

Judge makes a mockery of the Constitution in NY Trump trial

BY TERRY EVANS

The right to a fair trial and free speech were dealt serious blows by Judge Juan Merchan as part of the prosecution of presidential candidate Donald Trump initiated by New York City District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat. Bragg ran on a platform of being the best candidate to get Trump.

Merchan allowed the prosecution to introduce hour after hour of irrelevant and lurid testimony May 7 and 9 from pornography film actress and director Stephanie Clifford. She described an alleged 2006 tryst she had with the former president. The charges Trump faces — falsifying business records — have nothing to do with her testimony.

Merchan has imposed a gag order on Trump that bars him from responding publicly to Clifford.

Clifford insisted in court that she be identified as “Stormy Daniels,” her stage name. Under cross-examination she admitted to a long history of using her short-lived relationship with Trump to gouge out as much self-serving publicity and income as possible.

Clifford was put on the stand for one reason only, to prejudice the jury and

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As Moscow hits Kharkiv region, soldiers' deaths spur protests

BY ROY LANDERSEN

In an escalation of Vladimir Putin's murderous war against the people of Ukraine, Moscow's tanks attacked across Ukraine's northeastern border May 10 for the first time since the early weeks of its invasion in 2022. Ukrainian reserves are engaged in heavy fighting near Vovchansk.

Thousands of people from around the town were evacuated to nearby Kharkiv as shelling intensified. More advances by Moscow's forces would bring Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, within Russian artillery range.

Less than two years ago, Ukraine's working people and armed forces drove Putin's invaders from the Kharkiv region. Now Moscow is using its numerical superiority in troops and ammunition, and delays in U.S. military supplies, to stretch the war's front line to Ukraine's northeast. But Russian forces also suffered over 1,300 killed and wounded May 10.

This comes as Putin's regime is intensifying its bombardment of Ukrainian cities and at the same time many families of Russian soldiers are growing angry at the countless war deaths.

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SWP presidential candidate Rachele Fruit: 'Workers need to break with the bosses' parties, build a labor party'



Militant/Mary Martin

Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president Rachele Fruit, third from right, joins Rona big box store workers strike picket in Montreal May 8. The 172 workers in Confederation of National Trade Unions set up picket lines following bosses' lockout after one-day strike May 4.

SWP campaign expands reach of 'Militant,' Pathfinder books

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, is winning a growing hearing in cities across the U.S. and Canada for the party's call for workers to break with all the capitalist rulers' parties and build a labor party based on the unions. The campaign has reinforced the successful nine-week party effort to win 1,350 new *Militant* readers,

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Fruit takes campaign to Canada, calls for working-class solidarity

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Over three days here, Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, met with Canadian National rail workers as they prepare for a possible strike; brought her solidarity to the picket line of recently locked-out Rona hardware store workers, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions; and spoke to 32 people at a special *Militant*

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Flight attendants at American rally nationwide for contract, right to strike



Militant

American Airlines workers, members of Association of Professional Flight Attendants, with no raise in five years, rally in Washington, D.C., elsewhere, May 9 demanding right to strike.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

A spirited picket line of over 100 members of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants and their supporters rallied at Los Angeles International Airport May 9. The action was one of 14 across the U.S. organized as part of a monthslong cam-

campaign to demand the right to strike and for a new contract at American Airlines. Flight attendants there have not had a raise in five years. Their last contract expired in 2019.

“The new hires are making \$27,000 a year before taxes, an unlivable wage,”

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Israel defends existence as refuge for Jews in face of US opposition to Rafah fighting

BY SETH GALINSKY

Despite strong opposition from the Joseph Biden administration, the Israel Defense Forces are expanding their operations in Rafah, near the Egyptian border, and in Jabaliya

and Zeitoun in northern Gaza. They have been destroying Hamas tunnels, weapons stores, rocket launchers and command posts.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad death squads — financed and trained by Tehran — killed 1,200 people in Israel Oct. 7, mostly civilians, wounded more than 5,000, took over 250 hostages and raped and mutilated women. It was the largest anti-Jewish pogrom since World War II.

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Younger workers are hit hard by inflation, crisis of capitalism

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Young workers are being ravaged by the continuing scourge of inflation marking today's capitalist economic and social crisis. The average credit card debt for 22- to 24-year-olds has ballooned to a record high of \$2,834 per youth at the end of 2023 — 26% higher than what it was 10 years ago.

The highest price rises are for essential needs — housing and food. Many youth in their 20s — and beyond — are forced to live with their parents, relatives

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Rona home improvement store workers strike over wages, hours

Flight attendants rally across US

Continued from front page

Elizabeth Lozada, a flight attendant for nine years, told the *Militant*. Other flight attendants said some apply for food stamps and public housing assistance to get by.

“We demand the National Mediation Board release us to allow us our right to strike,” John Nikides, a flight attendant for 40 years, said.

Using the excuse that airline workers’ labor is “essential,” the government imposes the notorious anti-labor Railway Labor Act on them. It bars most strikes and introduces endless delays in negotiations through government interference.

One of the flight attendants’ key demands is to be paid for all the time they work. Today they are only paid for time in the air. Time loading and unloading the plane is unpaid.

Some 125 flight attendants picketed at the Philadelphia International Airport. Ashley Kaiser, who picketed while pulling a wagon with some of her children, told the *Militant*, “They really don’t care about our ability to take care of our families.” She said that she and her husband work opposite shifts because they can’t afford child care.

Some 20 flight attendants picketed at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport. Todd Smiertelny told the *Militant* that along with low wages, flight attendants are being asked to do more work today. During the COVID epidemic they cut the number of workers, he said, “but when the flights filled up again, they

didn’t increase the staff.”

Several dozen union members rallied outside the White House in Washington, D.C. “Release us now! We’re ready to strike,” they demanded.

The Association of Professional Flight Attendants and the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, which organizes workers at United and a number of other airlines, with some 77,000 total members between them, have announced an even larger joint action for June 13. They plan to hold pickets at 30 airports with details to follow.

Edwin Fruit in Minneapolis, Deborah Liatos in Los Angeles, Janet Post in Philadelphia, and Arlene Rubinstein in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.



Militant/Janet Post

Some 125 American Airlines flight attendants and supporters picketed Philadelphia International Airport May 9, part of 14 actions across the U.S. demanding a new contract.

Canadian rulers move to bar national rail strike

BY FÉLIX VINCENT ARDEA

MONTREAL — The Canadian government has assigned its Canada Industrial Relations Board to determine whether a work stoppage of the freight rail system would jeopardize “health and safety of Canadians” and if “essential services” should be maintained in the event of a strike or lockout, suspending rail workers’ right to strike.

This comes on the heels of a May 1 strike vote of over 95% in favor by 9,000 conductors, engineers and yard workers at Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City railways, as well as rail traffic controllers at CPKC, all members of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference.

Before the government’s move, the earliest date a strike could have started was May 22. Now, no strike or lockout can legally take place until

the board makes a decision on what parts, if any, of freight rail services are considered “essential.”

Canada’s capitalist rulers are demanding Ottawa restrict rail workers’ right to strike. Canadian Chamber of Commerce Vice President Robin Guy issued a statement saying, “A rail strike would have a devastating impact for the Canadian economy. We need government doing what it can to ensure all essential goods relied upon by Canadians daily continue to move.”

A similar letter came from the Agricultural Transportation Work Group, which speaks for big capitalist farmers.

Rail workers and their union are fighting to defend health and safety. For years now profit-driven rail bosses have been increasing the length of trains to 1 mile or even longer, while at the same time cutting the size of train crews to two or even only one rail worker. That’s what led to the Lac-Mégantic disaster in July 2013 when a parked train whose one-person “crew” was on rest rolled down a hill, exploded and set the downtown on fire, killing 47 people.

Rail workers are looking to counter moves by both CN and CPKC to restrict their right to proper rest and paid time off, and their attempts to reduce crew size even more, and other attacks.

In 2015 Canadian Pacific rail workers walked off the job for two days carrying

placards saying, “Fatigue kills.” In 2019 Canadian National rail workers waged an eight-day strike for safer working conditions and more human work schedules. Walkouts by Canadian Pacific rail workers in 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2022 all ended under threat of federal strikebreaking legislation.

Working-class solidarity was a major factor in gains made by Canadian National workers in their 2019 “strike for safety,” helping prevent Ottawa from imposing back-to-work legislation or compulsory arbitration. They carried handwritten signs saying, “I’m tired of being tired” and “Rail workers’ lives matter.”

Solidarity from the labor movement with the rail workers’ fight for safety, livable work schedules and their right to strike is needed now more than ever.

Félix Vincent Ardea is a CN train conductor, member of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference.

As we go to press:

Washington state officials have informed the Socialist Workers Party that Henry Dennison, its candidate for U.S. Senate, is on the ballot!

THE MILITANT

Chernobyl: Moscow’s disdain for working class

The same contempt for working people shown by the Soviet Union’s Stalinist bureaucrats during the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear meltdown was displayed by the capitalist rulers in Russia who stationed hundreds of troops at poisoned nuclear site in 2022 during invasion of Ukraine.



Militant/John Studer

June 8, 2014, march in Slavutych, founded for workers displaced by Chernobyl disaster.

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

Road forward for working class debated at Labor Notes meeting

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — The increased mood of resistance in the working class was reflected in the Labor Notes 2024 conference, which took place here April 19-21. Among the 4,700 people attending were workers who had participated in recent strikes and contract fights — autoworkers, flight attendants, teachers, UPS workers and others. But many were union staffers, “community organizers,” academics and students.

AS I SEE IT

The perspectives advanced by the conference organizers centered on building opposition “reform” caucuses, such as Teamsters for a Democratic Union, as the key way to revitalize the labor movement. This was often combined with supporting bourgeois “friends of labor,” mostly in the Democratic Party, or seeing union struggles as a way to pressure the capitalist government. Many argued the labor movement “strengthens America,” tying higher wages and other gains to bosses making higher profits and making progress against foreign competitors.

Several supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaign of Rachele Fruit for president took part, finding interest among some participants in a different course. The SWP campaigners discussed the need for the working class to chart a class-struggle road forward, to break politically from all capitalist parties and candidates, to build a labor party based on the unions to organize workers in their millions to take political power.

The gains made in the United Auto Workers strike against the Big Three auto bosses last year were a theme of many conference sessions. Participants celebrated the announcement during the conference that workers at Volkswagen in Chattanooga, Tennessee, had just voted to join the UAW — the first organizing victory at an assembly plant of a non-U.S. automaker in the South.

One of the featured speakers at the final conference session was UAW International President Shawn Fain. He wore a union sweatshirt with a picture of a B-24 World War II “liberator” bomber. In the 1940s “we created the arsenal of democracy,” the UAW president bragged, in patriotic praise of Washington’s role in the Second World War, out of which the U.S. rulers took their dominant position in the imperialist world order. He referred to President Joseph Biden’s visit during the auto strike last fall to the Willow Run plant, where the bombers had been built. The UAW was an early endorser of Biden’s reelection campaign.

Debate over labor party

The question of whether workers should support the Democrats as a “lesser evil” was debated at a number of the 300 workshops. At one, titled, “Can unions seize the moment?” a presenter argued that Republican Donald Trump is so bad union members need to vote for Biden, even if they don’t like him.

“The Democrats and Republicans both represent the interests of the bosses,” responded Gabrielle Prosser, a member of the Bakery, Confectionery,

Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union and SWP candidate for Congress from Minnesota. “We need to build a labor party, based on the unions, that could organize the whole working class to fight for our own class interests. What we win on the picket line will always come under attack again as long as the bosses and their political parties remain in power.” She got some applause.

But Sara Nelson, international president of the Association of Flight Attendants, one of the panelists at that session, disagreed, saying building a labor party would be “divisive,” since union members have different political viewpoints. “We have the union, that is our party!” she declared. “We need to fight capitalism! Let the politicians come to us!”

That may sound radical, but those “politicians” she seeks to attract are from the bosses’ parties, leaving workers demobilized and dependent on the political plane.

Other schemes for organizing “worker centers” and “independent” unions as a “progressive” alternative to the existing labor movement were presented — from Amazon warehouses to organizing agricultural workers.

This came up at a workshop on farmworkers. Clay Dennison, a rail worker and member of the SWP from Seattle,



Mike Zilles, president of Newton Teachers Association in Massachusetts, speaks Jan. 18 during strike battle. The union set an example for labor by denouncing Hamas “atrocities against Israelis on Oct. 7” and opposing a cease-fire that would “provoke further antisemitism.”

spoke about the five-year successful organizing and contract fight carried out by Familias United in Washington state. He helped organize solidarity for them.

“They were embraced by members of established unions, including by the State Labor Council from early on in their fight,” Dennison said. “With the rise in labor struggles today there are better chances now for farmworkers and others to win solidarity from within the labor movement.”

Workers need our own foreign policy

The conference included several workshops promoting the Hamas-led

call for a cease-fire in Gaza and calls for boycott of Israel. On the opening day, hundreds of conference participants chanting “Free Palestine” blocked the street near the conference venue and clashed with cops.

Socialist Workers Party campaigners had numerous discussions with participants about why it’s a crucial question for the working class to oppose Jew-hatred and pogroms, including the murderous Hamas assault on Jews in Israel. Some of these discussions were heated, but remained civil. Some people changed the subject, while others welcomed a dis-

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ON THE PICKET LINE

Supermarket workers in UK strike over ‘toxic’ conditions

LOWESTOFT, England — Some 175 workers struck the ASDA superstore in this small town 130 miles northeast of London May 10-11, the third strike in a campaign by General Municipal and Boilermakers union members against “toxic” conditions at the company. Similar strikes took place in the small rural towns of Wisbech in Cambridgeshire and Gosport in Hampshire. In addition to working conditions, pay and union rights are at issue.

“The union is now organizing strike ballots at stores in north London,” regional GMB organizer Keith Dixon told the *Militant*. The supermarket giant employs some 145,000 workers in over 1,000 stores across the country.

The vote in favor of the two-day stoppage here was 90% with an 80% turnout. Over 50 strikers staged a lively banner-waving picket. Passing cars sounded their horns in support, which added to the blare of the pickets’ trumpets. “When we were walking nearby, we were drawn to the noise and fantastic turnout,” said local groundskeeper Justin Burgess. He and his friend Richard Carbonari donned GMB union vests and joined the picket in solidarity. “We shop here. We know what they’re going through,” Burgess said.

“At the center of the dispute are the deteriorating conditions,” Dixon said. “Workers who leave aren’t being replaced. And there’s a high turnover. Hours are being cut — which means increased workload and reduced pay.”

Also being challenged is the union’s right to bargain for the workers. The company says industrial action by the GMB is contrary to the “joint partnership agreement” the union has with ASDA.

Pickets said the company has a re-

cord of disciplining workers who speak to the press. On condition of anonymity, one told the *Militant* the reduced hours mean that “with the additional workloads colleagues are being forced to carry out, safety is a big issue. In March there was a raw sewage spillage in the store here for much of a day — only stopped by union action.”

Also bringing solidarity to the picket was London supermarket worker Pamela Holmes, a member of the Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers at a Tesco store and the Communist League parliamentary candidate for the Tottenham constituency. “We face the same issues of less staff hours and increased workload,” Holmes told the pickets. “Solidarity is key to building and strengthening the unions.”

— Jonathan Silberman

Rona home improvement store workers strike over wages, hours

MONTREAL — “In April our strike vote was approved by 98%,” Massara Kamagate, Confederation of National Trade Unions shop steward at the Rona home improvement big-box store in Anjou, told the *Militant* May 9.

The 172 union members walked out on a one-day strike May 4. In response, the bosses locked them out. Since then, lively picket lines with music and dancing are up from early morning to 9 p.m. every day.

The boss is offering raises of only 1.5% per year over a six-year contract, Kamagate said. “The union is asking for 5% a year — \$1 an hour. Right now, the top rate is \$21.51 an hour [US\$15.75], even after 30 years.”

“Forklift drivers get no extra bonus,” said Stephane Martin. “I’ve driven specialized forklifts in printshops, at the port. There’s no recognition.”

Some workers have full-time jobs of

either 40 or 34 hours per week, the rest are part time. Management wants to eliminate the 15 remaining 40-hour-a-week full-time positions.

The Rona hardware chain operates 425 stores in Canada with 22,000 employees. Workers in different stores are organized by a number of unions.

“This is the first time there’s been a strike in a Rona,” union member Michel Potvin said. “We’ll be an example for the others.”


“This is a fight for respect,” Melina Gluch said.

Gabriel Chenier, a 20-year-old student, has worked at Rona for a year. He fist-bumped other part-timers. “I voted for the strike. It’s good to do this to improve the atmosphere at work,” he said.

Recently taken over by U.S. private equity firm Sycamore, Rona recently laid off 500 employees systemwide and closed a Quebec distribution center. Home improvement business owners raked in double-digit profit increases during the pandemic, but as inflation has sapped working people revenue has dropped.

Union members welcome support. Drop by the line at the Galeries d’Anjou shopping center or send a message to infofc@csn.qc.ca.

— Katy LeRougetel



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

pathfinderpress.com

SWP campaign expands reach



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

“Immigrant workers in the U.S. work hard, one day we’ll go on strike across the country,” Norma Ribas, right, told Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, May 13.

Continued from front page

get out the same number of books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries and raise \$165,000 for the paper.

The drive is over the top! We’ve won 1,355 subscribers, sold 1,511 books and raised \$168,246.

The party has taken Fruit’s presidential campaign, the *Militant*, the paper’s fund drive and its books to actions to back Israel’s existence as a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms; in support of Ukraine’s fight to defend its independence; and to workers on strike picket lines and at their doorsteps. SWP and Communist League members in Canada, Australia and the U.K. have discussed and debated the road forward with thousands of working people.

In Miami SWP members Steve Warshell and Laura Anderson visited St Paul Louis, a retired janitor and member of AFSCME Local 1184 May 12. Louis pulled out lawn chairs to discuss the paper and the Fruit campaign.

Louis has been reading the *Militant* for more than two years and has contributed to the Militant Prisoners’ Fund. “The Democrats and Republicans are hypocrites and don’t care about working people,” Louis said as he filled out a card to endorse Fruit’s campaign. “We need to depend on ourselves.” He also renewed his *Militant* subscription.

Louis described a visit he made back to Haiti in the 1980s. U.S. imperialism was “there for the rich,” he said. A defender of Israel as a refuge for Jews, he told Warshell and Anderson he’s looking forward to the French-language edition of the new book *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*.

Jonathan Parsons, from Richland Hills, Texas, also endorsed Fruit’s campaign after talking with party members George Chalmers and Hilda Cuzco on his doorstep May 13.

He said he worked in the oil fields until he was injured and now trims trees, another dangerous job. After discussing the need for a labor party based on the unions, Parsons pulled out \$20.

He got a copy of the *Militant* and *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* and donated the rest to the Militant Fighting Fund.

Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, and party member Alex Huinil met Norma Ribas on her doorstep in Cleburne May 13. “Immigrant workers in the U.S. work harder, more hours and for less pay,” Ribas said, as they discussed the challenges facing workers today. “One day we will strike all across the country and the U.S. will lose billions of dollars.”

Huinil told her about the millions of immigrant workers who organized protests demanding amnesty across the U.S. in 2006. “The SWP campaign supports amnesty for immigrants who live and work here,” he said. “This is a life-and-death question for the unions.”

‘Your fight can be an example,’ Richter tells flight attendants



Militant/David Rosenfeld

CHICAGO — Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, joined the American Airlines flight attendants rallying at O’Hare airport May 9, a highlight of his campaign visit here.

Dray Howard, president of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants union in Chicago, above, speaks with Richter about the issues in their fight. The 27,000 flight attendants at American, who work grueling schedules, have gone without a raise since 2019.

“I just don’t understand why they refuse to negotiate the big economic questions like wages,” Howard said. “Don’t they see that starting flight attendants live on poverty wages? Can’t they see that this isn’t fair? Why are they so greedy?”

“The big corporations are all competing against each other,” Richter told her. “This leads to every company looking to make cuts in wages and benefits, with layoffs and speedup. That’s why your fight is so important. Everyone is fighting for the same things, no matter what industry it is.

“I think you have to look at the world,” the SWP candidate added. “There is more competition between the bosses internationally. It’s leading to more wars, like the war in Ukraine for independence against Moscow’s invasion, and the war in the Middle East. I think that we need to support the right of the state of Israel to exist. It is the only country that has offered refuge for Jews, who are facing more and more Jew-hatred around the world. Hamas has to be defeated so that Israel can survive. These are important questions for the working class in this country.”

— ILONA GERSH

“Workers today are in a mood to fight, we can change our conditions,” Kennedy added. “We need to organize our own party to lead a powerful working-class movement based on the unions to take political power.”

Ribas got a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

Several flight attendants at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport told SWP members they appreciated their participation in the May 9 picket for a new contract there. Denise Chapple, who works for American Airlines, told Edwin Fruit she was glad to see the *Militant*’s earlier coverage of pickets by United Airlines flight attendants.

“I’m interested in reading other points of view and need to find out more about

the Middle East war,” she said. She got a subscription and copies of the *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us* and *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*.

Kami Forcier, a flight attendant for 25 years, described the fight they are waging for a wage increase and to end work done without pay. She also got a subscription.

SWP members are stepping up efforts to win endorsers for Rachele Fruit’s campaign and are organizing to get the SWP candidates on the ballot in as many states as possible. In the coming weeks, campaign and petitioning teams will be fanning out across New Jersey, Tennessee and Washington state.

To join these efforts contact the campaign office nearest you listed on page 6.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund

March 9-May 14 (Final chart)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta*	55	60	55	55	\$10,250	\$10,390
Chicago	100	83	100	78	\$14,000	\$14,598
Cincinnati	50	54	50	52	\$5,000	\$5,005
Dallas-Ft. Worth	60	63	60	70	\$5,000	\$5,005
Lincoln	15	16	15	16	\$500	\$502
Los Angeles*	120	124	120	137	\$16,000	\$16,195
Miami	35	37	35	64	\$5,000	\$5,585
Minneapolis	70	72	70	73	\$5,500	\$6,334
N. New Jersey	75	76	75	83	\$7,500	\$7,952
New York	100	106	100	105	\$20,500	\$21,004
Oakland	80	84	80	83	\$15,500	\$15,795
Philadelphia	55	58	55	68	\$6,000	\$7,816
Pittsburgh	45	47	45	61	\$6,000	\$6,232
Seattle	70	70	70	72	\$14,500	\$14,558
Washington	60	63	60	62	\$5,000	\$5,082
Other	0	21	0	180	\$0	\$3,750
Total U.S.	990	1034	990	1,259	\$136,250	\$145,803
Prisoners		103				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	45	52	45	52	\$2,560	\$3,130
Manchester	35	41	35	49	\$1,200	\$1,498
Total U.K.	80	93	80	101	\$3,760	\$4,628
Canada	90	93	110	115	\$12,150	\$12,715
Australia	30	32	30	36	\$5,000	\$5,100
Total	1,190	1,355	1,210	1,511	\$157,160	\$168,246
SHOULD BE	1,350	1,350	1,350	1,350	\$165,000	\$165,000
* Raised goal						

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

Fruit takes campaign to Canada

Continued from front page
Labor Forum May 9.

The meeting was chaired by Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate in the upcoming Montreal federal by-election.

"I am honored to be invited to speak in Montreal, among working-class fighters who have been on picket lines big and small over the last few years seeking to defend themselves against the bosses' drive to make us pay for the crisis of capitalism," she told the crowd.

"I and my running mate for vice president, Dennis Richter, a veteran of many union struggles, are campaigning on the program of socialist revolution.

"Ours is an international program, so it's important for us to come here and learn from you, for us to share ideas and experiences, to build an international movement," she said.

"The world capitalist economic crisis is bringing devastation and war to millions. The future of humanity depends on the U.S. working class taking power away from the capitalist rulers and starting down the road to make a socialist revolution."

More and more workers "are in the mood to fight," she said, not just in the United States, but around the world, including in Canada. She pointed to the recent strike of 600,000 Quebec government workers and an overwhelming strike vote by rail workers and a similar size vote by Montreal port workers against the port bosses' latest contract offer.

"There are 16.2 million U.S. workers who are in unions today," she said. "They are a powerful force, but they're only 10% of the working class and many millions more need to be organized. And so do our allies among small producers, like small farmers, independent truckers and fishermen."

What is needed to mobilize and unite working people, "is a political party independent of the boss parties. We call for a labor party based on the unions that can organize the whole working class to fight together, a social movement, in a struggle to replace capitalist political power with a workers government."

Fruit pointed to the example of what Cuba's workers and farmers have accomplished since their 1959 socialist revolution, and the consis-

tent record of the SWP in defending that revolution ever since.

In defense of Ukraine and Israel

"Both Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and the Oct. 7 pogrom by Hamas against Jews in Israel have huge stakes for the working class worldwide," said Fruit. "The decisive stand of the Socialist Workers Party and the communist movement internationally in the fight against Jew-hatred and in defense of Ukrainian sovereignty places the party on the front lines at a turning point in world politics."

Fruit explained how the party's positions on these struggles are rooted in its political continuity with the revolutionary perspectives and actions of the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin that led the 1917 Russian Revolution, and of Leon Trotsky's defense of Lenin's course against the counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin.

Centrality of fight against Jew-hatred

Fruit said that in the experience of SWP members going door to door in working-class neighborhoods, or talking to workers on picket lines and at demonstrations, most "overwhelmingly express horror at the Oct. 7 savage attack by Tehran-backed Hamas against Israel and its people."

"As one worker on the Molson Coors strike picket line in Fort Worth, Texas, told us: 'If I heard my daughter went to one of the pro-Hamas protests, I'd pull her out of school. I didn't send her to college to become an antisemite.'"

Fruit meets Quebec rail workers, discusses contract fight

BY MARY MARTIN

MONTREAL — On May 8 six rail workers in the Teamsters union in Montreal met with Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president.

They started with the potential nationwide strike at Canada's two largest railroads — the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City — and ended up with a discussion of why only the working class can resolve the economic, social and moral crisis of capitalism.

"I want our voice to be heard by everyone in Canada in the blue collar circles. I want to make it known what we are fighting for," Giulio Archambeault explained. "Our going on strike is showing our dedication to fellow rail workers, not just here but in the U.S. We are fighting for safety, for balance in our lives, for time with our wives and kids or girlfriends or boyfriends. We need salaries that keep up with inflation. They don't care about us."

Fruit said, "Rail workers in the U.S. gained a lot of support last year when they voted in their majority to strike, and despite that, the government forced the bosses' contract on them. More and more working people have come to understand the unsafe conditions facing rail workers, that they have no time to rest, let alone time to read a book, etc."

"I hope it doesn't take a tragedy here for people to see what is at stake," Sebastian Santamaria said, "like what happened in East Palestine and Lac-Mégantic."

They discussed the appeal for protective work gear for rail workers in Ukraine issued by their fellow union in the U.S., SMART-TD, in collaboration with a rail union there. Fruit said



Militant/Jim Upton

"We are campaigning on a program of socialist revolution," Rachele Fruit, right, SWP candidate for U.S. president, told May 9 meeting in Montreal. "It's important to build an international movement." Chair is Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate in federal by-election.

In the discussion period one participant asked about U.S. President Joseph Biden's threat to deny weapons to the Israeli army if it moves into Rafah to defeat Hamas. Fruit answered, "This helps to expose the reality that Washington has no interest in defending Israel as a refuge for the Jewish people. It is acting in the economic and political interests of the capitalist rulers in the U.S. who are looking to ensure stability and profitable relations with Arab capitalist regimes in the Middle East, as well as Iran."

After the forum, Canadian National train conductor Giulio Archambeault told the *Militant*, "I learned things here I didn't know about the wars that are going on. Rail workers here need

to show solidarity with rail workers all over North America, the U.S. and Mexico. This was an important aspect of the discussion."

Retired teacher and union activist Josette Hurtubise told the *Militant* the Pathfinder book *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* "shows that things are always changing and that it is possible for us to change the world. When you understand this, then the next question is, 'Where do I fit into this process?'"

Fruit answered this question appealing for all those present to endorse and support the SWP campaign and to join the Communist League. "There is no better thing you can do with your life."

this kind of international solidarity helps to give our class confidence in our own capacities.

Santamaria asked, "Isn't the government of Ukraine one of the most corrupt governments in Europe?"

All capitalist governments are corrupt and my party doesn't support the Ukrainian government, Fruit said. "But the Ukrainian people are fighting to defend the existence of their country, their language and culture. At the same time, the workers fight to defend their unions from attacks by their own government."

Fighting Jew-hatred is union issue

"Isn't the fight against Jew-hatred a central part of your campaign?" said Felix Ardea. "Yes," Fruit replied, explaining the Socialist Workers Party's position.

Santamaria agreed with Fruit that Hamas was a terrorist organization, but said he thought the numbers of Palestinians killed in Gaza showed that Israel's war in response to the Oct. 7 Hamas assault was unjust.

Philippe Tessier read a passage out loud from a new book, *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*, published by Pathfinder Press. He quoted from Hamas' founding charter explaining the purpose of their organization is to kill Jews. Jeffrey Shulman said he had just gotten the book and was looking forward to reading it.

Shulman said he can see how attacks under the capitalist system in Canada on workers' standard of living have accelerated. Housing is simply unaffordable for more and more working people.

At the same time, he said, he has friends who, "because they have an edu-

cation, think they are too good to work with their hands, like it's beneath them. They'd rather complain about being broke than take a real job."

Fruit pointed to the book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. It describes the privileged upper-middle-class meritocracy, which thinks it can tell workers how to live and how to think.

"Workers need to learn how to run all of society, how everything works, how to build everything. We need these skills," she said. "If you study the Cuban Revolution, you can see how they worked to overcome the division between manual and mental labor and make culture available to all workers."

In response to a question about Donald Trump, Fruit explained he is a capitalist politician who has no answers for working people. At the same time, she said, the Democratic Party's frame-up against him that dominates U.S. politics is aimed at preventing him from running or winning the election. It's an attack on the rights of those who want to vote for him.

"The Democratic Party pays no attention to the millions of working people in the middle of the country," she said. "They refer to this as 'flyover country.'"

"Shortly after Hillary Clinton talked about working people being 'deplorable,' teachers in West Virginia went out on strike. Their strike unified the working class behind them and set an example to workers everywhere," Fruit said. "They learned from the history of the United Mine Workers of America, where for years miners used their union to take control over safety and work conditions."

**Hear
Rachele Fruit,
SWP candidate
for U.S. president
Washington, D.C.
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Philadelphia
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SWP candidate
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see directory on page 6.

US-led intervention in Haiti deepens crisis, cycle of violence

BY RÓGER CALERO

Under the pressure of Washington and other capitalist powers, a transitional presidential council was established in Haiti April 25 prior to the arrival of a Kenyan-led foreign military force. It's tasked with quelling the current levels of gang violence and cobbling together a government amid a severe social, economic and political crisis.

According to a plan concocted by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and endorsed by the Caribbean Community trade bloc, the transitional government is charged with selecting a president, prime minister, a cabinet and a provisional electoral council to organize national and local elections by February 2026.

Haiti has been engulfed in a protracted political crisis marked by sharp factional battles among ruling circles that has dismantled any semblance of stable bourgeois democratic rule. The weak ruling class in Haiti has no solution to the social breakdowns that are fueled by the worldwide capitalist economic crisis.

Days before the announcement of the provisional council's composition, Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned. The new body is mainly composed of representatives of parties working people blame for the crisis.

Henry had faced calls to resign from many quarters — rival capitalist parties, gangs vying for power and working people angry that general elections have not been held in eight years. While in office, Henry did nothing to halt the advance of gangs, which now control 80% of Port-au-Prince, the capital. They've led to the killing of 5,000 people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands from their homes in the last year.

The latest spiral of gang violence ex-

ploded after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021, leaving different ruling-class factions fighting for control of the government. The conflict was settled by the U.N.-led Core Group, composed of the ambassadors of Brazil, Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Spain, the U.S. and the Organization of American States. The group appointed Henry.

Most Haitians have very little confidence that the new transitional body will produce a way out of the crisis. "Thieves and gangs! That's all they are!" yelled a man as he drove past the building where the council's swearing-in ceremony took place, reports NBC News.

Conditions for working people in one of the world's poorest countries have deteriorated in recent years. Cholera reappeared after a three-year absence in October 2022 and spread across the country. Much infrastructure has been destroyed, with less than half the health care facilities in Port-au-Prince functioning at normal capacity.

This will be the fourth foreign military intervention in Haiti since 1994. Unable to justify a direct U.S. intervention, the Biden administration negotiated the establishment of the Kenyan-led force with the support of the United Nations. In addition to some 1,000 Kenyan police officers, the governments of Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Chad and Jamaica have pledged police officers and soldiers for the intervention. Canadian Armed Forces recently completed training of some of these troops.

In early May U.S. military planes began transporting contractors to secure the Port-au-Prince airport and send supplies to build an operations base for the troops.

Gangs' and rulers' collusion

In the meantime, gang leaders are stepping up violence to get leverage as they seek an amnesty for their crimes and a seat at the table when the new government carves up the spoils. The current levels of violence have pulled back the curtain on the long history of collusion between political parties and gangs in Haiti.

The use of paramilitary gangs by



AP/Odelyn Joseph

U.S. Air Force cargo plane arrives at Toussaint Louverture airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, May 11 to build operations base for Kenyan-led military force backed by Washington, U.N.

Haitian ruling circles against their rivals and to repress the struggles by working people in city and countryside is not new. During the rule of the Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier family from 1957 to 1986, the regime used the notorious Tonton Macoutes — a paramilitary and secret police force — to dispose of its enemies and to terrorize working people. Washington propped up the Duvalier dictatorship.

Suppression of unions by the government and armed thugs has encouraged U.S. and other foreign businesses to flock to Haiti to set up factories, especially in the textile and apparel industries, where they get away with paying workers less than \$5 a day.

Poverty and insecurity, magnified by social disasters following hurricanes and a massive earthquake, has compelled hundreds of thousands of Haitians to migrate in recent decades to neighboring Dominican Republic, the U.S. and Canada.

Workers are only progressive force

Contrary to those who justify the impending foreign military intervention, Haiti's underdevelopment and social crisis can only be solved by working people there. In fact, it's workers and farmers who have been the driving force for political advances, not interventions orchestrated by the "democratic" imperialist powers.

In 1984, working-class resistance to intolerable conditions under Duvalier finally exploded. Over the next two

years, a broad struggle involving tens of thousands in street mobilizations, strikes, and student protests across the country defied the brutal repression by Duvalier's Tonton Macoutes and army.

They raised demands against rising food prices and economic policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund. They demanded the reopening of closed factories, a higher minimum wage and the disarmament of the paramilitary gangs.

This struggle got rid of one of the most brutal dictatorships in Latin America and built the confidence of working people in a way that many still remember today.

Gang leader Jimmy Cherizier, a former cop, opposes the interim government and demagogically vows to fight against corrupt oligarchs and traditional politicians.

"People sometimes talk about food distribution his gang has done to improve their image," Ausler Bathard, a Haitian-born member of UNITE HERE in Miami told the *Militant*, "but they forget that he got that food through robbery and extortion. There is nothing good about him.

"A foreign police force will not solve anything. There is a deeper problem," Bathard said. "Haiti is a country with many resources but the companies and the government do not manage them for the people, only for themselves."

Steve Warshell in Miami contributed to this article.

Labor Notes

Continued from page 3

cussion on these questions. "I thought I was the only one" who thinks Israel has a right to exist and defend itself, a grocery store worker from Los Angeles told this correspondent.

The scourge of Jew-hatred will be a life-and-death question for the working class as the crisis of capitalism deepens and the bosses look to fascist forces to crush the unions, as they did in Germany.

A labor studies student who is originally from Israel told Dennison she has been very disturbed by the atmosphere on campus and more broadly since Oct. 7. She signed up for a subscription to the *Militant* and got a copy of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*. Overall, conference participants bought six copies of that book, along with 17 *Militant* subscriptions.

Another best seller was *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*, which addresses the situation working people face today. *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs and books on the Cuban Revolution also sold well.

Naomi Craine is a freight rail worker and member of SMART-TD in Chicago.

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Opening guns of World War III get louder

The opening guns of World War III are getting louder, and the reality of the imperialist epoch is becoming clearer to millions. While the ruling capitalist families wield state power, their drive for profit, dog-eat-dog competition and sharpening clashes inexorably push them down the road toward the horrors of fascist pogroms, new world conflict, and the threat of nuclear destruction.

Only the working class — in the U.S. and around the world — has the capacity to halt this trajectory and end capitalism's exploitation, crises and wars.

Vladimir Putin's invasion in Ukraine is the biggest war in Europe since World War II, conducted with far-reaching brutality against civilian targets and infrastructure. The Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom, orchestrated by the counterrevolutionary rulers of Iran, slaughtered over 1,200 Jews in Israel. These have accelerated this march to war. Capitalist powers the world over, from Europe to Latin America, Washington to Beijing, are driving to protect their rival interests with military buildups, shifting alignments and growing threats.

A declaration by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes, issued a week after Putin's invasion began, explained why defending Ukraine's sovereignty is in the interests of working people worldwide. It called for the defeat of Moscow's forces and for U.S. troops and nuclear arms out of Europe.

Opposition to Washington's foreign policy is crucial for the working-class movement today, as the U.S. rulers look to use their military might to preserve their weakening but still dominant place at the top of the fragmenting imperialist world order. Its NATO alliance is used to assert its interventions in Europe for its own strategic and exploitative purposes.

In the Middle East, Washington plays Israel, the Arab states and the Iranian regime against each other in an effort to protect its own imperialist interests.

The term "a new iron curtain" has been used for the hardening dividing line emerging across Europe as eastern European governments, fearing Moscow's aggressive expansionism, are seeking closer alignment with Washington and its NATO allies.

Washington's war against Iraq in 1991 announced what the SWP called "the opening guns of World War III." What looms now isn't a new Cold War but the growing inevitability of new, and more threatening, "hot" wars around the world.

From Romania to Bulgaria, the capitalist rulers are taking steps to line up with Washington. Those of Sweden and Finland dropped their professed neutrality to join NATO. The Polish rulers are negotiating to host U.S. nuclear weapons. Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey all have U.S. tactical nuclear weapons based on their soil.

At the same time, as Barnes said in his 2022 statement, "Putin's efforts to excuse his bloodthirsty invasion of Ukraine on grounds of moves by Washington and other NATO governments are as cynical as they are false. A sovereign and independent Ukraine poses no military threat to Russia of any kind."

The threat to humanity of escalating conflicts leading to another world war where heavily armed nuclear powers face off against each other poses the need to build a leadership that can mobilize working people in their millions to take political power from the capitalist warmakers into our own hands.

Join the Socialist Workers Party 2024 campaign in the fight for this perspective!

Judge makes mockery of Constitution in Trump trial

Continued from front page

boost Democrats' efforts to get their main rival for the White House thrown in jail.

Seeking to make good on his campaign promises, Bragg cooked up the charges based on Trump recording reimbursements to his former lawyer, Michael Cohen, as legal payments. Cohen paid Clifford as part of a nondisclosure agreement that she had requested and signed. She earned \$130,000 for staying quiet about the sexual encounter she says she had with Trump. Trump says the hookup never happened and he arranged the payoff to protect the privacy of his family.

Bragg charges that Trump's recording of the payments to Cohen as a legal cost is somehow illegal, claiming they were made to influence the 2016 election.

Trump lawyer Susan Necheles asked Merchan to prevent Clifford's testimony about the sex as "unduly prejudicial." Merchan overruled Necheles, backing the prosecution's argument it was needed to establish Clifford's "credibility."

But questions about Clifford's reliability, as well as her explicit story of the alleged encounter, were immaterial. Neither the nondisclosure agreement she signed, nor the payment she sought are being contested in the trial. Nor are Trump's efforts to try to prevent other gossip about himself from being published during the 2016 election campaign.

When Necheles asked Clifford what she knew about the charges that Trump committed a crime related to his business records, she admitted, "I know nothing about his business records. No, why would I?"

Because of the irrelevant, prejudicial character of the testimony, defense lawyers urged the judge to declare a mistrial. He refused.

Gag order on presidential candidate

The defense also requested that the judge modify a gag order to allow Trump to respond to the liberal media's use of Clifford's testimony to imply he assaulted her, which she has admitted is false.

Writing in the *New York Times*, Jessica Bennett claimed Clifford's account was "reminiscent of so many of the other stories of women who have come forward to accuse him [Trump] of sexual assault."

But Clifford says the alleged encounter was consensual and she stayed in touch with Trump afterward, hoping to appear on his TV show.

Merchan rejected the defense request to lift the gag.

Merchan has twice threatened to use the gag order to jail Trump if he says a word about witnesses, including Clifford or Cohen. The porn actress continues to publicly mock Trump, sell merchandise about the trial on her website and call for him to be thrown in prison. But he is barred from saying a word in response.

The attempt to silence a candidate under political attack during a presidential campaign is unprecedented. It is even more outrageous after the judge allowed Clifford's hit-job testimony. If one of the bosses' two major parties can get away with doing this to the other, they'll do the same and far worse to workers, our unions and working-class political parties.

Prosecutors tampered with evidence

Democrats are desperate to get a conviction by any means. They've based Biden's reelection campaign on demonizing Trump and his supporters as a "threat to democracy," and doing everything possible to put him behind bars. The Bragg case is one of four they've got going. But it's increasingly unlikely that any of the three other cases will go to trial before the election.

In Florida, the Biden administration's special counsel, Jack Smith, indicted Trump for espionage for his handling of allegedly classified documents after he left office. But Judge Aileen Cannon indefinitely postponed the trial after Smith admitted that the main evidence — documents seized from Trump by the FBI — had been rearranged. Defense lawyers say they may have been tampered with.

In August 2022 Biden's Justice Department ordered the documents seized in a raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago premises by more than 30 FBI and Secret Service agents, trampling on constitutional protections against unreasonable search and seizure. The agents arranged the files on the floor of Trump's premises and took pictures of them that were broadcast worldwide.

The partisan Democratic Party-led assault on Trump's rights is dangerous for working people. Safeguarding constitutional protections is crucial to keeping open political space that workers need to advance our class interests against the employing class, their political parties and their government.

Young workers hit hard

Continued from front page

or friends, shelving any plans to start raising a family. Meanwhile, the big bankers are making superprofits charging huge annual interest rates of 20% or higher on unpaid credit card balances. Total credit card debt topped \$1 trillion last year.

Rents have soared 22% over the past four years. Keeping a roof over your head accounts for at least one-third of an average worker's monthly paycheck, and in many cities — like New York — it's much higher. Like grocery prices, rents are not coming down.

Since 2019 rent has gone up on average 1.5 times faster than workers' wages in 44 out of the country's 50 largest metropolitan areas, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports. Nowhere is this more so than in New York City, where wages rose a meager 1.2% between 2022 and 2023, while rents went up 8.6%, and even higher if you live by a subway stop. The city's average median rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$4,400.

Rising rents are "delaying my retirement," Teresa Diaz, a 67-year-old medical research assistant who rents a studio apartment in Detroit, told the *Wall Street Journal*. Her rent just jumped 12%. She's lucky. Her landlord had demanded a 30% increase!

Rents are now "stuck at a price most Americans can't afford," MarketWatch admitted.

High mortgage rates, currently around 7%, rule out getting your own home for many young workers. The average household would need to shell out more than 40% of its income to cover monthly payments on a median-priced home, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta figures.

"People are seeing prices jumping all around them, but then they turn on the TV and see the stock market at all-time highs," Chris Landeck, a retired petroleum engineer in Brenham, Texas, told the *Journal*. This is a stark reminder of class differentiations under capitalism.

Another method used by bosses to boost profits is adding surprise fees to many everyday purchases. More companies now tack on a 3% surcharge just for swiping your credit card. Extra fees are also being added for food delivery costs, bank overdrafts, purchasing event tickets and more.

Need surgery? You have to pay first

Another reminder of how the capitalist profit system works is new rules being adopted by many hospitals. They are now refusing to perform surgeries unless you pay in full for it first. This is true for a growing number of "non-life-threatening" conditions, like knee replacements, CT scans and delivering a baby.

Heather Miconi was required to pay \$2,000 to a surgery center in Merritt Island, Florida, so her daughter could get adenoid and tonsil surgery to correct problems she was having breathing. Miconi, whose insurance won't cover the cost, works three jobs — processing medical records, delivering food on weekends and catering meals — to make ends meet.

"I can't even provide for my daughter to get surgery for her to be able to breathe," she told the *Journal*. Half of adults say they couldn't afford to spend more than \$500 on medical care if they got sick or injured.

Walmart announced April 30 that it is closing all 51 of the health care centers they began opening in 2019. A company spokesman said they've become "unsustainable" because of a "lack of profitability."

Other profit-driven bosses who had hoped to cash in on the health care industry are doing likewise. Walgreens is planning to close 160 of its primary care clinics. And Amazon announced in February it would slash a few hundred jobs from its health care units.

If you live in one of the growing number of assisted-living or other senior citizen housing facilities, paying thousands a month for their services, and you fall down for any reason, management instructs staff not to pick you up. Instead, they're supposed to call the fire department for "lift assistance," including when you're feeling fine, if a little embarrassed.

"Lift-assist 911 calls from assisted living and other senior homes have spiked by 30 percent nationwide in recent years to nearly 42,000 calls a year," reported the *Washington Post*. "That's nearly three times faster than the increase in overall 911 call volume during the same 2019-2022 period."

A growing number of cities are now charging the facilities for "lift assist" fire department trips, but the bosses there just pass the extra costs onto the residents.

Moscow hits Kharkiv region

Continued from front page

More demoralized Russian soldiers are deserting.

The Putin regime sacrifices wave after wave of Russian soldiers in its assaults on Ukrainian positions. In April, 24,550 Russian soldiers were either killed or wounded to gain 33 square miles of Ukrainian territory in the southern Donetsk region. The rate of over 1,000 Russian casualties a day that month is almost double that of the past two years.

The Kremlin keeps the scale of losses a state secret. It also hides the fate of missing servicemen from their angry mothers and wives. A year ago Moscow turned down an offer by the Ukrainian government to repatriate the remains of 3,000 soldiers. Without bodies to prove their deaths, no compensation needs to be paid to families.

Groups of missing soldiers' relatives and friends in the tens of thousands have sprouted up on Russian online platforms to share information and demand answers.

At annual celebrations marking the end of World War II on May 9, descendants of Red Army veterans usually march with portraits of fathers and grandfathers who died in that war. In several cities around the country the Kremlin canceled these parades, fearing that women and children would swamp

the marches with pictures of husbands and fathers killed in its Ukraine war.

At a World War II memorial park in Moscow, soldiers' wives and mothers organized by the group The Way Home boldly laid flowers and protested the deployment of their loved ones in Ukraine.

"Did our ancestors truly sacrifice their lives so that we would be drawn into this war," the group said on its website. "Today is a day of sorrow for us and not a parade with fanfare."

Growth of Russian desertions

Demoralization is growing among untrained and ill-equipped Russian soldiers.

Get Lost is a group of Russians living in Georgia who aid Russian soldiers trying to desert. It says it was contacted by some 500 soldiers in the first two months of this year. More than 7,300 of Moscow's soldiers have faced trial in Russia for desertion since September 2022.

A deserting Russian soldier recently helped extract two wounded Ukrainian paratroopers who were stuck behind enemy lines in the Luhansk region, which is occupied by Moscow. They had been hidden by Ukrainian civilians there for more than a year while receiving medical treatment.

The Russian soldier, Dmytro, had ap-



"Solo protest" in Moscow Jan. 6, says, "Freedom for mobilized. Bring back husbands, fathers, sons!" The Way Home group, families of Russian conscripts, denounced Putin's May 9 rally, "Did our ancestors truly sacrifice their lives so we would be drawn into this [Ukraine] war?"

plied to the Ukrainian government's I Want to Live project, seeking to defect. More than 220 Russian soldiers surrendered last year by using the hotline.

Dmytro hijacked a car Sept. 28 and the three drove through 18 Russian checkpoints, disguised in army uniforms. The Ukrainian paratroopers are now back on duty. Dmytro is now a pro-Ukraine fighter with the Freedom of Russia Legion.

This militia is one of the Ukraine-based Russian units that jointly staged cross-border raids into Russian terri-

tory in the Kursk and Belgorod regions in mid-March. With tanks, armored vehicles and drones, they battled Russian forces for over a week.

Another of the pro-Ukraine exile groups is the Siberian Battalion, which draws fighters from the Russian Federation's ethnic minorities. These form a disproportionately large part of Moscow's troops dying in the war.

Developments like this help to show that working people in Russia are the most important potential allies of working people in Ukraine.

Moscow targets Crimean Tatars, supporters of national rights, Ukraine sovereignty

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Crimea's indigenous Tatar population has faced occupation, oppression and even mass deportation for generations. A decade after Moscow's forces seized the peninsula in 2014, the regime of Vladimir Putin has failed to break Tatars speaking out against its rule and they continue to be an obstacle to Moscow's efforts to use the peninsula as a launching pad for advancing the war on Ukraine.

The 80th anniversary of the forced deportation of Crimean Tatars by Mos-

cow is commemorated by their descendants on May 18. During World War II, Joseph Stalin smeared them as Nazi agents. The entire Tatar population, over 200,000 men, women, and children, was evicted from their homeland.

They were transported by cattle trains hundreds of miles across Russia to Uzbekistan, elsewhere in Central Asia, the Urals and Siberia. With little food or water, over a third perished during the journey or in the first months of exile. In Crimea, Stalin launched a process of "detatariza-

tion," trying to destroy reminders of the Tatar culture, from monuments to books, and giving their homes and land to Russian settlers.

It took almost 50 years before the survivors won their right to return home, strengthened when Ukraine became independent in 1991 as the Soviet Union came apart.

In 2014, the Kremlin, under a treaty imposed on Ukraine, had Russian troops garrisoned at its military base in Crimea. In uniforms without insignia, they spearheaded Moscow's illegal seizure of the peninsula. Tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars mobilized against Moscow's occupation. Russian authorities launched police raids and shut down the Tatar-language press.

Since the beginning of 2024, hundreds of Crimean Tatar and other Ukrainians in Crimea have been added to Moscow's long "list of terrorists and extremists." Many face abduction without legal rights, clandestine torture chambers or long incarceration in Russian jails. Events commemorating the deportation of the Tatars are banned by Moscow.

"Extremism" is what the Russian invaders call honoring the victims of the 1944 deportation of the entire Crimean Tatar people from their homeland," Halya Coynash wrote May 8 for the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group.

Ukrainian, Tatar culture flowered

Conquered by the czarist army in 1783, Crimea was dominated by Moscow for over two centuries. But there was a brief flowering of independence following the Russian Revolution of 1917. The Bolsheviks, under V.I. Lenin's leadership, recognized the right of self-determination for all nationalities oppressed under the former czar-

May 30, 1949

The plight of the Berlin railway strikers epitomizes the trap in which German workers generally and those in Western Europe as a whole find themselves today. In Berlin, as in Paris or Rome, the workers are caught in the middle between the two rival camps — Washington and Moscow.

Last September in France the Stalinists supported the hungry coal miners. This served the Kremlin's foreign policy at the time. A few days ago, the Stalinists in Berlin, again for the Kremlin's own sordid reasons, shot down in cold blood hungry railway workers.

It was not so long ago, either, that the U.S. Big Brass was riding herd on hungry demonstrators, slashing rations and breaking strikes in West Berlin and surrounding areas.

Until the occupation troops of both these ruthless destroyers are withdrawn, crimes such as those will be repeated time and again.

Israel defends existence as refuge

Continued from front page

The Israeli government aims to dismantle Hamas' terror battalions, free the remaining hostages and prevent the Islamist group from implementing its vow to repeat Oct. 7 "again and again," until it destroys Israel and expels or kills all the Jews.

Biden has drawn a "red line" against Israel's offensive in Rafah, feigning concern for civilians there. But Rafah is where the bulk of Hamas' remaining forces have been based and where Hamas' control of the border crossing with Egypt has allowed it to continue to get funds, arms and supplies for more anti-Jewish attacks.

Washington has maintained pressure on Israel to end the war — including withholding some weapons shipments — emboldening Hamas and its backers in Tehran to keep using the hostages as bargaining chips in a push for an extended cease-fire, hoping to preserve Hamas' military capacity for future attacks. Hamas is one of the proxy groups the Iranian rulers arm across the region as part of their expansionist foreign policy that includes the destruction of Israel.

The U.S. capitalist rulers don't care about Jews or Palestinians. Washington's concern is advancing the economic and political interests of U.S. imperial-

ism, including its relations with regimes from Egypt and Iraq to Saudi Arabia, as it tries to shore up its dominant position worldwide. It also hopes to reach an "understanding" with Tehran. The Biden administration sees the war in Gaza as an obstacle to advancing those goals as well as the stability it seeks for business and profit-making.

Blinken told CBS News May 12 that Israel has no "credible plan to protect civilians," including what at its peak was 1.3 million in Rafah. But after Israeli forces dropped leaflets, texted Gazans and informed humanitarian aid groups of its plans, some 450,000 have already left Rafah and headed to tent cities away from the combat zones.

Hamas' false death figures

Hamas apologists around the world charge that Israel is deliberately killing civilians and that most of those killed in Gaza are innocent women and children.

As of May 8, the United Nations — repeating Hamas' Gaza health ministry figures — claimed that more than 34,000 Gazans have been killed by Israeli forces. But the U.N. also admitted for the first time that at least 10,000 of those in that figure are based on Hamas press reports without any proof. Even the Hamas health ministry has cut in half its estimate of the number of women and children killed, now saying that 40% of the dead are men.

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said May 11 that Israel has killed some 14,000 combatants along with 16,000 civilians caught in the fighting. Hamas' use of civilians as human shields is responsible for those deaths.

The Israel Defense Forces gives advance warning to get civilians out of combat zones, even though that means losing the element of surprise.

"Every civilian death is a tragedy," Netanyahu has said, while for Hamas causing civilian deaths "is a strategy."

"We are proud to sacrifice martyrs," Hamas political bureau member Ghazi Hamad told Lebanese TV Oct. 24, 2023.

The overwhelming majority of people in Gaza don't agree. They are heeding Israeli orders to evacuate. Hundreds gathered outside Hamas government offices in Rafah May 8 demanding tents and aid so they can get out of the line of fire.

76 years of Israel's independence

On May 14 Israelis marked the 76th anniversary of Israel's declaration of Independence.



Deir el Bala camp in Central Gaza, May 10, as Palestinians heed Israel's call to flee combat zones and Israeli forces attack Hamas strongholds. Growing numbers see Hamas as responsible for war. Hundreds protested at Hamas office in Rafah May 8 demanding tents and aid.

Prior to World War II, most Jews were not supporters of creating a majority Jewish state in Palestine, then under British colonial rule. But that changed in the wake of the Holocaust, in which the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews, 40% of the Jews in the world. There are still fewer Jews in the world today, than at the start of that war.

Washington and other imperialist powers turned away Jews fleeing the Nazis and sent them back to Europe, many to their deaths. After the war, hundreds of thousands languished in "displaced person" camps, still largely denied entry to the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and beyond. Jews fought to create Israel and make it a refuge from Jew-hatred. The Jewish population of Palestine grew from 56,000 in 1919 to 680,000 by May 1948.

Zionist leaders had agreed to a United Nations proposed partition of Palestine into two states: one with a Jewish majority and one with an Arab majority.

But the semi-feudal and capitalist Arab leadership in Palestine and neighboring countries rejected the plan. Instead, they launched a war to destroy the new Jewish state and expel the Jews. Notorious Jew-hater Amin al-Husseini, the scion of a land-owning family and Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, played a prominent role in that war. Husseini organized anti-Jewish pogroms in Palestine as far back as 1920 and then collaborated with the Nazis during World War II.

Israel defeated the Arab armies and consolidated a capitalist state with all the contradictions that entails. Competing bourgeois regimes in

neighboring Egypt, Jordan and Syria blocked any moves toward an independent Palestinian state in the areas they controlled.

Hamas — and its backers in Tehran — are the continuators of Husseini and other Islamist forces that want to complete the Nazis' "Final Solution" of exterminating the Jews.

Defense of Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews is based on that history and the reality of Jew-hatred in the imperialist epoch.

Hamas a threat to Jews and Arabs

Hamas is not only a threat to Jews and Israel, it is the biggest obstacle Palestinian working people face in defending their own interests. After seizing power in Gaza in 2006 Hamas broke strikes by workers and persecuted political opponents. Hamas thugs threw activists from rival Fatah off building roofs and shot others in their kneecaps.

With the aid of Tehran, Hamas used its control of the 140-square-mile territory to build more than 350 miles of zig-zagging tunnels, including living quarters, command centers and jail cells. That's more than the 248 miles of tunnels in the subway system in New York City, spread over 304 square miles. But Hamas didn't build a single bomb shelter for civilians.

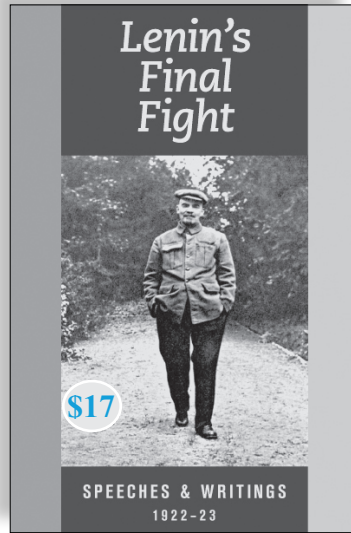
Israeli advances in Gaza are having a broader impact, including making it easier for working people there to speak out.

Residents in the encampments set up to avoid the latest combat "can be heard cursing Yahya Sinwar [the main Hamas leader still in Gaza] as the one who brought disaster on them," one Gaza resident told TPS news service.

The defeat of Hamas will create better conditions for common struggles by working people of all religions and nationalities, in Israel and across the region.

'Militant' Prisoners Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced-rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant, earmarked "Prisoners Fund," to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com



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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 31, 1999

HAVANA, Cuba — "On May 17, 1959, we crossed the Rubicon," stated Cuban president Fidel Castro at a rally here celebrating the adoption, exactly 40 years ago, of a land reform law, one of the first — and defining — measures of the Cuban revolution. "It was a step from which there was no retreat."

Through that 1959 measure, the revolutionary government confiscated millions of acres of large landholdings owned by U.S. and Cuban capitalist families, and hundreds of thousands of small farmers received titles to the land they worked.

"The revolution gave peasants something more than a land reform law," Castro said. "The peasant began to fully become a person, instead of being a pariah as he was before the revolution. It is the peasants who have defended the revolution, together with the farm workers, the workers in the cities, and students."

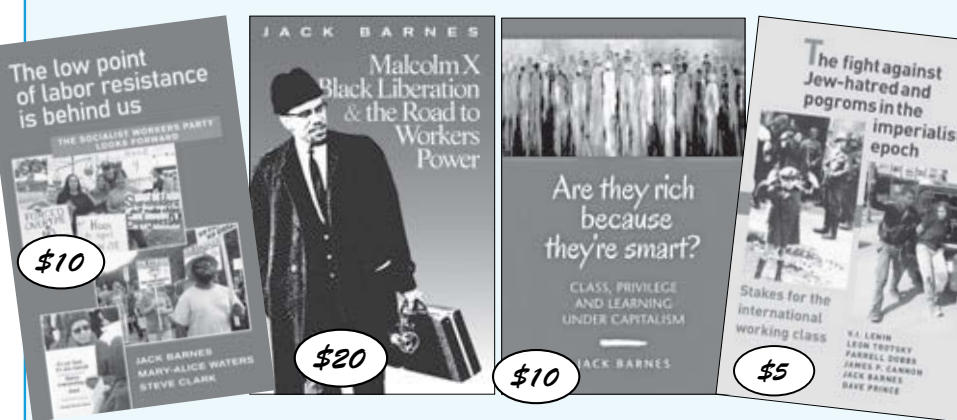
May 31, 1974

The Brookside Women's Club is as far as the moon from a typical women's club. These women are fighters. They have joined the picket line of their men in Brookside, Ky., who have been on strike since last July for the right to form a local of the United Mine Workers.

The strikers knew the history of "Bloody Harlan County," and its "gun thugs" who were hired by the coal barons to terrorize the miners. The current crop of "miners" trying to scab at Brookside are their blood brothers.

These women want their men in the UMW for the free hospitalization; the monthly pension; the union safety committee; and the benefits to the widows provided by the Welfare and Retirement Fund. When the *New York Times* asked Barbara Callahan, 23, if the club supported women's liberation, she said, "Right on!" adding, "except that I'm all for families and motherhood."

Books for working-class fighters



See page 6 for distributor near you