

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Canada gov't mounts new attack on political rights

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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MARCH 18, 2024

Forum in New Jersey takes up Ukraine fight for sovereignty

BY ROY LANDERSEN

UNION CITY, N.J. — “Look at the pictures of tens of thousands of people chanting slogans at the funeral for Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny,” John Studer, editor of the *Militant*, told a Militant Labor Forum here March 2. That’s the answer “to anyone who thought the death of Navalny would break the back of opposition to Putin and his war against the nation and people of Ukraine.”

“Two anniversaries were marked by the people of Ukraine a week ago,” Studer, who is a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, said. “Ten years ago, months of mobilizations by working people and youth culminated in the overthrow of the Moscow-backed president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich.” Studer explained he was part of three reporting teams to Ukraine in the wake of what became known as the Maidan revolution.

The second anniversary is the start of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war,
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Mass march in San Francisco protests rise of antisemitism

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO — Braving intermittent downpours, thousands turned out March 3 for the “Unity Against Antisemitism” march and rally in San Francisco. It was a strong, confident answer to the surge of Jew-hating actions in California in recent weeks.

The most serious attack against Jews occurred at the University of California, Berkeley Feb. 26 when a mob descended on the building where Ran Bar-Roshafat, an Israeli attorney and officer in the Israel Defense Forces reserves, was scheduled to speak. They chanted and pounded on the windows, shattered the glass at the front door and forced their way in, one yelling “dirty Jew.” Despite having adequate warning that a student group was planning to try to shut the meeting down, the university administration did nothing to ensure that the event could take place.

“People are using anti-Zionism to
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Join fight against Jew-hatred! SWP: Working-class alternative to Biden-Trump



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Rachele Fruit presents party’s program. Left, Laura Garza, SWP candidate for Senate, Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for vice president.

SWP presidential campaign launched at Oakland meeting

BY BETSEY STONE

OAKLAND, Calif. — The launching of the 2024 Socialist Workers Party campaign in California was greeted with enthusiasm at a packed hall here when Rachele Fruit, the party’s candidate for president, and vice presidential candidate Margaret Trowe spoke March 2. They were joined by Laura Garza, the party’s candidate for U.S. Senate from California.

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UN admits Oct. 7 pogrom by Hamas included rape, torture

BY SETH GALINSKY

It took five long months, but the United Nations office that supposedly fights against “conflict-related sexual violence” finally issued a report March 4 that admits there are “reasonable grounds to believe” that rape and gang rape by Hamas forces was widespread during their Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews in Israel. Some U.N. personnel and agencies have been found to have col-

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‘Congestion fees’ and ‘surge pricing’: New ways to rip off workers for profit



Stephen Nessen

Taxi drivers protest outside hearing on imposing onerous “congestion pricing” tolls in New York. Plans like this tax working people, while wealthy bondholders rake in the profits.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — Officials here are getting set to implement so-called congestion pricing fees on drivers entering the streets of Midtown and Lower Manhattan, a stiff regressive tax that falls most heavily on working people. Projected as a move to save the environment, in reality it’s a boon to line the pockets of wealthy bondholders.

Drivers will be charged for going south

of 60th Street, which includes coming off any bridge, tunnel or highway in this area. Prices range from a once-a-day toll of \$15 for passenger vehicles to \$24 to \$36 for trucks. Yellow cab taxi drivers will have to pay a \$1.25-per-ride toll to enter this zone; Uber, Lyft and other e-hail drivers, \$2.50 per ride.

These costs come on top of already steep bridge and tunnel tolls just to get

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Join spring campaign to extend reach of ‘Militant’ and books by SWP leaders

Join us in expanding the reach of the *Militant*!

The Socialist Workers Party is launching an eight-week campaign to increase the readership of the *Militant* and widely introduce books by SWP

and other revolutionary leaders that present the program, continuity and activities of the party and its 2024 candidates. The campaign will include the annual effort to raise \$165,000 to help cover the costs of producing and distributing the paper.

The Communist Leagues in Canada, Australia and the U.K. will join in this effort. You should too!

Alongside Moscow’s murderous invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Hamas’ Tehran-backed Oct. 7 pogrom killing 1,200 Jews in Israel marks a watershed in world politics. The world will never go back to the way it was before Oct. 7.

Continued on page 4

Defend rights! No to Democrats’ attack on workers’ right to vote for whom they want

BY TERRY EVANS

In an important victory for constitutional rights, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously overturned a Colorado court ruling throwing Donald Trump off the Republican Party primary ballot, a move that would have prevented millions from voting for the candidate of their choice.

With Democratic prosecutors facing legal obstacles bringing to trial other lawsuits targeting Trump, liberals have stepped up their attacks on the tens of

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Health workers in Australia protest parking fees

Patients die as ‘private equity’ hospital bosses rake in profits

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

The joy felt by Sungida Rashid and her husband, Nabil Haque, a couple who had just become new parents, was short-lived. Within hours of giving birth to a daughter at Boston’s St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center last October, Rashid began bleeding.

That’s when they found out that a medical device that could have saved her life was no longer available at the hospital. It had been repossessed by its manufacturer weeks earlier after it wasn’t paid for by the hospital’s owners, Steward Health Care. Rashid was rushed to another hospital but died hours later.

St. Elizabeth’s is one of 33 hospitals owned by Steward, the largest private, for-profit hospital system in the country. While not paying the bills, Steward’s owners paid themselves millions in dividends. Ralph de la Torre, its CEO, acquired a 190-foot yacht estimated to be worth \$40 million.

Across the U.S., profit-driven private equity outfits are snapping up hospitals, dental clinics, nursing homes, hospices and other medical facilities, looking to make a quick profit by taking out loans and mortgages while cutting staff, selling off equipment, leaving a trail of unpaid bills and often shutting down or selling off the facilities once they are stripped. In 2021 for-profit firms like Steward spent \$206 billion to acquire more than 1,400 health care facilities.

Angela Neopolitano, an emergency room nurse for more than 40 years at Delaware County Memorial Hospital in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, told

CBS News what happened after Prospect Medical Holdings bought her hospital in 2022.

“They kept on cutting services,” Neopolitano said. First the maternity ward was shut down, then the operating rooms and the intensive care unit, and finally the emergency room. “Things wouldn’t get fixed,” she said. “Our elevator in the back of the emergency room had been broken for over a year.”

At one point, she said, the credit cards used by paramedics to fill their ambulances with fuel were disabled because Prospect Medical “didn’t pay their bill.” The hospital was closed down a few months later when Pennsylvania’s health department ruled the facility was inadequately staffed.

Prospect has become a poster child for the private equity industry. Another example is in Connecticut, where the company bought up two hospitals, then took out a \$1.12 billion mortgage and used \$457 million of that to pay generous dividends to investors and big bonuses for their officers. Prospect CEO Sam Lee got \$128 million. They put virtually nothing into the hospitals, except



Gary Higgins/Boston Business Journal

Sungida Rashid gave birth at Boston’s St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center, above, last October, but began bleeding. Machine that could have saved her had been repossessed as bosses hadn’t paid for it. The center is run by Steward, largest private, for-profit hospital system in U.S.

greatly increasing their debts, putting them in dire financial straits.

During the COVID pandemic some 170,000 men and women — no longer working and making a profit for the bosses — died in nursing homes, locked away from their families and last on the list for life-saving respirators and other equipment. Death rates were highest at for-profit nursing homes.

Children don’t fare much better.

Two-year-old Zion Gastelum died in 2017, days after dentists at the Kool Smiles dental clinic in Yuma, Arizona, performed root-canal surgeries and put crowns on six of his baby teeth. The clinic’s practice of maximizing profits by subjecting kids enrolled in Medicaid to unneeded treatment led to Zion’s death from brain damage after he was hooked up to oxygen tanks that were either empty or broken.

Greek farmers protest low prices, gov’t regulations

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Over 6,000 farmers and their supporters rallied outside the Greek parliament here Feb. 20. Working people lined the sidewalk clapping and raising clenched fists as nearly 200 tractors caravanned into the city center. The tractorcade was

joined at the rally by 160 busloads of farmers from all over Greece.

Area trade unionists and university students showed up in solidarity. The students have been protesting government plans to allow private universities to open.

Farmers have for a month been using their tractors to block roads across the country. These actions come as farmers in Germany, France, Spain, Belgium and other European countries have mounted protests as well.

The government threatened to prevent tractors from entering the city, but in a victory for the right to protest, backed down in the face of the broad support the farmers got.

“Look, we small farmers can’t make ends meet. The cost of production is too high, and the prices paid for our commodities are too low,” Yannis, an apple

farmer from the village of Zagora in Thessaly, told the *Militant*. “The middlemen make all the money. For example, we get 40 cents a kilogram for our apples, and you pay 2 euros [\$2.18] for the same apples at the supermarket.

“I work on my farm, and also a construction job and as a lumberjack, just to pay bills,” he said. “In addition, last year’s floods in August were catastrophic and we haven’t been given a cent in state aid.”

Farmers who have set up roadblocks across the country addressed the rally. Like Yannis, many described the difference between the price they get paid for their crops and the prices on supermarket shelves.

Demands they submitted to the government included “special fuel prices for farm equipment, fuel that would be

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THE MILITANT

Workers defend Ukraine’s independence, union rights

Ukrainian workers are leading the defense of their country’s sovereignty against Moscow’s war. But they also have to defend their unions from boss attacks under cover of the capitalist government’s wartime martial law. Working people everywhere need to support their struggles.

Courtesy Mykhailo Volynets
Workers from Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine with supplies for soldiers.

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

Idaho prisoner faced botched execution, fights new attempts

BY JANET POST

In an hourlong botched execution Feb. 28, prison authorities at the Idaho Maximum Security Institution failed to find a vein to kill Thomas Creech by lethal injection. The 73 year old was stabbed eight times but the executioners were unable to set an intravenous line.

At one point, Creech said his legs “hurt a little bit,” but officials put that down to a “cramp.” Witnesses said executioners “used vein finders, hot compresses and blood-pressure cuffs to get access to veins,” reported the *New York Times*, sending out for more supplies part way through the bungled killing.

Gov. Brad Little had refused a postponement and the U.S. Supreme Court denied Creech’s remaining appeals. Some 15 people gathered outside the prison to protest the execution, singing “Amazing Grace.” Afterward, Creech’s death warrant expired and his lawyers filed a motion for a stay in U.S. District Court.

Creech has been in prison for 50 years, 43 of them on death row, convicted of four murders and accused of other killings, all in his youth. He attributes his crimes to fits of rage while high on amphetamines and other drugs. His death sentence was commuted to life in 1979 but he was sent back to death row in 1983 after beating another prisoner to death.

Current and former prison employees who worked closely with Creech filed declarations with Idaho’s Commission of Pardons and Parole opposing his execution. The state judge who sentenced Creech to death, Robert Newhouse, wrote that he no longer deserved to die. “An execution now would just be an act of vengeance,” he said.

“I’m sorry for my actions, for everything I’ve done,” Creech told the commission. He said he had gotten religion and was determined to do nothing but good. The commission had voted 3-3 Jan. 29 on whether to proceed with the execution, a deadlock that meant it would go ahead.

His lawyers argued the death penalty was unconstitutional because a judge and not a jury had sentenced Creech. In 2003 Idaho was the last U.S. state to rule that a jury must be involved in a capital punishment sentence.

Creech is one of many older pris-

oners nationwide facing execution. Of the 2,300 total on death row, 25% are over 60.

The attempted execution was Idaho’s first use of capital punishment in 12 years. Last year it approved the use of firing squads, although no protocol is yet in place.

Cantu executed in Texas

Hours after the failure to kill Creech, Ivan Cantu was executed at the state penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas, by lethal injection. He was convicted of the murder of a cousin and his friend in 2000. Cantu always denied he carried out the killings and proclaimed his innocence on the gurney in the death chamber.

The execution took place despite a key prosecution witness admitting he lied during the trial. Cantu said his defense attorney was incompetent, never calling any witnesses on his behalf.

“The trial itself was fabricated,” Jeff Calhoun, the foreperson for the jury that found Cantu guilty, told



Idaho Department of Corrections

Thomas Creech, center, at clemency hearing before the Idaho Commission of Pardons and Paroles Jan. 19 with his lawyer, left. Prison authorities tried for an hour to execute him Feb. 28.

KXAN-TV before the execution. “The simple fact is that there was perjury committed in the case.”

Anti-capital punishment activist Sister Helen Prejean was at Cantu’s side during the execution. She had called on Gov. Greg Abbott to pause the execution.

“When justice is not done in the

courts ... he can grant a reprieve long enough to be able to look at the new evidence, which no court is yet willing to hear,” Prejean said.

Cantu is the 587th person to be executed in Texas since 1982. Six more executions are scheduled nationwide for 2024 — in Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Ohio.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Airport cleaners, SEIU 32BJ rally in Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH — Aircraft cleaners and other workers at Jetstream Ground Services at the airport here are organizing to get better conditions and an end to boss harassment. On Feb. 23, members of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ took a bus to the airport to support them.

Some 40 union supporters gathered to hear Godfrey Baker and Mark Palmer, with a year and a half and nine years respectively at Jetstream, read a petition to the company signed by 70% of the 60 workers. They are demanding: “Respect our right to organize for better treatment on the job; ensure no discrimination and harassment in the workplace; provide an adequate number of uniforms.”

Management later refused to accept the petition from workers as they headed into work. Five airport workers described to the gathering the conditions they face on the job and why they need a union.

“This event was really successful, a lot better than I expected,” Baker told the *Militant*. “We need better wages and respect. These bosses are really abusive.” Baker had told the crowd how a supervisor had used a racist term to describe him. Baker and his co-workers protested, and that supervisor was fired.

“The company announced the day before Christmas in 2016 that they were ‘overstaffed and underbudgeted’ and laid off a lot of workers,” Palmer said. “And then they did that again recently. They have less of us doing more work.”

“This was a very powerful event,” said Pete Schmidt, a representative for 32BJ here. “Our members attended to show that other workers want to fight for what we have fought for and won. Being part of this invigorates us.” Local 32BJ members in Pittsburgh work as commercial and campus building cleaners.

“I came to support the airport workers fight to get what they deserve,” 32BJ cleaner Jantell Rounds said on the bus on the way home to Pittsburgh. Her hus-

band, Charles Rounds, took the day off from work to come with her. “This is my first protest,” he said. “I want to learn what it will take to organize a union in the factory where I work.”

— Candace Wagner

Health workers in Australia protest parking fees

SYDNEY — Some 40 health workers, members of the Health Services Union, joined a lunchtime rally and march at Liverpool Hospital here Feb. 29 to protest significant hikes in parking fees imposed by the New South Wales state government.

Michael Kerley, a HSU officer, told the rally of technicians, cleaners, administrative workers and others, “Union members are taking coordinated actions today.” Some 1,000 unionists walked off the job at 16 sites in Sydney, including four other major hospitals.

During the pandemic, free parking was introduced for hospital staff. But in January the Labor government in NSW reinstated charges for parking, and at higher rates than before the pandemic. At some hospitals rates are up 127% from what they were in 2021. “Why so much?” Kerley asked. “Wages have only increased by 6.8% in the last three years.”

One protester’s hand-painted sign read, “Worked all thru COVID and all I got was a parking ticket.”

Parking with a permit can cost 27.20 Australian dollars (\$17.95) per week. Many workers, who have been on a waiting list for a permit for years, have to pay the full street rate for parking, up to AU\$11 per day.

Chanting, “What do we want? Fair parking! When do we want it? Now!” health workers marched through the hospital and rallied outside the entrance.

— Linda Harris

UK rail workers strike against two tiers, demand better pay

MANCHESTER, England — “They say low pay. We say no way!” chanted rail workers outside the of-

ices of Carlisle Support Services Feb. 21 during two days of strike action here. Earlier in the day more than 70 of them joined picket lines at Manchester’s Piccadilly and Victoria train stations.

The workers are hired by Carlisle to staff ticket gate lines and collect fares for Northern Trains. Unlike workers directly employed by Northern, they earn less and have no sick pay or guaranteed hours, but do the same job.

“This was our first strike,” Israel Akanji, a member of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union, told the *Militant*. “Our union organizing effort goes back to 2019. We’re considering further strikes to challenge the two-tier conditions.”

Union members voted by 96% to strike. “In the days leading up to the action some 20 more workers joined the union,” RMT Regional Organizer Steve Shaw said. Carlisle refuses to recognize the union.

Workers’ confidence to fight for better conditions grew after a series of strikes by other rail workers. Contract workers at catering company Rail Gourmet — also members of the RMT — won a 21% raise after seven days of strike action last year. Thousands of RMT members who work directly for train-operating companies held 33 days of strikes during a 15-month period in 2022-23.

— Peter Clifford

— CALENDAR —

NEW YORK

New York

Stand with Cuba. Speakers: Ambassador Yuri Gala López, Cuban U.N. Mission; Lesmes Bonachea Aylen, Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. Sat., March 16. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 235 West 23rd St. For more information: www.US-CubaNormalization.org.

— MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

GEORGIA

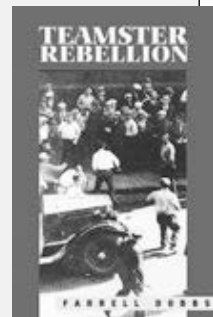
Atlanta

Immigration, Amnesty and the Fight to Unify the Working Class. Speaker: Janice Lynn, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., March 17, 3 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle.—\$16



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Working-class alternative to Biden-Trump

Continued from front page

“What we will be raising in this campaign concerns nothing less than the future of humanity,” Fruit said. “The system of capitalism is in crisis and we are seeing intensified exploitation of working people, disorder and expanding wars. The nightmare is not going to end until working people around the world find their voice and realize their ability to organize and take political power.”

Fruit, a long-time trade unionist and member of UNITE HERE, described the encouragement she received from her co-workers at the hotel where she has worked in Miami Beach when she announced her candidacy. “We are a party of workers who join and build solidarity with union and other working-class struggles.”

Participants in the meeting viewed a video of Jeremy Kimbrell announcing that many workers in the Alabama Mercedes-Benz plant where he works have decided to join the United Auto Workers union.

“Their decision is an example of why the low point of labor resistance is behind us,” Trowe said. “After years of being pushed back, the confidence of millions of workers, their readiness to fight the employers’ attacks is on the uptick.”

Garza, a rail conductor and member of the SMART-TD union, described a demonstration of many hundreds of flight attendants from American Airlines, United and Southwest at the airport in Los Angeles. “You could see the impact of workers standing up together, the potential power,” she said.

‘Workers need party of our own’

During the discussion, Levi Meir Clancy asked the candidates what kind of reception the campaign has been getting. “There is nothing for the working class with either Biden or Trump,” Fruit replied. “Many workers see this. They are more open today to discuss our position that workers need a party of our own and that only the power of workers can solve what we face today.”

Trowe described the party’s response to the rise in antisemitism and attacks on Jews in the Bay Area, including the recent shutdown of a speaker invited by Jewish groups at the University of California, Berkeley by a violent Jew-hating mob. Trowe’s campaign released a statement condemning the attack and the failure of university authorities to ensure the event would take place, even after the thugs announced their intent to shut it down. The Jewish Coalition of Berkeley posted the SWP statement on their blog, with a link to the *Militant*.

Greetings to the meeting were read from Ilana Pearlman, a parent who has been fighting antisemitism in the Berkeley public schools. “During a time when free speech has come under violent attack, the SWP has shown unwavering support by speaking out against Jew Hate at city council meetings, school board meetings, and in the *Militant*, while simultaneously participating in solidarity events, such as the Holocaust Remembrance Day March in Piedmont,” she wrote.

Dorothea Dorenz also sent a message. She and Trowe both spoke against a resolution demanding Israel agree to a cease-fire at a recent city council meeting. “When we fight against antisemitism we also fight against loss of rights for workers, unions, women, Blacks, Asians, LGBTQ and other

minorities,” she said. “Your group is unique in understanding this while others on the so-called left think it’s OK to demonize Jews and Israel and at the same time think that they will be safe from persecution. Nothing can be further from the truth.”

The family of Carlos Harris, framed up on attempted murder charges, congratulated the candidates on their upcoming campaign, thanked them for their support and encouraged them to continue speaking out about the fight to free Harris, who has served 19 years of a 28 year, four month sentence.

Campaigning at factory gates

Supporters of Fruit and Trowe are campaigning at factory plant gates and knocking on doors in working-class communities. On Feb. 28, Trowe and her supporters campaigned during the shift change at the chocolate factory where she has worked and now is on leave as she runs for vice president.

Trowe, a member of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, is known among co-workers as a staunch supporter of union struggles. Workers stopped to take a campaign flyer or get a copy of the *Militant*, saying, “I’ll be following you,” “I’ll vote for you,” and “good luck.” One gave \$15 for the campaign and two others pledged a contribution. Another renewed her *Militant* subscription. Two mechanics expressed

agreement with Trowe’s opposition to Hamas and wished her well.

On March 2, campaign supporters set up a table outside a Walmart in San Leandro. Walter Hill, a former autoworker and unionist, stopped to talk after seeing signs at the table saying, “Opposing Jew-hatred is a union question” and “Support the 100,000 flight attendants fighting for union contracts.”

“I’m against hatred of any kind,” Hill said. “I have always supported the Democrats. But with what’s going on I’m questioning that. I’m looking for something different.” Hill subscribed to the *Militant* and bought a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

On March 3, the candidates and supporters joined thousands at a “Unity March Against Antisemitism” in San Francisco. Despite rain, SWP campaign supporters were able to get out the SWP’s statement condemning antisemitic violence at UC Berkeley and sign up five new subscribers



Militant/Carole Lesnick

SWP vice presidential candidate Margaret Trowe discusses war on Hamas in Gaza with Sam Kaplan at UC Berkeley, March 4. Kaplan opposes Hamas, but favors a cease-fire, saying, “Innocent people are being killed.” Defeat of Hamas is in interest of all working people, Trowe said.

to the *Militant*. The *Jewish News of Northern California* reported that the SWP candidate for vice president was at the action.

For how to join campaigning for the SWP in California or elsewhere, see the campaign headquarters listed on page 10.

Spring campaign to extend reach of ‘Militant,’ books

Continued from front page

The week-by-week coverage in the *Militant* on the importance of fighting Jew-hatred, and its steadfast backing for the fight by Ukrainians against Putin’s war, is essential for working people looking to find a way forward. So too is the defense of constitutional freedoms that protect the political space workers need to fight the attacks of the bosses and their government. No other paper provides the facts, and explains the stakes for working people around the world.

The March 9 to May 7 spring campaign to sell 1,350 *Militant* subscriptions, 1,350 books and raise the \$165,000 for the paper is up and running. Fifteen Pathfinder books are being offered at a substantial discount with a subscription to the *Militant*.

These include the latest Pathfinder book, *Che Guevara on Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*

by Cuban revolutionary Carlos Tablada. Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution, joined Fidel Castro in laying the economic and political foundations of this historic transformation, efforts that were hammered out in revolutionary struggle. They chart a road for working people everywhere to join in the fight for a socialist world. And, to transform ourselves and millions of others in the process.

During the eight-week campaign, all other Pathfinder titles will be offered at a 20% discount.

The spring campaign will go hand in hand with the Socialist Workers Party election campaigns of Rachel Fruit for president and Margaret Trowe for vice president, along with candidates running for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives in states across the country. The Communist Leagues are also fielding candidates this spring.

These election campaigns offer a working-class program to take on the exploitation, oppression and wars endemic to capitalism and point a road toward breaking with the parties of the ruling rich. For workers in our millions to chart a course to take political power into our own hands, end capitalist exploitation and join the fight for a socialist world.

The 2024 campaigns come at a time when more workers are turning to our unions to unite the working class in the fight to make progress. On picket lines, at union meetings and solidarity rallies, and on workers’ doorsteps we will take the *Militant* and books to be part of the broadening political discussions taking place today.

The party and its candidates will lead the fight against the assaults on democratic rights led by the Democratic Party. The SWP will get our candidates on as many state ballots as possible and have already begun collecting signatures for ballot status in New Jersey. We invite all readers to join us in these efforts.

Party supporters will take the campaign to working people in cities, towns and countryside alike. We invite *Militant* readers to participate — introduce the paper and books to your co-workers, members of your unions, neighbors and others you discuss politics with. Join with SWP members and candidates in campaigning.

We encourage all *Militant* readers to join in. To help, please see the directory on page 10 and contact the party branch or Communist League nearest you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Studer".

John Studer
Militant Editor

JOIN SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY 2024 CAMPAIGNS

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Minnesota

Kevin Dwire, U.S. Senate
Gabrielle Prosser, U.S. Congress

New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, U.S. Senate
Lea Sherman, U.S. Congress

Ohio

John Hawkins, U.S. Senate
Ned Measel, U.S. Congress

Pennsylvania

Ved Dookhun, U.S. Senate
Candace Wagner, U.S. Congress

Texas

Alyson Kennedy, U.S. Senate

Mass march in San Francisco protests rise of antisemitism

Continued from front page mask their antisemitism,” Lior Verbitsky, a Berkeley student, told the *Jewish News of Northern California*. But the violent mob at Berkeley “attacked students because they were Jewish, not Israeli.”

One of the speakers at the March 3 rally, California State Sen. Scott Wiener, who is Jewish, has been hounded with threats to his life on social media and was surrounded while in his car by demonstrators charging him with “killing babies” and chanting, “Wiener, Wiener, you can’t hide. We charge you with genocide.”

One of the tech workers from Silicon Valley who initiated the rally told the *Jewish News* that a key part of the planning was to include as many organizations as possible, Jewish and non-Jewish. Many at the march carried “I stand in support of the Jews” placards. And there were repeated thanks from the platform to non-Jews who turned out, including a large contingent of participants originally from India.

Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, joined the rally. “The fight against Jew-hatred is a fight that workers and our unions can be won to,” she told tech worker Maya Kochman, who came with her family from San Jose. “It’s in the interest of all working people to defend the freedoms of speech and assembly to debate ideas without threats and violence.”

“The rise in antisemitism is being fueled today by supporters of Hamas, who deny what happened on Oct. 7 — a systematic slaughter of Jews, a pogrom, like those that marked the Holocaust — and they deny Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews,” Fruit said. “They try to cover over Hamas’ responsibility for Palestinians’ deaths in Gaza.”

“I agree Oct. 7 was a turning point,” Kochman responded. “I was in Israel at the time and a supporter of Israel pulling settlements out of Gaza. I care deeply about Palestinians. But now we see that we cannot continue with Hamas there. We need actions like today, with more numbers.”

The next day, supporters of the



Militant photos: above, Margaret Trowe; right, Eric Simpson
Above, March 3 demonstration in San Francisco protesting rise in acts of Jew-hatred in the Bay Area. Right, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Rachele Fruit speaks with protesters.

SWP campaign set up a literature table on the UC Berkeley campus and spoke with Elijah Feldman, who is on the board of Students Supporting Israel, one of the groups that organized the meeting for Bar-Yoshafat that was attacked and shut down.

Feldman said when the mob stormed into the building he was near the front entrance, helping a student whose hand had been injured when a woman came up screaming, “You Jew, you Jew, you dirty Jew.” He said this caught him off guard and he said to her, “I’m a Jew. Do you have a problem?” She called him a “f--king Nazi” and spit on him.

Members of Students for Justice in Palestine have been blocking Sather Gate, the main entrance to the campus. They display a pledge to “Flood Sather Gate,” a reference to the “Al-Aqsa Flood,” which was the Hamas thugs’ code name for the Oct. 7 pogrom.

From their table, set up next to the Students Supporting Israel and not far from the pro-Hamas group, Socialist Workers Party campaign supporters distributed a statement by vice presidential candidate Margaret Trowe. They found widespread disapproval of the violent mob attack on the Jewish students.

But some took issue with the party’s opposition to demanding a cease-



fire in Israel’s war on Hamas. “I oppose Hamas, but I want the war to stop because innocent people are being killed,” Sam Kaplan told Trowe, who was there campaigning.

“But Israel isn’t responsible for the carnage in Gaza, Hamas is. I support Israel’s efforts to put Hamas out of

commission,” Trowe said. “Hamas and its backers in Tehran are proud of what they did, and swear to carry out more pogroms until all the Jews are either killed or driven out. Defeating Hamas is in the interest of all working people, in Gaza, in Israel, in Iran, in the U.S.”



Militant/Eric Simpson
Laura Garza, center, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California, at March 3 San Francisco action against Jew-hatred. SWP promoted, joined in the march.

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Athens meeting celebrates book on Cuba's socialist revolution

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Some 40 people gathered here Feb. 24 to celebrate the Jan. 1 anniversary of the Cuban Revolution and for the launch of the newly published Greek edition of *Aldabonazo*, *Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground 1952-58* by Armando Hart. The event was organized by Diethnes Vima, the book's publisher in Greece, and held at the Enastron Cafe-Bookstore. A number of area workers came, to what for many was the first meeting on the Cuban Revolution they'd attended.

Aramis Fuente Hernández, Cuba's ambassador to Greece, opened the meeting by highlighting Hart's contributions to the revolutionary struggle. "When he was 22, Hart was one of the youth with a rebellious spirit that fought against the military coup by Batista in 1952. Then he joined the struggle led by Fidel [Castro]. In Fidel he saw all the elements — political, moral and human — that would make him the true and admired leader of the people, capable of heading an authentic and victorious revolutionary struggle," Fuente said.

"Hart carried out important work in the 'plain,' where he had the responsibility of maintaining revolutionary activities in the urban areas of the country.

"This book, which contains many materials the haven't been published before, refutes completely the at-

tempts of the enemies of the revolution to distort the real character of the struggle of the Cuban people and its vanguard," Fuente said. "They managed to integrate thought and action and to channel the spirit and traditions of struggles of our people, finally achieving, after almost a century, true and definitive independence."

Nikos Karandreas, president of the Greek-Cuban Friendship Society, said, "The humanism, anti-imperialism and Pan-Americanism of José Martí united these youth of whom Hart was an integral part. Along with that were the ethical positions of Fidel. It is out of this human material that a communist nucleus was forged, which saw the need to lead a socialist revolution. Thousands of Cubans came to say if Fidel is a communist, then sign me up."

"One of the most important aspects of the book is the exposure of the Miami Pact, which would have limited the overthrow of Batista within a strictly bourgeois context," he said. "Among the signers were people who said they represented the July 26 Movement. The book explains how Fidel immediately went public and denounced the pact, a very important political statement.

"This new book helps in understanding the dynamics of the Cuban Revolution and it is an important tool for our work in solidarity with it," said Karandreas.

Natasha Terlexi, editor of the Greek edition and president of Diethnes Vima, said, "We want to give homage to the contribution of Dina Kaklamani, who passed away in 2022. She served as the secretary at the Cuban Embassy for 30 years. Upon her retirement she volunteered some of her precious time translating books on the Cuban Revolution published by Diethnes Vima. The Greek edition of *Aldabonazo* is the result of that work.

"Most of all she was a person convinced of the just cause that the Cuban Revolution represented, which



Vasilis Revelas

Aramis Fuente Hernández, Cuba's ambassador to Greece, speaks at launch of Greek edition of *Aldabonazo* by Cuban revolutionary Armando Hart. Translator Sappho Diamanti on right.

she supported actively. We dedicate tonight's event to her. We also want to thank the members of her family who are here with us tonight," Terlexi said. She also thanked Pathfinder Press in New York for publishing and providing all the material for this book.

"This book is for each person who feels oppression and injustice and is today struggling for a dignified life, for the right to education, health care, culture, a world without wars," Terlexi said. "In 1959 the workers and farmers of Cuba succeeded in taking power into their own hands. Subsequently they took the productive forces of society into their own hands as well, and organized the economy and defense, education and health care to meet the needs of the working people."

"This book is for every worker who is having difficulty envisaging that making a revolution is possible. It is the story of Armando Hart, of how he was with the Cuban Revolution from the beginning and remained a living part of that process for his whole life."

Hart died in 2017. He served as minister of education after the revolution, directing the mass literacy campaign in 1961. Hart was a member of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee through 1991, and minister of culture until 1997, when he became the founding director of the José Martí Cultural Society.

Terlexi pointed to key lessons from the book: "How the workers and peasants themselves were the agents of their own emancipation; the decisive role of a revolutionary leadership, which Fidel constructed; the necessity to fight not only against a dictator but against a society built on social exploitation; the essential role of a leading organization, a disciplined organization that laid the seeds for a socialist revolution; and the need to unite the toilers on the basis of a program that represents their independent interests."

She urged those at the meeting to join in the fight against Washington's over-six-decades-long economic war against the Cuban Revolution, "their hatred of the example it sets for toilers in the Americas and the world."

People stayed after the program for discussions over snacks, drinks and coffee in the cafe. Some went to a nearby tavern to continue the discussions after the cafe closed. A total of seven copies of *Aldabonazo* were sold during the evening.

Greek farmers

Continued from page 2

taxed at a much lower rate"; "reduction of electricity prices by about 30%"; "government subsidies for fertilizers, feed and other material"; and "protection of the Greek brand" from competition by foreign producers.

Some farmers joined calls for protection from farmers elsewhere. "Shut the borders and all will be OK. No more foreign stuff!" one shouted out to *Militant* reporters.

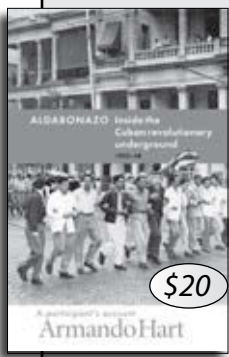
"The key problems are the cost of production and the new CAP," Nikos Pavlanasios, president of the Panhellenic Union of Young Farmers, told the press, referring to the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. The law is a series of "green" climate-change restrictions the EU imposes on farmers.

"Agriculture cannot exist with so many restrictions," Pavlanasios said, pointing to the policy. "Do you see what is happening in other states? This is not just our problem." Among other restrictions, the CAP requires farmers to set aside 4% of their land laying fallow, to protect the environment. The EU has made some concessions, but farmers said they are not sufficient.

The farmers parked their tractors in front of the parliament building overnight. The Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union provided free meals.

Bobbis Misailides and Natasha Terlexi contributed to this article.

Aldabonazo by Armando Hart



In this firsthand account by a historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, we meet men and women who led the urban underground fight against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1950s and opened road to revolution in the Americas.

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 22, 1999

CHICAGO — Federal prosecutors finished presenting their case in the frame-up trial of Puerto Rican independence activist José Solís Jordán here March 8. Solís faces charges in connection with the placing of two bombs outside a military recruitment center. The maximum sentence, if convicted, is 55 years in prison and \$800,000 in fines.

The government's central witness is Rafael Marrero, a paid FBI collaborator. The only "evidence" presented to link Solís to the attempted bombing is a tape recording made by Marrero when he wore a concealed wire to dinner with Solís in a restaurant in Puerto Rico. The voices are mostly unintelligible. What can be heard on the tape is mostly in Spanish, while the jury is English-speaking.

Solís was arrested, Nov. 6, 1997. He was interrogated for more than five hours before he was allowed to speak to his lawyer.



March 22, 1974

OCEANA, W.Va. — Striking miners here are determined not to compromise on their demand for more gasoline. "We know that they've got the gas," said one striker. "We don't believe we have this energy crisis." Twenty-six thousand miners remained out, idling mines in five counties.

No car with more than a quarter tank of fuel can get gasoline. Many miners travel 50 or 60 miles one way to work, over mountainous roads with few gas stations. The strikers, members of the United Mine Workers of America, are demanding that all limits on gasoline purchases be lifted. Their strike began two weeks ago and spread quickly through the use of roving pickets.

A striker pointed to the recent truckers' strike. "Maybe we should have come out with them. Maybe that way we could have been getting gas. If we had gotten together we could have supported each other."



March 21, 1949

TRENTON, N.J. — An unmatched tale of police brutality, stony justice and race hatred surrounds six men who sit in a dreary Trenton cell. They are charged with a murder they could not have committed. They were indicted by a Trenton press, which rendered its verdict the day the men were arrested. They were convicted by an all-white jury on the basis of confessions some never remember having seen.

Witnesses had agreed that two men killed William Horner, and the police had arrested six. Witnesses had agreed that the two men were either white or light-skinned Negroes, and these men were dark-skinned. Every one of the six men had a perfect alibi.

Today the "Trenton Six" languish in the death house, awaiting action on their appeal.

For them life or death depends on the amount of mass protest that can be aroused to prevent this legal lynching.

Canada gov't mounts new attack on political rights

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — In a major new attack on the right to free speech, Canada's Liberal Party government has introduced Bill 63 — the Online Harms Act. It is sweeping legislation to strengthen existing “anti-hate laws” and impose government censorship over the internet, as well as increasing prison sentences up to life in prison for anyone a judge rules committed an offense “motivated by hatred” or who advocates “genocide.” It also includes penalties of up to \$70,000.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau cynically disguised the attack by claiming the main purpose of the new law is to protect children from online sexual predators. “But don't be fooled,” warned Joanna Baron, executive director of the Canadian Constitution Foundation. “Most of the bill is aimed at restricting freedom of expression.”

“This act shows the government's determination to deepen attacks on fundamental political freedoms — the right to freedom of speech and assembly, as well as other liberties that are needed by working people to defend ourselves and our unions,” Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate in the coming Montreal federal by-election in LaSalle-Emard-Verdun, told the *Militant* March 1. “We need to fight for our rights against the attacks of the capitalist rulers.”

The bill allows a judge to place people under house arrest who, while committing no crime, the judge rules *might* commit “hate speech” crimes in the future. They can be forced to wear an ankle monitor to track their movements, can be forbidden from communicating with persons or organizations the court decides, and made to provide random urine or blood samples to check for alcohol or drugs. The breach of any of these conditions can be grounds for up to two years in prison.

Another threat to political rights in the Online Harms Act, Noa Mendelsohn Aviv, executive director and general counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, told the press, is “the vast authority bestowed upon a newly established body,” the Digital Safety Commission. This new spy agency would be comprised of “government appointees” tasked “to interpret the law, make up new rules, en-

force them, and then serve as judge, jury, and executioner.”

The act will also give the Canadian Human Rights Commission, appointed by Ottawa, new powers to prosecute and punish speech considered “hateful.” The government asserts it has this power because Canada's Supreme Court “has repeatedly upheld laws that combat hate speech as justified limits on freedom of expression.”

As the resistance by working people to the deepening economic and social crisis of the capitalist system grows, Ottawa and other capitalist governments around the world are moving to take broader control over our lives with increasingly undemocratic rules and regulations.

The “broad criminal prohibitions on speech in the bill risk stifling public discourse and criminalizing political activism,” the Canadian Civil Liberties Association says, and will “censor strong opposition to political authorities” and limit “debate and dissent on contentious issues.”

Under the new law, condemning Hamas for its Oct. 7 pogrom killing 1,200 Jews in Israel could be considered by a judge as “likely to foment detestation or vilification” of Palestinians, a violation of Bill 63.

The law would also give the federal



Justin Tang/The Canadian Press via AP

Canadian riot police use pepper spray against truckers, other protesters in Ottawa, Feb. 19, 2022. Despite Emergencies Act being recently ruled illegal by federal judge, Justin Trudeau government is pressing new attack on political rights, the Online Harms Act.

cabinet the power to unilaterally enact regulations, which have the force of law, restricting the content permitted on social media sites.

Ottawa mounted this new assault on political rights only weeks after federal judge Richard Mosley ruled that Ottawa's imposition of the Emergencies Act against protesting truckers and others in February 2022 was illegal and a violation of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Trudeau administration says it plans to appeal the court's ruling, and is driving ahead with frame-up trials of the leaders of the Freedom Convoy and many of the other protesters

arrested and charged after the Emergencies Act was imposed.

The New Democratic Party has said it supports Bill 63, ensuring its passage. Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre says his party, a minority in the Parliament, opposes it because the party doesn't agree with “censoring opinions.”

“Working people and our unions should oppose the Online Harms Act, demand the repeal of the Emergencies Act and call for the dropping of all the charges against participants in the Freedom Convoy,” Communist League candidate LeRougetel said.

Widespread Iran election boycott shows weakness of regime

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Iranian government claims that 41% of those eligible voted in the March 1 elections to the parliament and the Assembly of Experts, the body that picks the country's “Supreme Leader.” But even that figure would be the lowest voter turnout since 1990, deepening the long-term trend that reflects growing opposition to the reactionary bourgeois clerical regime.

A posting on an internet site of the teachers union estimated the real turnout was less than 20%.

The independent metalworkers union reports that during the Feb. 26 weekly protest over retirement benefits, thousands of retirees from the telecommunications industry marched in 17 cities.

“Not even one of the candidates came to ask, What are your demands?” the union pointed out. “We've heard enough lies. We won't vote anymore!” was one slogan at labor protests around the country.

Leaders of the independent teachers union, the metalworkers union and other unions called on workers to not vote.

Growing numbers of working people reject Tehran's trampling on democratic rights; its jailing of trade unionists, student activists and defenders of women's rights; the increase in executions; and the regime's relentless efforts to expand its counterrevolutionary reach abroad, including its backing of anti-working-class terrorist groups like Hamas.

In the wake of mass protests in 2022-23 after the death of Zhina Amini fol-

lowing her arrest by the “morality” police for allegedly violating the strict dress code for women, there has been an increase in protests. They have targeted the government's brutality, especially against oppressed nationalities like the Kurds and Baluch. There have been more strikes, labor protests, rallies by retirees and other resistance to government policies and to boss actions that lay the brunt of the effects of U.S. sanctions and the capitalist economic crisis on working people.

Most of the so-called reformist parties, the loyal opposition to the regime, urged people not to vote. Former President Mohammad Khatami made it widely known he didn't vote.

To prevent even the mildest of opposition from having a voice, the Guardian Council ruled 30% of parliamentary candidates off the ballot, mostly “reformers,” including 22 who are currently members of parliament. Former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was disqualified from running for reelection to the Assembly of Experts.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had said that not voting would strengthen Iran's enemies. His exhortations fell on deaf ears.

The regime also tried to call on solidarity with Hamas' attacks on “Zionists” in Israel to boost the vote, without effect.

Many who did vote opposed the regime by spoiling their ballots. In one district in Yazd province invalid ballots came in second.

“We succeeded. All of us, truckers and drivers, took saying ‘no’ to the elections as the first step to win our protest,” said the association of truck drivers. It includes independent owner-operators and employees of trucking companies demanding better rates and conditions.

Attack on Jews at university in Canada pushed back

A proposal for the student government, known as the Alma Mater Society, to organize a referendum at the University of British Columbia to evict the Jewish students' organization Hillel from campus by cancelling its lease, was rejected Feb. 28. After four hours of closed debate, the vote was no by 23-2. The referendum had been proposed in a petition signed by over 1,000 students.

The referendum also would have condemned Israel's attempt to destroy Hamas, the terrorist outfit that carried out the Oct. 7 pogrom killing 1,200 Israeli Jews and others, as “genocide” against Palestinians. It also would have ended all exchange programs with Israeli universities, withdrawn investments from companies that do business with Israel and endorsed the Boycott, Divest and Sanction movement against Israel.

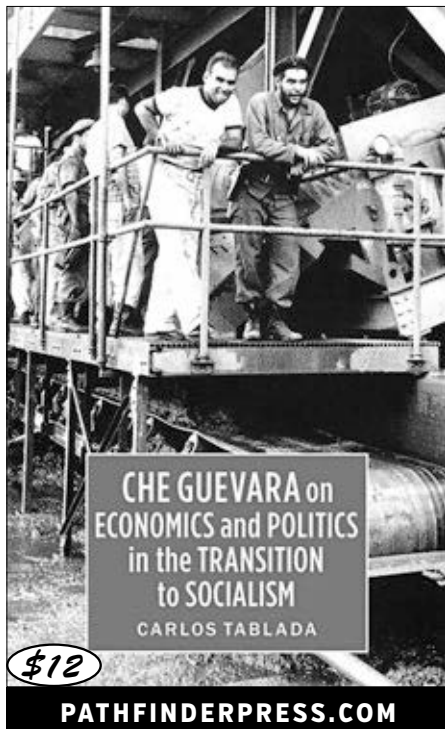
Jewish organizations had strongly protested the proposal. The Rabbinical Association of Vancouver wrote, “This [is] a stark reminder of the antisemitism that Jews have faced for centuries as we've been driven from, and prohibited from, public spaces, and even forcibly removed from countries themselves.”

Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate in the Montreal federal by-election in the LaSalle-Emard-Verdun district, sent an open letter characterizing the proposed referendum as a “dangerous, outrageous act of Jew-hatred.”

“Now is the time to step up defense of Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews, not attack it,” she said, “and to protest the increasing acts of Jew-hatred emanating from campuses and more broadly across North America and internationally.”

— STEVE PENNER

New expanded edition



Betrayals by German Stalinists led to Hitler's rise to power, Holocaust

BY MARGARET TROWE

OAKLAND, Calif. — As Socialist Workers Party members have joined fights against Jew-hatred in the U.S. after Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom, we're often asked by fellow fighters why we are the only socialists who defend Jews. And why the great majority of those who call themselves socialists or communists chant, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," a call for Israel's destruction and for driving Jews out of the region.

"Those who call themselves 'socialists' and who champion Hamas and other terrorist proxies of Iran will easily find themselves allied with future fascist forces," Rachele Fruit, the SWP's candidate for president, explained days after the Oct. 7 massacre.

The convergence of the left with fascist forces is described well by painter Diego Rivera when he visited Germany in 1928, in his book *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography*.

Rivera was hosted by Communist Party of Germany leader Willi Muenzenberg. The German CP was a mass party. But like other CPs worldwide, it had been transformed from a combat party of the working class into an organization that subordinated workers' interests to the needs of the reactionary bureaucratic caste, headed by Joseph Stalin, that usurped power in the Soviet Union.

Rivera was taken to a mass meeting for fascist leader Adolf Hitler, who Communist Party leaders had invited to speak to 25,000 of their members and youth in front of their large headquarters. "A temporary united front was then in effect between the Nazis and the Communists," Rivera wrote.

"Hitler arrived with an escort of nearly 1,000 men. They crossed the square and halted below a window from which Communist Party leaders were watching," Rivera says. "My Communist friends made mocking remarks about the 'funny little man' who was to address the meeting, and considered those who saw a threat in him timorous or foolish. ...

"When he finished, after two hours of speaking, there was a second of complete silence," Rivera said. "Then the silence gave way to tremendous, ear-shattering applause from all over the square."

While the CP leaders mocked the Nazi leader, Rivera told them he was "filled with forebodings. I had a premonition that, if the armed Communists here permitted Hitler to leave this place alive, he might live to cut off both of my comrades' heads."

When Ernst Thaelmann, central leader of the German CP, and Muenzenberg belittled Hitler, Rivera replied that German workers were "maddened by hunger and fear. Hitler is promising them a change." With financial support from the capitalists, he said, Hitler "can persuade them to go over to his side and turn on us."

"Don't worry," Thaelmann told Rivera. "In a few months he'll be finished, and then we'll be in a position to take power."

Rivera noticed the crowd continuing to applaud Hitler as he left. "It was clear that Hitler had won many followers among these left-wing workers," Thaelmann tried to reassure Rivera, saying, "It's nothing, nothing at all."

Rivera was right about the danger. "My 'crazy' artist's imagination was later bitterly substantiated. Both Thaelmann and my friend Muenzenberg were among the millions of human beings put to death by the 'clown' we had watched in the square that day."

But Rivera pointed the finger at "hungry workers" he said were attracted to Hitler, rather than place the blame where it really lay, on the Stalinist Communist Party that blocked with Hitler's Nazis against the Social Democrats.

The Communist Party claimed the Social Democratic Party was "social

fascist," and refused to make a united front of the workers parties against the Nazis. The labor movement could have led millions to take on Hitler's National Socialists and defeat their goon squads. The Stalinists refused to do so, along with the Social Democrats, helping to pave the way for Hitler's ascent to power and open the door to the Nazis slaughter of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust.

"If it has not succeeded up to now, if the German proletariat found itself impotent, disarmed, and paralyzed at the moment of its greatest historic test," Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian Revolution wrote in 1933, "the direct and immediate blame falls upon the leadership of the post-Leninist Comintern."

Since 1923, it "assisted the Social Democracy with all its strength to derail, to befuddle, to enfeeble the German proletariat," he said. "It restrained and hindered the workers when the conditions dictated a courageous revolutionary offensive; it proclaimed the approach of the revolutionary situation when it had already passed."

These are not historical questions peculiar to Germany in the 1930s, but matters of political weight for the work-



"Nazi barbarism" panel of mural by Diego Rivera for New Workers School in New York City, 1933, shows Hitler's oppressive rule. At left, Albert Einstein points to fascists' deadly persecution of Jewish people.

ing class and for vanguard fighters today, as workers worldwide confront wars, pogroms and intensifying class struggle bred by the capitalist crisis.

Currents claiming to fight for socialism, from the Communist Party to the Democratic Socialists of America, chant, "Death to Israel." They join forces with those shouting down Jewish speakers at meetings, promote boycotts of Jewish-owned businesses and stay silent when Jews are beaten on the streets. The convergence of the middle-class left and reactionary ultrarightist forces is clear to see.

The Socialist Workers Party is fighting to end pogroms and Jew-hatred for all time, building a working-class party capable of leading tens of millions to take power into our own hands, the only road to prevent capitalism's march toward war and fascism.

After months, UN officials finally admit Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom in Israel included rape and torture

Continued from front page
labored with Hamas in its deadly pogrom and other activities.

In carefully nuanced language aimed at avoiding any definitive findings, the U.N. committee said the "pattern of undressing and restraining of victims may be indicative of some forms of sexual violence." The U.N. also admits there are "reasonable grounds to believe" hostages still being held by Hamas and other Tehran-financed terrorist groups in Gaza may face ongoing "rape and sexualized torture and sexualized cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment."

Despite all the physical evidence, eyewitness testimony and explicit videos filmed and posted on the internet by the terrorist thugs themselves, the U.N. "mission team" said it could not "draw conclusions" on the responsibility of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the so-called Popular Resistance Committees for these horrific crimes.

In the entire report there is not one word on the goal of the Hamas death squads — to humiliate, dehumanize and terrorize all Jews, especially women, kill them or drive them from the region and destroy Israel. The assault had nothing to do with defending the interests of

Palestinians in Gaza or anywhere else.

"It's the first time an international organization has acknowledged the sexual crimes that took place, that's the good side," Orit Sulitzeanu, CEO of the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, told the *Militant* by phone from Tel Aviv March 6. She said she had met with the U.N. investigators, "but they refuse to say that it was Hamas and other terrorists from Gaza. What do they think? That the killers just fell from the sky?"

The Rape Crisis Centers report "Silent Cry: Sexual Crimes in the October 7 War" says sexual violence was carried out "systematically and deliberately."

The Oct. 7 pogrom, with 1,200 killed, more than 5,000 wounded and over 250 hostages kidnapped and taken to Gaza, was the worst massacre of Jews since the Nazi Holocaust.

"What is happening to people in Gaza today is bad," Sulitzeanu said, referring to the Israeli offensive to eliminate Hamas' structure and leadership. "But their own leaders don't care about the people there. It is Israel that is trying to alleviate the suffering."

"People see these photos of Gaza, but don't want to think about how this began," she said. "When terrorists invade

your country, murder, and rape women, can you let that terror continue?"

Representatives of the Israeli government have been negotiating in Cairo for a temporary cease-fire to allow for a new hostage release. Hamas says that 70 of the remaining 130 or so hostages in Gaza are dead. The Israeli government insists Hamas must present a list of all the hostages who are still alive for the talks to proceed.

Hamas official Basem Naim claimed March 5 that the reactionary bourgeois group doesn't know and that it won't be able to find out which hostages are still alive until there is a cease-fire. He then told BBC that information on the hostages is "valuable" and can't be given out "for free."

It's the same cynicism the Islamist group displays toward Palestinian civilians in Gaza, who it says it has no responsibility for and uses as human shields by building tunnels under hospitals, mosques, apartment buildings and other places civilians gather. And they are dying because of what Hamas does, while Hamas claims them as martyrs.

The main liberal bourgeois newspapers in the U.S., including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, act as apol-

Forum in New Jersey takes up Ukraine fight for independence

Continued from front page

two years ago, "to conquer Ukraine and once again subjugate it," he said. "Moscow's invasion aimed to kill Ukraine's leadership, who Putin falsely paints as Nazis," while denying Ukraine is a real country.

A week after the war started, Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, issued a statement for the party's National Committee.

"It stands up well," Studer said. It explains why workers should support Ukraine's independence and demand the withdrawal of Moscow's forces. SWP members will get out the truth about the Russian invasion, Barnes wrote, among "working people far and wide, including strike picket lines, social protests, at workers' doorsteps and everywhere else we go." The statement is available at themilitant.com.

"Putin's invasion is the first major war on European soil since the second imperialist world war," Studer said.

"It was a watershed marking a series of shifts in alliances among capitalist powers, renewed rearmament, and the threat of more wars, a shift that took another giant step with the Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews by Hamas."

"These events follow the coming apart of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union in 1991, and the sounding of the opening guns of World War III by the Iraq war that year," Studer said. "They give an impulse to imperialism's drive to more cutthroat competition, plunder and war."

"In recent decades, U.S. imperialism has gotten weaker — just look at the war in Afghanistan — but it retains its position on top of the imperialist world order. As it declines, it will drag down the whole rotten imperialist system with it."

But the working class is not observing these developments from the sidelines. "We are actors in history, capable of transforming the world and ourselves. It's happened twice in the imperialist ep-



Tens of thousands at Alexei Navalny's March 1 funeral in Moscow march to cemetery, chant "No to war!" and "Russia will be free!" It was the largest protest against the regime of Russian President Vladimir Putin since he launched his invasion of Ukraine two years ago.

och — in Russia under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and in Cuba in 1959 under the leadership of Fidel Castro," Studer said. "With proper leadership, the toilers took power, setting examples we look to today. They are the continuity of the SWP."

Reporting trips after the Maidan

Studer recounted what *Militant* reporters learned during the reporting trips to Ukraine in 2014 and 2015.

"We saw the impact of the Maidan uprising on rank-and-file workers, how it strengthened the working class, how determined all the workers we met were to make sure Moscow never got its hands on Ukraine again." They were also "determined to strengthen their unions and improve the situation of the working class in every way they could."

The reporting teams met with central leaders of Ukraine's unions, including Mykhailo Volynets; leaders of the Crimean Tatars, including Mustafa Dzhemilev; Joseph Zissels,

national leader of Ukraine's Jewish movement; and many more.

Recognizing the determination of workers in Ukraine today to resist the invasion, despite the real challenges they face, is important. It's the opposite of the picture of despair painted by much of the U.S. press, Studer said. The capitalist rulers here would like the war over quickly, with little concern for Ukraine's loss of territory and the potential for future conflict.

During the discussion one forum participant described talking to a Ukrainian co-worker, who told him, "Don't trust the Russians, they're all the same."

The most important allies in the fight to get Moscow's forces out of Ukraine are workers in Russia, Studer said. He described protests against the war across

Russia. "That's why, from the SWP's first statement, the party opposed the U.S. rulers' sanctions on Russia," which fall hardest on workers there.

By the late 1930s the regime headed by Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union had driven workers out of politics and murdered the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution that had brought the working class to power in 1917. Communist continuity was kept alive by co-thinkers of the SWP in Stalin's prison camps up until the 1950s.

A working-class leadership in Russia will be rebuilt in the years ahead through struggles against Russia's capitalist rulers and in collaboration with communists in the U.S. and elsewhere. Cadres can be won among Russian workers here and in Europe.

War shakes consciousness of millions

Today, "the cataclysm of war has shaken the consciousness of millions," Studer said, making more workers "open to the examples of the Russian and Cuban revolutions."

"When workers from Ukraine or Russia talk to SWP members today at protests here against Putin's war, they're interested," Studer said. "They say, you're a socialist who supports Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews. They say, you're communists but you support a sovereign Ukraine. A whole new discussion unfolds."

"Ultimately, the only road forward depends on workers forging the leadership we need," Studer concluded. "It is the working class taking power in the U.S. that will spell the death knell for every form of national oppression, for Jew-hatred, for capitalist exploitation and its wars and brutality worldwide."

Thousands turn out to join Navalny funeral, protest Putin, Ukraine war

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Several thousand people turned out for the funeral of Alexei Navalny, a longstanding political opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin who died in a gulag prison Feb. 16. Participants used the event to express their condemnation of Putin's regime and its murderous war in Ukraine. They marched from Mother of God Church My Sorrows Church through Moscow's streets to the graveyard March 1, chanting "No to war!" and "Russia will be free!"

"There are more than 10,000 people here, and no one is afraid," one participant, who said her name was Kamila, told Reuters.

Other chants by marchers included "Putin is a murderer!" "Freedom for political prisoners!" and Navalny's message to supporters, "Don't give up!"

The government had tried to intimidate people from coming out, issuing threats against "unsanctioned gatherings," placing surveillance cameras on lampposts and mobilizing large numbers of cops. Students were threatened with expulsion from college if they went.

People were undeterred, some chanting, "Bring the soldiers home!" One woman shouted, "Glory to the heroes," a pro-Ukraine slogan that was taken up by the crowd. Support for Ukraine is punishable by years in prison.

The funeral became the largest pro-

test against the Kremlin's war since it launched its invasion two years ago. In other cities — from St. Petersburg to Voronezh — flowers were piled at monuments dedicated to victims of Soviet repression. Although the funeral was blacked out by state media, hundreds of thousands watched online.

Over 100 people were detained in 16 regions, from Moscow to Ekaterinburg and Novosibirsk. When news of Navalny's death first emerged, over 400 were arrested for laying floral tributes at makeshift memorials.

Putin's reelection to another six-year term in mid-March is a forgone conclusion. He barred anti-war candidate Boris Nadezhdin from running after 200,000 people had lined up across the country to sign his nominating petition. Nadezhdin attended Navalny's funeral.

But as the carnage from the war continues to mount, with many more times the number of Russian troops killed than in Moscow's 10-year war in Afghanistan, Putin's regime is increasingly nervous about any public display of opposition. Protests by soldiers' wives and mothers and disaffection among broader layers of working people are growing. Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalnaya, called for people to protest on election day, March 17. This action had been proposed by her husband, dubbing it "noon against Putin."

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

\$17

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Carl Skoglund: lifelong communist, 'old guard' union fighter

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March is *Speeches for Socialism* by James P. Cannon. Below is an excerpt from Cannon's talk at a January 1961 Los Angeles meeting celebrating the life of Carl Skoglund. Both had been inspired by the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917 led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Both were involved in founding the Communist Party in the United States two years later. As a bureaucratic counterrevolution under Joseph Stalin consolidated in the Soviet Union, both joined the fight by Leon Trotsky to continue Lenin's proletarian internationalist course. Cannon led in founding the Socialist Workers Party, to which Skoglund devoted the rest of his life. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Northwest Organizer

Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544's executive board meeting in November 1937. From left, Farrell Dobbs, Grant Dunne, Carl Skoglund, V.R. Dunne, Miles Dunne, Jack Smith, Bill Brown. Skoglund, Cannon said, "played a big role" in victorious 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

As you know, from what has been printed in *The Militant* and your personal knowledge and the remarks of the other speakers, Carl was one of the old guard, one of the founders of our movement, thirty-two years ago. And before that, he was one of the founders of the Communist Party in 1919. And before that, he was active in the Socialist Party in this country since the day he illegally set foot on our sacred soil. He was even a socialist before that, in Sweden, or

wherever he came from — he never had any papers to prove it.

I first met Carl in 1923 — that's thirty-seven years ago — in Minneapolis, while I was on a speaking tour after I had returned from the Soviet Union for the first time. We have been together ever since that first meeting, without a break of any kind. ... [I]n the Communist Party we were always together in the same faction. We were together in the foundation of the Trotskyist movement in the revolt against Stalinism.

We have been together in the Socialist Workers Party ever since then, and in all party work. We were together in the big strikes in Minneapolis, where I had a chance to get closer to him and to see him in action in the mass movement and get a profounder appreciation of his many qualities than I had before.

And we were together in prison, and everywhere else. Carl was not alone. I can't think of him as a single individual. He was one of that remarkable group of worker-Bolsheviks in Minneapolis, who worked and fought so long and so consistently and brought so much credit and glory to our movement in the Minneapolis struggles. And all that remains with us and can never be taken away.

The whole world, I suppose, knows about the Minneapolis strikes. When I was in Europe in the fall of 1934, after the second big strike, I was told by comrades there that every paper in France

carried the story of the Minneapolis strikes on the front page, from day to day. It was worldwide news.

The world knows about the big union success in Minneapolis, which played a tremendous role in the creation of the new union movement, beginning with 1934. Carl played a big role in that. As Arne [Swabeck] remarked, he was always one of the leading cadre of Trotskyists who were the center of the whole storm. And later he was elected president of Local 544. ...

I personally remember Carl best and most affectionately and most gratefully for the quiet, unobtrusive things he did to help keep *The Militant* alive in the first hard years, when his name was not known outside the borders of the labor movement in Minneapolis; when he had been blacklisted in three different ways. He had been kicked out of the Central Labor Union because he was a Communist. He had been kicked out of the Communist Party because he was a Trotskyist. And he had been blacklisted on the railroad, where he was a mechanic, a good-paying job, because he had been the chairman of the strike committee in the big strike in 1923.

And in those early days, before he became famous along with the rest of the Minneapolis group, we in New York were isolated and dead broke, didn't know where to turn to find a few dollars to pay the bills from week to week. Every week was a financial crisis. ... We

couldn't close up shop because we had taken upon ourselves the obligation to tell the world the truth about Stalinism and the Russian Opposition and so forth.

Now in those days, Carl Skoglund, as you have been told, worked in a coal-yard. And he earned his meager wages by wielding a great big shovel, shoveling coal, long hours a day. And out of the wages he got for that, he donated every week a part to *The Militant*; sometimes as much as half his week's wages would be sent to New York to make it possible for us to get the paper out. ...

Now Carl was that kind of a socialist! He was always preaching socialism. He talked about it to the workers he met on the job or wherever he would run into them. He talked about it all the time, wherever he was, and he converted many people. Many people in this party owe their first interest in socialism to Carl Skoglund's persistent efforts. ...

You know we run a school, a Trotsky school for six months of the year, and there is a special building on this campus that houses the students, heated by steam heat. And just a few days before the death of Skoglund, the boiler, the old boiler, gave out and broke down. ...

[I]'s told about in a letter I'll quote, a letter from our own George [Novack] and Evelyn [Reed], who are there.

She says, "Sunday demonstrated that it was a perfect installation —" Why shouldn't it be? It had a conscientious mechanic [Skoglund] directing it, and it had to be perfect or he would never have approved.

[T]hey decided they would try to raise the money to pay the expense of the new installation without calling on the National Office, because the National Office is in financial trouble. And there they began a collection, and she says, "Carl offered \$100 toward it. Later we discovered he had just \$174 to his name." ...

[H]e died with his shoes on, after he had finished his work. That surely is a good way to die. He gave a lot to the movement for the emancipation of mankind. In fact he gave all that he had. But he did not regard it as a sacrifice. For by identifying himself with the human race as a whole, and working for its better future, he found himself and realized himself, and lived a satisfying, purposeful life to the very end. That's about the best that any of us can hope to do.

March
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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

SWP program to advance working-class struggles

U.S. bosses and their government are fond of telling us that an expanding capitalist economy is like a rising tide, it “lifts all boats.” This flies in the face of what workers experience in real life.

“Record profits weren’t enough to prevent Mercedes from imposing an unfair two-tier pay scale,” Jeremy Kimbrell, a worker at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance, Alabama, said in a new video, surrounded by his co-workers. And the bosses only gave “us a 42 cents raise over a six-year period.” He announced a majority of workers at the plant have signed up to join the United Auto Workers and appealed for workers elsewhere to stand with them. “Enough is enough.”

The conditions he describes face workers everywhere.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams claims, “We are thriving in this city.” He doesn’t say which “we” he’s talking about. The city’s poverty rate rose from 18% to 23% in the past two years. Demands for food stamps are surging, while “affordable housing” is a joke.

But with more jobs available today, even if a lot of them aren’t better-paying union jobs, workers are more confident we can join together and use the unions to fight for what we need. Support the UAW’s fight to win union recognition at Mercedes-Benz and elsewhere! Back the fight of 100,000 flight attendants for a new contract and higher wages!

Workers can use the unions to fight for cost-of-living adjustments in every contract. There is no way to prevent inflation under capitalism, but unions can win protection from its effect on us and our families. Every time prices go up, our wages should rise automatically. That protection must be extended to *all* workers and to pensions and federal programs like Social Security.

The capitalist rulers are experts at hiding their balance sheets. Unions need to demand bosses open their books to inspection by workers to find out the truth about company profits and practices. Unions need to establish consumer committees to monitor the real effect of inflation on the products workers need.

Union struggles increasingly take on bosses’ demands for “suicide work schedules,” forced overtime and debilitating speedup that makes our jobs more dangerous. Winning workers control of production can ensure no worker has to die or get maimed on the job. As the disasters at Boeing show, workers taking control over the organization of production is necessary to ensure the products we make are safe.

These are proposals Socialist Workers Party candidates are presenting today to advance workers’ unity, power and self-confidence. They encroach on the power of the bosses and point toward the necessity of workers uniting and acting in our millions to replace dog-eat-dog capitalist rule with workers power.

Democrats attack right to vote for whomever you want

Continued from front page

millions of his working-class supporters, who President Joseph Biden calls “semi-fascists.”

The high court ruled March 4 that states lack the power to bar presidential candidates by using a section of the 14th Amendment that barred Confederate Civil War secessionists from holding office. It was adopted as part of crucial Reconstruction era amendments enacted to advance gains for Black rights won through the Second American Revolution.

The Supreme Court’s ruling ended similar challenges to Trump’s candidacy in Maine and Illinois, as well as plans for comparable moves elsewhere.

The Democrats are in a partisan frenzy to use any means possible to stop Trump’s candidacy, regardless of the impact on constitutional freedoms won in blood by working people over decades. Their fervent hope is that the 2024 election will be decided by Democratic Party-appointed judges, not the people.

Trump appeals Smith’s charges

Days earlier Democrats were outraged by the Supreme Court after it exercised its responsibility to hear Trump’s appeal for presidential immunity from charges brought by Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith. He accuses Trump of conspiring to “defraud” the United States by challenging the results of the 2020 election. The court set fast-track oral arguments on Trump’s appeal during the week of April 22, but their taking the case makes it more possible it will not go to trial before the November election.

The court said it will rule “whether, and if so to what extent, does a former president enjoy presidential immunity from criminal prosecution for conduct alleged to involve official acts during his tenure in office.”

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi claimed the decision to hear the immunity appeal means “the Supreme Court is placing itself on trial.” Ruth Marcus in the *Washington Post* says the court taking the case ensures a “terrible outcome” — making it less likely Trump can be jailed before the election.

“There is no cavalry coming. No saviors,” moaned Eric Holder, Barack Obama’s former attorney general.

For decades the capitalist rulers have ruled through the two-party system, seeking to convince working people their only choice is to hold their nose and vote for first one, then the other, lesser evil. Today that system is fraying at the seams.

The two main parties of capitalist rule are embroiled in intense factional warfare. The Democrats’ crusade against Trump doesn’t directly target the working class. But it inevitably leads to serious blows against constitutional protections that

workers need and have a vital stake in defending.

Smith’s case against Trump for challenging the 2020 election results rests entirely on making a “crime” out of things he *said*. But saying an election is stolen isn’t illegal, nor is pressing officials to hunt for voter fraud, urging Vice President Michael Pence to halt the 2020 election certification, or backing lists of alternative electors in case legal challenges to the state election outcome are successful. It’s all free speech.

Liberals hatred of the ‘deplorables’

With the results of the primaries, and the Supreme Court ruling, it is increasingly likely the election will pit Biden against Trump. The liberal press is intensifying its attacks on Trump’s supporters. “White rural voters support politicians who tell them lies they want to hear,” insists columnist Paul Krugman in the Feb. 26 *New York Times*. He says they’re “the single greatest threat facing American democracy.”

“Does Biden Have to Cede the White Working Class to Trump?” asks Thomas Edsall in the same paper. Despite Biden passing legislation that Edsall says benefits workers, “the rollout of these measures has so far done little to improve Biden’s prospects.” Workers just don’t know what’s good for them.

Underlying liberals’ frequent complaints about a “white working class” that supports Trump is the view that workers who are Caucasian are incurably racist and bigoted. But the fact is more Black and Latinos say they will vote for Trump in 2024.

Racism is a product of the capitalist rulers’ need to foster divisions — racism and national chauvinism — to weaken working-class struggles against their oppressive system. There is less racism among workers today as a result of the conquests of historic Black-led struggles that brought down Jim Crow segregation.

Blinded by a “woke” outlook that defines people by their race, not by their class, the liberal anti-Trump media is perplexed at the fall in Biden’s poll ratings among Blacks since 2020, as if African Americans are innately Democrats. “Republicans see improvement with Black voters despite themselves,” the Feb. 26 *Washington Post* complained.

Underneath Democrats’ scorn is their fear that more and more working people see that the bosses and their parties only have “solutions” that dump the costs — monetary and human — of *their* crisis on *us*.

The working class is the only force that can chart a course out of today’s deepening capitalist crisis by organizing independently of the bosses’ two parties and advancing on a road toward taking political power into our own hands. This perspective is at the heart of the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2024.

‘Congestion’ pricing

Continued from front page

into the city, currently \$15.38 for the Lincoln Tunnel, if you’ve got an E-ZPass.

A network of cameras and sensors have already been installed at over 100 locations to snap photos of vehicles, including their front and back license plates, as they enter the “congestion zone.” Fees will be added onto E-ZPass bills. For those who don’t have E-ZPass, bills will be sent to vehicle owners by mail. The surveillance network is programmed to assess the toll based on the size and shape of your vehicle.

This rip-off is being organized by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which claims that these additional funds will generate \$1 billion per year. It would then use this manna from heaven to purchase \$15 billion in bonds for capital improvements. The bonds are triple guaranteed, a profit bonanza for well-heeled coupon clippers.

But the MTA is already buried in \$48 billion in debt with increasing interest payments to the bondholders, and the city government prioritizes paying them above all else. Even with increased bus and subway fares being imposed on working people, city authorities say there aren’t enough funds to rebuild, repair and keep running the more than 100-year-old transit system. Hence “congestion pricing.”

Even though the plan has already been approved by the state, the MTA conducted four hearings between Feb. 29 and March 4 where those for and against the new scheme could blow off steam. This would “put me over the edge,” Manhattan resident Linda Nicholas said at the Feb. 29 hearing. “For many of us who are struggling to make ends meet, an additional daily fee represents a substantial burden that will force sacrifices in other areas, such as food.”

“I hate that the working class doesn’t have a say,” John Gerald, a construction worker who uses his car to drive from Astoria, Queens, with his tools, told the *New York Post* outside the March 1 hearing. “The only people that suffer from this is the people that already can’t afford their bills. And that’s me.”

The New York City Municipal Labor Committee, comprising nearly 400,000 government workers, opposes the tax. Public Advocate Jumaane Williams says it’s needed to protect the environment. “Our planet is in jeopardy now,” he told a recent rally.

Several lawsuits have been filed in federal courts in New Jersey and New York against the congestion plan, including by the United Federation of Teachers and New Jersey Gov. Philip Murphy. If they’re unsuccessful, the MTA says it will be ready to start collecting the toll June 15.

Similar plans are being considered in Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and other cities.

‘Surge’ pricing

In a related income-boosting scheme, Wendy’s CEO Kirk Tanner announced plans Feb. 27 to introduce “surge” pricing, which created quite a stir among the fast-food chain’s customers and its competitors, like Burger King. The idea is to boost the price of food items when the store is busy, then bring them back down at other times. It would be like congestion pricing for fast food.

The following day, in response to an overwhelmingly unfavorable reaction, Wendy’s officials announced their plan had been “misconstrued in some media” and they have “no plans” to “raise prices when demand is highest at our restaurants.”

Instead, essentially saying the same thing, they said they would “offer discounts and value offers to our customers more easily, particularly in the slower times of day.” This would be like “happy hour” or “early-bird specials,” like other restaurants use to attract more customers.

Restaurant prices have risen relentlessly over the past couple of years. It’s now much more expensive to take one’s family out for a burger or anything else.

A burger, fries and a soda at Burger King in New York goes for \$14.22.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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