

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuba fights brutal effects of US rulers' economic war
— PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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APRIL 15, 2024

Rail workers in Canada wage fight over safety, work schedules

BY PHILIPPE TESSIER

MONTREAL — Canada's two major railroads — Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City — both filed a "notice of dispute" with the federal government Feb. 16, making it clear that the rail bosses intend to wage a combined fight against the 9,300 members of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, who are fighting for safer working conditions and livable schedules. This includes railroad conductors, locomotive engineers, yard workers and 90 rail traffic controllers on the Canadian Pacific Kansas City.

Workers will hold strike votes at both railways from April 8 to May 1. A strike could legally be called by the union May 22. Joint strikes were carried out by Canadian National and Canadian Pacific workers in 1966 and 1950. In the 1950 strike, 138,000 workers from the different rail trades fought and won the 40-hour workweek.

"The issue is simple — safety on the
Continued on page 2

Putin regime cracks down on Central Asian immigrants

BY ROY LANDERSEN

In the wake of the March 22 deadly Moscow terror attack by Islamic State Khorasan, a reactionary Islamist outfit, Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime is targeting Muslim immigrants from Central Asia. The Kremlin is conducting police raids across the country at the same time that it's trying to blame Ukraine for the attack on the Crocus City Hall entertainment venue.

Leaving 144 dead, the carefully planned assault is the deadliest IS operation in a European country. Some 360 more people were injured.

Four gunmen accused of the attack are from the predominantly Muslim country of Tajikistan. A dozen other suspects, from Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries, have been arrested.

Putin dismissed alerts Washington and its European allies gave Moscow about an imminent attack. But he also ignored a warning from Tehran, one of Moscow's military allies, about a big
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'Workers are in a mood to fight' Rachele Fruit for US president

The working-class alternative to Biden-Trump



Militant/Eric Simpson

"What class will rule is the central question that matters for working people everywhere in the world," Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, said at a Los Angeles campaign meeting March 30. "The U.S. working class is decisive in that fight."

Campaigners take SWP program far and wide

BY JANET POST AND VIVIAN SAHNER

As part of campaigning across the country for Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, SWP supporters have kicked off a three-week effort to put her, along with

Why you should endorse Rachele Fruit for president
— see page 9

Margaret Trowe for vice president and Joanne Kuniansky, the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey on that state's ballot. They are collecting 1,700
Continued on page 5

Rachele Fruit: 'The SWP points the way forward for the working class'

BY BERNIE SENTER

LOS ANGELES — "I am running for the office of president of the United States — the highest executive office of the most powerful and last imperialist empire," Socialist Workers Party candidate Rachele Fruit told an audience at a campaign meeting here March 30.

Fruit is a hotel worker in Miami and member of UNITE HERE Local 355. The event was attended by campaign supporters, as well as people who learned about the party on recent strike picket lines and at a rally to oppose Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

"The world capitalist economic crisis
Continued on page 3

Baltimore bridge disaster is result of the bosses' drive to boost profits



Maryland National Guard

Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed when struck by huge container ship March 26. Six construction workers died, jobs of thousands of workers in port area are threatened.

BY TERRY EVANS

The Dali, an ocean-going vessel carrying 4,679 loaded containers and weighing 123,881 tons, lost power and slammed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge, which collapsed at 1:29 a.m., just minutes after it sailed from the Port of Baltimore March 26. The port is now blockaded by the crippled ship, which ran aground, and the fallen bridge, a mass of twisted metal.

The bridge carried Interstate-695,

where eight construction workers were laboring when it collapsed. The bodies of two who were killed were recovered, Alejandro Hernandez Fuentes and Dorlian Ronial Castillo Cabrera. Two others survived and the other four are missing and presumed dead.

The death toll would have been much higher, but the pilot directing the ship got out a Mayday call and state police closed the bridge to traffic. Thousands

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Fight Jew-hatred! Defend Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews!

BY SETH GALINSKY

As the sixth-month anniversary of Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews in Israel approaches, the Israel Defense Forces are dealing blows to the reactionary Jew-hating group in Gaza and to the Tehran-led "axis of resistance." But Hamas still holds some 100 hostages and has thousands of its fighters in tunnels in its last stronghold in Rafah, near the Egyptian border.

The Israel Defense Forces March 31 wrapped up a two-week battle that eliminated or captured hundreds of Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters who had re-occupied Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. In November Israeli forces had expelled Hamas and destroyed the tunnels they had built underneath it. But Hamas and Islamic Jihad had returned, once again

using some 5,000 civilians taking refuge at the complex, as well as patients and medical staff there, as human shields.

The terrorist leaders calculated that basing themselves in the maternity ward and other parts of the hospital would protect them from Israeli attack. And any moves to dislodge them would re-
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Inside

Leeds students take stand against Jew-hatred in UK 7

— On the picket line, p. 8 —

LA hotel workers celebrate victory, continue fight

Autoport strikers in Nova Scotia face injunction, scabs

Canada rail workers wage fight

Continued from front page job,” Eugen Bernard, a train conductor at CN in Montreal for the past nine years, told the *Militant*. “They want to make as much money as possible and force us to work as often as possible.”

“Each year, Canada grapples with hundreds of derailments, fires, explosions, collisions and cases of runaway trains. Dangerous goods are often involved in these accidents,” Teamsters Canada President Francois Laporte wrote last July marking the 10th anniversary of the Lac-Megantic disaster, when a parked train rolled down a hill, exploded and set the downtown area on fire, killing 47 people. Since Lac-Megantic, “21 railway employees died and 110 were seriously injured on the job. ... [F]atigued railroaders across this country are operating

trains when they should be resting.”

Both Canadian Pacific and Canadian National bosses have sent their proposals directly to the members, bypassing the union. “The Employer’s purpose in sending these communications was to undermine the viability of the Union in the eyes of its membership,” the Teamsters Conference responded, omitting “crucial information” and failing to “describe all the radical changes it seeks to obtain,” which would destroy “your working conditions.”

“I think they’re trying to get a majority vote from the younger guys by offering them big money now, and not to think about what that will mean in the future,” said Jourdain Dumont, a conductor at Canadian National in Montreal for the past two years. CN’s letter claims it is offering a raise of 20% on average for each worker, without pointing out that means a wage cut for many, since rail workers get paid different rates for different jobs.

“It’s enticing to get that much more money. That’s a big jump without having to wait 10 years” to be able to hold the highest paying jobs, he said.

“As it is right now, we’re already tired when we work 10 hours, and on top of that they take a long time to get us back home. Now they want us to work 12 hours and be off for 10, which would be a qualitative deterioration of our work-life balance,” a conductor for Canadian National from Melville, Saskatchewan, who asked that his name not be used for fear of reprisal from the company, told the *Militant*.

“If we go on strike, the government might force us back to work under CN’s conditions,” Bernard said. “But we need to understand we have power. If we are



Militant/John Steele

Teamsters rail workers picket Canadian National Railway headquarters in Montreal, Nov. 26, 2019, during eight-day strike over safety, face similar fight today over conditions, schedules.

weak, we will be slaves for life.”

He pointed to the example of the 1942 Betteshanger Miners Strike in Kent, England. In the middle of World War II, facing draconian anti-strike legislation, the miners decided to walk out over dangerous working conditions and the mine owners holding back their wages. “One thousand eighty-five workers were fired, and many were jailed, but by fighting they ended up winning,” he said. “And everyone was pardoned.”

“Working people and their unions, as well as farmers and other small producers, have a big stake in supporting the rail workers fight for

safety on the job,” Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate in the upcoming by-election in LaSalle-Emard-Verdun, told the *Militant*. “It is also a vital fight for the safety of the hundreds of thousands that live close to the tracks and face the risks of another Lac-Megantic everyday.

“The labor movement as a whole needs to defend the rail workers’ right to strike. It’s the key tool workers have to fight for better wages and working conditions and for our rights,” she added. “And all working people need to prepare to back them with widespread labor solidarity.”

Calif. nurses protest understaffing

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Hundreds of nurses and supporters picketed outside the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center here April 2, the first day of a three-day strike by over 3,000 members of the Registered Nurses Professional Association at three county hospitals.

“Patient safety! That’s what the strike’s about,” registered nurse Evol Denny told the *Militant*. Denny, with 35 years nursing experience, five of them for the county, was talking about chronic understaffing. The county administration proposes to compensate

by sending nurses to work temporarily in different departments, and even to different hospitals, to cover egregious shortages. Picket signs carried by the nurses emphasized the nurses’ determination to put a stop to what is called “floating” nurses.

“They want to send us to these different departments, whether we are trained for them or not,” registered nurse Debbie Lee said.

Nurses are also demanding a wage increase of 15% through October 2025, 5% of which would be retroactive to the expiration of their contract in October 2023.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ILLINOIS

Chicago

How Can We Rid the World of Capitalism? The Relevance of Che Guevara’s Ideas and the Cuban Revolution Today. Speaker: Naomi Craine, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress. Sat., April 13. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 1858 W. Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Tel.: (312) 792-6160.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

Workers Need Our Own Party! Speaker: Jonathan Silberman, Communist League Central Committee. Sat., April 13, 6 p.m. Donation: £3. 329 Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St., M2 7PE. Tel.: 0161-312-8119.

THE MILITANT

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Reuters/Tyrone Siu

Some 1.7 million people marched in Hong Kong Aug. 18, 2019, for political freedoms.

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‘Workers in a mood to fight’

Continued from front page

is bringing devastation and war to millions,” Fruit said. “The fight over which class will rule is the central question that matters for working people everywhere in the world. The U.S. working class is decisive in that fight.”

Fruit pointed to the hundreds of thousands of workers who have marched on strike picket lines in the last couple years — auto and hotel workers; bakery workers, nurses and teachers; actors and screenwriters, all demonstrating their union power and capacity for solidarity. These fights “are built on the historic accomplishments of the U.S. working class, from the American Revolution, the Civil War, the gigantic labor battles in the 1930s and the proletarian social revolution that brought down Jim Crow segregation, proving what the U.S. working class is capable of.

“The fight to defend constitutional freedoms that were won in these revolutions is critical in our class battles today and in the future. They’re liberties held dear by the working class.”

“But the Democratic Party left is leading the charge against our rights,” said Fruit, “calling working people ‘deplorables’ and ‘MAGA Republicans’ — working people who are paying the price for the crisis of capitalism, who resist being told how to think and live, and for whom the Democrats have no solutions other than to try to criminalize them. The Democrats are driving to expand the use of the secret police, espe-

cially the FBI.”

Noting the six construction workers who died in the March 27 collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Fruit said workers are told to accept that these jobs are “inherently dangerous. Safety conditions continue to deteriorate in every industry as the capitalists drive for profit. Working people must take control over safety and production.”

Workers in a mood to fight

“Workers are in a mood to fight,” she said, pointing to the example of hotel workers in Los Angeles who recently won union contracts at 34 hotels, with 28 left to go.

“The union rallied hundreds and hundreds of hotel workers for months. They got crucial support from other unions. And in the end, they won a \$10 per hour pay increase over the four years of the contract, which will expire just in time for the Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028.”

“Sixteen million workers who are in unions is a formidable force, if united and acting together. But that only represents 11% of the working class. And only 6% of workers in private industry are organized. What about the rest?” Fruit said. “What we need is to build a political formation independent of the boss parties, a labor party based on the unions, that organizes the whole working class to fight together. A social movement that can attract all those who want to fight for a future for humanity. A party that could expose and fight against every outrage, every crime the rulers commit against us.

“A labor party would unite and represent the interests of all workers regardless of language or nationality. The global increase in immigration, greatest here in the U.S., is because working people find conditions in many parts of the world are unlivable. Facing lack of jobs, or mob violence tied to capitalist drug cartels and wars, the toilers are forced to relocate. A labor party would demand amnesty with equal rights for all those in the U.S.”

Fight Jew-hatred

“Our campaign will, first and foremost, defend the Jewish people,” she said. “The Oct. 7 massacre carried out by Hamas, with help and direction from the reactionary capitalist rulers in Iran,



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for president and member of UNITE HERE Local 355, with shop steward Nick Lenzi at rally for higher wages for Sky Chef workers in Miami Oct. 11, 2023.

unleashed a firestorm of Jew-hatred around the world. It was absolutely imperative to stand up against this, without hesitation. A moment of truth. A test for every political current and party.”

Fruit explained how she and her party joined a rally of 3,000 at the Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach Oct. 10. Fruit held up a picture from 1919, after the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, of V.I. Lenin using a gramophone to call on workers and peasants to fight anti-Jewish pogroms.

“The Holocaust took place because ‘democratic’ imperialism cared nothing for the Jews and because of the betrayals of the Stalinists who prevented the fighting working classes in Europe from taking power. That’s why Israel had to be and why it has to be today.

“Since the Oct. 7 pogrom, Maggie Trowe, my running mate, and other candidates of the SWP have joined debates at city council and other public meetings. Laura Garza, here tonight, the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, spoke at a meeting of hundreds in Pasadena last week. She was greatly outnumbered, but clear and confident. We are once again becoming known as the socialists who oppose Jew-hatred.”

Norton Sandler, who chaired the meeting, also introduced Eric Simpson from Oakland, the SWP’s candidate for U.S. Congress in the 12th District there.

During the discussion period, one person said it seems to him that Israel is answering Hamas’ attack by attacking hospitals, schools and housing. “Many Palestinians have died. I feel bad for them.”

“Israel is not at war with the Palestinian people but with Hamas. The conditions were set up in Gaza by Hamas that led to this. When they came to power in 2007, they destroyed infrastructure

and concentrated on building tunnels and other military outposts,” Fruit answered. “War is terrible, yes. But the only way to prevent yet more pogroms is for Israel to finish off Hamas. The demand for a cease-fire is nothing more than a demand for Israel to surrender to continued murderous attacks by Hamas, which it has pledged to repeat until all Jews are either killed or driven out of the region.”

Another meeting participant asked about a two-state solution. “Nobody supports a two-state solution. It’s a dream. There is no ‘leadership’ among Palestinians that doesn’t want to destroy Israel,” Fruit said. “The alternative I point to is to make a working-class revolution based on a leadership that unites all working people in the region to take power.

“An Algerian Muslim rail worker from Canada recently told the *Militant*, ‘I’m not for a two-state solution at all. I’m for one state, Israel, and we can fight for our rights there.’

“The U.S. rulers have their own imperialist interests at variance with Israel. That’s becoming more clear. Fighting Jew-hatred is not their concern and never has been,” she said. “They don’t defend Israel as a refuge for the Jews. Most working people in the U.S. support Israel’s right to exist.”

Putin’s war against Ukraine

In her presentation, Fruit took up the war by the Vladimir Putin regime in Russia against Ukraine, a war described by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as Moscow’s attempt “to erase our history, erase our country.”

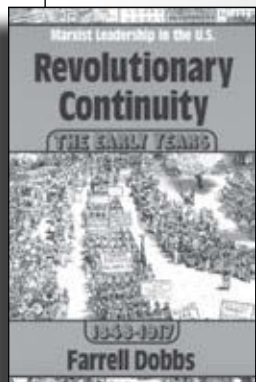
Fruit said, “Ukrainian workers and farmers have been conducting a courageous fight to defend their national sov-

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Revolutionary Continuity

The Early Years 1848-1917

by Farrell Dobbs



How successive generations of fighters joined in the struggles that shaped the U.S. labor movement, seeking to build a class-conscious revolutionary leadership capable of advancing the interests of workers and

small farmers and linking up with fellow toilers worldwide.

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Socialist Workers Party in 2024 Working-class alternative to Biden-Trump Rachele Fruit for president Margaret Trowe for vice president

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- I want to join in campaigning or host a house meeting for the candidates. Please contact me.
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‘Workers in a mood to fight’

Continued from page 3

ereignty and independence for the last 10 years, since hundreds of thousands of working people across the country set up tents and barricades to oppose the pro-Kremlin government in Kyiv in the Revolution of Dignity, also known as the Maidan.

“The Socialist Workers Party responded to the Maidan by sending three *Militant* reporting teams to meet and learn from the fighters involved, including coal miners, nuclear workers at Chernobyl and Enerhodar, rail and steelworkers and other defenders of Ukrainian sovereignty.

“The *Militant* has led in getting out the truth about the Ukrainian people’s battle for independence, as well as the struggles by the country’s working people in their own class interests.

“The decisive and clear stand of the SWP and the communist movement internationally in the fight against Jew-hatred, as well as in defense of Ukrainian sovereignty, places the party on the front lines at a turning point in world politics.

“These two historic confrontations are accelerating the weaknesses and breakdowns of the imperialist ‘order’

and the danger of spreading wars. They have accelerated tensions between working people on the one side and reactionary forces of bourgeois politics on the other.

“There is more danger than ever that some capitalist regime — maybe Iran, Russia, United States, China, who knows — will resort to the use of nuclear weapons in the face of extreme pressure. The SWP says, ‘Only socialist revolutions in the imperialist countries can bring the danger of a world nuclear conflagration to an end once and for all.’

“We don’t call for nonproliferation or arms treaties or disarmament. Our founding program, drafted by Leon Trotsky in 1938, said, ‘Disarmament? But the entire question revolves around who will disarm whom. The only disarmament which can avert or end war is the disarmament of the bourgeoisie by the workers.’”

Treachery of bourgeois liberalism

“It is important to absorb the depth of the treachery of bourgeois liberalism. And with it the origins and role of the United Nations,” Fruit said. “The entire middle-class left has become unabashed



Militant/Brian Williams

Scaffold worker Angel Sanchez talks to Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from New York, March 31 in the Bronx. He got *Militant* subscription, materials on Rachele Fruit campaign.

cheerleaders for Hamas. They don’t see the working class as the force that can and will advance humanity.”

“Workers are trying to figure out what is going on and why. They are the ones coming around with an interest in learning more about the party. They ask, ‘What’s a pogrom? Where did Hamas

come from and what do they stand for? What was the Holocaust? Why did Russia invade Ukraine?”

“We play an invaluable role explaining the real history and providing a working-class perspective.”

“The physical extermination of the Jews is the banner of reaction against proletarian revolution in the imperialist epoch. It is the working class that has a vital interest in standing up against Jew-hatred. Imperialism’s march toward fascism and war can only be stopped by a revolutionary working-class movement that charts a course to take political power out of their hands,” said Fruit.

“The governments in Ukraine and in Israel are capitalist. They defend the exploitation of the working class, but we support their efforts to win the wars they are fighting today. If they do, the working class will have more space to organize, unite and find allies, both inside and beyond their own countries. We need that space.”

Fruit pointed to the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution. “The Cuban toilers have had, under the greatest of odds, 65 years to show the world what can be achieved, how human beings will change. And we fight like hell to defend it. As Raúl Castro said in January, ‘We have overcome our problems by fighting, and it has been worth it.’”

“Capitalist production has drawn hundreds of millions of people into the working class — from Asia to Africa and Latin America — and they are being drawn into world politics in a new and urgent way,” she said. “They’re open to discussing why workers need to see our class as an independent political force with common interests the world over.

“More workers are using the unions to fight, walking picket lines, learning confidence in one another, working to win solidarity, and gaining vital class-struggle experience that we need for the deeper class battles ahead. They are beginning to see our class as a social force with immense potential power.

“We exist to win these workers to the banner of socialist revolution and to the Socialist Workers Party. Join us. There’s no better thing you can do with your life.”

Fruit urged everyone there to sign up as endorsers of the SWP campaign and to join in campaigning.

A delicious dinner was prepared for meeting participants who contributed \$1,760 to advance the national campaign.

Student newspaper ‘Corsair’ interviews Rachele Fruit

Bunker King goes to Santa Monica College and is an editor at the Corsair, the student newspaper. He attended the March 30 talk by Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for president, and interviewed her afterwards. These were some of the exchanges, recorded by Mary Martin.

Corsair: How did the SWP choose you to be the presidential candidate?

Rachele Fruit: I was the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida. We responded immediately to the Oct. 7 pogrom by joining a protest of thousands in Miami, explaining what was at stake for the working class.

We explained our party’s longstanding communist continuity in fighting Jew-hatred, going back to Lenin and the Russian Revolution. We said that the establishment of Israel became inevitable when the countries of “democratic” imperialism closed their doors to the victims of the Holocaust, and the Stalinist rulers of the Soviet Union prevented the workers of Germany from uniting to defeat Hitler.

We said Israel has to exist as a refuge for the Jews facing threats and persecution anywhere in the world. And we said that those “socialists” who support Hamas will find themselves allied with future fascist forces.

A photo of me talking to the press at this protest appeared on the front page of the *Militant*.

Corsair: It’s a great picture, by the way. Why should people vote for a third-party candidate?

Fruit: The Socialist Workers Party is a working-class party, not a “third” party. All the so-called third parties today support capitalism. They campaign to convince working people to keep supporting the exploitative system we live under. We explain the need for a labor party based on the unions that could organize all working people to advance our interests. Those who agree should endorse and get involved in our campaign.

Corsair: Would you ever support a “first party” candidate?

Fruit: No, we would never support a politician who campaigns for capitalism.

Corsair: Bernie Sanders has been a socialist politician for a long time. What is your view of him?

Fruit: Sanders has used his reputation as a socialist to draw as many young people as he could into the Democratic Party instead of building an independent working-class movement. Now he is leading the call for a cease-fire in Gaza, supporting Hamas, a reactionary position.



Militant/Mary Martin

Corsair reporter Bunker King asked Fruit why the SWP has so many books. “The books contain our history, the history of the working class, that we need to learn from,” she explained.

SWP campaigns far and wide

Continued from front page

signatures each for Fruit and Kuniansky, more than double the 800 required.

Lea Sherman, the party's candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey, met Wilson Cruz, an Amazon truck driver, on his doorstep in North Bergen March 30. He told her she was lucky to catch him on a day off, given the amount of mandatory overtime on his job. He pointed to a *Militant* headline "Biden says the economy's great, workers face a different reality."

"I agree with that," he said. After signing to put the SWP candidates on the ballot, he bought a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by party leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark and *Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity* by Rafael Cancel Miranda.

Fruit's campaign is at the center of the eight-week international campaign by the SWP and Communist Leagues in Canada, Australia and the U.K. to win 1,350 *Militant* readers, sell 1,350 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries and raise \$165,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund.

Ved Dookhun, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania, met bakery worker Martha Marlen, a member of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, on her doorstep in Philadelphia March 30.

Marlen, who works on the midnight shift six days a week, said she agreed with Fruit's proposal that unions lead a fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay and for automatic cost-of-living increases so wages keep up with inflation.

"Working people need to break from the Democrats and Republicans, the capitalist parties that have never represented the interests of workers

and farmers," Dookhun said.

"Yes, just say it — the rich!" said Marlen. Her husband is an Uber driver and she appreciated hearing about the Feb. 14 one-day strike by Uber, Lyft and DoorDash drivers. "The drivers say the companies take 80% of their pay," Dookhun said. "Well, it's really more like 90%," said Marlen, pointing to her husband's earnings.

Marlen subscribed to the *Militant* and bought *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* by Barnes and *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*. She contributed to the Militant Fighting Fund.

SWP members Chris Hoepfner and Abby Tilsner went to Narberth, Pennsylvania, to give solidarity to Gladys Senderowitsch, an Israeli American and owner of Nana's Kitchen, after "Free Gaza" was spray-painted on the side of her restaurant March 15. Senderowitsch organized a rally of 200 to protest the Jew-hating attack. She thanked Hoepfner and Tilsner for their visit.

A customer in the restaurant, overhearing the discussion, gave a \$20 donation to the Militant Fighting Fund. The paper is financed entirely by workers who appreciate its role in building solidarity and advancing a road forward for the working class.

Later that week waiter Eli Shea got a subscription to the paper. "I really like the *Militant's* view of the world, giving a class perspective," Shea said, pointing to an article opposing efforts to silence author J.K. Rowling for her



Militant/Roy Landersen

After talking to Lea Sherman, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey, March 30, Amazon worker Wilson Cruz got *Militant* subscription, signed to put Rachele Fruit on ballot.

defense of women's rights. He bought copies of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon and *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and Mary-Alice Waters. Both are among the 15 titles on special during the spring campaign.

In New York, Eri Rodriguez, an owner-operator truck driver, told Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from there, and party member Brian Williams that with ever-increasing tolls and the soon-to-be-implemented "congestion pricing," he'll be paying \$36 a day for his tractor and trailer to enter parts of the city. "That's another \$720 a month on top of gas," he said.

Rodriguez left his hospital job two years ago to drive a truck, thinking he'd make more money. "But that's not the case," he said. "If I do the math on my expenses I'd be doing as well to bag groceries in the supermarket."

Rodriguez purchased a *Militant* subscription and said he was interested in hearing more about working-class struggles and efforts to build unions.

To join in campaigning for SWP and Communist League candidates, contact the office nearest you listed on page 8. Checks for the fund are payable to The Militant and can be sent to 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Payments can also be made online at www.themilitant.com.

Minn. Democrats attack third party ballot rights

BY GABRIELLE PROSSER

MINNEAPOLIS — A judge here March 20 ruled in favor of a suit filed by the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party that will revoke the major-party status of the Legal Marijuana Now Party, the last

political party, other than the Democrats and Republicans, to hold major-party status in Minnesota. The status guarantees parties a place on the ballot.

The case was based on a new law passed by the DFL-dominated state legislature in 2023 requiring major parties to hold conventions in each of Minnesota's eight congressional districts and at least 45 of its legislative districts.

The law imposed this requirement as part of a series of new measures aimed at limiting the franchise. A new party now has to receive 8% of the vote to achieve major-party status, up from 5% previously. This is part of a broader drive by the Democrats, backed by some Never-Trump Republicans, to close down space for new parties to get on the ballot.

This law was passed "to use specifically to target our party," Dennis Schuller, chairman of the Legal Marijuana Now Party, told the press, "and silence the voices of the thousands of Americans who have voted for us."

The Democratic National Committee — along with other pro-Joseph Biden groups with names like the Citizens to Save Our Republic, American Bridge, and the Third Way — is raising funds and mobilizing to beat back third parties and independent presidential candidates, including Robert Kennedy Jr., the Green Party's and the candidate of No Labels group.

"The single biggest threat that helps put Trump back in the White House is third-party candidates," Joe Trippi, founder of the super PAC Citizens to Save Our Republic, told NBC News. "It's not Biden's age. It's not whether Trump gets convicted."

LETTERS

Holocaust Memorial in Glen Cove

On the North Shore of Long Island, New York, is a museum well worth a visit. The Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center in Glen Cove offers seven galleries of photos, documents, videos and displays, as well as a library and guest speakers, chronicling the lead up to and horrors of the Nazi Holocaust.

The material is presented so visitors can read, view and absorb the history of European Jews, from persecution and pogroms prior to World War I through the rise of fascism in Germany and the extermination of 6 million Jewish men, women and children, and its aftermath.

Displays show the hunger and desperation in Germany, the promises in fascist propaganda posters of "Jobs and Bread." One important omission is no mention of the refusal of the Stalinist Communist Party and Social Democrats to unite to lead a fight against Hitler's rise.

The imperialist leaders' complicity is

It's not any of that stuff."

The Socialist Workers Party is looking to put Rachele Fruit on the ballot for president across the country, including in Minnesota. "The ruling capitalist families are determined to confine the political arena to their decades-old two-party shell game," said John Studer, the SWP's national campaign director.

"This comes at a time when more working people see the need to break with the bosses' parties, to find a way to express their own class interests in the political arena. We oppose all efforts to kick other candidates off the ballot, including the SWP," he said.

made evident — the Evian Conference in 1938 called by Roosevelt where 32 government representatives met, with no discussion of taking in Jewish refugees from fascism; capitalist governments blocking the truth from the media; how Washington turned away the St. Louis, a ship filled with fleeing Jews; how liberating U.S. GIs had never been told what to expect in the concentration camps; and the cruel conditions survivors of the Holocaust faced confined in displaced persons camps after the war.

There is also a sense of hope and humanity in examples of solidarity and resistance — a gypsy family who hid a Jew, photographed before their execution. A Muslim family likewise. Many incredible acts of protest and defiance.

Militant readers will come away better equipped to tell the facts about this chapter in the imperialist epoch.

Elizabeth Lariscy
New York, New York

Campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, fund

March 9-May 7 (week three)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta	55	16	55	22	\$9,500	\$2,795
Chicago	100	24	100	29	\$14,000	\$2,075
Cincinnati	50	9	50	7	\$5,000	\$0
Dallas-Ft. Worth	60	25	60	24	\$5,000	\$1,825
Lincoln	15	4	15	6	\$500	\$150
Los Angeles*	120	43	120	36	\$16,000	\$1,450
Miami	35	5	35	17	\$5,000	\$1,500
Minneapolis	70	19	70	20	\$5,500	\$1,120
N. New Jersey	75	22	75	23	\$7,500	\$3,000
New York	100	32	100	34	\$20,500	\$5,170
Oakland	80	38	80	31	\$15,500	\$6,918
Philadelphia	55	16	55	22	\$6,000	\$2,250
Pittsburgh	45	14	45	9	\$6,000	\$525
Seattle	70	25	70	19	\$14,500	\$200
Washington	60	22	60	18	\$5,000	\$405
Other	0	0	0	0	\$0	\$250
Total U.S.	990	314	990	317	\$135,500	\$29,633
Prisoners		45				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	45	16	45	10	\$2,560	\$616
Manchester	35	18	35	17	\$1,200	\$45
Total U.K.	80	34	80	27	\$3,760	\$661
Canada	90	33	110	39	\$12,150	\$6,275
Australia	30	14	30	8	\$5,000	\$850
Total	1,190	440	1,210	391	\$156,410	\$37,419
SHOULD BE	1,350	506	1,350	506	\$165,000	\$61,875
* Raised goal						

Crackdown on Central Asians

Continued from front page
“terrorist operation.” Iranian interrogators had gleaned this from Islamic State operatives who were Tajik, captured after deadly twin blasts in the city of Kerman Jan. 3.

Tajikistan is the poorest country in Europe and Asia. Nearly a million Tajik immigrants work in Russia. Some 2 million more immigrants in the country are from the mainly Muslim former Soviet republics of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

Russia’s population has been shrinking since 1993. Today young adults aged 25 to 30 are 5 million less than a decade ago. The only offsetting factor is a net immigration from Central Asia of over 200,000 last year.

Nine people suspected of links to the Islamic State Khorasan terror group were detained in Tajikistan two days after the attack. Families of the four alleged gunmen were also rounded up.

In Blagoveshchensk, a city in the Amur region of Russia’s Far East, a shopping center used by Central Asian migrants was set on fire. In Kaluga, southwest of Moscow, a group of people beat up three Tajik citizens, hospitalizing one. At least 30 similar cases of violence against immigrants have been reported.

Police raids on dormitories, apartments and workplaces where Central Asian immigrants live and work have sharply increased. Large-scale deportations have begun.

On March 27, cops and the national guard raided a huge warehouse on Moscow’s outskirts, demanding to see the passports and work permits of 5,000 workers. Police used batons to beat those who tried to resist. Some 40 people were detained.

An operation in St. Petersburg called “Anti-Migrant” was launched to identify and deport foreigners without residency papers.

Human rights lawyer Valentina Chupnik told the Moscow Times she got over 3,000 requests for help in the first 72 hours following the terror attack. “There are 118 people who were beaten by the police and more than 400 people who were subject to tortuous conditions,” she said. Many are held with “no food, no water and no access to the toilet.”

Immigrant workers are a vital source of cheap labor — and big profits — for Russia’s capitalists. They fill jobs from factories and construction to supermarkets and food delivery, as well as taxi and truck drivers. Putin is using the ter-

ror attack to intensify assaults on immigrant workers to try to deepen divisions among working people as a whole and to shore up dwindling support for his regime’s war to conquer Ukraine.

“Tajiks are really afraid that the Russian authorities will start sending Tajiks to the front en masse to fight as a sort of revenge against our people,” Saidanvar, a Tajik rights activist, told the *New York Times*.

Young men from Muslim minority ethnic groups in the Russian Federation already make up a disproportionate number of Russian army soldiers fighting and dying in Ukraine. Putin made it easier for immigrants to become citizens at the start of the war to expand the Kremlin’s pool of potential military recruits. As police raids surge today, more immigrants are being taken to military registration offices or deported.

Over the last 18 months Putin has avoided a new round of forced service for the front. The last one in September 2022 triggered widespread anti-war protests. But on March 31 he signed a decree calling up 150,000 men for military service to back up his depleted forces in Ukraine.

Cuba fights brutal effects of US rulers’ economic war

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

For 65 years the U.S. government has carried out a far-reaching economic, trade and financial war against Cuba. This brutal policy has been continued by every one of the 13 Democratic and Republican administrations since 1959.

The U.S. rulers’ stated aim is to crush the spirit of Cuba’s working people and bring down the socialist revolution they have carried out and resolutely defend. In the face of this assault, Cuban workers continue to safeguard gains made on many fronts.

One example is the recently completed Havana International Book Fair. Despite shortages of paper to print large quantities of new books, transportation problems due to the shortage of fuel and spare parts for public buses, and other challenges, some 2.2 million people attended the event as it traveled across the country making literature and arts accessible on a mass scale. Held for the first time in 1982, this cultural event grew out of the conquests made by working people in Cuba, including the massive 1961 campaign that eradicated illiteracy in the country.

Washington’s economic embargo against the Cuban people has a severe effect on the country’s ability to import raw materials, like paper for books, resources to produce medicines, medical equipment, gas and badly needed agricultural and manufacturing supplies. The impact of these hardships has been compounded by the effects of the deepening worldwide capitalist economic crisis.

The Donald Trump administration placed Cuba on Washington’s “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list and the Biden administration has maintained this attack on Cuba. This imposes additional sanctions that restrict access to financing from foreign banks and institutions, the collection of payments for services provided by Cuba to other countries and the ability of Cubans living abroad to send money



Moskva News Agency

Central Asian immigrant workers detained during Russian police raid on construction site in Moscow days after March 22 Islamic State terror attack. Kremlin has stepped up these arrests, deportations, while smearing Ukraine and its fight for sovereignty as responsible for the attack.

The Kremlin claims the Islamic State gunmen admitted to links with Ukraine — after the use of torture. The Ukrainian government vehemently denies this. The Russian government’s Investigation Committee said it’s now probing the “organization, financing, and conduct of terrorist acts by the United States,

Ukraine and other Western countries directed against Russia.”

Putin has a long record of utilizing terrorist atrocities as a pretext to attack political rights. In the wake of the seizure of a Moscow theater in 2002 by Chechen forces, he pushed through laws strengthening government control.

to their families on the island.

For the sole purpose of depriving Cuba of obtaining hard currency through tourism, Washington denies anyone from countries eligible for the U.S. Visa Waiver Program who visits the island access to the program. This has led many to stay away from Cuba.

The shortage of foreign exchange for fuel has caused regular blackouts. Frustrations over long electricity outages — sometimes daily for six to 12 hours, especially outside Havana — and food shortages led to a peaceful street action in Santiago de Cuba March 17. Headlines in the U.S. capitalist press read “Protests rattle ‘cradle’ of the Revolution” and “Shortages fuel unrest.” “Cuba Is Starving Its People” was the slanderous headline of a column in the March 25 *Wall Street Journal*, as if Washington’s decadeslong drive to starve the Cuban people into submission doesn’t exist.

In response to the actions in Santiago de Cuba, Beatriz Johnson, a leader of the Communist Party there, went out to meet with participants. Within hours a truckload of rice, sugar, milk and soap arrived in the city and was distributed to the population.

The following day, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel dispatched leading government and party officials across the island “to listen, to dialogue, to explain the numerous steps being taken to improve the situation, always in an atmosphere of tranquility,” he told the media. The Cuban president joined these discussions himself, in Santiago March 21.

To try to meet the demand for food products Cuba has to rely on imports from countries willing to trade with the island in the face of Washington’s sanctions. It imports about 400,000 tons of rice a year from Vietnam to guarantee a basic supply sold through the government’s rationing system at a subsidized price.

While some transactions like this

give Cuba relatively better terms, they are nevertheless done on the basis of the capitalist market. This often results in imported products not being delivered because of Cuba’s inability to pay.

No one is left on their own

The drive to increase production and deal with the problems Cuba faces has been at the center of efforts led by the trade unions.

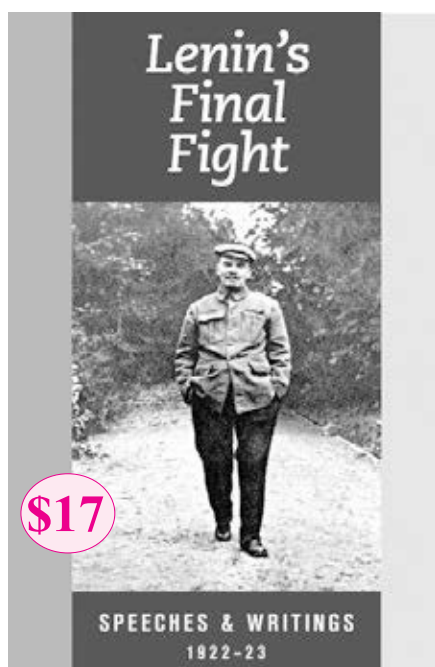
“In everything accomplished lies the daily feats workers make to overcome the obstacles generated by the tightening of the U.S. blockade against Cuba in shortages of supplies, fuel, lubricants, spare parts, and tires,” said Yarieti Grotestan, secretary of the energy and miners union SNTEM, at a meeting in Las Tunas.

Its members have been at the forefront of a big effort to get energy plants badly in need of maintenance back on line. SNTEM’s members include linemen who are among the first to be mobilized to restore electricity following hurricanes that hit Cuba. They have earned the admiration of the Cuban population.

“Your work, done quietly, has taken apart the fallacy the enemy has constantly tried to sow about a failed state,” Luis Antonio Torres, a Communist Party leader in Havana, told a contingent of linemen who took part in a mobilization following Hurricane Ian, which had left a trail of devastation across the island in 2022.

“Your effort confirms that we can go through different situations, but we must always maintain confidence in the revolution, which doesn’t leave anyone on their own,” he added.

This commitment by workers in Cuba to defend their revolution was reaffirmed by Army Gen. Raúl Castro in a speech in Santiago de Cuba on the 65th anniversary of the revolution Jan. 1. “If the current challenges and difficulties are great,” Castro said, “let us get out of these difficulties, as we have always done, by fighting!”



pathfinderpress.com

Defend Israel's right to exist!

Continued from front page
sult in civilian “martyrs” Hamas could use to appeal to liberals internationally to back its lie that Israel is engaged in genocide.

Instead, Israel Defense Forces evacuated the patients and doctors to a field hospital away from the combat before taking on the reactionary Islamist thugs. But the battle left the hospital in shambles.

Since Oct. 7, when Tehran-backed Hamas killed 1,200 people in Israel, mostly civilians, wounded more than 5,000 and took more than 250 hostages — the worst massacre of Jews since the Nazi Holocaust — Israeli forces have degraded or destroyed the majority of Hamas’ battalions.

Gazans speak out against Hamas

Israeli successes have begun to open up space for Gazans to speak out against Hamas. In February modest demonstrations took place in Rafah, Jabalya and Deir Al-Balah denouncing Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar and Ismail Haniyeh and chanting “Down with Hamas.”

Hamas has ruled Gaza since 2006, jailing, torturing and killing political opponents; breaking strikes by trade unions; and restricting women’s rights. It is the biggest obstacle Palestinian workers face in Gaza and the West Bank to be able to freely join with others — including Jewish workers — to fight in their class interests.

Amira Hass reported in the daily *Haaretz* April 1 on the growing opposition to Hamas. Hass, a longtime opponent of what she claims is Israeli “apartheid” and of Israel’s current war to eliminate Hamas, spoke by phone with four people in Gaza. They told her that many in Gaza, likely most, oppose the massacre carried out by Hamas Oct. 7.

One woman told Haas that “she too hears the curses against Hamas everywhere: at the hospital that couldn’t treat her wounded granddaughter, when she’s waiting in line to fill their water container, and when passing by piles of stinking garbage that no one clears.”

One man told her “Hamas’ military power in Gaza has been almost totally destroyed, but not its power to oppress us.” But that’s beginning to change also.

Another indication of the declining influence of Hamas is the failure of its “call upon our people in Jerusalem, the West Bank, the interior, and the occupied lands to mobilize and confront the occupation’s schemes against the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque” during Ramadan.

Instead, tens of thousands have been praying peacefully at the mosque since the start of Ramadan March 10.

In addition, the annual “Land Day” protests inside Israel — while still attracting thousands of people — were the smallest in years. The actions protest what some groups call “theft” of Palestinian land during the formation of Israel in 1948.

Of course not every action of Israel’s capitalist government and army advance the fight against Hamas. Israeli officials admitted that seven volunteers from the World Central Kitchen — which has set up dozens of kitchens in collaboration with Israel to alleviate lack of food in Gaza — were killed in an airstrike on civilian vehicles April 2. Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he lamented the killings, calling them tragic and unintended. The IDF said an independent fact-finding body has been set up to investigate what happened.

Meanwhile, the Joseph Biden administration continues to pressure the Israeli government to call off its planned offensive in Rafah, feigning concern for Palestinian civilians. The main concern of the capitalist rulers in Washington is to protect their own interests in the Mideast, not Israel’s.



More than 1,000 people defend synagogue in Teaneck, New Jersey, April 2, outmobilizing 100 pro-Hamas protesters who claimed firsthand accounts of Oct. 7 pogrom atrocities given at fundraiser that night would “fuel Gaza genocide.” Gila Rachlin, who lives in the neighborhood, told the press, “I want them to know that the Jewish people can’t be intimidated.”

The White House says Israel should “enhance” security at the border with Egypt instead.

But this would leave Hamas able to rebuild and relaunch its war to kill Jews and destroy Israel.

Tehran’s ‘axis of resistance’

On April 1, missiles fired from Israeli planes destroyed a building near the Iranian Embassy in Damascus, killing at least seven Iranian military and intelligence officers, including three generals in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. They were meeting with Palestinian Islamic Jihad leaders.

The meeting in Damascus came on the heels of visits by central leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad to Tehran,

where they conferred with top Iranian officials to coordinate stepped-up attacks on Israel. According to the Iranian daily *Hamshahri*, they discussed expanding “the scope of the fight against the occupying regime,” including from the Houthis in Yemen, Iran-organized militias in Iraq and Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatened that “the evil regime” will be “punished” for the strike.

The danger of further escalation takes place in the context of a deepening crisis of the Washington-dominated imperialist “world order,” accelerated by Moscow’s war against the people of Ukraine, the Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel and the step up in Jew-hatred worldwide.

Leeds students take stand against Jew-hatred in UK

BY PETER CLIFFORD

LEEDS, England — “Jewish students have had enough,” Emma Levy, president of the Jewish Society at the University of Leeds, told several hundred students at a “Stand Against Antisemitism” vigil here March 1. It was called in response to mounting threats against Jews on campus. “We stand together as a testament to our unbreakable spirit,” she said.

The protest came in the wake of a campaign to drive the students’ rabbi,

Zecharia Deutsch, off the campus. The reactionary effort was initiated by *Guardian* columnist Suhaimyah Manzoor-Khan and is backed by the Muslim Association of Britain, along with a range of middle-class leftists.

Rabbi Deutsch served in the Israel Defense Forces and like many others carried out reservist duties after Hamas’ Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel. Pro-Hamas supporters smear him as a “war criminal” and demand authorities kick him off the campus. Death threats against Deutsch and his family have forced them to move to a safe location.

Hillel House, a community center for Jewish students, was targeted Feb. 9 with graffiti calling for “Free Palestine” and “IDF off campus” on its walls. Despite the threats, Deutsch joined the March 1 vigil with his family. Leeds has the largest Jewish student population in the U.K., with more than 1,000 studying here.

Jewish students are stepping up efforts to push back against the rise in Jew-hatred after a few dozen pro-Hamas supporters took over part of the Parkinson Building on campus March 7 to press for the rabbi’s exclusion, accusing the university of complicity with Israel. Jewish students organized a table nearby March 12 with a sign “Come talk to us about Jewish identity,” along

with information fliers and photos of hostages seized by Hamas.

A crowd came over from the Parkinson Building. Two Jew-hating thugs ripped the Israeli flag and scattered the table’s contents before running away. Afterward, a university spokesperson said, “We are aware of an incident. There is no evidence that any of our students were involved.” Undeterred by the university’s refusal to stand up to the thugs, Jewish students have continued setting up tables.

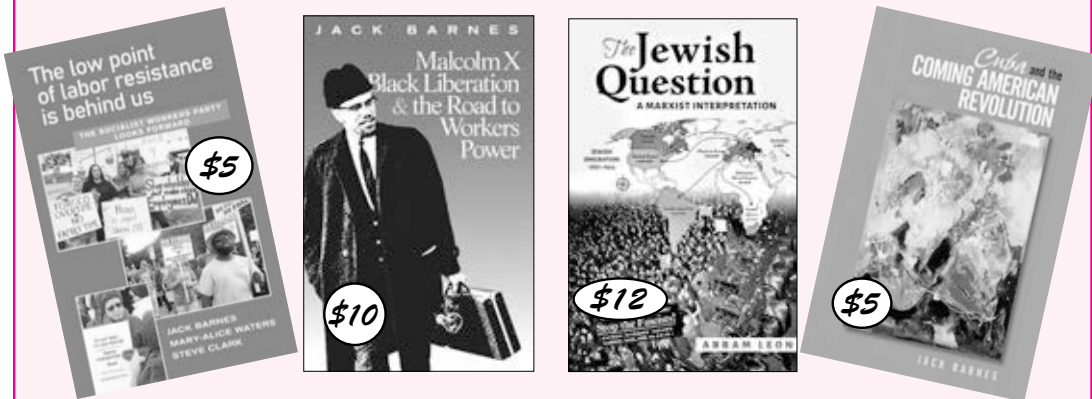
Several students stopped by a Communist League campaign table on campus March 20. Some were uncertain about how to react to the attacks on the rabbi, but welcomed a discussion.

“Before Oct. 7, I didn’t believe there was a need for Israel to exist. Then the celebrations of Oct. 7 shocked me,” James Harrod told this reporter. Its actions “made it abundantly clear why there does have to be a Jewish state.” He said he had been talking about this with fellow students who are Muslim.

I described how CL members discussed this question with working people, including many Muslims. “It’s important to recognize that Muslims are not a single bloc,” I said. “They’re class divided. Many are more and more distrustful of the capitalist rulers. Many are open to recognizing that Jew-hatred is a question for all workers to challenge.”

Peter Clifford is the Communist League candidate for Parliament in the Manchester Central constituency for this year’s general election.

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See page 8 for distributor near you

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

LA hotel workers celebrate victory, continue fight

LOS ANGELES — More than 200 hotel workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 11, and their supporters held a press conference on the steps of the InterContinental Hotel here March 25 to celebrate their victory after ratifying the contracts the union signed with 34 hotels. Workers voted them up by 98%.

The contracts include a raise of \$5 an hour in the first year, and \$10 an hour over the course of the contract, which expires in 2028. Kurt Petersen, co-president of Local 11, told the press, “This is a struggle over the most urgent question facing the city — who will be able to live and work in Los Angeles. We demanded that hotels must help end the housing crisis by paying a living wage.”

He said the \$5 per hour raise meant nearly \$10,000 a year for union members. Under the new contract, room attendants will earn about \$35 an hour by 2027 and workers won increased company contributions for health care and pensions. They also won an end to the bosses’ use of E-Verify, a government program designed to deny jobs to workers without papers. The hotels also agreed to restore working conditions that were cut back during the pandemic, including staffing levels and daily room cleaning.

Several hotel workers spoke at the press conference. “Low wages and high rent forced me out of L.A., but this doesn’t have to keep happening,” Brenda Mendoza, a uniform attendant at the downtown JW Marriott for 14 years, said. She described how this meant she had to get by on only four hours of sleep a night. “The wage raise will give me peace of mind. It means I don’t have to put in extra hours to make ends meet. It means that I won’t have to live paycheck to paycheck.”

Arturo Hueso, a housekeeper at the Fairmont Miramar in Santa Monica for 30 years, told the press that workers will keep showing up to protests to support workers at hotels who are still fighting to win contracts. “We will not give up,” he said.

More than two dozen hotels are still holding out. Petersen said some are negotiating and others still refuse to talk. “They are already defeated, it is time to sign,” he said.

The unionists marched to the nearby Hotel Figueroa behind a banner that read, “Not over yet.” The Figueroa is one of the hotels that hasn’t settled, and recently laid off 100 restaurant workers who had signed cards to unionize.

— Bill Arth

Chattanooga VW workers to vote on UAW April 17-19

ATLANTA — Some 4,300 Volkswagen autoworkers in Chattanooga, Tennessee, will vote on union recognition April 17-19, aimed at bringing the United Auto Workers in to represent them. The election was set after union supporters filed what they called a “supermajority” of cards favoring the union with the National Labor Relations Board. This will

be the third vote on union recognition at the plant, after unsuccessful attempts in 2014 and 2019.

The vote will be the first since the UAW launched a campaign to organize the many nonunion auto assembly plants following the 46-day strike last fall against the Big Three automakers, winning significant gains. Union officials report that more than 10,000 workers at Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz in Vance, Alabama, and other nonunion assembly plants have signed union cards over the last few months.

“A number of union supporters here have just filed unfair labor practices charges against Mercedes-Benz,” Kirk Garner, a supporter of the UAW organizing drive at the Mercedes-Benz plant, told the *Militant* March 26. “We’re still signing new people up.”

The workers are asking for an injunction stopping company harassment and disciplinary actions, including firing workers because they support the union. Some faced attack for pro-union comments they made in mandatory “captive audience” meetings organized by the company to pressure workers to vote no.

Union supporters turned out March 24 for an enthusiastic rally at which UAW President Shawn Fain spoke. “I didn’t come down here to tell you what all I’m going to do for you,” Fain told the crowd. “Everything you win in this fight will be because you won it.”

“And the company knows it too,” he said. “That’s why Mercedes is pulling out every trick in the book.”

— Susan LaMont

Over 200 Autoport strikers in Nova Scotia face injunction, scabs

The 239 Unifor union members at Canadian National Railway’s Autoport in Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia, have been on strike since Feb. 27. CN bosses have brought in scabs and filed for an injunction against the strikers’ right to picket. The union has been holding the picket line strong in face of these intimidation tactics. They are demanding higher wages, turning down an offer of only 8% spread out over three years.

“We are always open to going back to the table as long as the company understands that our members, their employees, deserve a fair wage and a fair and equitable deal,” Sean Warnell,



Militant/Bill Arth

Hotel workers, members of UNITE HERE, join news conference at InterContinental Hotel in Los Angeles March 25 to celebrate strike actions that won contract with large pay raise.

a 27-year Autoport worker, told the CBC. “Everybody has bills, mortgages, kids are in university. People are just trying to make ends meet.”

This is the third strike at Canadian National since 2019. Some 3,200 train conductors and yardmasters, members of the Teamsters, went out in November 2019 in a strike over safety. Signal and communications workers, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, followed in 2022.

Autoport workers move about 185,000 vehicles on and off railcars annually, one of the biggest such operations in North America. Canadian National bosses raked in over \$16.8 billion Canadian dollars (\$12.4 billion) in 2023.

— Philippe Tessier

Striking rail workers in UK: ‘Solidarity shows we’re not alone’

MANCHESTER, England — Rail workers hired by contractor Carlisle Support Services who staff ticket gate lines for Northern Trains took their third day of strike action March 16 in a fight over two-tier pay, working conditions and for union recognition. Thirty-five members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union were on the picket line at Piccadilly Station here, with dozens more picketing at Manchester Victoria Station, and at train stations in Wigan and Leeds, almost 80 workers in all.

The mood among the workers was confident despite moves by the bosses to weaken their action. Carlisle Sup-

port Services has pressed 18 new hires to work through the strike. Northern Trains bosses, for their part, have also sought to attack the strike, deploying higher-paid company workers to staff ticket gate lines.

In the lead-up to the strike, solidarity cards circulated around Piccadilly Station by RMT members were signed by over 140 rail workers — rail cleaners, train drivers, conductors, catering and ticket-office staff, and other workers from different rail companies and contractors. Many who signed hadn’t known the strikers, who also wear Northern Trains uniforms on the job but don’t get the same pay and conditions as directly employed Northern workers.

Some of the messages on the cards read, “Strength in numbers, we are with you” from a conductor, “Let’s do this!” from a contractor for Rail Gourmet, and “Your fight is our fight!”

Conor Price, a conductor at Piccadilly Station and member of the National Executive Committee of the RMT, presented a folder with all the signed cards to Gary Corrigan, who was leading the picket line there. “We’re determined to see this through. We’re in it for the long haul. We’ve been fighting this for four years,” Corrigan said. After seeing the cards, Julian Hasford, a striking gate line worker said, “This shows we’re not alone.”

Another striker, Hussein Mohamed, said the important thing “is the collective effort we put in.”

— Andrés Mendoza

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Endorse Rachele Fruit for president!

We ask readers of the *Militant* to endorse the campaign of Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president! Join efforts to win others to do so.

Joseph Biden and Donald Trump garner support among their class, the capitalist ruling families and their upper-middle-class backers. Working people need to break with the bosses' parties, to take a stand for the interests of our class, the vast majority. In 2024 that means backing the Socialist Workers Party!

Rachele Fruit and Margaret Trowe, the SWP candidate for vice president, along with SWP candidates all across the country offer a program to meet the crisis we face caused by for-profit capitalist rule. Tens of millions of workers are disgusted with the conditions they face and increasingly recognize the ones responsible are the bosses and their parties.

Fruit speaks for the interests of workers on strike for wages and conditions that make family life possible. For fighters determined to resist growing assaults on Jews. For opponents of Moscow's war to conquer Ukraine. For workers angered at the rulers' disregard for our lives, starkly illustrated by the deaths and unfolding social disaster resulting from the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge at the Port of Baltimore.

The capitalist rulers rely on making workers think they are incapable of uniting and taking control of society. Fruit and other SWP candidates get a hearing when they explain workers have the capacities to take

our future into our own hands, to act on our common class interests. And when they propose a course forward to overcome the divisions the bosses promote among us to weaken our struggles.

The SWP campaign explains workers need to build our own party, a labor party based on the unions, that brings working people together to fight for the things our class needs. Endorsing Rachele Fruit for president expands the reach of the working-class alternative to Biden, Trump and all other lesser-evil capitalist candidates like Robert Kennedy.

The rule of the capitalist class and their dog-eat-dog system is the root cause of the insecurity, hardship and wars workers face today. The SWP offers a road to lead tens of millions to fight to replace capitalist rule with workers power. And, as the example of Cuba's socialist revolution shows, to transform ourselves as we fight together. The SWP offers workers the opportunity to campaign for what you're *for*, not for who you're against.

Join us in using the SWP campaign to deepen this discussion with your co-workers, fellow unionists, friends and others. It is a tribune speaking for all those exploited and oppressed by capital. And a voice for solidarity with working-class battles worldwide.

Cut out and sign the endorser card on page 3. Send it to the *Militant*, and consider sending a picture and a short statement about why you think others should do so that we can use.

You can make a difference!

Baltimore disaster is result of bosses' profit drive

Continued from front page

of dockworkers, ship crew members, truckers, warehouse workers and many others face an unknown future. Some 30,000 vehicles traveled over the bridge every day. City residents and travelers through the area face widespread congestion and delays.

This social catastrophe is a result of the profit-driven capitalist system.

The bridge was built in 1977, with a design known as "fracture critical," which means if any one section breaks the whole bridge can collapse. There are no built-in redundancies. Since then shipping bosses' drive for profits has led them to steadily increase the size, weight and capacity of container ships to the behemoths sailing today. The Association of Maryland Pilots says the hulls of some modern ships sail nearly 48 feet below the water line and the main Baltimore shipping channels are just 50 feet deep.

All the Dali's 21 member-crew are alive and remain aboard the ship. The Maryland-based pilot responsible for guiding the ship out of the harbor — the one who alerted authorities the ship was in trouble — and an apprentice working with him are safely ashore.

The pilot had tried everything he could to prevent the boat from hitting the bridge. He dropped an anchor and turned the rudder hard left, but in less than five minutes after losing power, the giant boat hit the bridge with the force of a rocket launch.

As a result of the disaster, shipping at the Port of Baltimore is shut down, with no indication when it may reopen. Up to \$200 million in goods comes through the port every day. It is the main East Coast port for cars and light trucks. An estimated 140,000 jobs are tied to the port's operation.

"Most of my colleagues are worried that the government is not going to step up and do what they say they're going to do, as quickly and speedy as they say," David Brothel, a longshoreman at Consol Energy's coal yard, told the *Washington Post*. "If this doesn't clear up in three months, I may have to transfer."

The Dali was contracted by shipping giant Maersk to take the load to Sri Lanka. Maersk is the second largest container shipping company worldwide. Just four giant outfits control some 57% of all the industry's traffic — owning 3,611 ships and over 166 million containers.

Maersk made a killing in 2022 during shipping's recovery from the earlier COVID-influenced supply line crisis, raking in a profit of \$29.3 billion.

These shipping companies helped push through

the expansion of the locks on the Panama Canal in 2016, opening the door to the newer, giant ships and boosting their profits. Capitalist production and trade today is tied up with the expansion of sea-bound cargo. The annual volume of containers moving through U.S. ports has nearly doubled in the last 20 years, reaching 62 million in 2022.

"These companies, what they do is they're looking to make as much profit as they can," Roland Rexha, secretary-treasurer of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, told the *Guardian*. Alongside "the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, and what's happened with Boeing," he said, "obviously we've seen corporate greed at its worst."

Outdated bridges threaten lives

The dangers of operating vessels the size of the Dali underneath bridges like the one in Baltimore are no secret. Some 17,000 bridges across the U.S. — like the Francis Scott Key Bridge — are "fracture critical."

The Maryland transportation agency said it had planned to install a fiberglass protection system at the bridge's columns, but not until the summer of 2025. Despite the lack of pier protection, federal inspectors rated the bridge in "fair" condition last year.

The bridge's collapse "is a disaster that did not have to happen," James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Washington, D.C., delegate to Congress, said April 1. "The size of the ship, the design of the bridge, the lack of collision protection structures," Harris said, "reflect the priorities and workings of the dog-eat-dog capitalist system."

"Safety is a union question," Harris said. Party members are distributing his statement to longshoremen and working people throughout the region.

"Why didn't they have tugboats to escort them out like they use to?" Diantha Kenney asked SWP campaigner Sarah Ullman when she knocked on Kenney's door in Dundalk, Maryland, near the bridge. Two tugboats assigned to accompany the Dali from the dock had been recalled before it reached the bridge. After the ship lost power, the pilot sent out a call for tugs to come help, but they were too far away.

"It's capitalist greed," Ullman replied. "It shows why workers and our unions need to fight for control over safety and production."

Arrin Hawkins in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

Farmers in UK protest rising production costs



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Farmers protest government policies March 25 in London.

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — With signs reading "Stop killing farming" and "No farmers, no food, no future," up to 100 tractors descended on Parliament Square here March 25. Organized by the recently established Fairness for Farmers of Kent, the protest was the biggest farmers' action in the capital in years.

"Production costs are killing us," James Forknall told the *Militant*. "The price of fuel and fertilizer has sky-rocketed with the Ukraine war. And the price we get for what we farm fluctuates wildly."

Forknall farms 2,500 acres with his father, employing six workers. "It's come to the point when many farmers are cutting back," he said. "Under the government's misnamed 'Sustainable Farming Incentive' many are finding they can make more by growing hedgerows and trees than producing food."

Kevin Coleman raises cattle at a much smaller holding, with 100 head of cattle, near Dover, Kent, in southeast England. He joined the protest along with Chloe Seath, another Kent farmer who works together with her husband, Philip. They have 250 cattle. He was not able to make the protest because of an accident. Farming has the highest accident rate of any industry, with 27 deaths last year.

"This is the beginning of something," Liz Webster, one of the protest organizers, told the press. "We are not going to stop until we get what we need."

She said that the situation is especially hard for small farmers and even more so for tenants. Webster, who works a beef and crop farm in Wiltshire, is the founder of Save British Farming. She calls for restrictions on "cheap" farm imports, which she says are "substandard," and for supermarket labeling that clearly identifies a product's country of origin. Many farmers on the protest agreed.

"When I go to buy food, like most workers I'm interested in quality and price, not where they're farmed," said Dag Tirsén to Coleman and Seath. He is a rail worker and Communist League member.

"Farmers in Germany and France are also calling for import restrictions," Tirsén said. "Wouldn't it be better if farmers worldwide got together in a common fight to protect their living standards? And if farmers fought together with the trade unions? We're all being hit with rising prices."

"We're not trying to shame anyone from buying imported food," Coleman replied. "All working people are suffering. What you say about struggling together is good. I've read that in Germany the farmers have linked up with the rail unions."

"There should be a workers and farmers government in Britain," Tirsén said, "not a government of the ruling rich."

The farmers' action was supported by dozens of protesters opposing a tax on vehicle emissions imposed by London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who has declared London a ULEZ, Ultra Low Emission Zone.

"We welcome support from the anti-ULEZ campaigners," Coleman said. The tax is "another example of working people being made to pay, but the crisis is not of our doing."

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