

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Iranian working-class resistance to Tehran is the best ally of Israel
 — PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 20

MAY 20, 2024

Defend Israel's right to exist as a refuge from Jew-hatred

BY SETH GALINSKY

Israeli tanks and troops entered Rafah May 6, taking control over the border crossing on the Gaza side of the Egyptian border, attacking other military targets and taking out 20 Hamas troops.

Israeli forces dropped tens of thousands of leaflets and sent other alerts instructing the 100,000 civilians in eastern Rafah to evacuate ahead of time to minimize casualties. Israel Defense Forces spokespeople said most people heeded their call.

The day before, Hamas launched mortars from Rafah on Kerem Shalom in Israel, about 2 miles away, near the crossing there into Gaza. Four Israeli soldiers were killed.

Following the deadly Iran-organized and financed Hamas pogrom last Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 civilians — mostly Jews — and wounded 5,000 more on farms and at a music party, along with dozens of rapes and abuse of women, Israel has moved to eliminate Hamas as a threat. Hamas leaders openly say they intend to con-

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SWP presidential candidate Rachele Fruit: 'Workers need our own party to fight to take political power'



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, campaigns at Little Haiti Book Festival in Miami May 5. She spoke to crowd of 300, with translation into Creole.

'I've decided to sign up to endorse Rachele Fruit'

BY VIVIAN SAHNER AND JANET POST

Supporters of the campaign of Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, are introducing the party's working-class

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Break with the capitalist parties, build a labor party

BY LAURA ANDERSON

MIAMI — The culmination of Rachele Fruit's campaign stop here was a public meeting at the Socialist Workers Party campaign headquarters here on May 5.

To begin with, you have to start with what is unfolding, what the capitalist rulers in the U.S. and worldwide are out to accomplish, and what that means for working people everywhere, she said. The bosses and their governments in each country are seeking to defend their own predatory interests against each other, in a world of deepening disorder and conflict. And they all seek to do so

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Railroad, port workers in Canada vote to go on strike

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Some 9,300 freight workers at Canadian Pacific Kansas City and Canadian National — Canada's largest railways — and over 1,200 Montreal port workers have voted by big majorities to strike for better contracts. The rail workers are members of the Teamsters and the port workers are represented by Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 375.

Rail workers rejected a series of concessions, including being forced to work 12-hour shifts rather than 10; a cut from 10 to five days for personal leave, which can be taken whenever workers need them; and job combinations that will pave the way for layoffs. They voted 98% to strike and could take action as early as May 22.

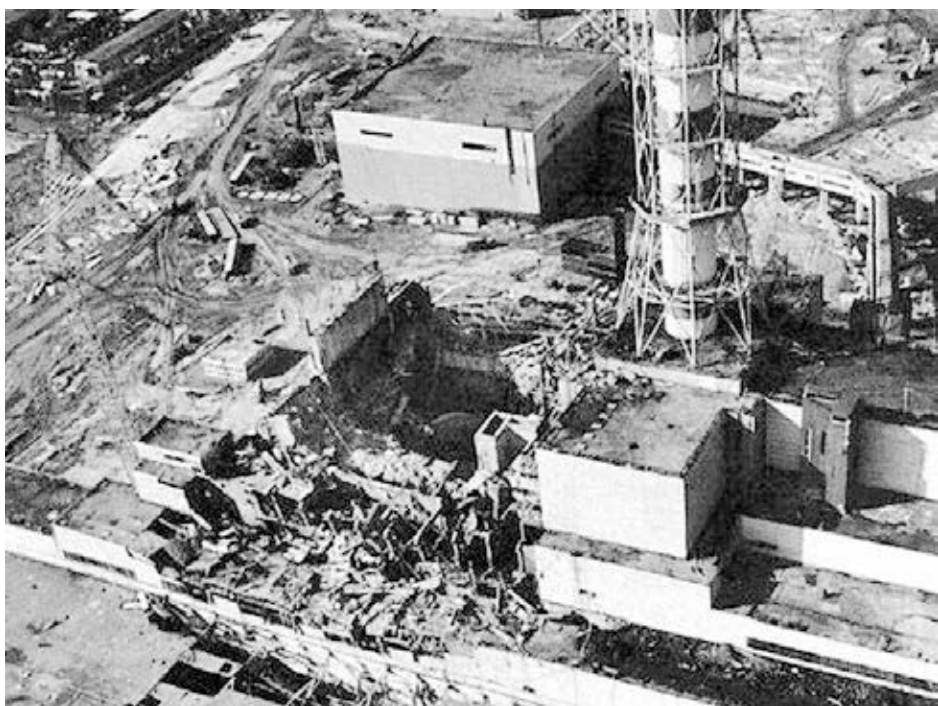
The strike vote shows "that whatever image the company tries to portray it's not fooling the employees and shouldn't fool anyone about their real intentions," Eugen Bernard, a Canadian National conductor in Montreal, told the *Militant*.

Alexander Famili, who also works as a conductor at CN, said he thought "most people understand that our job is in general dangerous, and are probably on our side for wanting better conditions."

Because of the economic weight of these workers in essential transportation, the capitalist rulers are calling on the government to rule that transport workers are "essential," effectively bar-

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Chernobyl disaster, Moscow's war on Ukraine: disdain for the working class



European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Chernobyl plant in Ukraine after April 26, 1986, nuclear meltdown. Capitalist rulers in Russia today have same contempt for working people as Stalinist bureaucrats in Soviet Union had.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

When Moscow's military invaded Ukraine in February 2022, assured by President Vladimir Putin of an easy victory, they were rapidly repelled from Kyiv, the capital, as working people put up fierce resistance. But 60 miles to the north Russian troops occupied the still highly radioactive Chernobyl reac-

tor site on the Belarus border for over a month. This has had deadly consequences for some of them.

On April 26, 1986, an explosion and 10-day fire at one of the reactors in the Chernobyl power plant became the worst nuclear meltdown in history. Ukraine was then still part of the Soviet Union.

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Fertility rate plummets in the US, product of capitalism's crisis today

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The birthrate in the U.S. declined to an average of 1.62 births per woman in 2023, the lowest rate recorded since the government began tracking it in the 1930s. The root causes are the squeeze on workers' living standards and rising uncertainty about what the future holds amid today's capitalist crisis.

The 2023 decline is a 2% drop from a year earlier, alongside a cumulative drop of some 23% over the past 16 years. For a country's population to at least hold steady requires a birth rate of 2.1 children per woman.

Birthrates are declining in many other countries for the same reason. In Germany births are at the lowest level in a decade, declining 6.2% from 2022. In Italy the birthrate dropped for the 15th straight year, to 1.2 per woman. Twelve people now die in Italy for every seven babies born.

In Asia, the birth rate in Japan plunged 5.1% in the last year, the lowest since statistics began being kept in 1899. China's population fell by 2 million last year, as the birth rate is now approaching 1.0, far below the replacement rate.

This situation also reflects the mounting difficulties young work-

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Unionists rally on May Day to boost workers' struggles

Moscow's disdain for workers

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This man-made disaster stemmed from the bureaucratic disregard for the safety of millions by the Stalinist regime in Moscow. The capitalist rulers in Russia today show no greater concern for working people — in uniform or not — than did the Stalinist bureaucrats in 1986.

A *Militant* reporting team led by current editor John Studer visited the Chernobyl exclusion zone in 2014, at the invitation of the union there. They described the devastating, long-term social, medical and environmental consequences. They also reported on support for Ukrainian independence by the workers there, hundreds of whom continue to manage the site.

Over 2,000 square miles were seriously contaminated. More than 8.5 million residents of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia received severe doses of radiation and over half a million eventually died.

The nuclear reactors' flawed design and government neglect led to the meltdown. Its effects were worsened by Moscow's decision not to build a containment shell that would have kept most radiation from escaping. The Soviet government was callously indifferent as thousands of the plant's workers and all its volunteer firefighters, with little or no protection, selflessly fought to contain the fire. Within three months 28 were dead and 19 more died in subsequent years, with many more suffering radiation poisoning.

Tens of thousands of other Ukrainian workers, mostly volunteers — known as "liquidators" — came to Chernobyl to try and bury the radioactive site. They also were affected.

The bureaucratic regime in Moscow told workers at the site not to worry and

delayed any evacuation of the area. No measures were taken to avoid residents consuming contaminated milk and vegetables. Over 6,000 children and youth contracted thyroid cancer as a result.

The Kremlin tried to cover up the disaster until a radioactive cloud was detected 800 miles away over Sweden. Telling the truth about the scale of the disaster remained prohibited for many years. The catastrophe accelerated the coming apart of the Soviet Union, which disintegrated in 1991, with Ukraine and other Soviet republics declaring their independence.

Moscow treated working people in the surrounding area like cattle, bureaucratically displacing hundreds of thousands. Few resources were allocated to treat victims of radiation and assist those whose lives were turned upside down.

Revolutionary Cuba steps in

In a sharp class contrast, Cuba's revolutionary government responded, sending doctors and setting up clinics in affected areas of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. By 1990, it began selflessly providing medical care and all other assistance in Cuba to the sickest, mainly young, victims of Chernobyl. They came overwhelmingly from Ukraine. More than 25,000 were given exceptional treatment free of charge at Tarará, a special medical and rehabilitation camp the Cuban government set up outside Havana.

The Chernobyl program was striking confirmation of the proletarian internationalism of Cuba's socialist revolution. Even at the height of what Cubans call the "special period" of economic hardship in the 1990s after the Soviet Union collapsed, there was no letup in the Tarará program, with its



Militant/John Studer

March in Slavutych, June 8, 2014, town founded to house nuclear workers, families displaced by 1986 Chernobyl disaster. Plant workers' union, above, formed large contingent.

free medical treatment to all who needed it. This only ended in 2011, when the Ukrainian government stopped providing transportation to patients to get to Havana. Efforts to restart the program have not succeeded.

The effects of the Chernobyl disaster struck again on hundreds of Russian soldiers in 2022. Over 2,000 troops were ordered to occupy the condemned site and set up a military base. The Russian authorities ignored warnings of dangers by workers stationed near there.

Hundreds of them dug trenches, stirring up contaminated soil, and camped in the notoriously radioactive Red Forest. This is 6 square miles of woods turned red by radiation levels that were much higher than Ground Zero in the 1945 atomic bombing of the Japanese population of Hiroshima by Washington. To stay for more than a few minutes is considered dangerous, but Russian troops were forced to live there for 35 days!

The troops had to drive over reopened roads through the Chernobyl exclusion zone, ignoring hazard warning signs. Irradiated equipment, furnishings and souvenirs were ransacked from the site.

The first soldiers began dying within weeks from radiation sickness. In a Feb. 29 interview by the state news agency Ukrinform, Oleksander Menzul, a Ukrainian nuclear engineer, said that there is little chance that any survivors are left from the hundreds who had been stationed in the Red Forest.

A few days after entering Chernobyl, Russian forces also took control of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, located in southeastern Ukraine. The *Militant's* reporting team visited this site as well, meeting with members of the union there. It's the largest nuclear power plant in Europe and now sits in the middle of a conflict zone.

The plant ceased operation but the Russian occupiers use it as a military base. A skeleton crew of Ukrainian workers is kept to maintain the reactors. They are subject to physical abuse and worse, while forced to get Russian passports and submit to the occupiers' contracts. The International Atomic Energy Agency has complained about the dangers posed by shelling and drone strikes close to the plant.

Moscow recently announced plans to restart running the plant, to generate power for occupied Crimea, which would greatly increase its vulnerability to a nuclear disaster.

CUBA AND CHERNOBYL

The 2006 Cuban documentary *Cuba and Chernobyl* covers the 1986 nuclear disaster in the Soviet Union and Cuba's exemplary internationalist medical program, which treated over 25,000 of the sickest, mainly youthful, Ukrainian victims at Tarará Pediatric Hospital in Havana.

View online at themilitant.com or order a DVD for \$7 from the *Militant*.

THE MILITANT

'Only working class can stop rail, social disasters'

From the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, to the Baltimore bridge collapse, bosses' drive for profits disregards the safety and jobs of working people. The *'Militant'* supports the SWP presidential campaign of Rachele Fruit that says workers need to take political power.



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit, left, SWP presidential candidate, in visit to East Palestine, Ohio, April 22.

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

Unionists rally on May Day to boost workers' struggles

Hotel workers and other unionists across the country took the May Day workers' holiday to hold marches and rallies marking strikes and other fights with the bosses. Below are a few examples.

Over 1,000 D.C. hotel workers march on May 1

WASHINGTON — Chants of "What do we want? A contract!" echoed through the streets as hotel workers marched here May 1. UNITE HERE Local 25 represents over 7,000 hospitality workers in D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

The UNITE HERE union set May 1 as a day of action in the U.S. and Canada. Union contracts covering 40,000 workers at 230 hotels are up for renegotiation in over 22 cities this year. Union rallies took place in 18 cities, from Los Angeles to Toronto, from Miami to Waikiki, Hawaii.

Wearing black T-shirts saying "Respect our work" and carrying placards with the names of their hotels — Hyatt, Waldorf, Hilton, DoubleTree and more, signed by workers from each one — the well-marshaled and disciplined protest stopped outside the hotels along their route.

"It's been a record year for the hotels and we deserve a big raise here," Paul Schwalb, secretary-treasurer of Local 25, told a pre-march rally at McPherson Square. "Inflation is really hurting families, and an increase in wages and pensions is needed to keep up."

Workers are also demanding better conditions on the job. Many hotels have kept COVID-era job cuts in place, overloading work on fewer workers. The union says hotel staffing per occupied room is down 13% since 2019, and 32% since 1995.

Several workers from the Bazaar restaurant inside the Waldorf Astoria Hotel marched. They're in negotiations for a first contract since 96 workers submitted a petition for union recognition with UNITE HERE Local

25 in January. Three days later, employer chef José Andrés recognized the union. Tipped workers at the restaurant make \$9 per hour plus tips, while unionized hotel bussers make \$20 plus tips.

Forty UNITE HERE Local 7 members picketed in front of the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor. "I am ready to get a better contract," cook La'Tan Smith said in a union press release. "I shouldn't have to work 12-hour days just to make my check look like something. I shouldn't have to miss all of my child's life and help with homework just so that I can make a living."

— Arrin Hawkins

Janitors join hotel workers in downtown San Francisco march

SAN FRANCISCO — Office building janitors marched past the high-rise buildings they clean and joined with hotel workers for a rally of over 1,000 unionists here May 1. Ten thousand Bay Area hotel workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 2, and 5,000 Service Employees International Union Local 87 office and residential tower cleaners face contract battles this summer.

They were joined by several dozen members of other unions, including Operating Engineers Local 39, which had fought long strikes against Macy's department store and Kaiser hospitals.

The janitors kicked off the march in front of the Salesforce Tower. They carried signs reading, "My union contract is essential," "Janitors' lives depend on: paid sick days," "Sexual harassment protections," "Safety measures," and "The right to return to work for laid-off janitors."

Several told the *Militant* that post-COVID changes, including office workers working from home, have left whole floors of many office buildings vacant. This has led to sharp cutbacks in staffing. In a city known for its exorbitant cost of living, janitors need higher wages, as well as better

Millions turn out to celebrate May Day in Cuba



Ahora

Millions turned out to celebrate May Day across Cuba, as they have since the Cuban Revolution triumphed. Above, rally in Holguín May 1. In Havana some 200,000 gathered at the José Martí Anti-Imperialist Tribune square, joined by Army Gen. Raúl Castro, a central leader of the revolution, and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

Speaking at the rally, Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento, general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), described the impact of Washington's unrelenting economic war on Cuba. "In the face of these challenging circumstances we have dedicated the celebration of the world proletariat to the heroism of the working people, who are concentrating their efforts on economic recovery as the main battle," Guilarte said. Those men and women "show us that human capital is the most secure and solid resource we have today."

Guilarte also condemned the Israeli government's offensive in Gaza, carried out with the complicity of the United States.

Due to fuel shortages — primarily a result of Washington's unrelenting economic war against the Cuban Revolution — Cubans celebrated in cities throughout the country for the second year in a row instead of traveling to Havana. Esteban Lazo, president of the National Assembly of Cuba, addressed the May Day crowd in Santiago de Cuba.

The 4 million working people in Cuba who took part on May Day showed that Cubans "are ready to defend their independence, their sovereignty, their right to live in peace," Díaz-Canel told a solidarity meeting in Havana the next day. "Without kneeling down, without renouncing their history and their principles."

— VIVIAN SAHNER

health care and lighter workloads.

In 2020, 98% of Local 2 hotel workers were laid off due to COVID shutdowns. The union fought and won recall rights through 2024. Many marching on May Day told the *Militant* they have decades in the union, which was reflected in the confidence they showed.

— Eric Simpson

Louisville bus drivers rally to oppose cuts to service

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1447 and supporters rallied here May 1 to protest plans by the Transit Authority of River City to slash bus service by as much as 40% and lay off 60 to 80 drivers. A budget passed by the TARC Board April 15 includes a so-called Saturday-plus schedule on many bus routes.

"This schedule is 'plus' in name only," said Lillian Brents, president of the union. Some routes that run every 10-15 minutes will now run every 60-90 minutes, disrupting commutes to work and school.

"We're glad to be out here with you," Todd Dunn, president of the Greater Louisville Central Labor Council and United Auto Workers Local 862, told the rally, "They underestimate us every time. Our voices matter."

Brents invited supporters to come out for more rallies outside of the Metro Council meetings that will take up funding for TARC in May and June.

— Amy Husk

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 24, 1999

The U.S.-organized NATO forces bombed the central market and a hospital in Nis, Yugoslavia, in midday May 7, killing 14 civilians. They blasted the Chinese embassy in downtown Belgrade that night, killing three people.

As protests erupted around the world over the embassy bombing, Washington stepped up its campaign of destroying factories, infrastructure and working-class neighborhoods across Yugoslavia. The resulting death toll is rising. These events reveal a bit more of the brutal face of imperialism.

"Age-old ethnic rivalries" are not the cause of the carnage in Yugoslavia. The rich legacy of the Yugoslav revolution after the second World War proves the opposite. Workers and farmers of all nationalities fought together in the struggle against fascist occupation during the war and against the capitalists and landlords, taking power out of their hands.



May 24, 1974

Top U.S. military officials have been conducting secret negotiations with South African military brass and with NATO officials over plans to defend the white supremacist regimes in southern Africa in face of the rising independence struggles in the Portuguese colonies.

Freedom fighters in Mozambique, Angola and the independent nation of Guinea-Bissau have stepped up their actions against the occupying Portuguese troops. The rebels have rejected proposals from the new Portuguese government to lay down their arms and accept continued domination in the form of a "federation" with Portugal.

The *New York Post* reported that "American and NATO military officials are actively engaged in secret contingency planning that could turn into a commitment to defend the white minority regimes of southern Africa against both internal and external threats."

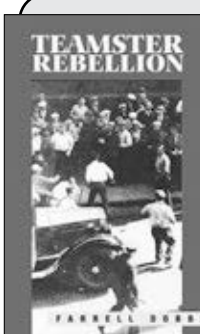


May 23, 1949

Calling upon all labor organizations to join in a drive for a shorter work week to combat layoffs and unemployment, the CIO Oil Workers International Union has announced that it will need a 36-hour week in the oil industry with no reduction in take-home pay.

Almost simultaneously, a demand for shorter hours was made by the CIO Shipbuilding Workers Union who called for a 35-hour week in place of their current 40-hour week without any cut in pay; an additional wage boost; a health and welfare plan and other demands not yet published.

Both statements show the increasing awareness of the need to defend labor's ranks against the scourge of unemployment. The Oil Workers' appeal to all unions should become a starting point for a national campaign to safeguard remaining jobs, and restore employment to five million victims of present layoffs.



Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

Tells the story of how a class-struggle leadership of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis in 1934 showed how to fight — and win — strike battles in midst of depression. — \$16

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'Sign to endorse Rachele Fruit'

Continued from front page

program far and wide, urging working people to endorse the campaign, break with the capitalist parties and take steps toward independent working-class political action.

In a discussion with SWP members John Staggs and Ved Dookhun May 2 at the United Steelworkers Local 10-234 union hall, long-time trade unionist and *Militant* subscriber Dennis Stephano signed as an endorser of Fruit's campaign. Stephano is the retired president of this local in Linwood, Pennsylvania.

"The SWP has always supported all of the union struggles we've been through," said Stephano. "More so than any other political organization."

Displayed in the union hall was literature promoting various Democratic Party candidates. Stephano said he had been asked to pass this out in the past, especially for Hillary Clinton, "which I have done." But it's a "total waste of time" because these Democrats never end up supporting the unions, he said.

Stephano said he agreed with the SWP's fight against Jew-hatred and its defense of Israel as a refuge for Jews. He bought three copies of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class* as well as *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*.

And, he said, "Here's \$40 for the campaign."

During the discussion, Staggs and Dookhun saw displayed on the wall of the union hall a *Militant* article Stephano had posted on the Canadian rail disaster in 2013 that killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, and on the Canadian government's failed efforts to frame up the engineer, a member of USW Local 1976. "The *Militant* is

the only place you could get the truth about that," Stephano said.

Along with winning campaign endorsers, members of the SWP and the Communist Leagues in Canada, Australia and the U.K. are heading into the last week of the international campaign to win 1,350 subscribers to the *Militant*, to sell the same number of books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries, and to raise \$165,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund.

A Militant Labor Forum in Montreal titled "The rise of Jew-hatred on campuses, the product of growing class polarization" opened a lively discussion May 4. One participant said, "If we recognize the injustice of Hamas' actions, we must also do so for Israel's. Why should Israel be against a Palestinian state?"

He was answered by first-time forum participant Shay Bas, who came with his daughter, Melissa, a junior college student. "Arabs are taught that Jews are killers. But 2 million Arabs live in Israel today, no problem," he said. "We must find a way to live together. But what is Israel to do, open its borders to the Hamas terrorists?"

"I grew up here," he added, "and antisemitism in Canada is not because of Palestine, it's been in Canada for a long time."

"Israel is a refuge for Jews but not a solution," CL member Joe Young said. "Only by leading a socialist revolution can the working class wipe out Jew-hatred."

After the forum Bas and his daughter got a copy of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*.

'Workers need to run government'

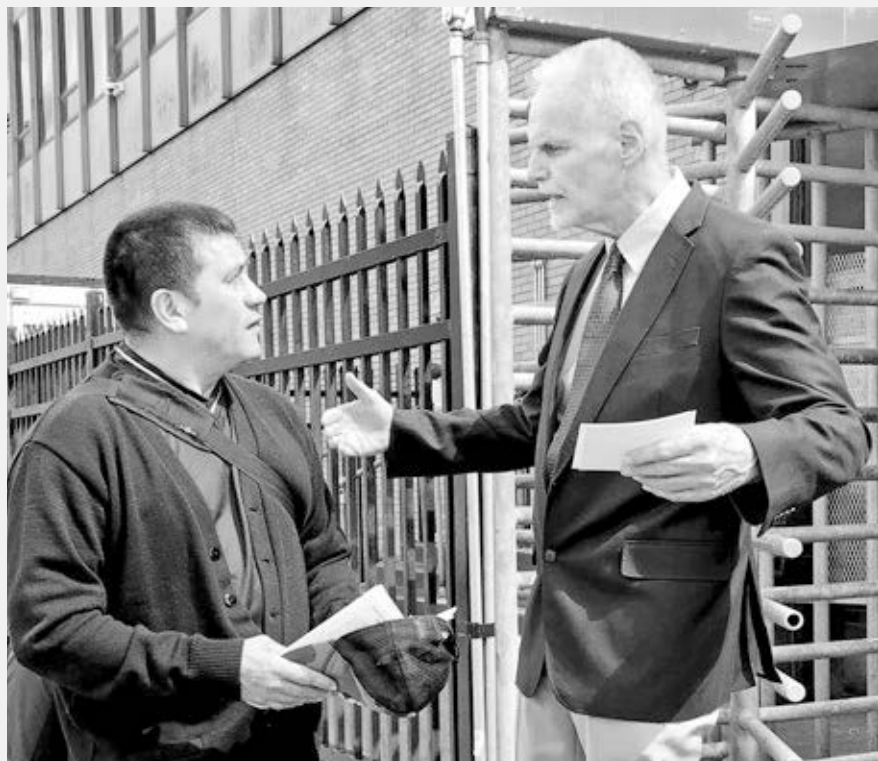
Family caregiver Lynnette Valentine, an African American, invited Ved Dookhun, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania, and campaign supporters Abby Tilsner and Janet Post into her Philadelphia home May 4 to talk about the campaign.

"I don't like how hard-working people are abused, manipulated and scammed," Valentine told them. She was talking about not only workers' treatment by the bosses, but a breakdown in solidarity among working people that can lead to illegal schemes or drug dealing that takes advantage of other workers. "Of course those involved are hurting themselves, too," she said.

"During the civil rights movement you saw much less of that," said Dookhun, "Workers were joining together in a common struggle for their rights. Today, workers are starting to stand up again, like the autoworkers in the South fighting for a union. They are gaining confidence."

Valentine had also worked as a nurses' aid, but was let go for "caring too much," she said.

Richter campaigns with bakery workers in Chicago



Militant/David Rosenfeld

CHICAGO — Workers changing shifts or on break at Alpha Baking Co. here May 7 talked with Dennis Richter, running mate of Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, as he shook hands with workers and campaigned there.

"Inflation keeps going up," said one worker. "We may be in a conflict here when our contract expires soon." Richter pledged that if the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers members do go on strike, supporters of the Rachele Fruit for president campaign will help organize solidarity. "All workers need to fight for cost-of-living adjustments in our contracts so that inflation doesn't eat up our wages," he said.

Richter, a member of the UNITE HERE union in Texas and a former bakery worker, explained he is very familiar with the conditions they face, including inadequate pay, unpredictable schedules and grueling temperatures in the summer. Richter and his supporters sold six subscriptions to the *Militant*, three books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and 10 single copies of the *Militant*. One of the new subscribers, Derrick Hogan, signed up to endorse the Rachele Fruit for president campaign.

Jorge Aguaya, a shop steward and a plant mechanic, above, was very excited to meet the socialist candidate. After he took several selfies with Richter, they began discussing the big questions facing working people worldwide. "As we campaign in our unions and in working-class communities, we explain that Jew-hatred is a life-and-death question for the working class," Richter said. "My party says that Hamas must be defeated, or they will carry out more pogroms against Jews in Israel."

"That's right," Aguaya replied. "If they are not defeated it will keep spreading." Aguaya, who had read the *Militant* in the past, signed up for a one-year subscription, and bought *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*.

Richter was joined by Naomi Craine, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from Illinois, and several campaign supporters who worked in the plant before and introduced many of their former co-workers to the candidates. Two workers bought the Spanish edition of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*.

— DAVID ROSENFELD

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

March 9-May 14 (week eight)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta*	55	57	55	47	\$10,250	\$8,045
Chicago	100	68	100	70	\$14,000	\$10,970
Cincinnati	50	40	50	45	\$5,000	\$4,024
Dallas-Ft. Worth	60	52	60	60	\$5,000	\$4,890
Lincoln	15	15	15	15	\$500	\$502
Los Angeles*	120	116	120	132	\$16,000	\$7,925
Miami	35	27	35	60	\$5,000	\$3,710
Minneapolis	70	56	70	52	\$5,500	\$3,464
N. New Jersey	75	63	75	70	\$7,500	\$7,444
New York	100	86	100	92	\$20,500	\$18,978
Oakland	80	70	80	73	\$15,500	\$14,376
Philadelphia	55	40	55	60	\$6,000	\$6,831
Pittsburgh	45	36	45	39	\$6,000	\$4,749
Seattle	70	60	70	60	\$14,500	\$13,548
Washington	60	46	60	55	\$5,000	\$2,235
Other	0	21	0	160	\$0	\$2,950
Total U.S.	990	853	990	1,090	\$136,250	\$114,641
Prisoners		87				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	45	36	45	39	\$2,560	\$2,600
Manchester	35	39	35	47	\$1,200	\$1,498
Total U.K.	80	75	80	86	\$3,760	\$4,098
Canada	90	85	110	107	\$12,150	\$12,550
Australia	30	31	30	33	\$5,000	\$5,050
Total	1,190	1,131	1,210	1,316	\$157,160	\$136,339
SHOULD BE	1,350	1,202	1,350	1,202	\$165,000	\$146,850
* Raised goal						

"When a patient rang a bell for help I answered it whether it was my patient or not. I couldn't stand to not help them." Tilsner told Valentine, "If working people ran the government and economy, health care would be for human needs and not for profits. We would always 'answer the bell.'"

"This is another reason why a labor party, a party of working people

based on the unions, and a break from the Democrats and Republicans, is so important," said Dookhun.

Valentine bought a *Militant* subscription; and got copies of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*; *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*; and *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

Endorse Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party 2024 candidate for U.S. president!

Campaign for what you are for, not who you're against!

- I endorse 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 email address to: Socialist Workers Party 2024 Campaign, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, NY, NY 10018. Tel: 347-871-0282 Email: socialistworkers2024@gmail.com

'Break with the bosses' parties'

Continued from front page

on the backs of the working class.

"I'm running for president, the highest executive officer of the most powerful — and the last — imperialist empire.

"I am running on the program of socialist revolution. That's what I'm going to talk about tonight," she said. "The fight over which class will rule is the central question that matters for working people everywhere in the world."

"The U.S. is a weakened imperialist power, but still the most powerful ruling class in the world. Its rulers seek to expand their economic, military and political control throughout the world just like their competitors, allies and enemies alike," she said.

"As the crisis of capitalism deepens, they become more ferocious. As my party said when Washington invaded Iraq in 1991, we were witnessing the opening guns of World War III, and that has escalated since.

"We were the only people raising this then. Today this seems self-evident to millions."

"This trajectory has been accelerated by Moscow's assault on the Ukrainian people and their independence and by Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews in Israel," Fruit said. "Ruling classes everywhere are looking for more weaponry and new allies.

'A course to take political power'

The road to prevent World War III is for workers to break from the parties of the bosses and chart a course to take political power into our own hands.

"Hundreds of thousands of workers have been on picket lines in the last couple of years. They are fighting side by side for their families, their union, their class — rail workers, UPS workers, 'Big Three' autoworkers, bakery workers, hotel workers, flight attendants, nurses, teachers, actors, screenwriters and more. Through these fights they begin to see each other in a new light, in their humanity and their capacity for solidarity. They often say that they aren't fighting primarily for themselves, but for future generations.

"The U.S. working class has proved itself capable of historic accomplishments, as the backbone of the first two American revolutions, for independence and to overthrow chattel slavery; the gigantic workers' upsurge that led to the organization of the industrial unions in the 1930s; and the Black-led proletarian social revolution that brought down Jim Crow segregation in the South.

"While the competing imperialist rulers — armed to the teeth — threaten fascism and war," Fruit said, "the SWP says we are living in the epoch of revolution."

Fruit pointed to the centrality of the fight to defend the constitutional freedoms that were won in these revolutions

— freedom of speech, assembly, of worship, the right to due process, and the rest. These are under attack today and they will be critical to our future battles.

"It is the working class that will have to fight to defend them — and defend them for everyone, including our political opponents and enemies — against encroachments, primarily by the Democrats today, in their panic to destroy Donald Trump as the only way to reelect Joseph Biden. At the same time, all the capitalist parties seek to clean up the reputation of the FBI and expand the use of the government's secret police. A bipartisan deal was reached to reauthorize its warrantless surveillance powers, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act."

Fruit pointed to the numerous legal moves by the White House and Democratic prosecutors to frame up Trump. Each of them aims to prevent him from running for president and prevent millions from being able to vote for him.

Fruit has been active in working-class politics in Florida for many years. "The Republicans in charge here target our rights as well," she said. "We've seen book bannings, attacks on the unions, increased use of the death penalty, attempts to outlaw abortion and so forth. On April 17, the anniversary of the defeat of the U.S.-organized and armed mercenaries at Playa Girón, the Bay of Pigs, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis surrounded himself with surviving members of those mercenaries to sign a bill mandating kindergartners be indoctrinated on the 'evils of communism.'

"Our campaign will speak out to de-



Militant/Laura Anderson

Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for president, speaks with cruise ship porter Jorge Pineda while campaigning outside International Longshoremen's Association union hall in Miami May 4.

fend the Jewish people," Fruit said. "The Oct. 7 massacre, carried out by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad with help and direction from the reactionary capitalist government of Iran, was a pogrom that slaughtered 1,200 people — mostly Jewish civilians — leaving over 5,000 wounded, seizing over 240 hostages and raping and abusing scores of women.

"This was the largest anti-Jewish pogrom since the Nazi Holocaust, and it unleashed a firestorm of bourgeois and middle-class Jew-hatred around the world," she said.

Fruit pointed to the new book prepared by the SWP leadership, *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the Inter-*

national Working Class.

"It explains that the persecution of the Jews goes back two millennia. But with the dawn of the imperialist epoch at the end of the 19th century, the weight and place of Jew-hatred in social relations changed, it became an international question," she said. "It has a permanent place and function for the propertied ruling families, and the fight against it is tied to building a unified revolutionary working-class party of all nationalities in every country."

The SWP is campaigning to win endorsers for the Fruit campaign, from anyone who agrees the working class has to break from the bosses' parties once and for all. Join in today!

Rachele Fruit wins support campaigning in Miami

BY LAURA ANDERSON

MIAMI — Kicking off her presidential campaign tour here May 1, Socialist Workers Party candidate Rachele Fruit joined 150 UNITE HERE hotel, airport food service and airline catering workers and their supporters in a rally at the downtown Stephen P. Clark Government Center. Along with UNITE HERE hotel workers demonstrating across North America the same day, they were demanding higher wages, more staffing and better working conditions. Fruit is a member of UNITE HERE Local 355 in Miami.

She ran into Elizabeth George, one of her co-workers. "I'm so happy to see you! How's the campaign going?" George asked her. "I took the day off because I had to be here today. Keep up the good work."

"We are all in this together," airport concession worker Laticha Mentor said, adding she was interested in learning more about Fruit's campaign.

Sandy Evans, who works at the Hilton, said this was her first union action. "I'm glad I came and I brought my children. My aunt said I had to

join the union, or you're alone to face what they throw at you."

She was happy to hear from Fruit about the United Auto Workers union recognition victory at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and also was pleased to see Fruit running for president.

On May 4 Fruit received a warm welcome as she spoke with dockworkers at the International Longshoremen's Association Local 1416 hiring hall. SWP members regularly campaign there.

Many on their way into work bought a copy of the *Militant*. Others who recognized Fruit from earlier visits came by to say hello and meet her. As one worker looked at the campaign literature table and its sign reading, "BACK UNITE HERE contract fights. FOR a Labor Party. FIGHT Jew-Hatred," he smiled and said, "Shalom."

Union fights give workers confidence

Longshoremen Richard Canty and Derrick Collie stopped to talk with Fruit. She explained workers need to break from the bosses' parties and form our own party, a labor party, that could draw in millions of working people to fight for our own class interests and for political power. "That sounds like a big project," Canty said.

"A labor party will grow out of our struggles, as we build and transform the unions," she said. "Efforts like the Chattanooga vote for the United Auto Workers give people confidence in union power."

Fruit explained the SWP isn't a "third party," like the Greens or Libertarians, that offers slightly different proposals to defend the interests of the ruling rich. It's a working-class party.

Backing the SWP today is a way for workers to register their support for building a labor party.

After talking with Fruit, workers got two books — *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* and *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class* — and a *Militant* subscription.

The next day Fruit and SWP campaigners set up a table at the Little Haiti Book Festival. This annual event attracts writers and artists who have works on display in English, French and Creole. Hundreds from the community turn out.

The table featured literature on Fruit's campaign and books from Pathfinder Press by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries. They described the crucial example of the Cuban Revolution, the revolution led by Maurice Bishop in Grenada, and the deepening world disorder today as the crisis of capitalism continues to unfold, driving up a spike in Jew-hatred and pushing toward more wars. Participants got six *Militant* subscriptions and over a dozen Pathfinder titles.

Fruit was able to speak from the stage at the fair, with Creole translation.

"None of the social and economic problems we suffer from can be solved under imperialism," she said. "Working people must organize independently of the Democrats and Republicans and all the other capitalist candidates.

"We need to join with all working people in our own fight for political power — in the U.S., in Haiti, the Middle East and elsewhere. We have common class interests and can unite to build a socialist world."

Help take Militant Fighting Fund over the top!

As of May 8, some \$136,339 has been collected toward the Militant Fighting Fund. With one week left of the campaign to raise \$165,000, supporters around the country are stepping up efforts to meet the goal.

The Socialist Workers Party branch in Chicago sent an update out to *Militant* subscribers that resulted in increased pledges of \$665. This put Chicago over the top! An over-the-road truck driver who subscribed to the paper last year at a rally of Teamsters made an online contribution of \$100.

Don't stop now. The end of the Militant Fighting Fund will include all contributions made by May 14. Send your contribution to the Militant, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018, or online at themilitant.com.

— ILONA GERSH

Rail, port workers vote to strike

Continued from front page
ring them from striking. The bosses want to force the unions into compulsory arbitration where a government-appointed bureaucrat dictates wages and working conditions.

"But they can't put 1,000 port workers in prison," Samuel Lupien, a Montreal port worker, told the *Militant* at the port parking lot.

Montreal port workers voted 99.5% to reject the Association of Maritime Employees latest contract offer April 21-22. Among the union's demands are a 20% wage raise over four years and greater job security.

Three years ago, the government ended the port workers' four-day strike, forcing compulsory arbitration on the union. But the government-appointed arbitrator's report referred the key issues of hours and scheduling back for negotiations between the union and bosses. Those talks went nowhere.

Elsewhere, 81 Quebec City port workers, also members of CUPE, have been locked out for 19 months. An ironic sign on their picket line sums up the impact the bosses' profit

drive is having on their lives. "Wanting them from striking. The bosses want to force the unions into compulsory arbitration where a government-appointed bureaucrat dictates wages and working conditions."

Right to strike under threat

Shipping bosses have long been fighting for port workers to be designated "essential workers" to prevent them from striking, but the Canada Industrial Relations Board rejected their demand March 14.

The industrial relations board bureaucrats' unwillingness to challenge the workers' right to strike reflects the impact of the strike waged by 7,400 British Columbia longshore workers last July, which shut down 30 ports for 13 days, including Vancouver, the largest port in Canada.

The Grain Growers of Canada, which speaks for major capitalist grain farmers, issued a thinly veiled call May 1 for government intervention to prevent a rail strike. "We are deeply worried about the impact a strike would have, not just on our operations but on Canada's reputation



Keira Ferguson/Sudbury.com
Canadian National Railway workers picket rail station in Capreol, Ontario, on Nov. 20, 2019, during Teamsters Canada Rail Conference nationwide eight-day strike for safety.

as a reliable supplier," it said.

During the last Canadian National strike in 2019 the government and bosses brought intense pressure to bear on the union to end the walkout, claiming that the rail workers' action was causing an economic crisis, especially in agriculture.

Since then, working people won an important victory pushing back

government intervention into union struggles. A federal judge in January ruled that the government's invoking of the notorious Emergencies Act to shut down a truckers' protest in Ottawa in 2022 was "unjustifiable."

Canadian National conductor and Teamsters member Philippe Tessier contributed to this article.

Iranian working-class resistance to Tehran is the best ally of Israel

BY SETH GALINSKY

While the reactionary bourgeois-clerical regime in Iran has tried to mount large demonstrations in solidarity with Hamas since its Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews in Israel — a massacre planned and carried out in close collaboration with Tehran — turnout has been markedly small.

That's because large numbers of working people in Iran oppose the regime and its trampling of democratic, political and union rights; its persecution of religious minorities; its discrimination against Baluch, Arabs, Kurds and other oppressed nationalities; and its violent attacks on women who violate the rulers' reactionary dress code. They know that Hamas is cut from the same cloth.

Over recent weeks, Tehran has stepped up its attempts to force women to wear "proper" hijab, issuing fines and worse. Videos show morality police thugs forcing women into police vehicles for refusing to cover up their hair. But a video from the Tehran subway shows a crowd yelling "shame on you," forcing cops to back off from a woman they had targeted.

The regime has also stepped up the use of the death penalty. These repressive measures are aimed at intimidating working people and other opponents of the government's expansionary war moves.

In the two weeks prior to May 2 there was an execution on average every five hours, the Iran Human Rights Organization reported.

An April 24 statement by over 80 current and former political and union prisoners opposing the executions noted they come as the "government continues to play the war drum."

The same day, popular rapper Toomaj Salehi was sentenced to death, con-

victed of "corruption on earth," "inciting a riot" and other charges. His crimes? Songs supporting the mass protests following the death of Zhina Amini after her arrest by the morality police in September 2022 and others describing the government's disdain for working people and oppressed minorities.

Unions of teachers, sugar cane workers, as well as retiree organizations and student groups, have denounced the death sentence.

Unionists: 'No to death penalty'

At weekly pension protests across the country April 28, some retirees demanded Salehi and other political prisoners be released. In the city of Arak they chanted, "Forget about the hijab! Pay attention to our conditions!"

A truckers' strike began April 20 protesting fuel shortages, low hauling rates and the high cost of spare parts. Work stoppages have spread to Fars, Ilam, Yazd, East Azerbaijan, Gilan, Kerman, Sistan-Baluchistan and Tehran provinces.

Over the last month and a half "the price of beans has increased by 30%, red meat by 25%, vegetables by 50%, rice by 10%," the Union of Truckers

and Drivers said in calling the strike. "Do you expect us drivers to work the same fare as before?"

Working people and oppressed nationalities in Iran are the biggest obstacle to the Iranian rulers' promotion of Jew-hatred and long-term determination to destroy Israel.

Now even those lauded by the regime as heroes of the Islamic Republic are speaking out. Some 460 veterans of the war with Iraq and their family members signed a statement May 2 saying that after sacrificing "to defend our homeland against foreign invasion, we now see many of our long-standing hopes and aspirations disappearing into thin air." They called the death sentence for Salehi "shameful," adding the government should "desist from threatening and intimidating" youth and women.

Shifting alliances, rivalries

The Iranian rulers hoped their April 13 missile and drone attack on Israel, its first ever directly from Iranian soil, would convince regimes in the region that they should back off "normalizing" relations with Israel.

Instead, the attack, which caused little damage in Israel, strengthened the

view of rival governments that Tehran is a dangerous threat, and Israel is a potential ally. And it increased opposition among working people and oppressed minorities in Iran.

Sunni-based bourgeois regimes in Muslim nations like Saudi Arabia have long feared the Shiite-based Islamic Republic's attempts to extend its counterrevolutionary influence throughout the region. Tehran presents itself as the defender of "oppressed" Shiites, who are a minority in most Muslim countries. Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan are majority Shiite.

Iran's "axis of resistance" against Israel includes Shiite Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, militias in Syria and Iraq, the Sunni-based Hamas and the government of Syria.

However, despite the crucial support Tehran — and Moscow — provided that allowed the Bashar al-Assad regime to crush a 2011 rebellion and civil war that nearly toppled his rule in Syria, "since Oct. 7 Assad has largely sat out the Gaza conflict," *Asharq Al-Awsat* reported.

While Moscow buys drones from Tehran to attack Ukraine and sells some of its military equipment to the Iranian regime, its main concern in the region is defending its own economic and political interests.

According to Iranian news site Asr Iran, during a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi complained about Moscow's refusal to use its anti-aircraft guns in Syria to prevent Israeli attacks on Iranian positions there. Putin replied that Moscow had no intention of taking actions that would "lead to further escalation."

Despite reestablishing relations with Tehran last year, the Saudi monarchy now says it wants to normalize relations with Israel.

Defend Israel's right to exist

Continued from front page
tinue their attacks until all Jews there are either killed or driven away.

The fight against Jew-hatred and defense of Israel as a refuge for Jews is a key battle today for working people everywhere.

Israeli officials said they were carrying out a "limited operation," at least for now.

For the first time since the start of the war in Gaza, Israeli troops now control much of the corridor along the border with Egypt, striking another major blow to Hamas. They discovered three "significant" tunnel shafts that could have been used by the four Hamas brigades in Gaza stationed in Rafah.

The Joseph Biden administration has been pushing Israel to back off and stop further efforts to cripple Hamas. Biden called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu May 6 and "reiterated his clear position on Rafah." State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said, "The U.S. will not support the Rafah offensive currently envisioned by Israel."

Ratcheting up the pressure and widening their rift, Washington has also delayed the \$1 billion sale of thousands of precision weapons to Israel to show its opposition to continuing the war against Hamas.

The "Americans want the war to end," one Israeli official told the *Jerusalem Post*. "We want to win the war."

Washington's only interest in the Middle East is defending U.S. imperialist economic and political interests, not in ensuring Jews are safe from pogroms; nor alleviating the suffering Palestinians face in Gaza, a result of the conscious intentions of Hamas.

Just before the Rafah operation began, headlines in the liberal capitalist media reported as fact Hamas propaganda that the Jew-hating group had just agreed to a "cease-fire proposal," implying Hamas had signed on to a deal that Israel had also accepted.

But that wasn't true. Hamas' push was a "counterproposal," another version of Hamas' longstanding demand that Israel permanently pull all its troops out of Gaza and allow Hamas to immediately begin redeploying its

remaining forces throughout the territory, including taking control over the flow of humanitarian aid.

The Hamas proposal is so cynical that it says that in the first stage of the cease-fire, they would release only 33 hostages of the 128 it still holds — or their "bodies" if they're dead — in exchange for 30 times that number of Palestinians in Israeli prisons accused of terrorist acts. Israeli officials believe at least 35 of the hostages are dead.

The Biden administration knew about Hamas' "new" counterproposal, but didn't inform Israeli officials.

Netanyahu spoke at the opening ceremony for International Holocaust Memorial Day May 5 at the Yad Vashem museum in Jerusalem. The annual event commemorates the murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis during World War II, highlighting why the creation of the state of Israel became inevitable. The Oct. 7 Hamas slaughter was the worst pogrom since the Holocaust.

Imperialist powers from Washington to London and Ottawa turned away Jews trying to flee the Nazi terror, sending tens of thousands to their deaths. After the Nazis were defeated, Jews languished in European "displaced person" camps, still denied



Majdi Fathi
Gazans arrive in Khan Younis May 6, heeding Israeli instructions to evacuate east Rafah and not get caught in Israeli attack on Hamas, which hides its bases in residential areas. IDF distributed thousands of flyers, sent text messages urging evacuation to avoid civilian casualties.

entry abroad. That's why hundreds of thousands of survivors of the Holocaust fought to make their way to Israel.

Hamas intent is genocide

Netanyahu said Hamas failed in turning the Oct. 7 pogrom into a Holocaust despite its "intent of genocide" only because Israel exists and Jews were able to fight back.

"We are fighting on two fronts," he said, "first, the fanatical regime in Iran

and its terror proxies, who act with the clear intention to destroy us; the second, the antisemitic volcano eruption that spits burning lava of lies against us, all around the world."

"I say to the leaders of the world, no amount of pressure, no decision by any international forum, will stop Israel from defending itself," he said. "But we know we are not alone because countless decent people around the world support our just cause."

Campus occupations back Hamas, spread Jew-hatred

Liberal media across the country have attempted to paint occupations and other actions organized in defense of Hamas on elite campuses in the U.S. as a new, progressive mass movement in the tradition of the civil rights movement and fight against Washington's war against the Vietnamese people. This is false on all counts.

The fact is there have been actions on only about 100 campuses out of some 4,000 U.S. colleges, centered mainly in large cities and the two coasts.

The central organizers of the so-called Free Palestine movement claim they are just "peaceful protesters" seeking a cease-fire and fighting against "genocide" in Gaza. They claim they are defending "free speech" and are "anti-Zionist" not antisemitic.

But their actions prove the opposite. "Death to the Zionists"; "From the water to the water, Israel will be destroyed"; "We don't want any Zionists here or in Israel"; and "We will release Palestine with blood." These are just some of the slogans chanted May 5 at the encampment set up at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Supporters of the Columbia University encampment chanted, "We say justice! You say how? Burn Tel Aviv to the ground!" and "Go Hamas, we love you. We support your rockets too." Does that sound like a call for peace and a cease-fire?

"Within Our Lifetime," one of the middle-class radical apologists for Hamas, titled a leaflet "Enough with De-Escalation Trainings; Where are the Escalation Trainings!" Repeating ultra-left aphorisms taken from Mao Zedong, like "a single spark can start a prairie fire," the group calls for learning how to "build effective barricades" and confronting the police on the road to becoming "a power broker ourselves."

Many of those who back these neo-soveiled calls for violence against their opponents — and threats and violence against Jewish students on many campuses — will end up as cadres of a future fascist movement.

Nothing like 1968

The *New York Times*, along with backers of the "Gaza" encampments, claim that the occupations of campus buildings are similar to protests during the war in Vietnam, such as the takeover of Columbia's Hamilton Hall in April 1968.

They have little in common. The movement against the war in Vietnam grew to involve millions of young people and workers, including growing numbers of U.S. GIs, demanding Washington pull its half a million soldiers out of Vietnam. Many were won to support

the fight of the Vietnamese for their independence and sovereignty.

But Hamas is not fighting to win independence from a foreign occupation. The terror outfit ruled Gaza — where there was not a single foreign soldier — for some 16 years. Their Islamist thugs broke strikes, tortured political opponents, suppressed women's and gay rights and closed down political space for working people.

It repeatedly launched unprovoked assaults on the civilian population in Israel and, when the Israeli government responded, used Gazan civilians as human shields, placing their barracks and weapons caches under hospitals, schools and workers' homes. It's the biggest obstacle working people in Gaza face to be able to advance their own interests. And a key obstacle to opening a road to uniting working people in the region whatever their religious beliefs or nationality.

Its goal is to destroy an independent nation — Israel, where 21% of the people are Arabs — and kill or expel all the Jews there. Palestinians interest them only as potential martyrs to win sympathy.

The mass movement against the war in Vietnam sought to get out the truth about U.S. imperialist intervention and debate its proponents. Participants knew the truth was on their side.

But the Hamas apologists are afraid of the truth, civil discussion and debate. The leaders know that many of the students swept up in the "passion" of concern for the people of Gaza know little about Hamas, Gaza, Israel or the truth about Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom. Leaders of the encampment at the University of Wisconsin gathered their acolytes together and told them, "Not engaging with Zionists and other counterprotesters is essential to keeping our solidarity camp focused on Gaza."

— S.G.



Union of Truckers and Drivers of Iran
Striking truck drivers protest at Merhan Iran-Iraq border crossing May 6, part of nationwide actions. Banner says, "Job security is equal to life security." Workers in Iran pay the price for bourgeois clerical regime's foreign military adventures.

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Castro: 'Debt to imperialist banks is unpayable, immoral'

Fidel Castro Speeches 1984-85: War and Crisis in the Americas is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. At a time when a new debt crisis is looming, we publish extracts from two interviews Cuban President Fidel Castro gave as part of a widening campaign among Latin American governments to unite and demand cancellation of the foreign debt of countries oppressed by imperialism. The first excerpt is from "The political and social situation in Latin America is a powder keg," given Feb. 13, 1985, to Spanish news agency EFE. The second is from "Latin America's foreign debt must be canceled!" given March 21, 1985, to Mexican daily Excelsior. Copyright © 1985 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Above, courtesy of Antonio Rodríguez Banchs **Banner in Puerto Rico, 2017: "The debt is not ours, it's the empire's!" Inset, Fidel Castro speaking Aug. 3, 1985, at "continental dialogue" in Havana, advancing campaign to demand foreign debt of the entire Third World be canceled. It is unpayable, and immoral, given the exploitation of semi-colonial countries by imperialism, he said.**

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FIDEL CASTRO

[T]he debt that these countries and all other Latin American countries have is unpayable. Our position is that it's unpayable. This is my firm conviction.

[I]t's not a question of renegotiating the debt, rescheduling it and providing terms of ten, twelve, and fourteen years with three-, four-, and five-year grace periods to pay the principal. The debt can be renegotiated and nothing at all will be solved. They can't pay the interest, that's the key point, they cannot pay the interest. ...

Twenty-four years ago, [John F.] Kennedy promoted the Alliance for Progress as an antidote to prevent social convulsions, and undoubtedly the measures were imaginative. He proposed reforms and economic aid totalling \$20 billion over several years to solve the problems of development and social problems.

The population is now twice as large as twenty-four years ago and the social problems have multiplied. The foreign debt is eighteen times greater than what Kennedy proposed as aid and the interest payments are \$40 billion a year, \$400 billion in ten years. So it's not a matter of whether the countries want to pay the debt or the interest rates. It's that they have no alternative; they cannot pay them. ...

The danger is a complete political destabilization and social explosion. That's what I say is going to occur if there's an attempt to impose the IMF's formulas and collect those interest payments.



[I]n just these four ways — because of our being charged extra for their products and being paid less for ours, compared to the situation in 1980; because of the artificially high interest rates, a consequence of United States monetary policy; because of the flight of capital; and because of the fact that we are paying with more expensive dollars, inflated ones, that have been overvalued — the

Latin American countries' economies were illegitimately stripped of more than \$45 billion in 1984; \$20 billion for the deterioration in trade relations, \$10 billion for excessive interest, \$10 billion for the flight of capital, and \$5 billion (a conservative estimate) for the overvaluation of the dollar. Adding it all up, including what can be considered normal interest on the debt, in just one year the Latin American countries have turned values equal to around \$70 billion over to the rich, developed world. ...

[I]f, to this and to everything else I have already pointed out, you add the protectionist policies of the richest industrialized countries, plus the dumping and unfair competition with subsidized products which those same industrialized countries habitually engage in, how can you fail to understand the difficul-

ties and the terrible crisis to which Latin America is now subjected? ...

[I]t is simply impossible to pay the debt. It can't be done from a practical standpoint — our economies couldn't survive it — and it could never solve the problem of development. The debt is an economic and a political impossibility. It is also a moral impossibility. ... Any attempt to pay the debt under the present social, economic, and political circumstances in Latin America would cost our suffering and impoverished nations rivers of blood, and it could never be done. Our peoples are not to blame for underdevelopment or for the debt. Our countries are not to blame for having been colonies; neocolonies; banana republics; or coffee, mining, or oil republics whose role was to produce raw materials, exotic products, and fuel at low cost and with cheap labor.

Economic specialists and historians tell us that the fabulous amounts of gold and silver that were extracted from the entrails of our nations and amassed over the centuries thanks to our peoples' sweat and blood financed the development of the industrialized world that is now the creditor demanding payment of the debt. The amount wrenched away from our peoples in just the last few decades through unequal terms of trade, high interest rates, protectionism, dumping, monetary manipulations, and the flight of capital is much greater than the total amount of the debt. The riches and well-being of which we have been deprived through the imposition of economic dependence and underdevelopment cannot even be estimated, let alone measured. It is our peoples who, by right, are the creditors of the rich and industrialized Western world, both morally and materially.

May
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Castro: 'Cancel Third World Debt!'

Fidel Castro's 1985 campaign to unite underdeveloped countries to repudiate their unpayable foreign debts peaked with a Latin American "continental dialogue" in Havana July 30-Aug. 3. Over 1,000 delegates from 17 countries participated. The gathering had been preceded by conventions there of labor organizations, women's groups and journalists. Thomas Sankara, Burkina Faso's president and revolutionary leader, took Castro's campaign across Africa.

Castro's closing speech presented the conference conclusions that "the watchword of debt cancellation was valid for all countries of the Third World." The call for a new international economic order with fair prices, he said, was aimed at all the industrialized world, from Washington to "the socialist countries," referring to the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China.

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A road forward amid capitalist world disorder

The capitalist rulers in the U.S. triumphantly declared the birth of a “new world order” after they emerged as top dog out of the second imperialist world slaughter in 1945. They declared another giant step forward with the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1990-91.

But neither Washington, nor any of its rivals, won the Cold War. The U.S. rulers’ Iraq war in 1991 showed that what lay ahead was not decades of an American Century, but sharpening imperialist conflicts.

In the years that followed, the U.S. rulers have proved incapable of winning wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Big new watershed developments — stiff competition from Beijing, Moscow’s war on Ukraine and the fallout from Hamas’ murderous Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews in Israel — reveal growing world disorder.

Washington has shown it cannot prevent ruinous economic breakdowns in the world, nor sharpening clashes with and between rival powers. Nor have the U.S. rulers been able to crush working-class resistance at home, as today’s renewed labor struggles show.

Washington is rearming for the wars that lie ahead. The U.S. ruling families are strengthening their military forces and alliances with the rulers in Japan and Australia to counter Beijing and to try to defend Washington’s supremacy in the Pacific, a result of its bloody victory in World War II.

For decades the U.S. rulers have deployed tens of thousands of troops, warships and jet fighters across the Middle East. Everything Washington does there is to protect its own imperialist interests. That includes pressing Israel to end its war against

Hamas without a victory that would prevent the reactionary group and its backers in Tehran from carrying out more massacres of Jews.

Capitalist powers across the region are advancing their own rival interests against each other, reaffirming what the Socialist Workers Party explained in 1991. “Washington’s war against the Iraqi people signaled the opening guns of broadening class, national and interimperialist conflicts,” wrote SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes in “Washington’s Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III.”

“What is far from inevitable is that these battles will culminate in a third world war,” Barnes said. “That will depend on the outcome of the class battles in the years ahead, in the course of which workers and farmers will have our chance — the opportunity to win revolutionary victories and take the power to make war out of the hands of the imperialist ruling classes.

“Such victories, however, can be won only if proletarian communist parties can be built as part of a world revolutionary leadership of the toilers,” Barnes said. “Such a party can and must be constructed here in the United States.”

It is along that road that those who set out “to throw off the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in Cuba led a victorious revolution in 1959 and forged a Communist Party with revolutionary leaders of the caliber of Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara,” Barnes said.

The Socialist Workers Party exists to emulate that example. Leading working people in the U.S. to take political power and disarm forever the imperialist rulers will open the door to end the horrors of the imperialist epoch for all time.

Biden, bipartisan Congress expand FBI spy powers

BY TERRY EVANS

After a yearlong dispute, Democrats and Republicans reached a bipartisan agreement April 20 to renew and expand secret spy powers contained in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. In the process, they advanced steps to try to refurbish the reputation of the FBI, the capitalist rulers’ political police.

The law lets the government snoop on any non-U.S. citizen living abroad and any U.S. citizens that these noncitizens email, text or call without needing to get a warrant.

To reach the agreement, amendments were added that supposedly curtail the spy agencies’ powers, including limits on the number of agents who can use the FBI’s database and a threat of harsher penalties for snoops who don’t comply with FBI “guidelines.” Between 2020 and early 2021, the FBI admitted it had “improperly” abused its procedures 278,000 times.

This included spying on people at protests against police brutality after the death of George Floyd; on participants in the Jan. 6, 2021, melee at the Capitol; and on some 19,000 donors to political campaigns.

FISA will come up for renewal again in two years, instead of five. And from now on, the FBI must let Congress know if it puts any of its august members under surveillance. Of course no notification is needed to spy on the rest of us.

Supporters of the bill’s renewal touted these changes. House Speaker Michael Johnson claimed they “would actually kill the abuses that allowed President Trump’s campaign to be spied on.” In 2016 the FBI got a FISA court to ratify its spying on Trump campaign worker Carter Page based on Democrats’ claims Trump was colluding with Moscow.

Amendments were also adopted that increased the reach of the FBI, allowing it to spy on U.S. citizens who happen to mention the name of someone the FBI is targeting abroad. The new statute expands the range of businesses that must provide government spies with information they collect

on individuals. It replaces reference to “electronic communication service provider,” with the more wide-ranging “any other service provider.”

No capitalist state can maintain the ruling class’s domination without spying on its opponents at home and abroad, especially working-class parties and political groups. The U.S. rulers are no exception. Since 1939 the FBI has been tasked with this, trampling on free speech and other constitutional protections.

Rulers move to refurbish FBI’s image

In the course of the struggles against Jim Crow segregation and the Vietnam War, the rulers’ spy agencies were exposed and discredited in the 1960s and ’70s. During the Socialist Workers Party’s historic 1973 lawsuit against the FBI, decades of break-ins, wiretaps, disruption and the use of informers were uncovered, targeting unionists, Black rights fighters, communists and opponents of Washington’s wars.

Ever since, the rulers have worked overtime trying to burnish the FBI’s image. Five years after the SWP’s lawsuit began, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act was adopted, supposedly to limit FBI snooping. In fact it set up a procedure for approving warrants to spy on U.S. citizens in secret hearings at FISA courts, where the FBI and other agencies don’t have to provide any sworn testimony to get permits. From the outset, these courts have been integral to FBI frame-up operations, approving some 99% of all requests.

In 1986, the federal court in New York ruled the revolutionary views of the SWP were constitutionally protected and that the FBI could not infiltrate it or spy on its members; that its burglaries and wiretapping of the SWP were unconstitutional; and that its attempts to disrupt the party’s activity was illegal. That victory was a gain for all working people.

The government continued to seek openings to expand its spy operations, adopting the Patriot Act in 2001, after al-Qaeda’s 9/11 attacks. In a blatant violation of free speech, the act allowed courts to grant surveillance orders based on a person’s internet searches, book purchases and published writings. Searches could be conducted without the government having to show that individual is likely to commit a crime. Nor does the person targeted ever have to be informed of the search, opening the door to the government being able to use secret evidence in a trial.

Fertility rate plummets

Continued from front page

ers face being able to afford a place of their own to start and raise a family. Facing high prices for groceries, gasoline, rent, mortgages, child care and more, increasing numbers of women are forced to put off decisions about whether to raise children.

The fertility rate in the U.S. of 1.62 births per woman is a huge drop from the “baby boom” years after World War II in the late 1940s and ’50s, when the rate was more than three births per woman. This decline began in the 1960s.

And the drop has been accelerating over the past decade and a half.

Except for a brief increase of 1% during the COVID pandemic from 2020 to 2021, the birthrate has been decreasing by 2% annually over the past decade.

Birthrates have long been falling for teenagers and younger women, but rising for women in their 30s and 40s. But last year birthrates fell for all women younger than 40.

Need for more immigrant workers

With a declining workforce, the bosses need more immigrants to labor for them and produce profits. The government “needs an annual immigration rate of about 3.5 times what it is now to offset plummeting birth rates among native-born Americans,” writes the New York Sun.

As the government moves to increase immigration it also expands the layer of the working class that lives in a second-class status, in fear of deportation. Bosses seek to use this to drive down the wages and conditions of all workers. This points to the need to organize *all* workers into unions to be better able to fight for wages and conditions that make family life possible.

Similarly, in Germany the government employment agency says 400,000 immigrant workers will be needed each year to prevent the labor force from shrinking further.

Worldwide the fertility rate has more than halved over the past 70 years. Half of all countries are below the population replacement level as of 2021, the *Lancet* medical journal reports.

In contrast, sub-Saharan Africa has one of the highest birthrates. In 2021, 29% of the world’s babies were born there.

‘Gag’ order on Trump is attack on free speech

BY TERRY EVANS

For a second time, Judge Juan Merchan threatened to throw presidential candidate Donald Trump in jail for his public comments. Merchan’s assault on free speech came in response to a prosecutor’s motion for sanctions against Trump for an alleged violation of a gag order during his New York trial on charges cooked up by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat.

“Going forward, this court will have to consider a jail sanction,” Merchan said May 6, after fining Trump \$1,000 for saying, “The jury was picked so fast — 95% Democrats,” April 22. “The area’s mostly Democrat. It’s a very unfair situation, that I can tell you.”

Merchan’s absurd reason for the ruling is his claim that Trump’s comments endangered “the safety of the jurors and of their loved ones.”

Under the judge’s gag order Trump is barred from commenting about potential witnesses, like his former lawyer, Michael Cohen. Merchan rejected the prosecution’s demand for more sanctions after Trump asked April 22, “And when are they going to look at all the lies that Cohen did in the last trial?”

Cohen comments nightly about Trump on his TikTok channel, using the platform to solicit donations from viewers for his vitriol toward the presidential candidate. “Trump 2024?” Cohen said April 23, “More like Trump 20-24 years.”

When Trump comes out of court each day, Cohen said, he “goes right into that little cage, which is where he belongs, in a f--king cage like an animal.” Trump is barred from responding.

The judge’s attempts to silence the presidential candidate and his threats to jail him are a blow to constitutional protections working people need.

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