

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Workers hit with rising medical care costs as bosses boost profits
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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MAY 6, 2024

Working people in Ukraine fight to defend their independence

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Moscow is stepping up its murderous assault on Ukrainian workers' lives and on the mines and factories of the country's eastern Donetsk region, as well as on crucial infrastructure across the country. Yet the Ukrainian people's courageous determination to defend their independence remains unbroken.

The Kremlin is throwing waves of troops against outgunned Ukrainian forces on the eastern front, making some small gains, as Ukraine's supply of armaments dwindles. Although President Vladimir Putin's police have largely suppressed larger public protests at home for now, the heavy toll on Russian conscripts, especially from regions with substantial populations of oppressed nationalities, continues to stoke anger and smoldering opposition among working people.

Putin denies that Ukraine — as a nation and as a people — exists. He promises a long bloody war at the ex-

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Volkswagen workers vote overwhelmingly for UAW



Autoworkers at Volkswagen in Chattanooga, Tennessee, celebrate announcement of 73% vote for UAW April 19. Victory gives impetus to workers fighting for union recognition elsewhere.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

In an important victory for unions across the U.S., workers at the Chattanooga, Tennessee, Volkswagen plant voted by 73% to be represented by the United Auto Workers, giving impetus to workers fighting for union recognition elsewhere. It's the first assembly plant owned by a foreign automaker to

be organized in the South.

Cheers erupted from autoworkers at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 175 hall as results came in April 19. More than 80% of the plant's 4,300 workers voted.

"People in high places told us good things can't happen here in Chattanooga," Kelcey Smith, a paint department worker, said in a UAW press release. "They told us this isn't the time to stand up, this isn't the place. But we did stand up and we won."

"Union supporters here think the win in Chattanooga is awesome," Kirk

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Support Israel as refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms!

BY SETH GALINSKY

The reactionary clerical regime in Iran had hoped the Oct. 7 anti-Jewish pogrom it organized with Hamas, along with Israel's response to defend itself, would reverse moves by governments in Muslim-majority countries toward normalized relations with Israel. The opposite is happening today.

The governments of Saudi Arabia and Jordan joined U.S. forces in helping the Israeli military shoot down 99% of the 320 drones and missiles Tehran fired at Israel April 13. The first-ever direct assault by the Iranian rulers on Israel was a dangerous escalation of their decades-long drive to destroy Israel and drive Jews from the region.

The Israeli government retaliated April 19, damaging an air-defense system protecting an Iranian nuclear site near Isfahan, showing its forces can strike anywhere in Iran as Tehran advances toward its goal of acquiring nuclear weapons.

Tehran's direct assault on Israel has sparked increased opposition from working people in Iran to the regime and its military adventures abroad. The Union of Metalworkers and Mechanics noted April 15 that despite the "intensification of the warlike atmosphere," retirees, teachers and others have continued

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Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate

Rachele Fruit: 'Workers need a labor party based on the unions'



Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, speaks at campaign rally in Fort Worth April 20. "The future of humanity depends on the U.S. working class taking power away from the capitalist rulers and starting down the road to a socialist revolution," she said.

BY HILDA CUZCO

FORT WORTH, Texas — "We've been on strike going on nine weeks. We have a lot of union support, but we need more," Rick Miedema, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 997 on strike at Molson Coors big brewery here, told Socialist Workers Party candidate for president Rachele Fruit April 19. Fruit was here on a four-day campaign stop.

Fruit, a hotel worker in Miami and

member of UNITE HERE Local 355, joined the Teamsters picket line to show her solidarity and learn more to build support as she tours around the country and abroad. Joining her was Alyson Kennedy, the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas.

The brewery workers are fighting for pay raises, to keep their union health care, and for better retirement plans. Ne-

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Trump's trial in New York opens — an attack on constitutional freedoms

BY TERRY EVANS

Opening arguments began April 22 in the one case Democrats have succeeded in bringing to trial against arch-nemesis Donald Trump in their drive to derail his presidential campaign and, they fervent-

ly hope, send him to prison.

It's the hush-money case engineered by Democratic Manhattan Attorney General Alvin Bragg. Trump is forced to be present in court for the duration of the trial, expected to last at least six weeks, sharply curtailing his ability to campaign. Meanwhile, his main opponent, Joseph Biden, is campaigning across the country.

Even in its first few days, the trial reflects the Democrats' willingness to toss aside constitutional protections in their

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SWP campaigners win new support

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Campaigners for Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, are introducing the party's working-class program and activity widely among working people and making good use of the just-published title *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*.

The book, by V.I. Lenin and other leaders of the Russian Revolution to SWP leaders today, is one of several titles on special offer during the eight-week campaign by the SWP and Com-

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Daimler workers prepare for strike as contract deadline nears
800 Toronto airport Teamsters strike for higher pay, safety

Workers hit with rising medical care costs as bosses boost profits

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Increasing numbers of working people are finding themselves unable to cover the exorbitant costs of health care for their family. This is because under capitalism medical care is treated like every other industry, a way to generate profit, not to provide care for the millions who need it, particularly for older workers. This goes for hospital, insurance, pharmaceutical and assisted-living facility bosses and more.

Drug shortages in the U.S. reached a record high in the first quarter of this year. Among the hundreds of medicines in scarce supply are the diabetes drug Ozempic, chemotherapy medications and meperidine hydrochloride injections, essential in alleviating pain during surgery. Many of these drugs are generics, where bosses have been shutting factories and cutting production in those still open because they're not making enough profit today.

"I just find it amazing that you can't find this stuff and nobody seems to be doing anything about it," Stan Brady, 68, told the *Wall Street Journal*. He hasn't been able to get the diabetes drug Mounjaro to control his blood-sugar levels. Alternative drugs his doctor provided haven't worked.

The 850,000 older adults residing in assisted-living facilities across the country face penny-pinching boss cutbacks in staffing levels, meaning less care. Brookdale Senior Living, the leading operator of senior housing with 652 facilities nationwide, uses an algorithm-based system to make staff cuts wherever possible and to assign time limits for those remaining to see

to the needs of each patient.

When things take longer, residents are charged special fees on top of the thousands of dollars they pay for the luxury of staying in these facilities each month. At one residential center, Brookdale charged each resident with special cognitive or psychological needs an extra \$468 to \$703 a month for an average of 14 minutes of additional care per day, the *Washington Post* reported April 1.

There are no federal laws regulating the 31,000 assisted-living facilities in the U.S., and Medicare doesn't cover costs there. Only 13 states require staffing minimums.

Those who signed up for Medicaid to help cover the costs of assisted-living facilities or for care at a family home soon learn that this "benefit" also comes at a price. Most states limit those eligible for Medicaid to people who have a maximum of \$2,000 in assets. If you own a home, the boss or the government can seize it after you die. Your family is left with nothing.

Since 2021 some 17,000 families in Illinois alone have had their homes repossessed by the state through so-called Medicaid recovery.

At the same time, the federal and state governments have been slashing Medicaid coverage, hitting lower-paid workers the hardest. In March 2023 the Joseph Biden administration ended the pandemic-era policy that barred states from disenrolling people. Since then, more than 20 million people have been kicked off Medicaid.

The drugstore chains are another part of the health industry slashing



KCTV

Brookdale Senior Living residents in Shawnee, Kansas, December 2023. Bosses of nationwide assisted living chain use algorithms to make staff cuts, limit time per patient to ramp up profits.

staffing and pushing speedup to boost profits. Workers there are pushing back. At the end of last year, pharmacy workers carried out a three-day walkout demanding more hiring and better working conditions.

The International Association of Machinists has set up a special Pharmacy Guild to organize workers who fill prescriptions. In the last three weeks workers at CVS Omnicare Las Vegas — an operation that handles prescriptions for area nursing homes — and two CVS pharmacies in Rhode Island filed for Guild representation.

Hidden fees boost profits

Hidden fees are an increasingly popular way hospitals and insurance companies reap extra profits today. Hospital bosses add billions of dollars in "facility fees" to medical bills for routine care in outpatient centers and clinics they own.

Tim Ebel visited an ear, nose and throat specialist at an Avon, Ohio, clinic last October and was billed \$348 for the visit. Then he got a second bill for \$645 more. It was from the hospital that owns the Avon clinic, billing for use of the office where he met with the doctor.

Secret fees like this boost your medical bills by hundreds of dollars for receiving widely used and standard medical treatment, including colonoscopies, mammograms and heart screen tests.

Another scheme used by insurance

companies is to charge exorbitant fees when you have to seek treatment from doctors who are not part of your insurance plan's network of providers.

"Weeks after undergoing heart surgery, Gail Lawson found herself back in an operating room. Her incision wasn't healing, and an infection was spreading," the *New York Times* reported April 7 in an article titled "Insurers Reap Hidden Fees by Slashing Payments. You May Get the Bill."

But the doctor who performed the second surgery on Lawson wasn't covered by her insurance plan, so she was hit with a bill for more than \$100,000. "I'm thinking to myself, 'But this is why I had insurance,'" she told the *Times*. "They take out, what, \$300 or \$400 a month? Well, why aren't you people paying these bills?"

Many of health insurance conglomerates work with a "data analytics" firm called MultiPlan to boost their fees by cutting payments to out-of-network doctors or heaping extra bills on the patients. Over the past few years, one of the nation's largest insurers, United-Healthcare, has reaped \$1 billion in fees annually from this scam.

Contribute to the 'Militant' online at themilitant.com

THE MILITANT

Bosses' profit greed caused Baltimore bridge disaster

The 'Militant' shows how Baltimore bridge collapse was caused by bosses disdain for human lives in their rush for profits. Six workers died after huge container ship hit pylon. Workers need to use their unions to fight for control over infrastructure, work conditions and safety.



Maryland National Guard
Baltimore bridge collapsed from container ship collision March 26, killing six workers.

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Daimler workers prepare for strike as contract deadline nears

BUFORD, Ga. — Chanting “No bucks, no trucks!” and “We are the union — mighty, mighty union!” some 80 members of the United Auto Workers marched here April 20 in a practice picket in front of the Daimler Trucks parts warehouse.

Some 7,000 Daimler workers at truck assembly plants and warehouses in North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia are preparing to strike April 26 if a contract isn’t reached. Workers voted by 96% to authorize a strike in March.

“We are ready!” was the most frequent comment from union members.

“I’ve worked at the warehouse here for 19 ½ years,” UAW Local 10 member Conrad Blackburn told the *Militant*. “We need higher wages. After I got hired, I maxed out at top pay in 2008 and I haven’t had a raise since then!”

“This fight is also important for the younger workers coming in,” said warehouse worker Joe Ellis.

The union is fighting for higher wages, a shorter wage progression from the current six years to reach top rate, cost-of-living adjustments to ensure wages keep up with inflation and better benefits, including additional holidays and bereavement time.

UAW Local 10 members from the warehouse were joined by a busload of UAW Local 5285 members from the assembly plant in Mt. Holly, North Carolina. A union member from the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where workers won an overwhelming victory in their union election April 19, also took part.

“We are thrilled about the union victory at VW,” UAW Local 5285 Vice President Mark Hoyle told the *Militant*. Many others said they felt the same way.

— Susan LaMont

800 Toronto airport Teamsters strike for higher pay, safety

MISSISSAUGA, Ontario— “Share the news. It must get around to everybody,” striker Maged Awad told the *Militant* as we walked the picket line at Toronto Pearson International Airport

here April 20. Some 800 Teamsters Local 647 members struck airline meal caterer Gate Gourmet four days earlier.

“Wages aren’t good here,” said Hali Hashi. “Starting wage is \$17.69. We’re asking for \$20.69.” Ontario’s minimum wage will go up to 17.20 Canadian dollars (\$12.56) Oct. 1. “I’ve worked here 24 years and I earn \$22.48,” said Rupinder Toor. “During the pandemic we helped the company and took a wage freeze. For six years we had no raise.”

Strikers prepare in-flight food and deliver it to the planes. “Drivers have no breaks or lunchtime. If you work fast, maybe, otherwise, nothing,” Luan Grajeveci, a driver with 20 years’ seniority, said, speaking for a group of drivers.

“They keep people on overtime. It creates accidents. It’s not right,” he said. “We work by the planes in winter. People get injured. We had a big fight to get access to the elevator for an injured worker in a wheelchair. He couldn’t get up to the employee cafeteria on the second floor. We had to go to the union.

“One contract, we got a penny raise. We’re underpaid,” he added.

“They said you are lucky we’re giving you jobs. They took agency people, putting full-timers out of work during the pandemic,” said Toor. She called pickets together for a group shot with the *Militant* reporters, who had brought solidarity and muffins.

May Day actions to defend immigrants, workers’ rights

BY JANET POST

Events to celebrate May 1 — International Workers Day — are being held around the country, from strikes by e-hail drivers in several cities, to actions to win support for union contract fights and protests for the rights of immigrant workers.

These actions will attract workers and youth looking for ways to build unions and resist the impact of today’s deepening capitalist crisis.

A number of actions are being held in the Washington, D.C., area. UNITE HERE Local 25 has called a rally at McPherson Square at 4.30 p.m. to win



Militant/Sam Manuel

United Auto Workers members join strike preparation rally April 10 outside Daimler trucking warehouse in Buford, Georgia. Workers are fighting for a wage raise, cost-of-living protection.

“Everything is going up, so why not our wages?” asked Hajinder Gill. “That’s why I’m here. Work inside — it’s cold, it’s heavy.”

Pickets circled in front of the Gate Gourmet entrance, while three vans filled with strikebreakers waited to get in. Although the bosses maintain some production, WestJet and Air Canada, Canada’s biggest airlines, are warning flyers that in-flight food options will be reduced or unavailable. Toronto Pearson is Canada’s largest airport.

After the union rejected the company

offer of only 12% over three years, government mediators intervened to bring both sides back to the table.

“Unfortunately, Gate Gourmet is more interested in keeping their workers close to the poverty line than they are in bargaining,” Martin Cerqua, president of Teamsters Local 647, told the media. “This strike will be over the minute Gate Gourmet decides to value its employees as much as it values profits.”

The picket lines are up 24/7 at 2498 Britannia Road E, in Mississauga.

— Katy LeRougetel

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 10, 1999

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minn. — More than 500 angry farmers from a dozen Midwestern states came to this former meatpacking center April 18 to demand the federal government do something about worsening conditions they face.

Much of the farmers’ fire was directed at representatives of the U.S. Justice and Agriculture Departments who were on the platform. A big proportion of the farmers were hog producers who were protesting the historic low prices they are being paid for their hogs.

A central demand was that the federal government enforce the Packers & Stockyards Act, which outlaws discriminatory and monopoly pricing by packinghouses. Farmers also were demanding new legislation requiring packers to publicly report the prices they pay farmers.

Six firms control 75 percent of all U.S. hog slaughter. Five corporations control the beef packing industry.



May 10, 1974

The overturn of the dictatorship of Marcello Caetano has brought forth a storm of political activity, discussion, and jubilation from the Portuguese people. The lifting of the 40-year brutal dictatorship of the late Antonio Salazar, continued by Caetano, opened the floodgates for the feelings and opinions of the masses to be openly expressed for the first time in decades.

The key issue precipitating the overturn was the government’s 13-year-long colonial war to maintain dominance over Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau. The downfall of Caetano will give inspiration to Blacks in South Africa and Rhodesia, whose white-supremacist regimes maintained a joint command with Portuguese troops against the rebels in all three countries.

And the granting of democratic rights inside Portugal will have important repercussions in neighboring Spain.



May 9, 1949

Attorney General [Thomas] Clark’s latest additions to his “subversive” blacklist include a labor union — the Industrial Workers of the World. This is the first time a union has ever been designated as “subversive” by the government of the U.S.

The IWW is not a large union today, although during the early part of its 44-year history it was one of the most dynamic sections of the American labor movement. Nevertheless, it is a union, acting as bargaining agent for workers in a number of industries and certified as such. As IWW Secretary-Treasurer W.H. Westman points out, Clark’s arbitrary ruling “is clearly subversive to democratic institutions.”

Most of the labor movement has been critical of Clark’s blacklist. The attack on the IWW shows the rights of labor as a whole are involved and underlines the necessity to put an end to the blacklist system.

“hard hat” memorial Mass at Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City will take place May 1 this year. The union-organized event commemorates the construction workers killed or injured on the job over the last year. The percentage of construction workers in New York who are undocumented immigrants has soared in recent years, as has the percentage of nonunion contractors.

In San Francisco, members of Service Employees International Union Local 87, which organizes janitors and hotel workers, will march to press their fight for a new contract May 1 at 2 p.m. from 415 Mission Street.

Strikes and rallies are being organized by Justice for App Workers, a coalition of 130,000 e-hail drivers across the East Coast and Midwest.

“We’re sick of working 80 hours/week just to make ends meet,” the organization’s website says, as well as “worrying about being deactivated with the click of a button.” For cities and times of these actions visit <https://justiceforappworkers.org/may-day-strike/>

Elsewhere, as in previous years, actions will be held in several cities — from Los Angeles to Milwaukee to New York — to press for amnesty and rights for immigrant workers in the U.S., a question that’s crucial to unifying the working class and strengthening the labor movement. For those working without papers that the government considers adequate, another demand is they be able to get driver’s licenses.

In the U.S., May Day was first celebrated in 1886, when working people and labor unions launched a fight for the eight-hour day. That demand still resonates for millions here and worldwide who face the bosses’ drive to lengthen the workday and workweek with intolerable schedules. In 2006 and 2007 millions of workers took to the streets to demand rights for immigrant workers.

SWP campaigners win support

Continued from front page

munist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. to win 1,350 new readers to the *Militant*, sell 1,350 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries and raise \$165,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund. The new book is on special for \$5 through June 15.

SWP members Jeanne Fitzmaurice and Jacob Perasso campaigned in Everett, Washington, April 21, days after autoworkers at the Chattanooga, Tennessee, Volkswagen plant voted overwhelmingly for union recognition. “The vote for the United Auto Workers shows that the low point of labor resistance is behind us,” Fitzmaurice told Lisa Black, a member of the International Association of Machinists and a 20-year worker at Boeing, the aircraft manufacturer.

“We’ve been following the UAW fight,” Black said. “We’re preparing to go on strike in September. Boeing used to set the standard for wages in the area but we have people working decades now who can’t afford to buy a home. We can’t survive anymore with inflation. Boeing will try to buy us off with a bonus, but workers are setting aside strike funds.”

“Our paper is featuring a statement by Rachele Fruit defending Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews,” Perasso told her. On April 13 Iran’s capitalist government unleashed a drone and mis-

sile onslaught on Israel, escalating its decadeslong drive to destroy the country and drive Jews out of the region.

“It doesn’t make sense that people say the Jews control everything but yet they are somehow still always targeted,” Black said. She got a year’s subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*.

In the face of the rising violence targeting Jews, the book presents a road forward to end Jew-hatred and all national oppression, by forging proletarian parties able to lead hundreds of millions to fight for workers power, uproot capitalist exploitation and join the fight for a socialist world.

In Montreal, Communist League campaigners sold nine copies of the new book within days of receiving it. Three people bought it at the Bring Them Home Now march April 14, a weekly action in support of the Israeli hostages kidnapped by Hamas on Oct. 7.

Fatimata Ouedraogo, a day care worker and student, was participating in the march for the first time, along with her two young sons. “I’m worried about a third world war, and I want to understand what is happening,” she told CL member Katy LeRougetel. Ouedraogo got the book and made a contribution toward the Militant Fighting Fund.



Militant/Tony Lane

When Candace Wagner, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, knocked on his door in Butler, Pennsylvania, UAW member Richard LeGrande said even with a union job it’s hard to afford housing. LeGrande got a *Militant* subscription, three books by SWP leaders.

“This book explains why it’s important to defend Israel as a refuge for Jewish people,” SWP member Janice Lynn told auto mechanic Noe Mendoza, showing him a copy of the new book, on the porch of his home in Athens, Georgia, April 16.

“It is important to be educated on what is really going on in the world,” Mendoza said. “You can’t believe what you hear in the news.” He bought the book along with the Spanish-language edition of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*, a subscription to the *Militant*, and made a \$5 contribution to the Militant Fighting Fund.

Mendoza told Lynn he was interested in learning more about Rachele Fruit’s presidential campaign, a working-class alternative to Biden, Trump, Kennedy and other capitalist candidates.

“I had coffee with a young worker this morning following his shift as a grocery clerk,” Joe Swanson told the *Militant* April 22. “He told me a few weeks ago he didn’t want to renew his *Militant* subscription because of the paper’s coverage on the war in Gaza and what his friends were saying about it.

“We went through the centerfold feature of this week’s issue of the paper, the first chapter of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*. He appreciated the discussion, thanked me and renewed his subscription for six months and bought a copy of the book.”

To campaign for Rachele Fruit and other SWP and Communist League candidates, contact the campaign office near you on page 8. Donations to the Militant Fighting Fund can be made out to the *Militant* and sent to 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, or online at themilitant.com.

Bookshop fights for right to send books to prisoners

BY JANICE LYNN

ATHENS, Ga. — The Avid Bookshop here is fighting for the right to send books to prisoners. It filed a lawsuit against the sheriff and jail commander of the Gwinnett County Jail in mid-March for refusing to accept books from their shop.

“We are an independent bookseller and the jail’s policy violates our First Amendment right to free speech,” Luis Correa, the store’s operations manager, told the *Militant* April 16. “A lot of what we carry reflects our views on social issues.”

The lawsuit says, “Avid’s mission is not merely to sell books, but to ‘stand up for human rights, equality, and the freedom to read.’” They recommend books to customers, including shipping them to prisoners.

The jail’s policy “violates the rights of prisoners, not allowing them to

explore the world through books,” Correa said. “We want to be a part of anything to make their lives more humane.” The lawsuit says that reading is one of the few means available to prisoners “for education, self-improvement and entertainment while they are incarcerated.”

On two occasions Correa mailed books for two customers to a prisoner at the jail. Both times the packages were returned with a notification they were not sent from an “authorized retailer.”

In phone calls to the jail, Correa was told the prison only accepts books from Amazon and Barnes & Noble, and that Avid could not become an authorized retailer. Officials claim this is necessary to ensure that pages would not be soaked in drugs or otherwise create safety issues.

The jail’s policy contains no criteria for designating an authorized retailer.

This ensures an “arbitrary and potentially discriminatory or even viewpoint-based application of the Authorized Retailer Policy,” the lawsuit says, violating equal protection under the law guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.

The Avid Bookshop asks the court to declare the jail’s policy unconstitutional and stop authorities from enforcing it. Correa said that they have received wide support from customers, as well as from members of the American Booksellers Association and PEN America.

“This lawsuit is not just for the right of our bookshop to send books to prisoners,” Correa said, “but will serve as an example for other independent and community bookstores that want to do the same.”

Past lawsuits challenging restrictions on prisoners’ access to books in many state and federal prisons have been successful. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the First Amendment encompasses the right to receive books and publications in jail. The *Militant* has successfully challenged attempts to ban the paper at prisons around the country.



Militant/Marklyn Wilson

Gwinnett County Jail’s ban on sending books to prisoners “violates our First Amendment right to free speech,” said Luis Correa, above, operations manager for Avid Bookshop in Georgia.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2024! Campaign for what you are for, not who you’re against!

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

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

‘Workers need a labor party’

Continued from front page
negotiations have broken off.

“The company wants to break the union here as they have done at other Molson Coors facilities that were organized by the Teamsters,” said Miedema, pointing to the need to build and strengthen the unions. “The railroad line that comes into this plant is non-union. The trucks that take products in and out are nonunion. If the workers at these companies had a union, it would help us to win the strike.”

“There are about half a million workers who will be in contract fights this year. Workers are in a mood to fight,” Fruit told Miedema. “We are raising the need for workers to break from the capitalist parties, to form our own party, a labor party based on the unions. It would reach out to organize all working people, to fight for class interests, starting with solidarity with each other’s fights.”

“I agree with that 100%,” Miedema said, asking the SWP candidates to help spread the word about their fight. Fruit said that’s exactly what she planned to do.

At an SWP campaign rally the next day, Fruit described her visit with the Molson Coors strikers, how Miedema had told her and Kennedy, “We’re not going back without a fair contract.”

“The future of humanity depends on the U.S. working class taking power away from the capitalist rulers and start-

ing down the road to a socialist revolution,” Fruit told the meeting. “The fight over which class will rule is the central question that matters for working people everywhere in the world. And the U.S. working class is decisive in that fight.”

“The U.S. is a weakened imperialist power today, but still the most powerful,” she said. “Its rulers are determined to defend their position throughout the world, as do their competitors, allies and enemies alike.”

“We oppose U.S. troops, bases, armaments, all of it, anywhere in the world,” she said. “Their aim is to prepare for wars, which will never cease until the working class takes political power.”

Workers stand up and fight

“We see workers today standing up and fighting, seeing each other for the first time in a new light,” she said. “They are recognizing their humanity and their capacity for solidarity. They see themselves as fighting not primarily for themselves but for future generations of workers.”

Fruit pointed to the central importance of workers’ fights to defend constitutional freedoms under attack today. “The various frame-ups against Donald Trump cooked up by the White House and Democratic prosecutors are meant to prevent him from running for president and prevent millions from voting for him.”

“It is the working class that will have to fight to defend these rights — freedom of speech, assembly, of worship and the rest — and defend them for everyone, including our political opponents and enemies.”

“None of us can control how the class struggle will unfold,” she said. But the Socialist Workers Party is in tune with it, we are part of it, we respond to it. Our experience — from the Big Three autoworkers, the VW organizing drive in Tennessee and much more — shows workers are in a mood to fight.

“We say workers need a political weapon independent of the bosses’ parties. A labor party would explain that no worker has to die on the job. We need workers control of safety and all aspects of production,” she said. “It would fight for a government-funded public works program to provide jobs for all at union-scale wages, to build schools, hospitals, bridges, mass transit and other things workers need, and for cost-of-living adjustments to our wages and benefits to combat inflation.”

“It would fight to unite all workers together, regardless of race, creed or nationality,” she said. “It would demand amnesty for undocumented workers, and encourage all workers to join unions and fight together.”

“It would fight for a working-class foreign policy, from Israel’s right to exist and to defend itself from Jew-hatred and pogroms to Ukrainian workers’ determination to beat back Mos-



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, visited picket line of Teamsters Local 997 on strike against Molson Coors in Fort Worth April 19. From left, Rick Miedema, local’s secretary-treasurer; Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate; striking union members Travis Rose and Landon Groat. They won’t “go back without a fair contract.”

cow’s deadly invasion.

“If you agree that our class needs to break and form a party that represents our class interests, you can express that by supporting the Socialist Workers Party campaign,” she said. “I urge you to endorse the campaign, to join in campaigning with us.”

“Our campaign will, first and foremost, defend the Jewish people. The Oct. 7 pogrom, carried out by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad with help and direction from the reactionary capitalist government of Iran, slaughtered 1,200 people — mostly Jewish civilians — left more than 5,000 wounded, seized over 240 hostages and raped scores of women.

“But since April 13, Israel is no longer just confronting Iran’s proxies. Iran launched 320 missiles and drones, the overwhelming number of which were knocked out by Israeli forces and others, including several Arab regimes in the area.

“I issued a statement, which says, ‘The fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms is decisive for the working class the world over.’ As the crisis of the capitalist rulers deepens, ‘they will turn to fascist forces to divide, attack and seek to crush workers, the oppressed and the unions. The rulers will raise the banner of Jew-hatred to scapegoat Jews as the enemy, not the capitalist system.’”

Fruit pointed to the importance of the new book from Pathfinder, *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*.

“It shows that the Socialist Workers Party is rooted in the continuity of the communist movement in the fight against Jew-hatred, as in all other key class questions,” she said. “This goes back to the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution led by V.I. Lenin in 1917, Leon Trotsky’s battle to defend that legacy against Stalinist counterrevolution in the

1920s and ’30s, and the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro in 1959.

‘No better thing to do with your life’

“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,” Fruit said. “The same thing is true of working people here in the U.S. They are beginning to see our class as a social force with immense potential power.”

She urged those at the meeting to get involved in the SWP campaign. “There is no better thing you can do with your life.”

Alyson Kennedy told the meeting that the SWP intends to put its presidential ticket on the ballot in six states in 2024 — New Jersey, Tennessee, Washington, Minnesota, Vermont and Louisiana. “The Dallas-Fort Worth and Miami branches of the SWP are taking responsibility to get the party on the ballot in Louisiana. We will begin the week after next with a team in the Shreveport area and other parts of the state in the summer.”

During the discussion, Gerardo Sánchez said he had attended a sugarcane workers conference in the Dominican Republic along with Fruit, bringing greetings from his union, Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 111. The Dominican unionists in turn sent greetings to the International Flavors and Fragrances workers, who were on strike in Memphis, Tennessee, that he delivered.

Meeting participants ate a delicious dinner before the program and contributed \$1,290 to the SWP national campaign.

Alyson Kennedy contributed to this article.

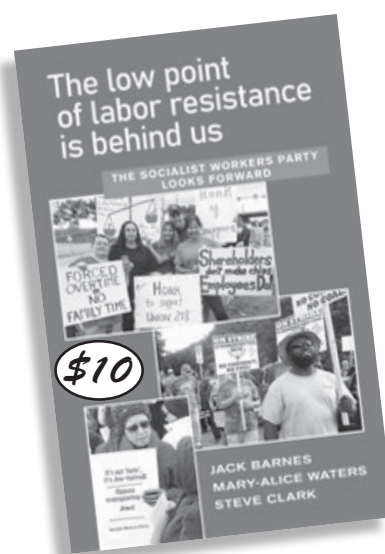
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March 9-May 7 (week six)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta*	55	40	55	34	\$10,250	\$6,660
Chicago	100	54	100	57	\$14,000	\$7,794
Cincinnati	50	27	50	26	\$5,000	\$2,778
Dallas-Ft. Worth	60	35	60	50	\$5,000	\$4,055
Lincoln	15	11	15	12	\$500	\$404
Los Angeles*	120	95	120	95	\$16,000	\$4,380
Miami	35	16	35	49	\$5,000	\$2,505
Minneapolis	70	38	70	34	\$5,500	\$3,333
N. New Jersey	75	48	75	52	\$7,500	\$6,029
New York	100	61	100	67	\$20,500	\$15,793
Oakland	80	60	80	51	\$15,500	\$10,981
Philadelphia	55	35	55	50	\$6,000	\$4,421
Pittsburgh	45	26	45	23	\$6,000	\$3,384
Seattle	70	49	70	42	\$14,500	\$10,873
Washington	60	34	60	48	\$5,000	\$2,235
Other	0	22	0	150	\$0	\$1,750
Total U.S.	990	651	990	840	\$136,250	\$87,375
Prisoners		69				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	45	31	45	24	\$2,560	\$1,570
Manchester	35	29	35	24	\$1,200	\$350
Total U.K.	80	60	80	48	\$3,760	\$1,920
Canada	90	68	110	94	\$12,150	\$10,315
Australia	30	25	30	31	\$5,000	\$3,600
Total	1,190	873	1,210	1,013	\$157,160	\$103,210
SHOULD BE	1,350	1,013	1,350	1,013	\$165,000	\$123,750
* Raised goal						



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Lenin and the Bolsheviks: A united workers party and the fight against the pogroms

Below are the introductory note and excerpts from the second chapter of the new book *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class, which includes two of the writings by V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the Bolshevik Party. The book describes the continuity of the communist movement in the fight against Jew-hatred going back more than 100 years. It helps make clear the decisive importance of building a communist leadership capable of leading hundreds of millions to fight to take political power for the working class and oppressed nations in the U.S. and worldwide. Copyright © 2024 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

From the opening of the twentieth century, V.I. Lenin led the political fight in the tsarist empire's massive "prison house of nations" for a united and centralized working-class party — a party incorporating all those who agreed with its program, regardless of their language, national, or religious origin.

That disciplined revolutionary workers party, known as the Bolsheviks from 1903 on, joined the front lines of the fight against anti-Jewish pogroms promoted by Russia's capitalist rulers. The Bolshevik-led proletarian government brought to power by the victorious October 1917 revolution put a stop to those brutal attacks on Jews.

The young soviet government was defended by the newly formed volunteer Red Army, led by Lenin and commanded by Leon Trotsky. Its backbone came from the ranks of the most politically conscious workers of all nationalities throughout the former tsarist realm. In a bitter war lasting some three years, they not only crushed the counterrevolutionary armies of Russia's toppled capitalists and landowners. They also defeated the invading armies of imperialist powers from London and Paris, as well as from Washington, Tokyo, and others.

The survival and victory of the new workers state was due in no small part to the intransigent battle the Bolshe-

viks waged — before, during, and after the October victory — to defend the rights of all oppressed nationalities, including the millions of Jews, across the former tsarist empire. The Bolsheviks educated the toilers about the origins and reactionary character of Jew-hatred. Lenin's two opening pieces from 1918-19 are examples.



Jews aren't working people's enemies, the enemies are capitalists of all countries

From speech on phonograph record V.I. Lenin, March 1919

Anti-Semitism means spreading enmity towards the Jews.

When the accursed tsarist monarchy was living its last days it tried to incite ignorant workers and peasants against the Jews. The tsarist police, in alliance with the landowners and the capitalists, organized pogroms against the Jews. The landowners and capitalists tried to divert against the Jews the hatred of the workers and peasants who were tortured by want. In other countries, too, we often see the capitalists fomenting hatred against the Jews in order to blind the workers, to turn away their attention from the enemy of the working people, capital. . . .

It is not the Jews who are the enemies of the working people. The enemies of the workers are the capitalists of all countries. Among the Jews there are working people, and they form the majority. They are our brothers, who, like us, are oppressed by capital; they are our comrades in the struggle for socialism.

Among the Jews there are kulaks, exploiters, and capitalists, just as there are among the Russians, and among people of all nations. The capitalists strive to sow and foment hatred between workers of different faiths, dif-

ferent nations, and different races. Those who do not work are kept in power by the power and strength of capital. Rich Jews, like rich Russians, and the rich in all countries, are in alliance to oppress, crush, rob, and disunite the workers.

Shame on accursed tsarism, which tortured and persecuted the Jews. Shame on those who foment hatred toward the Jews, who foment hatred toward other nations. Long live the fraternal trust and fighting alliance of the workers of all nations in the struggle to overthrow capital.



Pogroms are fatal to the workers and peasants revolution

From resolution of the Council of People's Commissars V.I. Lenin, July 1918

According to reports received by the Council of People's Commissars, the counterrevolutionaries are carrying on agitation for pogroms in many cities, especially in the frontier zone, as a result of which there have been sporadic outrages against the toiling Jewish population. The bourgeois counterrevolution has taken up the weapon that has slipped from the hands of the tsar.

The absolutist government, each time when the need arose, turned the wrath of the peoples directed at itself against the Jews, at the same time telling the uneducated masses that all their misery comes from the Jews. . . .

In the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, where the principle of self-determination of the toiling mass-

deployment of U.S. forces in Europe, who are there to advance Washington's imperialist interests, and calls for their withdrawal, including their nuclear weapons," she said.

Moscow's 'missile terrorism'

Moscow's "missile terrorism" has destroyed "almost all of Ukraine's thermal energy generation," the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) and the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU) said April 19 in an appeal for solidarity to the European trade union movement. Power cuts mean coal miners "find themselves in constant danger underground during blackouts and attacks in Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk regions."

Cynical double rocket strikes are used to target "rescuers and ambulance workers who are members of the KVPU and FPU." The union statement noted that "Russian forces also torture, illegally imprison and kill civilians, including workers and trade unionists, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine."

Over 80 missiles and drones targeted



"It's not the Jews who are the enemies of working people — it's the capitalists of all countries," Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin said in 1919 speech he recorded and widely circulated on phonograph records sent out across the country.

es of all peoples has been proclaimed, there is no room for national oppression. The Jewish bourgeois are our enemies, not as Jews but as bourgeois. The Jewish worker is our brother.

Any kind of hatred against any nation is inadmissible and shameful.

The Council of People's Commissars declares that the anti-Semitic movement and pogroms against the Jews are fatal to the interests of the workers and peasants revolution and calls upon the toiling people of Socialist Russia to fight this evil with all the means at their disposal.

National hostility weakens the ranks of our revolutionaries, disrupts the united front of the toilers without distinctions of nationality, and helps only our enemies.

The Council of People's Commissars instructs all Soviet deputies to take uncompromising measures to tear the anti-Semitic movement out by the roots. Pogromists and pogrom-agitators are to be placed outside the law.

Support Israel as refuge for Jews!

Continued from front page to protest for higher income and better conditions.

Like many other governments in Muslim countries, despite their public criticism of Israel's conduct of its war in Gaza, the Saudi and Jordanian rulers want to see Hamas, Tehran and its so-called axis of resistance defeated. They see Tehran's course of extending its counterrevolutionary influence through the arming of proxy militias across the region as a threat to their own capitalist regimes and alliances.

Tehran now admits it financed, organized and helped plan the Oct. 7 pogrom. Hamas and Islamic Jihad death squads killed more than 1,200 people, wounded more than 5,000, took over 240 hostages and raped scores of women. It was the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust by the Nazis.

Tehran has repeatedly denounced the Abraham Accords that established diplomatic relations with Israel by the governments of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan and Kosovo in 2020 and 2021.

In March, in another slap in the face for Tehran, the government of Indonesia, home to the largest Muslim population in the world, confirmed its plans to establish diplomatic relations with Israel soon. The two countries already conduct millions of dollars in trade and tourism every year.

Israel prepares for Rafah offensive

Despite continuing pressure from the Joseph Biden administration in Washington for Israel to wind down the war in Gaza, the Israeli military is moving ahead with plans to attack the last remaining Hamas strongholds in Rafah, near the Egyptian border. Defeating Hamas and demolishing its command structure is key to preventing it from organizing future pogroms. The end of its dictatorial rule will open space for workers to begin organizing and acting in their own interests and to join together with fel-

low working people across the region, including in Israel.

More than 250,000 of the 1.3 million Palestinians in Rafah have already moved north in the last few weeks, in anticipation of a new Israeli offensive. According to *Haaretz* the Egyptian government is assisting in building a tent city just west of Khan Younis for those leaving Rafah, to help limit the number of civilian casualties.

Open Jew-hatred at universities

Over the last several weeks Hamas apologists among middle-class layers in the U.S. — at universities from Columbia to Yale and beyond — are more openly showing that their call for a cease-fire in Gaza has been a cover for their true goal, the destruction of Israel and the spread of Jew-hatred.

Supporters of a so-called Gaza Solidarity Encampment at Columbia University April 17 chanted, "Al-Qassam [one of Hamas' military units] make us proud, kill another soldier now!" One prominent sign, with an arrow pointed at Jewish students who were counterprotesting, read "Al-Qassam brigades' next target."

At the request of the university president, New York City police shut down the encampment at Columbia April 18, arresting some 100 students. A number of them were suspended. By the next day the pro-Hamas forces had occupied another nearby lawn on the campus and had stepped up their antisemitic actions with officials doing nothing to protect Jewish students. Similar "occupations" have been set up at New York University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California, Berkeley and other campuses.

Eliana Goldin, a Jewish student at Columbia, was part of a group of students countering other Hamas supporters who were cheering on the encampment near the campus entrance. "We were verbally harassed, and some of my friends were

physically assaulted," she told the Jewish Insider April 21. "Public Safety and the NYPD did not help us. We were essentially stalked and followed as we tried to leave.

"They yelled at us to go back to Poland, that we have no culture and chanted, 'Strike, strike Tel Aviv!'" Goldin said.

Instead of ensuring the safety of Jews on campus, the administration cancelled all in-person classes.

Many of Columbia's faculty members — and not just in its Mideast studies department — are well-known for calling for the destruction of Israel. Professor Joseph Massad said that Hamas' Oct. 7 slaughter was "awesome" and a "stunning victory of the Palestinian resistance." A visiting professor, Mohamed Abdou — described on the university's

website as an expert in "critical race and Islamic studies, as well as gender, sexuality, abolition and decolonization" — boasted, "Yes, I'm with Hamas and Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad."

While such opinions get a hearing among privileged middle-class layers, they're deeply abhorrent to the big majority of working people. These attitudes fit with the increasingly popular "cancel culture" and "woke" politics that have become common on college campuses.

Ariana Pinsker-Lehrer, a student at Columbia's School of Social Work, told the *Militant*, "I can understand some people wanting to support a cease-fire. But how can you do that and support Hamas?" She pointed out that Hamas' goal is not peace but the destruction of Israel. "They're not interested in discussion or in the facts."

Protests spread against 'Russian law' in Georgia



Some 20,000 people, mainly young, protested in Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, April 18, chanting, "No to the Russian law!" The former Soviet republic bordering Russia on the Black Sea has been rocked for days by demonstrations opposing the ruling Georgian Dream party's controversial bill to outlaw "foreign influence." Above, another protest four days later. Demonstrators see the law as modeled on one used by Russian President Vladimir Putin's repressive regime to clamp down on dissent.

Cops fired tear gas and beat and arrested some protesters. More actions are planned in early May. Last year the government tried to push through a similar bill, but mass demonstrations forced the government to back off.

"This is about our future, it's about Georgia's fate!" Giorgi Toroshelidze told the *Kyiv Post*. "Not only will we make them repeal this law, we won't tolerate a pro-Russian government ruling in Georgia any longer."

— ROY LANDERSEN

Working people in Ukraine fight to defend their independence, Moscow attacks war protesters at home

Continued from front page

pense of working people in both Russia and Ukraine. Moscow billboards quote him, "Russia's borders do not end anywhere." This signals the expansionist ambitions of his Great Russian chauvinist regime modeled on the czarist empire and on Joseph Stalin's rule after he crushed the revolutionary working-class movement built by V.I. Lenin.

"The Socialist Workers Party supports the courageous Ukrainian working people defending their country's sovereignty and calls for the defeat of Moscow's invasion forces," Alyson Kennedy, the party's candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, told the *Militant* April 23. "Communists oppose the U.S.-led sanctions against Russia, which hit working people the hardest. These economic measures are a barrier to the solidarity that is possible and needed between Ukrainian and Russian working people, and by workers in the U.S.

"The SWP also opposes the

energy facilities across the country April 11 with the Trypillia thermal power plant, the country's largest, just south of Kyiv, being destroyed. Days later, scores of people were killed or injured as missiles struck apartment buildings in the northern city of Chernihiv and then in Dnipro and elsewhere in the Dnipropetrovsk region.

While Putin claims he is the champion of the people of eastern Ukraine, the fact is he has systematically destroyed the infrastructure, industrial base and fields across the region. An April 21 *New York Times* article titled, "Russian Attacks Crush Villages" graphically describes this reality.

Plants like the massive Azovstal steel mill in Mariupol, the giant ammonia plant in Sievierodonetsk and the Avdiivka coking coal plant have been obliterated, with workers driven out, arrested or killed. The Kurakhove Heating and Power Plant, 6 miles from the front, has been targeted 48 times by artillery and rockets this year.

The Ukrainian parliament passed a new mobilization law April 19, seek-

ing to boost the size of the country's armed forces by 300,000 to 1.2 million. Since the popular Mайдан mass mobilizations overthrew the pro-Moscow government of Viktor Yanukovich in 2014, tens of thousands of working-class volunteers have flocked into the territorial militias and army.

This greatly expanded after Moscow invaded in 2022 as Ukraine pushed Russian forces back. But now with increasing assaults by Moscow, the capitalist government in Kyiv has had to turn to conscription to augment its forces.

The Putin regime is gambling that Russia's greater population and resources will enable it to win a protracted war of destruction, as backing for Kyiv from Washington and European powers weakens.

But Putin faces opposition to his brutal war bubbling on the home front, fueled by the heavy casualties resulting from his "human waste" offensive, despite deepening repression.

A video appeal was made to Russian authorities in early April by families of soldiers mobilized for the 1454th Regiment from the Yugra region in central

Russia. It complained that the men were

used by their commanders as cannon fodder in "meat grinder assaults" on Ukrainian lines near Avdiivka. Units at their back were ordered to shoot soldiers trying to avoid fire or retreat. Within five days, the relatives said, their men's unit was effectively destroyed.

The Way Home, a group of wives and mothers of mobilized reservists, is demanding the return of their loved ones from extended service at the front. After police harassment of their weekly flower-laying protests, they are now organizing actions by women banging pots and pans from their balconies.

Russian working people are the greatest potential allies for Ukrainian toilers' fight to defend their national sovereignty.

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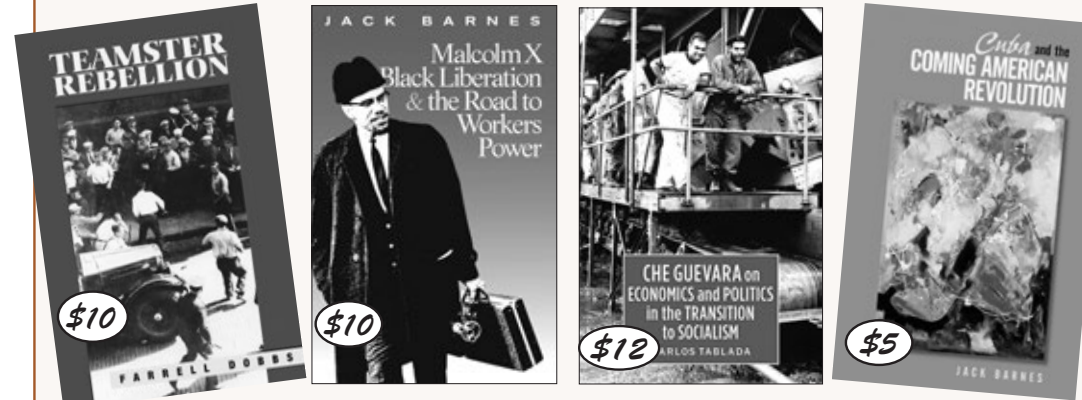
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Russia's socialist revolution posed the road forward everywhere

The Left Opposition in the U.S.: Writings and Speeches, 1928-31 by James P. Cannon is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. Cannon was won to the political course of the 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party under V.I. Lenin. Cannon helped found the Communist Party in the U.S. in 1919, part of the newly formed Communist International. In 1928, he joined the opposition led by Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky to the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and Communist parties. His tribute to the Bolshevik Revolution, "Fortress of the World Revolution," below was run in the first issue of the Militant, Nov. 15, 1928. Copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Jules Humbert-Droz Archives

Delegates to the Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, Azerbaijan, September 1920. "Soviet Russia is the fortress of the world revolution," James P. Cannon said. It "inspires and strengthens the movement of the workers and oppressed peoples throughout the world."

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

Eleven years have gone by since the Russian workers took the hammer of revolution in their hands and broke the chain of world imperialism at its weakest link. The history of the whole intervening period represents on the one hand the efforts of the imperialists to forge that chain together again and bind it tighter around the enslaved masses and, on the other hand, the struggle of the proletariat to tear it apart from the whole of humanity.

The Russian revolution was not merely a national event — it was the begin-

ning of and signal for the international proletarian revolution. Herein lies its true meaning, its great historic significance. From this standpoint the revolutionary workers of the world hail the cause of Soviet Russia as their cause on the eleventh anniversary of her October.

The Russian revolution broke forever the unity of the world and divided it into two hostile camps — the camp of imperialist exploitation and the camp of social revolution. At one polar extreme stands America, the strongest imperialist world power. At the other stands the USSR, the land of the workers' rule. The antagonism between them, and the systems they represent, is irreconcilable. They cannot live together permanently side by side. The victory of the Soviet system on a world scale means the liberation of enslaved humanity and its ascent to heights of culture and achievement beyond our dreams — to socialism and beyond that to communism. The victory of imperialism would hurl civilization into the abyss. Such is the issue of the epoch of wars and revolutions in which we live and fight.

The Russian revolution revived the revolutionary movement of the world and inspired the proletarian masses with new confidence and hope. It lifted up the banner of socialism, trampled in the mud of social patriotism by the traitor leaders of the Socialist parties, and

made it again synonymous with internationalism. Lenin, the leader of the Russian revolution, was also the leader of the Communist International, which arose out of the ruins brought about by social treason in the war. Eleven years of the dictatorship of the proletariat has confirmed everything that Lenin taught about the international significance of the revolution and the indissoluble bonds between it and the world proletariat.

Soviet Russia is the fortress of the world revolution. While it stands, the imperialist system shakes on its foundations. Every attempt at stabilization brings greater insecurity and deeper contradictions. The example and the brotherly help of Soviet Russia inspires and strengthens the movement of the workers and oppressed peoples throughout the world. The flag of our socialist fatherland is the flag of our hope. On this eleventh anniversary we again hail it as our own.

Between the Soviet republics united in the USSR and the international revolutionary proletariat there is an organic connection. They are bound together spiritually and politically. They are united by ties of mutual solidarity which no power on earth can break. Just as the Soviet republics constitute an impregnable fortress of the world revolution, so is the international proletariat the protector of the Soviet republics. The revolutionary

workers see in every blow aimed at Soviet Russia a blow aimed at their own cause, and react against it as such. The defense of the Soviet Union is our own fight. It is and will be a central rallying slogan of the labor militants of the entire world. "Defend the Soviet Union!" is a slogan leading the workers to follow the example of the Russian revolution. So they must conceive it. So will the victory of socialism in Russia and throughout the world be finally secured.

The victory of the Russian proletariat grew out of the World War. The establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia and the organization of the Communist International — two vast achievements historically linked together — are the plus signs against the slaughter of the millions and the collapse of the Second International. The imperialist warmakers and their "Socialist" lackeys unleashed forces which they could not control.

The imperialist masters of the world want to take back these gains of the workers wrested out of the bloody pit of war and revolution. Armaments are being multiplied on an unprecedented scale. War clouds darken the skies. War plans grow apace. They are aimed primarily at Soviet Russia and through it at the entire international labor movement.

The celebrations of the workers throughout the world on this eleventh anniversary of the Russian revolution must therefore be dominated above all by the solemn realization of the war danger and the steel resolve to meet it by revolutionary means; by the resolve to put all our weight and all our sacrifice in the scale for the cause of Soviet Russia, which is the cause of the oppressed and exploited.

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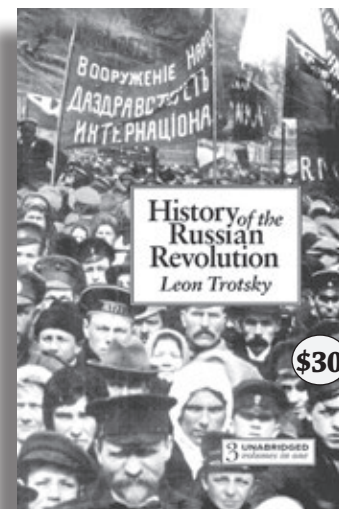
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The opening guns of World War III

The U.S. rulers' 1991 war on Iraq, and their inability to decisively win it, sounded the opening guns of World War III. It announced that the world order born out of Washington's emergence as the top dog in World War II was coming apart. That the rulers' clashes for markets, resources and influence would only sharpen.

That reality has become more apparent ever since. Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom was orchestrated by the reactionary Iranian rulers, escalating their decadeslong drive to destroy Israel and annihilate all the Jews. Alongside Moscow's war to obliterate Ukraine, it marked a further turning point in the rulers' crisis, deepening the threat of a nuclear catastrophe.

The reality of the imperialist epoch, its breakdowns and sharpening conflict, and the horrors it unleashes on working people are out of the control of the U.S. rulers and their rivals. But the working class — here and worldwide — has the capacity to end imperialism's exploitation and predatory wars once and for all.

Tied to their dog-eat-dog competition and inevitable conflicts is the capitalist rulers' relentless drive to profit by stepping up their exploitation of workers. But today the low point of labor resistance is clearly behind us. From strike battles reported weekly in the *Militant*, to the victorious United Auto Workers union drive at Volkswagen, the assaults by the bosses are breeding class struggle.

In the course of these battles, workers begin to acquire self-confidence and class consciousness. We learn that the claims by Democrats and Republicans

and "independent" capitalist candidates like Robert Kennedy Jr. that they govern for "all Americans" are a lie. They all serve the bosses. The conflict between the capitalist rulers and the tens of millions of working people underlies all political questions.

"Whether or not the unthinkable horrors of a third imperialist world slaughter are unleashed will be decided by mighty class battles and their outcome in the coming years," writes Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, in "Washington's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III" in *New Internationalist* no. 7. "It is in our hands, the hands of the workers of the world to prevent the calamities that imperialism is marching, and stumbling, toward."

The conquest of power by workers and farmers in Russia in 1917, led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, showed the kind of leadership that is needed for our class to overturn capitalist rule, take political power in our own hands, uproot exploitation and begin putting an end to national oppression, Jew-hatred and war.

In 1959 Cuba's socialist revolution demonstrated once again that working people could forge proletarian leadership of the highest caliber and transform both society and ourselves.

The Socialist Workers Party seeks to emulate the course set by the leadership of these two great socialist revolutions. Join in campaigning for and building a party to lead the fight for workers power in the U.S. to end forever the capitalists march toward fascism and a third world war.

Trump's trial — attack on constitutional freedoms

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partisan hysteria against the former president.

Trump is charged with maneuvering to conceal payments to Michael Cohen, his lawyer at the time, who is alleged to have paid Stephanie Clifford, also known as Stormy Daniels, in exchange for her silence about a relationship she claims she had with Trump. But signing a nondisclosure agreement is not a crime and even if Trump is found guilty of falsifying business records, it's only a misdemeanor. To get around this, Bragg cooks up a felony — with potential jail time — by claiming the payments to Cohen were part of a scheme to "unlawfully" corrupt the 2016 election.

Prosecutor Matthew Colangelo, a former Biden administration official now on Bragg's payroll, tried to puff up this "crime" during opening statements. He accused Trump of a "long-running conspiracy" that was "election fraud, pure and simple."

This is the first-ever criminal trial of a presidential candidate of one of the U.S. rulers' two main parties. It's a political prosecution put together after Bragg campaigned for DA as the candidate most likely to bring Trump down. And it's an unconcealed assault on First Amendment rights to free speech. Safeguarding these freedoms is vital to workers and our unions.

Trump's lawyers tried to get the trial moved out of New York City, with its overwhelming Democratic Party majority. The need for this was made clear by the difficulty the judge had in selecting a jury. He excused some 200 people for being unable to reach a fair verdict before 12 jurors and six alternates could be seated. Even then, some of those selected made it clear they were prejudiced against Trump.

One woman said she thought Trump "seems very selfish and self-serving," adding, "I don't like his persona." Merchan seated her anyway. The Constitution's Sixth Amendment gives all those facing charges the right to a "public trial, by an impartial jury."

Judge gags a presidential candidate

Merchan has imposed a far-reaching gag order on Trump that bans him from commenting about potential witnesses that Bragg may call during the trial, including those who are campaigning against him.

Prosecutors filed a motion urging Merchan to fine Trump for allegedly violating the gag order by referring to Cohen and Clifford as "two sleaze bags," and for retweeting a statement by Michael Avenatti, Clifford's former lawyer. He says, "It is outrageous that Cohen and Daniels can do countless TV interviews,

post on social [media] and make \$\$ on bogus documentaries — all by talking s--t about Trump — but he's gagged and threatened with jail" if he responds.

Bragg insists Trump's description of Cohen as a "disgraced attorney and felon" breaches the gag. But Cohen says he lied in court and to the media and pleaded guilty to lying to Congress, for which he was disbarred from practicing law in New York.

Prosecutors demand Merchan threaten Trump with 30-days in jail for any further remarks about Cohen, Clifford or other witnesses. When defense lawyer Todd Blanche pointed out that Trump was merely replying "to a barrage of political attacks" from Cohen, Merchan dismissed it, warning Blanche he was "losing all credibility with the court."

A higher court will hear Trump's appeal of the gag order after April 29. Merchan's assault on free speech protections undermines Trump's ability to defend himself and advance his presidential campaign.

Bragg's case has gotten help from the judge. When the statute of limitations ran out on the charge of falsifying business records, Merchan said it was OK, he could file the charges anyway, justifying the extension because of the COVID pandemic.

Bragg says the falsification of business records was done with the intent to carry out another crime, which makes it a felony, but he has yet to identify what that charge is. Instead, he drops innuendos, like the far-fetched argument that paying off a mistress should have been filed as a campaign expense!

None of his allegations amount to anything close to a crime. But Bragg and Merchan are determined to push ahead. Democrats fear that the other cases they've cooked up against Trump won't go to trial in time to affect the election, if ever.

Even some liberals admit the case is an embarrassment. Jed Handelsman Shugerman, a law professor at Boston University, wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* April 23 titled, "The Bragg Case Against Trump Is a Historic Mistake." He sums the prosecution up as "an embarrassment of prosecutorial ethics and apparent selective prosecution."

As the Democrat-led assault on rights continues, more workers recognize the courts will not only be used against a conservative capitalist politician like Trump, but also by the bosses and their government to frame us up when we fight their attacks. And especially when we form our own party, a labor party, and enter the political arena to advance our own class interests against the employing class.

UAW win at Volkswagen

Continued from front page

Garner, a veteran union builder at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance, Alabama, told the *Militant* by phone April 21. "The Chattanooga victory is helping us win over people who are still on the sidelines and haven't yet signed union cards. We're fired up now."

Workers at the Mercedes-Benz plant are voting May 13-17 on union recognition after a big majority of the 5,000 workers there signed union cards in less than five months, forcing the National Labor Relations Board to schedule an election.

Previous attempts to unionize at Volkswagen in 2014 and 2019 failed in close votes. Gains made by UAW strikes last fall against Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis, a fight closely followed by millions across the country, won wide support.

The series of strikes showed it was possible to win gains in wages and benefits after years of concessions.

"Five years ago unions weren't doing any organizing," Todd Dunn, president of amalgamated UAW Local 862 that includes Ford's Kentucky Truck Plant, told the *Militant*. "We sent a message during the recent strike, that now is the time to fight."

Volkswagen offered an 11% wage raise, hoping to undercut union support. But the company also planned to raise health insurance premiums by 15%.

"Job safety and health care costs are two of the primary issues that workers at the plant hope to address," Victor Vaughn, a member of the union-organizing committee at Volkswagen, told CBS. "That was a shock to us," he said of the hike in health care costs.

Tennessee Gov. William Lee also tried to undercut support for the union. On a visit to Chattanooga, he said voting for the union would be a "big mistake."

He was joined by five other Southern governors in a press release, alleging the fight for the union was organized by "special interests looking to come into our state and threaten our jobs and the values we live by."

Their words rang hollow, especially after bosses at nonunion Tesla announced plans to lay off 10% of its workforce April 15.

"Our vote shows that workers everywhere want a better life on and off the job," Doug Snyder, a body worker at Volkswagen, said. "Fair pay is important, but so is time with our families. So is a voice for safety in our plant."

Fight continues at Mercedes

The election at Volkswagen was closely watched across the South, no more so than in Alabama, one of the top-five auto production states in the country. Some 50,000 assembly workers are employed there.

For Jeremy Kimbrell, a worker in the Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance since 1999, it's simple. "Why should a worker just because he lives in Alabama be paid less and be treated worse? That's old-timey thinking," he told AL.com.

In 2017, Mercedes introduced two tiers of pay and started using temporary workers. This "opened the eyes" of many workers, he added.

Workers in the plant have filed multiple federal charges with the NLRB as the company has carried out an aggressive anti-union campaign in the plant.

"Mercedes is forcing me and my co-workers to attend meetings and watch anti-union videos that are full of lies," Taylor Snipes, a worker in the plant, says on the UAW website. When he objected, Snipes was told he "had to watch the video or put my head down on the desk." That day he was fired for having his phone on the factory floor, even though he had permission to check messages from his child's day care center.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey claimed the union drive at Mercedes is a sign that Alabama's "model for economic success is under attack."

"She's talking about an outside party coming in," Kimbrell said. "We're the workers, we don't know what she's talking about. Let us worry about our business inside our plant."

Thousands more autoworkers have signed union cards in recent months, with public campaigns at Hyundai in Montgomery, Alabama, and Toyota in Troy, Missouri. Workers at more than two dozen other facilities are actively organizing, according to an April 19 UAW news release.

Susan LaMont in Atlanta and Amy Husk in Louisville, Kentucky, contributed to this article.