in broad daylight, protesters chanted, "We need food. We need flour. Sinwar and [Ismail] Haniyeh, stay away from us, you thieves." That's a reference to Hamas' long record of confiscating humanitarian aid for its own use or to sell for a profit.

A group calling itself "Free Gaza -

Gaza's Liberators" is putting up posters across the territory calling for a "revolution now to eliminate Hamas and its ideology," reports Israeli news agency YNET.

The Israeli government is looking for forces in Gaza hostile to Hamas to form a new ruling structure, to prevent the return of the reactionary group and make possible the rebuilding of Gaza. Army officials say they have met with clan leaders in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City to discuss them taking over food distribution and other tasks.

Prior to Hamas' takeover, tribal and clan leaders played a prominent role in the politics and local government in Gaza, but they were disarmed, pushed aside or partially co-opted when Hamas consolidated its rule.

## Hamas sexual crimes

Apologists for Hamas around the world continue to press the demand for a permanent cease-fire that would allow Hamas to regroup and carry out more pogroms, as it has promised it will do.

To try to win public sympathy, some deny that Hamas targeted civilians on Oct. 7 and gang-raped and mutilated women — and men — in an attempt to sow terror among Jews everywhere.

Orit Sultzeanu, CEO of the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Tel Aviv, told the *Militant* by phone Feb. 23 that she was shocked by the level of denial — and hatred toward Jews — among groups that she thought were defenders of women's rights in the U.S. and Europe. "People who deny what happened on Oct. 7 are just like those who deny the Holocaust," she said.

To get out the truth, her group put together and submitted a report to the United Nations Feb. 21, "Silent Cry: Sexual Crimes in the October 7 War."

It's based on eyewitness accounts



Rafah, Gaza, protest against skyrocketing prices Feb. 28. Hamas steals part of the humanitarian aid, sells some of it at a huge profit, while civilians suffer impact of the war Hamas provoked.

of the rapes; videos that Hamas thugs themselves filmed to flaunt their atrocities; accounts and photos by first responders who saw the bodies; and on conversations with some of those who were raped Oct. 7, survived and spoke to counselors at the crisis centers. "It is still too early for them to speak out publicly," Sultzeanu said.

The rape of dozens and dozens of women — including children and women in their 70s — "happened systematically," she said. "Many women were shot in the genitalia. Sometimes their faces were shot off."

"The genitals of both women and men were brutally mutilated, and sometimes weapons were inserted into them," the report notes. "Often, the rape was perpetrated in front of an audience — partners, family or friends — in a manner intended to increase the pain and humiliation of all present."

The rapes took place everywhere Hamas attacked: the dance rave, army bases and farm communities. "They had to have been given directives to do this or it wouldn't have happened like that everywhere," Sultzeanu emphasized.

"People read the news about the suffering in Gaza," she said. "But they don't understand that Hamas still holds the hostages there, including women, children and the elderly who face the risk of abuse every day."

"Even if you believe that Israel is an oppressor, even if you don't like Israel's

politics and you don't understand the complexity of life here, no human being should excuse the sadistic torture that took place Oct. 7," Sultzeanu said.

"Many Arabs still find it hard to believe that Hamas could do something like this," she said. They hope to get the report translated to help get out the truth to Arabic speakers inside Israel, in the Palestinian territories and beyond.

## Jew-hatred disguised as anti-Zionism

As Israeli forces advance in Gaza and as more Arabs speak out against the reactionary bourgeois Islamist group, supporters and apologists for Hamas in the U.S. and around the world are becoming more thuggish and more openly antisemitic.

So-called supporters of Palestine picketed and passed out leaflets outside a Feb. 14 comedy show in New York that was raising funds for victims of Oct. 7. The leaflets charged that "all 'Israelis' are settlers and partake in the risks associated with stealing land and resources" — in other words, Jews who live or visit there, from babies to the elderly, are fair game for murder and rape by Hamas.

"No matter where they are, they shall not know peace," the leaflet threatened at the end. "May we teach them a lesson they won't soon forget."

Their encouragement of Jew-hating violence should be rejected and condemned by all working people, religious groups and the unions.

# Opponents of Jew-hatred condemn harassment of New York mosque

Two major organizations that fight antisemitism — the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County and the Anti-Defamation League — condemned the Feb. 23 harassment of worshippers and staff at the Islamic Center of Melville.

Lawyer Jordan Endler reportedly entered the Islamic Center in the New York City suburb and began shouting, "Free the Israeli hostages now"; called Muslim congregants "racists"; and rubbed his shoes on their prayer rugs, a sign of disrespect. When asked to leave he refused.

This attack "is completely unacceptable and goes against the principles of respect, tolerance, and understanding," the Holocaust Memorial said in its Feb. 26 statement. "Furthermore, no one can make assumptions regarding anyone's views simply by what religion they practice."

— Seth Galinsky

# Ukraine unions call for solidarity against Moscow invasion

BY ROY LANDERSEN AND VIVIAN SAHNER

"The priority now is defending Ukraine," Mykhailo Volynets, chairperson of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) and of the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine, told the *Militant* in a phone interview Feb. 14. The vast majority of "union members want to join the fight" against Russian President Vladimir Putin's war, "which is trying to destroy the country."

The expansionist ambitions of the Putin regime "threaten a third world war," Volynets warned.

As Moscow's invasion enters its third year, the KVPU and the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine held a joint conference Feb. 22-24 appealing for international working-class solidarity. Several unionists of the General Union of Workers from Catalonia, Spain, met them and were taken on a tour of damage from Russian airstrikes in Kyiv. Since it is "hard to travel inside Ukraine" under wartime conditions, Volynets said, much of the Feb. 22-24 meeting for unionists internationally and within Ukraine would also be by video conference.

The war means the trade union movement in Ukraine faces "a lot of tasks in a complicated period," Volynets said. Numerous local union leaders have volunteered to join the armed forces or ter-

ritorial guard "to defend our country." Many workers are toiling to fill the spots left vacant by those joining the country's defense forces. This means "their workload has increased."

Some 4 million people are displaced internally and another 6 million have been forced to flee the country because of the war. "The unions are working to aid many of these refugees," he said. With "all the injured, disabled, and those who've lost family members," unions have had to "provide services, not needed before in peacetime."

The KVPU leader said there is a "high level of corruption" in Ukraine, which is "still a young country." It gained independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Volynets said that Ukraine's bosses had pushed the government of President Volodymyr Zelensky to pass a new labor law that "attacks workers rights." It allows employers to tear up contracts and impose longer hours. The government wants to "deprive workers of using their unions to defend their rights."

"It is not possible to take industrial action or hold rallies under martial law," Volynets said. But after the war, there will be action "if nothing changes for the better for workers."

The Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine led mass strikes and protest marches in 1989 and 1991 as the



Workers from the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine deliver wood, other supplies to soldiers on the frontline in war to defeat Moscow's invasion, defend Ukraine independence.

Soviet Union disintegrated. The KVPU grew out of this. Volynets appealed for workers internationally to understand the need to support the independent unions of Ukraine.

Nearly 20% of the country is occupied, with Moscow's offensive aiming to take more, he said. Some "30% of the territory is mined, making Ukraine one of the world's most heavily mined countries."

Russian missiles "can reach any target within the country," Volynets said. "Ukraine lacks sufficient air defenses to protect all the cities. Some areas are under constant attack — schools, hospitals, including maternity facilities, and power stations." Many airstrikes target electrical generators and power lines since the Kremlin knows "how cold the winters are in Ukraine."

Numerous coal and iron ore mines have faced power blackouts from the war, sometimes trapping miners underground until power is restored. But miners have kept working underground, not only those near the Donetsk and Luhansk battlefields or Kryvyi Rih, but across the country. "Even in the west-

ern regions, electrical infrastructure has been damaged."

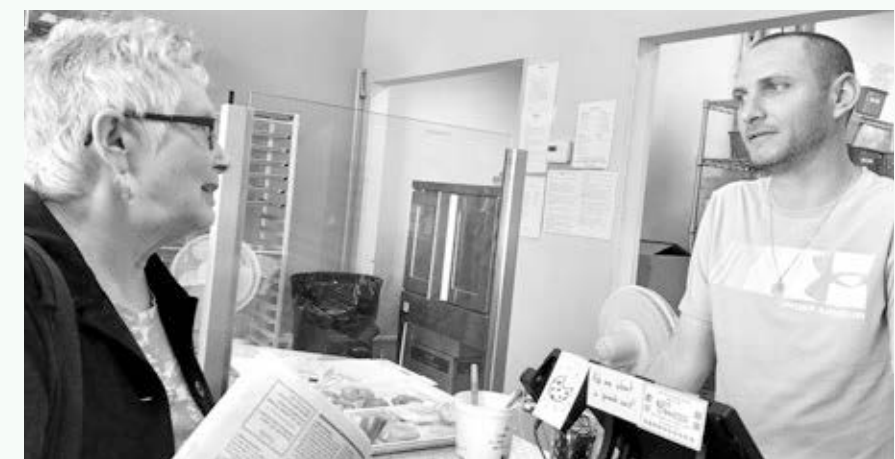
One of the unions in the KVPU is the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine. Many rail workers have been killed or injured by these attacks but they try to keep the trains running "to help people get to work, or to evacuate," with both "cargo and passenger trains targeted," Volynets said. Pro-Kremlin saboteurs have hit rail lines and bridges, costing the lives and limbs of civilians and rail workers.

He stressed how grateful Ukrainian working people are for the solidarity and direct aid by unions from the U.S. to Europe. He noted that the government-sanctioned trade unions in Russia had supported Putin's invasion "from the first days."

"Getting the facts out" about what working people in Ukraine face is key to building international solidarity, Volynets said. This is vital to Ukraine's survival, and will help it "continue to resist."

Olesia Briazgunova, international secretary of the KVPU, translated for the interview.

## Atlanta bakery stands up to Jew-hatred



ATLANTA — "We came today to extend our solidarity to you and your family in standing up against the boycott of your store," Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in the 5th District, told Sagi Shablis during a Feb. 22 visit to Ali's Cookies here.

Sagi and his wife Nofar Shablis, both from Israel, have owned the cookie shop near Emory University since 2022, after moving to Atlanta from Israel the previous year. Both served in the Israel Defense Forces.

Following Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre of Jews and others in Israel, the couple displayed an Israeli flag inside their store. "Oct. 7, 2023, that is a day that I am sure everyone will remember as Black Saturday," Nofar Shablis told the *Atlanta Jewish Times*. "For me, and for every other Jew and Israeli, these horrors, this reality, is so hard to explain and to cope with, to know that my people suffered and still are, is heartbreaking. Since that day, the store hasn't been the same."

Sales dropped, the store was "unfollowed" by some on social media and others who came into the store turned around and walked out upon seeing the Israeli flag. The Emory campus has been the site of many "pro-Palestinian" actions in recent months.

Boycotts of Jewish-owned businesses in Nazi Germany were "how the Holocaust started in the first place," Nofar Shablis told Fox5 Atlanta.

The Shablis held their ground and began publicizing the impact of the boycott. Messages of support began rolling in. "I will order more cookies immediately," one person wrote. "I live in Chattanooga, can you ship?" asked another. "It's important to respond to every act of Jew-hatred and antisemitism, as you have done," Potash told Sagi Shablis. "We use our campaign to explain that the fight against Jew-hatred is a life-and-death question for the working class in the U.S. and everywhere, as is defense of Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews."

"Thank you so much for your support," Sagi Shablis answered, showing us a "Free Palestine! End the genocide!" sticker like ones they often have to scrap off the front of their store. While they continue to receive phone and mail threats "business has returned to normal," he added, with a smile.

— SUSAN LAMONT

## Join, build March 3 San Francisco march against Jew-hatred!

OAKLAND, Calif — The Socialist Workers Party and its candidates in the 2024 elections are urging the largest possible turnout for the March 3 protest against antisemitism in San Francisco, starting at 1:30 p.m. at Embarcadero Plaza. Since Oct. 7, when Hamas death squads invaded Israel, massacring over 1,200 men, women and children, there has been a sharp increase in attacks on synagogues, businesses owned by Jews and individuals who defend Israel's right to exist. The march is a response to these acts of Jew-hatred in the Bay Area.

Recently, graffiti was spray painted around Lake Merritt here saying, "Long live Hamas," and "Our blood will defeat your airstrikes and massacres, O Zionist." In December, vandals destroyed an 11-foot menorah at the lake, with nearby graffiti saying "Free Palestine."

SWP vice presidential candidate Margaret Trowe and her campaign supporters are getting out the message that the fight against Jew-hatred is a labor issue as they campaign at plant gates and in working-class neighborhoods. SWP presidential candidate Rachele Fruit will join them at the March 3 action.

It is vital to oppose every act of Jew-hatred and intimidation by pro-Hamas, pro-Tehran forces who shout down and threaten those they disagree with.

— BETSEY STONE



Screenshot from internet site where Hamas boasts of its exploits. Above, Hamas thugs kidnap Shiri Bibas and her two children — one just 9 months old — to Gaza. They are still being held hostage. Rape, mutilation, murder, hostage-taking of Jews was central to Oct. 7 pogrom.

"There is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism, just as there is no solution to other problems before humanity..."

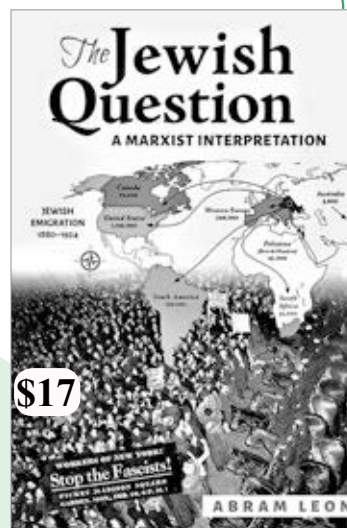
— Abram Leon

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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\$17



# Teamsters' newspaper helped win 1934 Minneapolis strikes

The French edition of *The History of American Trotskyism, 1928-1938: Report of a Participant* by James P. Cannon is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for February. Cannon, a founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party, explains in the book, "*Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine, but the restoration, the revival, of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian Revolution and in the early days of the Communist International.*" The excerpt is from Chapter 8, "*The Great Minneapolis Strikes.*" Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The year 1933, the fourth year of the great American crisis, marked the beginning of the greatest awakening of the American workers and their movement towards union organization on a scale never seen before in American history. That was the background of all the developments within the various political parties, groups, and tendencies. This movement of the American workers took the form of a tremendous drive to break out of their atomized state and to confront the employers with the organized force of unionism. ...

Our lecture tonight deals with the strike wave of 1934 as represented in the Minneapolis strikes. There, for the first time, the effective participation of



July 26 *Organizer*, daily broadsheet of Teamsters Local 574's 1934 strike battles in Minneapolis. Crucial to winning victory, union prepared strikers for every move by bosses, the government.

a revolutionary Marxist group in actual strike organization and direction was demonstrated. The basis of these strike waves and organization movements was a partial industrial revival. ...

Our people didn't believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity. Consequently, they expected from the start that the union would have to fight for its right to exist; that the bosses would not yield any recognition to the union, would not yield any increase of wages or reduction of the scandalous hours without some pressure being brought to bear.

Therefore they prepared everything from the point of view of class war. They knew that power, not diplomacy, would decide the issue. Bluffs don't work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight. ...

The fifth and crowning contribution that Trotskyism made to the Minneapolis strike was the publication of the daily strike newspaper, the *Daily Organizer*. For the first time in the history of the American labor movement, strikers were not left dependent on the capitalist press, were not befuddled and terrorized by it, did not see public sentiment disoriented by the capitalist monopoly of the press. The Minneapolis strikers published their own daily newspa-

per. This was done not by a half million coal miners, a hundred thousand auto or steel workers, but by a single local union of 5,000 truck drivers, a new union in Minneapolis which had Trotskyist leadership. This leadership understood that publicity and propaganda are highly important, and that is something very few trade union leaders know. It is almost impossible to convey the tremendous effect of this daily newspaper. It wasn't a big one — just a two-page tabloid. But it completely counteracted the capitalist press.

After a day or two we didn't care what the daily papers of the bosses said. They printed all kinds of things but it didn't make that much difference in the ranks of the strikers. They had their own paper and took its reports as gospel. The *Daily Organizer* covered the town like a blanket. Strikers at the headquarters all used to get it straight from the press. The Women's Auxiliary sold it in every tavern in town that had working-class customers. In many saloons in working-class neighborhoods they would leave a bundle of papers on the bar with a slotted collection can beside them for contributions. Many a dollar was collected that way and carefully watched by the friendly bartenders.

Union men used to come from the shops and railroad yards every night to get bundles of the *Organizer* for distribution among the men on their shifts. The power of that little paper, its hold

on the workers, is indescribable. They believed the *Organizer* and no other paper. Occasionally a story would appear in the capitalist press about some new development in the strike. The workers wouldn't believe it. They would wait for the *Organizer* to see what the truth was. Press distortions of strike incidents and outright fabrications — which have destroyed the morale of many a strike — didn't work in Minneapolis. More than once, among a crowd that always surged around strike headquarters when the latest issue of the *Organizer* was delivered, one could hear remarks such as this: "You see what the *Organizer* says. I told you that story in the *Tribune* was a damned lie." That was the general sentiment of the workers toward the voice of labor in the strike, the *Daily Organizer*.

This powerful instrument didn't cost the union a penny. On the contrary, the *Daily Organizer* made a profit from the first day and carried the strike through when there was no money in the treasury. The profits of the *Organizer* paid the daily expenses of the commissary. The paper was distributed free to anyone who wanted it, but nearly every sympathetic worker gave from a nickel to a dollar for a copy. The morale of the strikers was kept up by it, but above all, the role of the *Organizer* was that of an educator. Every day the paper had the news of the strike, some jokes about the bosses, some information about what went on in the labor movement. There was even a daily cartoon drawn by a local comrade. Then there would be an editorial drawing the lessons of the past 24 hours, day after day, and pointing the way ahead. "This is what has happened. This is what is coming next. This is our position."

The striking workers were armed and prepared in advance for every move of the mediators or Governor Olson. We would be poor Marxists if we couldn't see 24 hours in advance. We called the turn so many times that the strikers began to take our forecasts as news and to rely upon them as such. The *Daily Organizer* was the greatest of all the weapons in the arsenal of the Minneapolis strike. I can say without any qualification that of all the contributions we made, the most decisive, the one that tipped the scale to victory, was the publication of the daily paper. Without the *Organizer* the strike would not have been won.

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## SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

# Join the fight against Jew-hatred!

Statement by Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey, Feb. 28.

Jew-hatred is built into capitalist rule, spreading as this cut-throat social system breeds deepening crises and more wars.

The Socialist Workers Party urges workers to join in combating Jew-hatred, whether it's offering solidarity to Jewish-owned businesses subject to boycotts by the middle-class left, or joining street actions to protest growing assaults on Jews, or refuting the lie that Israel is carrying out "genocide" in its war to destroy Hamas. Join the March 3 protest against antisemitism in San Francisco!

It's a deadly illusion that Jews can be assimilated enough in the U.S. — or anywhere else — to avoid persecution. As is the notion that imperialist governments, or either the Democratic and Republican parties, can be relied on for protection.

Combating Jew-hatred has a special place in the fight to build working-class parties capable of leading workers to take political power into our own hands, uproot capitalist exploitation and to transform ourselves.

Under capitalism, as layers of the middle class get ruined, reactionary demagogues — including those who today call themselves socialists — blame Jews. When the capitalist rulers decide their rule is threatened, they will back fascist thugs to try to crush unions, murder vanguard workers and annihilate the Jewish people. That's what happened in Germany in

the 1930s. Incipient fascist currents emerged in the U.S. at the same time, like Mayor Frank Hague in Jersey City, who crushed the union movement there, as well as free speech.

This is the future everywhere, including in the "democratic" imperialist nations, where the fight to replace capitalism with workers power is decisive for humanity's future. It's in the U.S. — home to the rulers of the world's last empire — that the battle against Jew-hatred will be most important.

Fighting Jew-hatred is why it's crucial today to defend Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews. Israel was founded because the imperialist rulers in London and Washington slammed shut their borders to those fleeing the rise of the Nazis and because of the slaughter of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust.

Responding to the Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel is a test for any political current claiming to speak for the working class. Recognizing what took place was in fact a pogrom has to be faced. It was a slaughter targeting Jews, accompanied by the rape and mutilation that has always been part of pogroms. It was neither an act of "terror" as the U.S. government says, nor a fight, however misplaced, for Palestinian liberation as the middle-class left argues.

The Socialist Workers Party campaigns for working people to *act* against all moves to slander, scapegoat and attack Jews. This task belongs to the working class and our unions in the U.S. and worldwide. Join the fight!

## Democrats' drive against Trump hits crucial rights

Continued from front page

district attorneys in New York and Georgia have filed several criminal and civil lawsuits against Trump aimed at crippling his family's business, throwing him in jail and rigging the 2024 election for Joseph Biden.

At the same time, Trump has won the five Republican primaries so far, including South Carolina by a big majority Feb. 24. He is virtually assured of winning the Republican nomination. The Democrats — lacking confidence that Biden can win in November — are determined to use the courts to try to crush Trump. Some of these cases are now coming to trial.

New York Judge Arthur Engoron hit the Republican front-runner with an unprecedented \$355 million fine, after ruling him guilty of business fraud before the trial had even begun! Engoron said prosecutors didn't have to prove Trump actually deceived anyone, nor that Trump's "fraud" had caused anyone to suffer a loss. All they had to do was show he had "the capacity or tendency to deceive." But, as all workers know, under the dog-eat-dog capitalist system, *every* boss and landlord lives by a "tendency to deception."

Engoron denied Trump's request Feb. 22 for a 30-day delay in paying the fine. A day later a further \$99 million in interest was slapped onto the judgment. Trump filed a notice of appeal Feb. 26. He now has until March 25 to secure a stay from the appeals court, which would prevent him from having to pay out the massive judgment, or receive any automatic stay by putting up cash or assets. On top of all this, Engoron banned Trump from seeking loans from any financial institution chartered in New York for three years.

New York Attorney General Letitia James, who brought the charges, says she's ready and waiting to seize Trump's properties. "I look at 40 Wall Street each and every day," she told ABC News. When she ran for office in 2018, James made it clear her top priority would be to get Trump. In her victory speech she vowed she would be "shining a bright light into every dark corner of his real estate dealings."

After her election, James sued the then-president's charitable Trump Foundation on charges of "misusing donations," forcing him to shut it down.

Then she set her sights on the current frame-up.

After the South Carolina primary, the "Never-Trump" *Wall Street Journal* editors condemned the former president for "dividing" Republicans and urged Nikki Haley, who has lost every primary to Trump by large margins, to continue fighting.

The *Journal* also ran a column by New York Law School professor Steven Cohen saying, "Many of us are delighted to see Mr. Trump get his comeuppance" in Engoron's ruling. He praised James for "a novel and effective use of an existing statute."

But there was nothing "novel" about James' use of the courts to try to ruin Trump. This trial was one more step in a yearslong political vendetta, with dangerous precedents for the working class.

"Under conditions of the bourgeois regime, all suppression of political rights and freedom, no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning," Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky said in 1939, "in the end inevitably bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced elements. That is a law of history."

### Democrats use courts against their own

At the same time that Democrats are seeking to destroy Trump, they're trying to figure out what to do about their own candidate, Joseph Biden, whose poll numbers have hit rock bottom. Selecting another candidate could "fracture the Democratic coalition," and still not guarantee Trump is defeated, *New York Times* columnist Jamelle Bouie wrote Feb. 24.

And the socialist wing of the Democratic Party is pressuring Biden to cave into some of its politics — especially back-handed support to the murderous Jew-hating Hamas thugs in Gaza. Their call for a protest vote against Biden in the party's Feb. 27 Michigan primary netted only 13.3% of the vote.

In their own factional attack, Democratic leaders in New York are using the State Board of Elections and campaign finance laws to go after the Democratic Socialists of America. Democratic-appointee Michael L. Johnson, the board's "watchdog," is demanding an Albany court order the DSA to pay \$300,000 in penalties for violating "financial transparency."

Neither the Democratic nor the Republican parties are concerned that in the course of their factional battles, basic constitutional protections are undermined. It is workers who resist the bosses' profit-driven attacks who have most at stake in defending these freedoms and who must be in the forefront safeguarding them.

## Workers face price rises

Continued from front page

her food bills are rising faster than her family's income. "Everything is a negotiation, an analysis about our budget," she said. "It's exhausting."

"If you look historically after periods of inflation, there's really no period you could point to where [food] prices go back down," Steve Cahillane, chief executive of snack giant Kellanova, told the paper. "They tend to be sticky." That is, the increases don't go away. He should know. He and his fellow bosses are the ones sticking it to us.

*New York Times* economic guru Paul Krugman insists "Bidenomics" is "almost miraculously good." He says January inflation figures showing prices on key items are still going up is just a "statistical blip."

But facts show otherwise. While prices for some items like wheat, coffee beans and chicken have declined from what they were a year ago, others haven't, from sugar to beef to french fries. Nestle, the world's biggest packaged-food company, raised prices about 7.5% last year. And they're still rising. Hard hit are pet care, confectionaries, cooking aids and milk products.

With grocery prices high, Walmart continues to boost profits by expanding its massive grocery business. By charging slightly lower prices than its competitors at its 5,000 U.S. stores, Walmart takes in about 70% of its sales from grocery, health and other essential products. It projects sales of \$645 billion for fiscal 2024, double that of Target, its closest competitor.

And the cost of many services continues to climb. To repair household items on the fritz costs 18.2% more than it did a year ago. Car repair and insurance prices for homes and health care are more expensive. The Pacific Gas & Electric Co. is raising prices by 13% for the 16 million people it "serves" in California. Power monopolies are pushing similar rate hikes across the country.

Workers are increasingly finding themselves forced to use their credit cards to pay for groceries and other necessities. And it's taking longer to pay these debts off. This is a boon for the big bankers, who rake in superprofits from charging monthly interest rates of over 20% on unpaid balances. Workers paying on car loans face the same kind of price gouging. Delinquencies on auto loans and credit cards are both now at their highest point in more than a decade.

The bosses boost their profits with price rises. ExxonMobil and Chevron, for example, recorded the biggest profits in 2022 and 2023 in a decade. Exxon's bonanza was \$91 billion; Chevron's, \$57 billion.

### Capitalist economy driven by 'greed'

"When asked what drives the economy, many Americans have a simple, single answer that comes to mind immediately: 'greed,'" said a Feb. 21 article in the *New York Times* by Katherine Cramer and Jonathan Cohen, reporting on a study conducted by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

"If there is a singular explanation for dissatisfaction with the economy, it is a lack of financial certainty," they wrote, and workers' conviction that Democratic and Republican politicians are "unable or unwilling to do anything to help them."

While hiring has gone up, in some areas bosses have been cutting jobs. This is true in many tech companies, including Amazon, Microsoft, Zoom and Snap, which have laid off 32,000 employees since January.

At the same time, Wall Street is gloating over the fact that seven tech companies — Microsoft, Apple, Nvidia, Amazon, Alphabet, Meta and Tesla, known as the Magnificent Seven — are responsible for the bulk of the upswing in stock prices.

Over 900 members of the United Steelworkers union are losing their jobs as bosses at Cleveland-Cliffs are closing their tin mill in Weirton, West Virginia.

Apartment rents keep climbing, a whopping 20% since 2020. Half of all those renting an apartment spend at least 30% of their income on rent.

According to a new report from Columbia University, 23% of residents in New York City were unable to afford basic needs like housing and food in 2022, up from 18% a year earlier. This was exacerbated by the federal government's decision to let several pandemic programs expire, including expanded child tax credits, increased unemployment insurance and cash payments to low-income families battered by inflation.

So much for Bidenomics.

### 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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