

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Supreme Court rulings are victory for constitutional freedoms
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 26

JULY 15, 2024

Communist League: Protest rising attacks on Jews in Canada

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — Since the deadly Oct. 7 pogrom by Hamas in Israel there has been a rise in Jew-hating violence worldwide. Here in Canada, Hamas supporters have shot bullets at schools; carried out physical attacks, threats and vandalism at synagogues; and have attempted to shut down events featuring people from Israel. Pro-Hamas encampments have been set up on at least 15 university campuses across the country.

These attacks have been met with an organized response, public mobilizations protesting Jew-hatred.

Shots were fired at the Jewish school Yeshiva Gedola in Montreal Nov. 9 and 12. On May 25 a Jewish girls' school was shot at in Toronto, and on May 28 the Belz School in the Young Israel of Montreal synagogue was hit.

On Jan. 3 a Jewish deli was attacked in Toronto, and on June 19 the Falafel Yoni restaurant in Montreal was shot at and windows smashed at a nearby gym whose owner is Jewish.

Synagogues have been vandalized. On Nov. 7 an arson attack was

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Sharp conflicts in South China Sea pose threat of future wars

BY ROY LANDERSEN

China's Coast Guard vessels repeatedly rammed and then troops boarded Philippine naval vessels, injuring several sailors in the Spratly Islands June 17. The clash was the most violent encounter to date between Chinese and Filipino forces whose rulers both claim the Second Thomas Shoal in the strategically important South China Sea.

Along with rising political and military tensions over Taiwan, this conflict has the potential to draw Washington — an ally of the Philippine government — into a larger conflict with Beijing, one of its main rivals. The Chinese rulers' massive expansion of capitalist production and trade — and their military forces — over decades has challenged Washington's supremacy in the Pacific, a region the U.S. rulers have long considered their prize coming out of their bloody victory in World War II.

In the clash in the Spratly Islands, sailors on speedboats from China's Coast Guard, some brandishing machetes, knives and an axe, attacked the Philippine boats to prevent sailors from transferring food and weapons to a tiny

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Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for president: 'Workers need to form our own party, a party of labor'



Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Deb Snell, head of nurses' union at University of Vermont Medical Center, announces strike to take place July 12 at press conference in Burlington July 2. Socialist Workers Party campaigners petitioning there to put Rachele Fruit on the ballot are building support for the nurses' fight.

Hundreds sign in Vermont to put SWP on the ballot

BY DAVID ROSENFELD AND SARA LOBMAN

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Supporters of Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, began campaigning here, introducing the party and its program to thousands of working people across Vermont. In the process, they're collecting more than twice the 1,000 signatures required to get Fruit and running mate Dennis

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Rachele Fruit: the working class alternative in 2024

BY SETH GALINSKY

The widely discussed June 27 debate between President Joseph Biden and former President Donald Trump confirmed that neither capitalist candidate — nor their parties — are capable of addressing the social and economic crisis facing workers and the growing danger of more wars around the world.

"There was nothing there for the working class," Rachele Fruit, the So-

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NTSB: Norfolk Southern's actions 'unprecedented and reprehensible'



AP photo/Gene J. Puskar

At June 25 hearing in East Palestine, Ohio, the NTSB said Norfolk Southern bears full responsibility for 2023 derailment, disaster there, including toxic chemical "vent and burn," above.

BY TONY LANE

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — In its June 25 final hearing on the February 2023 Norfolk Southern derailment and disaster for residents here, the National Transportation Safety Board said the rail company bears full responsibility. Board Chair Jen-

nifer Homendy called their conduct "unprecedented and reprehensible."

At the same time, working people in East Palestine faced a July 1 deadline to decide whether or not to sign onto the \$600 million lawsuit settlement deal agreed to by Norfolk Southern bosses.

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Oil workers strikes, protests against the death penalty take place in Iran

BY SETH GALINSKY

More than 20,000 oil project contract workers are on strike at over 100 work-sites in Iran, demanding higher wages and better working conditions. The strike began June 20, a week before the

country's presidential election. In a sign of the Iranian regime's declining support, some 60% of those eligible to vote boycotted the first round of the election. A runoff between the two highest-polling candidates is set for July 5.

Hundreds of thousands of oil project workers employed by contractors — including pipefitters, welders and scaffolders — are paid substantially less than workers employed directly by the oil companies.

"There should be equal wages and

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Join fight against ban on 'Militant' in Florida prison

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Two dozen letters have been sent to the Florida Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee urging it to reverse the ban prison authorities have placed on *Militant* issue no. 17 at Jackson Correctional Institution in Malone, Florida. More are on the way.

The *Militant* filed an appeal with the Department of Corrections challenging the ban, which violates the right of the *Militant* to reach its subscribers behind bars and their right to

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- Moscow charges two women over a play against terrorism 7

Tens of thousands in Kenya protest worsening conditions

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Protests erupted across Kenya June 25, with tens of thousands of mostly young demonstrators pouring into central Nairobi, the country's capital, as the government passed legislation jacking up taxes on eggs, bread, sugar, cooking oil, diapers and other necessities.

When part of the crowd stormed the Parliament building, the police opened fire with tear gas and live bullets, killing at least 17 and wounding more than 300. Another 22 were killed in demonstrations in other cities. Calling the protesters "treasonous," Kenyan President William Ruto deployed the military on the city's streets. Hundreds were arrested.

The bill, intended to bring in \$2.7 billion, was one of a series of measures Kenya's rulers have taken to raise money to avoid defaulting on \$80 billion in loans, a figure that accounts for nearly three-quarters of Kenya's entire annual economic output.

The crisis unfolding for Kenya's capitalist rulers today is a reality throughout Africa and former colonial countries worldwide. To grow, they've become increasingly indebted to international

lenders like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Washington and other imperialist powers, and, more recently, to the rulers of China.

Nairobi began taking out bigger and bigger loans in the early 2000s to cover the costs of infrastructure projects, including roads, railways, dams and rural electrification. The cost of servicing that debt soared as interest rates grew with the set of new loans. Debt service cost Kenya's government over 600 billion shillings (\$4.65 billion) by the end of 2023.

This indebtedness was exacerbated by growing worldwide instability, including Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the unfolding effects of Hamas' murderous pogrom against Jews in Israel, the COVID pandemic and more. Interest payments now eat up 27% of Kenya's tax revenue.

Unpayable debt

More than half the people in Africa live in countries whose governments spend more on interest payments than they do on health or education.

As images flashed on TV screens worldwide showing wounded people sprawled on Nairobi's streets, Ruto reversed course June 26, saying he would instead look at imposing austerity by trimming government spending — from wages to social services — as demanded by the IMF.

The demonstrations continue, with protesters outraged by the police violence and demanding Ruto resign. Since taking office in 2022, his administration has increased taxes, scrapped subsidies and raised electri-



Loise Wangui/Nation Media Group

Protesters in Eldoret, Kenya, June 25. Tens of thousands took to the streets in cities across the country to demand end to devastating tax increases and for President William Ruto to resign.

cal rates. Deep anger remains over the steep rise in living costs, widespread corruption and lack of jobs.

Washington claims to be "shocked" and "deeply concerned" by the brutality of Kenya's police. Only a month before the shootings in Nairobi, President Joseph Biden feted Ruto at a lavish White House state dinner attended by top government officials and former U.S. Presidents William Clinton and Barack Obama.

The U.S. rulers looked to Ruto's forces to help in their efforts to tamp down lawlessness and crisis conditions in Haiti. On June 24 the first contingent of 400 Kenyan police officers arrived there on a "security mission" largely financed by Washington. Biden designated Kenya a "major non-NATO ally of the U.S.," with plans to expand

joint security operations and increase Kenya's access to U.S. weapons.

In the 1980s Fidel Castro, the leader of the Cuban Revolution, spoke out against the foreign debt saddling the people of the neo-colonial world. "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," he said in 1985.

"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."

Farm Bureau says cost of your 4th of July BBQ hits record high

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The American Farm Bureau issued a report leading into the July 4 holiday showing how persistent inflation has boosted the cost of this year's holiday barbecue to a record high. The average cost for feeding a group of 10 will be \$71.22 this year, up 30% from 2019.

"Meat will put the biggest dent in your grocery budget," the bureau says.

The basket of goods added up includes hamburger buns, cheese, ground beef, cookies, ice cream, strawberries, chips, chicken breasts, pork chops, pork and beans, lemonade and potato salad.

Everything has gone up with the only exceptions being chicken breasts and potato salad. They're down 4% from last year.

Have a nice holiday cookout!

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Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Vivian Sahner, Brian Williams.

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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THE MILITANT

Back Puerto Ricans' fight against US colonial rule!

"Since our party's founding in 1938," Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, told the U.N. June 20, "we have championed the fight for Puerto Rico's independence from colonial rule, a fight that will strengthen working people in the U.S."



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit testifies before U.N. decolonization committee on status of Puerto Rico.

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'Unprecedented, reprehensible'

Continued from front page

"They've done nothing to prevent this happening again," Jami Wallace, president of the Unity Council for the East Palestine Train Derailment, told the *Militant*. Wallace was one of a number of working people from the area who attended the hearing and two NTSB-sponsored community meetings. She pointed to the board's conclusion that Norfolk Southern officials delayed in providing emergency responders crucial information on what cargo — including dangerous chemicals — was on the train. "Every firefighter in the U.S. should be outraged by this," she said.

Representatives from three rail workers' unions attended the hearing — the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers-Transportation Division, the main union representing train conductors; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen; and the Transportation Communications Union-Brotherhood of Railway Carmen.

NTSB results point the blame

The drive by bosses at Norfolk Southern and other rail carriers to cut crew size, run with schedules that wipe workers out and destroy their families, and to slash inspections, maintenance and other key safety measures was behind the disaster, the unions have explained. The NTSB report backs them up.

As part of their fight to force out the truth and hold the company responsible, Wallace and others have criticized the lawsuit settlement. "All the expenses that the railroad paid for when we were evacuated, like hotel rooms, will be subtracted from your portion," Chris Albright, a residential gas pipeline worker and member of the Laborers union, told the *Militant*. "That means we would get \$35,000. That's nothing.

"I got very sick from the derailment and am now fighting to get my job back," he said. "Our central fight is for lifetime health care."

"I don't know, if you don't take this, what's your other option going to be?" local resident Linda Murphy told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. "Norfolk Southern gets what Norfolk Southern wants. They are a Goliath, and they will roll right through this, just like their train rolls through people's

towns. They have little or no concern for the damage they leave behind."

The *Washington Post* reported that a new study shows that pollution from the East Palestine train derailment and "vent and burn" of dangerous vinyl chloride tank cars rained chemicals down in 16 states. "There's more going on here than most people would have guessed, including me," said David Gay, lead author of the study. The NTSB report said the vent and burn was "based on incomplete and misleading information provided by Norfolk Southern officials and contractors."

On its website, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen explained that "the vent and burn strategy was the quickest way to reopen the tracks. BLET Vice President Randy Fannon told the Associated Press, 'When you've got 35 or 45 trains sitting and waiting to get through one area, no way to get around it.'"

Another major factor in this disaster — as well as in the 2013 derailment and fire in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, that killed 47 people — was the bosses' profit-driven insistence on using tank cars prone to crack on impact to carry dangerous cargo. These cars — known as DOT-111 cars — are scheduled to be phased out, but not until 2029.

Homendy said the NTSB has been urging these cars be taken out of service since 1991. The transportation and chemical industries have resisted.

"The lifespan of these rail cars can be 20 to 30 years," said Robert Sumwalt, former NTSB chair, pointing out the rail companies want to get their full value out of them. "If you bought a tank car in 2014, you're planning on phasing that out in 2034."

When the train derailed in East Palestine, three DOT-111 cars with combustible materials, including one carrying highly flammable and toxic butyl acrylate, ruptured, starting a raging fire. "The vent and burn could have been avoided had there been no DOT-111 tank cars carrying combustible and flammable liquids on this train," NTSB representative Paul Stancil said. There



Reuters/Alan Freed

Town hall meeting in East Palestine, Ohio, on Feb. 15, 2023, 12 days after Norfolk Southern toxic chemical train derailment. Residents are still fighting to get out truth about the disaster.

are 25,000 of these cars in use today.

The NTSB report concluded a failed wheel bearing on one of the cars that was detected too late caused the derailment. But why?

Job cuts, bosses disdain

"Under Precision Scheduled Railroading, the railroads have boosted profits by cutting the workforce by nearly a third over the past seven years," BLET President Eddie Hall explained in a statement distributed at the hearing. "As a result, they have reduced the number of thorough inspections of rail cars, along with other service cuts."

"The cutting down of inspection times to 30 seconds per side of a car," made detecting problems in the cars more difficult, Jason Cox, national representative of the Transportation Communications Union-Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, told the *Militant*.

"After its departure from Madison, Illinois, the entire train wasn't inspected before the derailment, despite traveling over 600 miles and passing several stations with qualified carmen," Cox said.

Hall also pointed to the bosses' "over-reliance on technology." Wayside detectors, which are supposed to measure wheel bearing temperatures and sound an alert if they're hot, "shouldn't sub-

stitute for rail workers conducting thorough inspections," he said.

Jared Cassity, SMART-TD national safety team director, had told the NTSB that the train "should have stopped when the first elevated temperature was detected. Prior to 2021, the crew would have received an audible alert."

The hearing also documented how Norfolk Southern job cuts meant only one worker was assigned to monitor all the wayside detectors on the railroad's 19,500 miles of track that night. He was working "solo" on a computer at home, on a 12-hour shift, with no scheduled lunch break or time to use the bathroom.

He told the NTSB that when the bearing alert came through on the train nearing East Palestine, "Honestly, I didn't see it when it first came in. There were three other trains I was working on." These alerts are not sent to the train's operating crew or the train dispatchers the crews work with.

Overall, the report from the NTSB — which has no enforcement power — is a damning picture of responsibility by Norfolk Southern bosses, a result of their drive for profit at all costs. Rail workers and their unions need to take the lead in a fight for control over all aspects of their work to protect themselves and those who live near the tracks.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 19, 1999

CEIBA, Puerto Rico — In a sea of Puerto Rican flags, 50,000 people marched here July 4 to demand the U.S. Navy leave the island of Vieques. At the beginning of World War II, the Navy took over two-thirds of the island and has remained there, with devastating effects on the livelihoods of the residents, many of whom are fishermen.

The renewed groundswell of protests was precipitated when a Navy warplane dropped two bombs off course and killed David Sanes, a Vieques resident employed by the Navy.

The outrage among working people marks a resurgence of nationalist sentiment that was evident last year in the working-class support for the telephone workers strike. That battle, opposing efforts of the Puerto Rican government to sell the state-owned phone company to the U.S. company GTE, culminated in a general strike of half a million workers.



July 19, 1974

NEW YORK — In perhaps the largest outpouring since the Christopher Street Liberation Day demonstrations began in 1970, some 20,000 people marched here on June 30.

The event commemorates the Stonewall rebellion of June 1969, when patrons at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar on Christopher Street in New York's Greenwich Village, fought back against a police raid and helped to inspire the gay liberation movement.

Organizers of the march were surprised at the large turnout. They attributed it to anger over the defeat of Intro 2, the gay civil rights bill that was recently voted on by the New York City Council.

Among the marchers was a contingent of Socialist Workers Party supporters and candidates, including Derrick Morrison, SWP candidate for governor of New York. They walked with a banner demanding, "Pass the New York Gay Civil Rights Bill."



July 18, 1949

As the London longshoremen's strike entered its third month, the Laborite government invoked and applied the Emergency Powers Act to try to break the strike by use of armed troops and legal terror. A vote by striking longshoremen to continue their two-month walkout resulted in proclamation of state of emergency by King George VI, empowering the Labor Government to use troops to break the strike.

The ranks of the strikers increased after this open act of government strikebreaking. Labor Minister George Isaacs told the House of Commons that the number of men on strike had risen to nearly 13,000.

The mood of the longshoremen was indicated by their voting overwhelmingly to continue the strike while the Cabinet was convening on the issue amid cries of "treason," "agitators from abroad," and the ominous threat of the dictatorial decree.

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Vermont: Hundreds sign for SWP

Continued from front page

Richter on the ballot in November.

Campaigners are meeting people with a wide range of opinions about the coming elections. Many don't like the choices. Some said they would hold their nose and vote for the lesser of two evils.

Outside a Walmart in Williston, Maynard Pearo signed the SWP petition. Pearo is a Mohawk Native American construction worker and runs a gunsmith shop. "The economic crisis affecting working people shows that our class needs to make a political break with the two parties of the rich. We need a party of labor," SWP campaigner Craig Honts told him.

"Indians have a saying: 'The Democrats and Republicans are two wings of the same bird,'" Pearo said. "Liberal or conservative, it's the same thing."

After signing the petition, Pearo wanted to discuss an article in the *Militant* whose headline caught his attention. It was about why the Second Amendment's protection of the right to bear arms was needed to protect free speech and other constitutional freedoms. He subscribed to the paper.

Ali Levin and Kasey Rown told Honts the cost of starting a family was beyond them. "It's good to see a candidate that actually supports working people and is not just raising money for programs that don't help us," Rown said. They both signed the petition and bought *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*, by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

Andre Carriveau, an unemployed diesel mechanic, signed the SWP petition right away. Fifteen minutes later he came back to give campaigner David Rosenfeld beverages and a piece of fruit.

"In 2016 I believed that Bernie Sanders was standing up for working-class dinks like me. But the way he gave in to the status quo left a bad taste in my mouth," he said.

"Politicians like Sanders help win workers to supporting the bosses' parties and political system," Rosenfeld said. "We're finding many workers are in a fighting mood. Flight attendants have been rallying around the country to protest working conditions and wages, but also to fight the anti-labor laws that make it very difficult for rail and airline workers to strike."

Carriveau said he is thinking about

how he can help nurses if they go on strike this month. Some 1,900 nurses at the University of Vermont Medical Center announced July 2 they would strike July 12 for better staffing, wages and schedules.

"I think Palestinians have a right to a free Palestinian state but I don't think it can happen with Hamas," Carriveau said. "Israel deserves the right to be an independent state too. Why can't there be a peaceful resolution?"

"The ideology of Hamas is like that of the Nazis," Rosenfeld said. "They are committed to killing the Jews and driving them out Israel."

"Why have the Jews have been persecuted for so many years?" Carriveau asked.

"There is a history going back thousands of years," Rosenfeld replied. "But in the imperialist epoch, in times of crisis, the rulers turn to rightists whose banner is Jew-hatred to divert people from seeing the real cause of their problems, capitalism. They build a cadre in the streets to crush the working-class movement. That's why this is such an important question for workers and unions worldwide."

Carriveau endorsed the campaign, got a subscription to the *Militant* and bought *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class* and *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*. He is looking forward to the upcoming Vermont visit of SWP vice presidential candidate Dennis Richter.

John Duffy is a medical worker at Central Vermont Medical Center. "Imaging and other lab support just won our first contract," he told campaigner Alex Collins on his doorstep. "We got a significant pay raise. Before I needed a second job to get by. Now I don't, but I still need a roommate." Duffy told Collins his sister is a teacher in Massachusetts. "She and many of her co-workers work waiting tables at a nearby restaurant," he said.

"There's a lot of anger among work-



Militant/Sara Lobman

Fred LaBrake, left, retired IBEW worker, talks to SWP member Róger Calero in Bennington, Vermont, July 1 as he signs to put Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. president, on ballot.

ers because of these conditions," Collins noted. "But the most important thing is that more workers are showing a willingness to fight back."

In the first three days of petitioning, SWP campaigners gathered 486 signatures and sold eight subscriptions and 44 single copies of the *Militant*, and eight books on revolutionary working-class struggle.



More than 1,000 sign up to put SWP on Washington state ballot

BY JACOB PERASSO

VANCOUVER, Wash. — More than 1,200 people have signed to put the Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket of Rachele Fruit and Dennis Richter on the ballot in Washington state, over the 1,000 required. Supporters have introduced the campaign to workers here, Spokane and other towns and plan to turn in more than 1,700 signatures.

"Workers are afraid they'll lose whatever they have if they stand up," Trevor Berrian, a 32-year-old logistics worker in Ridgefield told Vincent Auger, the SWP candidate for governor of Washington.

"The bosses want us to think we'll be

lost and broke if we fight," said Auger. "It is a big decision, but what workers find when they do fight is how strong we are when we're united. We become more confident and we see the solidarity other workers are ready to give."

"When I think about the ideals of democracy, I see it as workers having a say in the work we do and how society is organized, but today we don't have a say at all," Berrian said.

"Democratic rights were born out of bourgeois revolutions," said Auger. "Now in decline, the capitalist class has to undermine those rights. It's up to workers to defend and extend them. This is why building a labor party, where the working class can have its own independent political voice, is so crucial."

Berrian signed up for a subscription to the *Militant* and bought a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

Supporters will campaign over the next few weeks, with a focused effort July 12-18. If you'd like to volunteer, contact the Socialist Workers Party campaign at 650 S. Orcas St., #120, Seattle, WA 98108, phone (206) 323-1755 or email swpseattle@gmail.com.

Supreme Court rulings victory for constitutional freedoms

BY TERRY EVANS

In a victory upholding crucial constitutional freedoms, the U.S. Supreme Court threw out the use of an anti-business fraud statute to target Joseph

Fischer for his part in the Jan. 6, 2021, melee at the Capitol. This was rapidly followed by the court ruling that Donald Trump does have immunity from prosecution for official actions he took when he was president.

These rulings deal blows to Democrats' efforts to use the courts to imprison the former president. They reinforce rights needed by working people and the unions today and in battles to come.

The Fischer ruling applies to hundreds of others prosecuted by the Justice Department for participating in Jan. 6 activities, as well as similar charges filed against Trump by special counsel Jack Smith. It sets back the Joseph Biden administration's efforts to frame up his chief challenger in the 2024 election and his supporters.

Fischer, a former cop from Jonestown, Pennsylvania, was among hundreds indicted for actions on Jan. 6. He was charged with assaulting an officer, entering and remaining in a restricted building and engaging in disorderly and disruptive conduct. Those charges carry maximum penalties ranging from six months to eight years in prison.

The prosecutions have unfolded as the White House and Democrats have tried

to whip up hysteria over an "attempted coup" on Jan. 6. Looking to inflict the harshest punishment possible, Department of Justice prosecutors tacked on a charge of "obstructing an official proceeding" under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. This law was adopted by Congress after Enron auditor Arthur Andersen shredded papers during the company's collapse and bankruptcy.

Indicting Fischer under this law allowed prosecutors to seek a much longer sentence, up to 20 years.

Fischer's trial has been on hold since June 2022 pending the results of his legal challenge. Some 350 other Jan. 6 defendants have been charged under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act to boost their potential sentences. Of these, 52 people were convicted and sentenced solely under the anti-business fraud statute. Twenty-seven are currently in prison.

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act criminalizes anyone who "alters, destroys, mutilates or conceals a record, document or other object" to prevent its use in "an official proceeding." But the government using the statute against Jan. 6 defendants "reaches beyond the scenario that prompted the legislation," Chief Justice

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Rachele Fruit for president & Dennis Richter vice-president

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Rachele Fruit: ‘Workers need our own party, a party of labor’

Continued from front page

cialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, told the *Militant*.

Fruit, her running mate Dennis Richter, and Socialist Workers Party candidates around the country call on workers to make a clear, class political break from the bosses’ parties and reject their lesser-evil shell game.

“We need a party of labor that would fight all year round to involve working people in defending our own interests and to realize what workers are capable of accomplishing when we come together,” Fruit says.

Some 48 million people watched the debate, nearly one-third fewer than the 2020 debates between the two capitalist candidates. A third capitalist candidate, Robert Kennedy Jr., was excluded from the debate, as was Fruit, the only working-class voice in the election.

“The debate showed the political crisis of both capitalist parties,” Fruit added. “This is the best they have to offer! It’s another sign that U.S. imperialism, the world’s last empire, is in decline.”

She urged workers looking for a way forward to endorse the Socialist Workers Party 2024 presidential ticket — the working-class alternative — and encourage others to do the same.

No ‘lesser evil’

For decades the U.S. rulers have tried to convince workers they should choose the lesser evil of the Democratic or Republican candidates. But voting for Trump, Biden — or whoever the Democrats might now choose to replace him — or for third party capitalist candidates like Kennedy is a dead end.

To the extent they have differences, it’s over how best to defend the interests of the ruling rich, not how to defend the life and livelihood of working people.

“Trump and Biden blamed each other for the state of the economy, inflation, and for who was responsible for the war in Ukraine,” Fruit noted, “as if one individual in the White House controls the crisis of capitalism. But the central problem is not the policies of one or another capitalist government. It’s that the boss class is driven by their dog-eat-dog competition for markets, natural resources and profits to increase the exploitation of workers.”

Trump and Biden argued over whether higher or lower tariffs and higher or lower taxes on the rich would lead to more hiring. But as long as the capitalist class holds power, workers will continue to face layoffs and job cuts when the bosses deem it necessary to defend their profits. Just as we will confront their assaults on our wages and working conditions.

The real question facing working people is which class should rule? The capitalist class or the working class?

Class bias was reflected in the questions from the debate moderators as well, Fruit said. “There were no questions on the increased interest among the working class in organizing the unorganized, on using unions to fight for dignity and being able to live like human beings.” Neither Biden nor Trump mentioned — not once — the need for labor unions.

Build, strengthen the unions

Trump and Biden claimed to support Israel’s war to eliminate Hamas and to oppose Moscow’s war on Ukraine. But in reality the U.S. government does not



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit, right, SWP candidate for U.S. president, at UNITE HERE Local 355 rally May 1 in Miami. Fruit is a member of that local. The June 27 presidential debate “showed the political crisis of both capitalist parties,” Fruit told the *Militant*. “The world’s last empire is in decline.”

start from the defense of the sovereignty of Ukraine, nor from fighting Jew-hatred and defending the right of Israel to exist as a refuge for Jews. All the U.S. rulers care about is advancing their own economic, political and military interests against every one of their competitors. Their foreign policy, under either of their parties, serves that purpose.

The working class needs its own foreign policy, based on the interests we share with workers worldwide against the U.S. imperialist rulers and all the other exploiting ruling classes around the globe.

And there was no mention in the debate of the rise in Jew-hatred, no mention of the recent series of physical and verbal threats against Jews in the U.S. or worldwide.

Biden claimed he was doing better than Trump in lowering the number of people “coming across the border illegally.”

In fact, his administration, as Trump’s did, serves the needs of the U.S. capitalists. Today they want — and need — so-called illegal immigrants to fill jobs at lower wages than U.S.-born workers and drive down wages more broadly, boosting their profits and competitive advantage against their rivals in Europe and China.

Trump demagogically repeated a dangerous theme of his campaign, that “illegal” immigrants are “taking Black jobs and they’re taking Hispanic jobs.” That’s aimed at dividing the working class and undermining solidarity.

Fruit, Richter and other SWP candi-

dates raise instead the need to fight for amnesty for workers in the U.S. without papers. The unions must reach out to those workers, invite them to join the union to fight together for better wages and working conditions for all.

A spate of frame-up criminal cases and other lawsuits against Trump are being orchestrated by the Democrats, dealing blows to constitutional freedoms. Trump has said they’re aimed at preventing him from winning the election.

“Trump has threatened to do the same thing to Biden and other Democrats if he gets elected,” Fruit said. “For their partisan interests, both parties are engaged in dangerous attacks on rights the working class needs today, constitutional protections won in struggle.”

The bourgeois press is full of stories about Biden’s poor debate performance, the lies told by both candidates, their questionable mental acuity and ethics, etc. Two papers that back the Democrats, the *New York Times* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, called on Biden to bow out of the race so the Democrats can choose another candidate they hope will have a better chance to win.

Whether that happens or not, none of the capitalist candidates point a way forward for working people.

“We have to organize independently of the capitalist parties to unite the working class to fight in our common interests,” Fruit said. “To fight against all national oppression, racism that is inherent in the capitalist system; to fight for the emancipation of women; to build a party of labor; to combat Jew-hatred today. To open the road to working people in our tens of millions taking power out of the hands of the capitalist war makers.

“Join us!”

Supreme Court rulings victory for constitutional freedoms

Continued from page 4

John Roberts wrote for the court majority in a 6-3 ruling.

“Under the Government’s interpretation, a peaceful protester could conceivably be charged,” Roberts wrote, “and face a 20-year sentence.”

Within weeks of the Jan. 6 riot, Michael Sherwin, then the top federal prosecutor in D.C., promised a campaign of “shock and awe” against anyone involved. With the aid of the FBI, his office systematically investigated and issued charges against 1,400 people.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said he was “disappointed” with the high court’s Fischer ruling, but would find other ways to target Jan. 6 defendants. Within hours of the Supreme Court decision, the Washington, D.C., District Court had to reopen proceedings on some of the convictions.

Special counsel Smith filed two obstruction charges under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act against Trump as part of a four-part indictment claiming he conspired to overturn the 2020 election.

Trump granted partial immunity

The Supreme Court July 1 in a 6-3 vote ruled that Trump has immunity from prosecution for official acts he carried out as president. The president “may not be prosecuted for exercising his core constitutional powers, and he is entitled, at a minimum, to a presumptive immunity from prosecution for all his official acts,” Roberts wrote for the court majority. The ruling has limits. “Not everything the President does is

official,” he added.

The court threw out parts of Smith’s indictment charging Trump used the Justice Department to advance his claim of election fraud. Other allegations against him are sent back to the trial judge to determine whether his actions actually fell within his official duties or not before the trial can proceed.

In an angry dissenting opinion, Judge Sonia Sotomayor claimed, “The President is now a king above the law.”

Roberts says this makes a mockery of the Constitution. “Like everyone else the President is subject to prosecution in his unofficial capacity,” he wrote. “But unlike anyone else, the President is a branch of government, and the Constitution vests in him sweeping powers. ... The dissents’ positions in the end boil down to ignoring the Constitution’s separation of powers.”

Following the ruling, New York Judge Juan Merchan postponed Trump’s July 11 sentencing on his hush money conviction. Merchan says he will rule on whether Trump has immunity Sept. 6 and, if it’s still necessary, sentence the presidential candidate Sept. 18.

The Supreme Court has “gone rogue,” former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi claimed after the ruling.

Squad member Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez went further. She said she would file impeachment charges against some Supreme Court justices for the decision, which she claims is “an assault on American democracy” that threatens to put the country on a path to tyranny.

She failed to mention that members

of Congress also have immunity from prosecution for official acts in office.

Much of the liberal fury toward the court has centered on the fact that its decision will likely delay the case until after the election. In Democrats’ eyes this undercuts the reason for bringing the charges in the first place. Their partisan goal was to prevent tens of millions from being able to vote for the candidate of their choice.

For working people the key issue that must be fought in Smith’s case is his targeting of free speech. Trump is charged for what he said to Vice President Michael Pence about challenging the reported 2020 election results; for what he said to various state officials urging them to do what they could to uncover voting fraud; and for his remarks at a rally at the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 where, among other things, he urged his supporters to act peacefully.

Regardless of whether anyone agrees with his opinions, they are protected by the First Amendment. Safeguarding protections written into the Constitution is deeply in workers’ interests, regardless of the fact that it’s Trump — a candidate of one of the bosses’ parties — who is under attack. In the long run, it is the working class that will be the target of these kinds of assaults.

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themilitant.com

Conflicts in South China Sea

Continued from front page
garrison there. Some of their equipment was seized by Beijing's forces.

The Philippine government said the Chinese sailors behaved "like pirates." Beijing said the Filipinos were "trespassing." The yearslong territorial flashpoint centers on a rusting World War II ship, beached in 1999 as a Philippine outpost on the shoal. It is 120 miles from the westernmost island in the Philippines and more than 600 miles from China's southernmost point.

The conflict underscores the instability racking capitalist powers across the region and the threat to the working class of more wars.

The White House condemned Beijing's "escalatory and irresponsible actions." The U.S. rulers' imperialist allies from Europe to Japan and Australia did likewise.

Just over two weeks earlier, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had warned Beijing that causing any fatalities among Filipinos in these clashes would be akin to "an act of war."

After the attack, Manila tried to de-escalate tensions, under pressure from Washington, which is pursuing its own imperial interests. Marcos told Filipino troops June 23 that his government "is not in the business to instigate wars" and would refuse "to choose sides in a great power competition."

During Marcos' visit to the U.S. in April, President Joseph Biden said Washington's commitment to its 1951 mutual defense pact with the Philippines was "ironclad." The White House promises it will support its ally in the event of any armed attack.

In 2012, Beijing wrested control of Scarborough Shoal, which lies within an exclusive economic zone claimed by the Philippine government.

The Obama administration abandoned the U.S. rulers' "ally" in the confrontation. The previous president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, responded by drawing closer to Beijing and Moscow. But as the Philippine rulers' territorial conflict with Beijing has sharpened, Duterte now has backtracked.

Stakes in South China Sea conflicts

Today Washington is trying to cement a network of alliances in Asia and the Pacific aimed at countering Beijing, centered on its imperialist allies in Japan and Australia. It stations tens of thousands of troops across the region.

The Philippine government has allowed U.S. forces access to nine of its military bases. Washington and the Indian government have supplied missile defenses to the Philippines,

while the rulers in Japan have provided patrol boats.

Washington is staging a series of joint maritime exercises with Manila's military, along with forces from France, Japan and Australia, in disputed waters west of the Philippines. At the same time, Beijing dispatched an aircraft carrier to join its other warships in the South China Sea, near the Philippine coast.

As their economic clout has grown over decades, China's rulers have aggressively asserted claims to an arc of islets in the western Pacific. Beijing claims sovereignty over 80% of the South China Sea. But this is contested by overlapping counterclaims from the governments of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

A United Nations tribunal denied the Chinese government's territorial claims in 2016. Ignoring this, Beijing has been reinforcing underwater reefs as artificial islands with airfields and military bases, backed up by its Coast Guard ships, maritime militia boats and fishing fleets.

A new law adopted by Beijing June 15 authorizes its coast guard to seize foreign ships "that illegally enter China's territorial waters" and detain foreign crews for up to 60 days. It empowers China's Coast Guard to open fire.

Today around a third of global



Map shows controversial old "nine-dash line" used by China's rulers to claim 80% of South China Sea. Beijing's claim over area has led to sharp conflicts with rival governments of the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and Taiwan, many backed by Washington.

shipping goes through the South China Sea with \$3 trillion of trade passing to and from busy ports in China, Japan, South Korea and elsewhere in East Asia. It also has large oil and gas reserves and 12% of the world's fish catch.

Clashes in the South China Sea

pose new challenges to Washington, the world's final empire, as it seeks to shore up its place in an increasingly unstable world. The threat of more wars can only be brought to an end by the working class, as it becomes strong enough to take power out of the hands of the capitalist war makers.

WestJet workers strike, demand union contract

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Some 680 mechanics and maintenance workers at WestJet, Canada's second-largest airline, went on strike June 28, despite a federal government order seeking to force them into compulsory binding arbitration. The workers are fighting for their first union contract as members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association.

The strike began on the three-day July 1 Canada Day holiday weekend. Hundreds of flights were cancelled.

Picketing at Toronto Pearson International Airport's Terminal 3 June 29, Sean McVeigh, a WestJet maintenance engineer, told the *Canadian Press* that they had to strike to force WestJet bosses to return to "respectful negotiation." He said the strikers are asking for better working conditions and a "fair and respectful wage."

"Safety in the air begins with quality maintenance on the ground" is AMFA's slogan.

Saying it didn't meet their needs, workers voted down a tentative agreement between WestJet bosses and union officials in mid-June by 97.5%. Since then, WestJet bosses have refused

to negotiate seriously, offering a paltry 1% wage increase over an extended contract. A mandatory 72-hour strike notice handed in by the union June 27 was immediately followed by a 72-hour lockout notice by bosses.

To prevent the strike, Liberal government Labor Minister Seamus O'Regan — under a clause in the Canada Labor Code that gives federal officials the power to "maintain industrial peace" — ordered the Canada Industrial Relations Board June 27 to forbid a strike and force the workers into compulsory arbitration.

The board, supposedly an independent body that deals with disputes that fall under the federal labor code, governs workers in air, rail transportation and in Canada's ports.

This time the board didn't do Ottawa's bidding. It ruled that Ottawa's

compulsory arbitration order didn't have the "effect of suspending the right to strike or lockout." On this basis, Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association officials called the strike.

WestJet bosses charge the strike was illegal. Company CEO Alexis von Hoensbroech blamed the strike on a "rogue union from the U.S. that was trying to make inroads into Canada." They threatened to fire workers who join the picket lines.

A victory by the WestJet mechanics would register a blow to the federal government's use of anti-labor boards and strike bans against Machinists, rail workers and others who move freight and passengers.

A tentative agreement was reached June 30. It's front-loaded with a 15.5% raise in the first year, and if it's voted down binding arbitration is imposed.



Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association
WestJet mechanics, maintenance workers picket June 19, week before gov't ordered them to go into arbitration. Instead they went on strike for two days before being ordered back to work.

Opposing US ruling-class assaults on freedoms protected by the Constitution

Chapter 1 from Socialist Workers Party December 2022 resolution, "The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us."

Special feature in Issue #24 of the *Militant*.

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Protest attacks on Jews in Canada

Continued from front page

carried out against the Beth Tikvah synagogue in Montreal. A similar attack took place at the Schara Tzedek synagogue in Vancouver May 30.

When speakers from Israel came to speak at Montreal's Concordia University March 4, organizers decided to move the venue off campus to the Holocaust Museum because of threats to disrupt it. Supporters of Hamas blocked the entrance to the museum and physically attacked those who tried to enter.

Encampments calling on the administration to withdraw all investments connected with Israel have been set up at the University of Toronto and McGill University in Montreal. Those there have cursed at, threatened and carried out physical attacks against Jews and others who speak out in defense of Israel as a refuge for Jews.

At the University of Toronto a woman putting up posters calling for freeing the hostages Hamas is holding in Gaza was punched in the face and her hair pulled. Others have been attacked the same way. Posters near the encampment say, "We need another Holocaust" and "Jews belong in the sea, Palestine will be free." Red triangles have been spray-painted around campus, a symbol used by Hamas to target opponents to be killed.

Mobilizations against Jew-hatred

Countermobilizations, led largely by Jews and Jewish organizations, have been organized against these attacks. On June 9 this was a theme at the annual Walk with Israel in Toronto. According to the organizers, 50,000 people took part. The police estimated 20,000. Either way, it was the largest such march ever. On May 17 some 200 neighbors accompanied a 13-year-old Jewish student to school in Toronto because he had been threatened.

One Muslim group also responded. The Council of Muslims Against Antisemitism took out a full-page ad

in the *National Post* entitled "Not in the name of Islam," denouncing both Hamas and antisemitism.

It calls for Muslims to reject the "weaponization of our faith by Islamist extremists." It also mourns the death of Gazan civilians, but places the blame squarely on Hamas, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Iranian regime and "all those who fund, justify and glorify them."

The Toronto school board — which oversees the largest school district in the country — voted to include "anti-Palestinian racism" in its anti-discrimination policy, but failed to do so for antisemitism. In response, hundreds protested outside the board June 18.

Hillel, the main Jewish student organization, and Federation CJA, the main citywide Jewish organization in Montreal, organized a June 17 rally outside City Hall to demand the government take action against attacks on Jews. "The antisemitism on our campuses and streets is not acceptable!!! Let our municipal leaders know enough is enough," the call for the action said. "Call on Mayor Valerie Plante and all elected officials to bring order back to our streets and enforce the law to protect the Jewish community."

The day before the rally, the construction site for a new Holocaust Museum in Montreal was graffitied with the words, "F--k Israel."

Communist League members and supporters have participated in these actions. At a protest in Montreal June 25, Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate in the LaSalle-Emard-Verdun federal by-election, met Steven Abady, who will start a job in music therapy this fall. "Jews are the canary in the coal mine," he said. "It starts with Jews but it never ends with Jews."

"True," said LeRougetel. "As we saw with the rise of the Nazis in the 1930s, the ruling rich use Jew-hatred when their rule is threatened by a rising working-class movement to whip

Moscow charges two women over a play against terrorism



Dmitry Serebryakov/Associated Press

Yevgenia Berkovich, left, a prominent theater director, and playwright Svetlana Petriyuchuk were put on trial in Moscow in May on charges of terrorism over a prize-winning play they staged. Arrested over a year ago and held in jail until the trial, the women face allegations their play justifies exactly the kind of brutal terrorist acts they set out to condemn and educate against. If convicted, they can be imprisoned for seven years.

"Finist the Brave Falcon," is a modern-day Russian fairy tale tragedy about a young Russian woman who goes to Syria to join a radical extremist offering to marry her. Horrified by the actions of Islamic State and feeling betrayed, she returns home only to find herself charged and convicted as a terrorist herself.

The play is based on court records showing how women from Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan had been lured to become wives or sex slaves for Islamic State combatants. The goal of the author and producer was to expose this and prevent more women from having such disastrous experiences. Launched at a Moscow literary festival in 2019, their play won widespread acclaim. It received an award and funding from the Russian culture ministry in 2022 as President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine unfolded.

For their play, Berkovich and Petriyuchuk face the threat of punishment not seen in decades. This sparked outrage in Russia, with over 16,000 people signing an open letter in their defense. The play, the letter said, "carries an absolutely clear anti-terrorist sentiment."

Since Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine, he has deepened the assault on free expression in art and culture in Russia. This is unparalleled since the days of Stalin's gulag in the Soviet Union. Prominent artists, writers and musicians have been purged from their jobs, with some, like Berkovich and Petriyuchuk, facing prosecution and prison.

The Kremlin has an unstated reason for its chilling persecution of the two women and their play: Berkovich has made statements opposing Putin's invasion of Ukraine and published anti-war poetry.

— ROY LANDERSEN

Socialist Workers Party candidates in Cincinnati speak out against attack on Jewish cemeteries



CINCINNATI — After the news broke that Jew-haters had attacked a Jewish cemetery complex here, Socialist Workers Party candidates John Hawkins for U.S. Senate and Ned Measel for U.S. Congress in the First District spoke out.

"The cowardly toppling of 176 gravestones inside the Covedale Jewish Cemeteries on Cincinnati's west side deserves the condemnation of all working people," they said in a press statement. "This act of blatant Jew-hatred, discovered July 1, is the latest local manifestation of the increase in antisemitic attacks in this country and internationally since Hamas and similar organizations, sponsored by the reactionary regime in Iran, invaded southern Israel Oct. 7 and carried out a bloodthirsty massacre — a pogrom.

"Working people and the trade unions must oppose such acts, speak out against them, and organize to defend against them."

— NED MEASEL

up fascist gangs against the workers and their organizations. While this is not the situation today, the rise of Jew-hating attacks is a sign of things to come and has to be fought vigorously. This is a life-and-death question for the labor movement."

Later, she told the *Militant*, "Relying on the bosses' government and

the cops is a trap. It was Ottawa and Washington that refused entry to the Jews before, during and after the Second World War. Jew-hatred can only be ended by ending the capitalist system. That's why workers need a party of labor that can organize us in our millions to take power out of the hands of the exploiters."

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Texas execution justified by so-called 'future dangerousness'

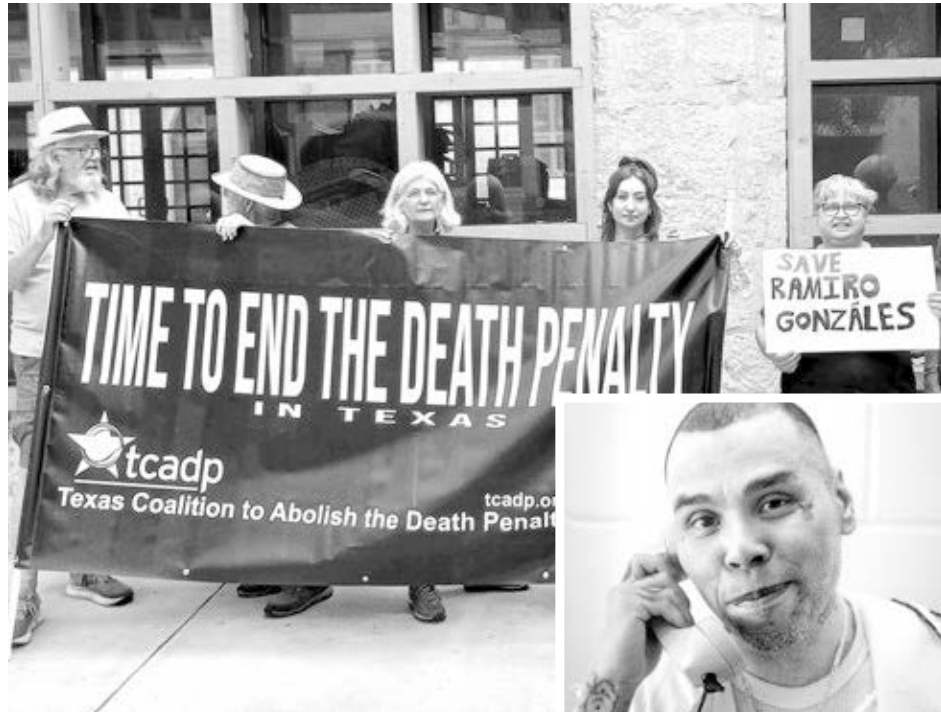
BY JANET POST

Prison officials in Huntsville, Texas, executed 41-year-old death row inmate Ramiro Gonzales using a pentobarbital injection June 26. He had been sentenced to death in 2006 for the sexual assault and murder five years earlier of Bridget Townsend, the girlfriend of his drug dealer. Gonzales was 18 at the time of the killing, an addict who had been abandoned by his mother and only met his father later when they happened to be in the same prison.

The Texas Board of Pardons and Parole unanimously voted June 24 to deny a clemency petition that would have reduced Gonzales' sentence to life in prison. The U.S. Supreme Court denied Gonzales' appeal the day he was executed.

Numerous letters of support, videos and 20,000 protest signatures were submitted to the board. "Many painted a picture of Gonzales as a changed man who volunteered a kidney to a stranger; never committed another act of violence; became a preacher; and was appointed by prison administrators to serve as a mentor for other inmates," wrote the *Washington Post* June 26.

On the day he was put to death, rallies protesting the execution took place



Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty; inset, Texas Defender Service
Demonstration June 26 in Texas against execution of Ramiro Gonzales, inset, who was killed despite rehabilitation, psychiatrist reversing his false testimony on "future dangerousness."

in Austin at the state Capitol and in front of the Huntsville penitentiary.

In addition to evidence of his rehabilitation, another key issue in Texas was a compelling argument for reducing Gonzales' sentence. His attorneys pointed out that he should be ineligible for execution, providing evidence he

posed no risk of "future dangerousness," a criteria presented to juries for sentencing in Texas since 1973.

"Before imposing the death penalty, Texas requires jurors to consider the probability that the defendant 'would constitute a continuing threat to society' — a measure known as

the 'future dangerousness' standard," the *Post* explained.

In 2022, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals directed a lower court to review Gonzales' claim that his death sentence resulted from false testimony by psychiatrist Edward Gripon, an "expert" for the state. He referred to a statement by Gonzales' cellmate who later admitted he had been pressured to lie.

During the trial, Gripon relied on statistics about the likelihood of people who have committed a sex crime to do so again. In 2022 Gripon recanted his testimony, saying he had relied on a 1980s psychology magazine article written by someone without any credentials. As to Gonzales, who he had recently interviewed again, Gripon wrote, "I don't think that diagnosis would now be accurate."

Gonzales' cellmate admitted he had made up his earlier testimony after a prison official threatened him with a harsher sentence if he didn't do so.

In 1976 the Supreme Court had upheld using "future dangerousness" in sentencing hearings. But as early as 1982 the American Psychiatric Association concluded the "unreliability of psychiatric predictions of long-term future dangerousness is by now an established fact within the profession."

"The reason why they bring in a psychiatrist who gives testimony on future dangerousness is for the sole purpose of sending you to death row," said Gonzales. "His job is to make you look like the worst individual that anybody's ever seen — a monster." The capitalist rulers use the death penalty — and their whole criminal 'justice' system — not to rehabilitate workers behind bars, but to intimidate them and reinforce their predatory profit-driven system

In Gonzales' last words before his execution he addressed the Townsend family. "I can't put into words the pain I have caused you all, the hurt, what I took away that I cannot give back," he said. "I lived the rest of this life for you guys to the best of my ability for restitution, restoration, and taking responsibility."

Gonzales' execution was the eighth in the U.S. so far this year. The ninth was Richard Norman Rojem Jr., who was executed in Oklahoma by a three-drug lethal injection the next day.

Join fight against ban on 'Militant' in Florida prison

Continued from front page
 read what they choose.

The *Militant* was informed May 17 by Jackson Correctional Institution authorities that they had impounded that issue, dated April 29, for running a photo that "shows dead person being paraded around on a motorcycle." The authorities claim that the photo and the *Militant* itself "depict hatred toward a specific race."

In fact, this widely circulated Associated Press picture accompanied an article in the paper opposing Jew-hatred. It shows the body of a Jewish man murdered by Hamas during its deadly Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel being driven around Gaza City to cheers by the Islamist group's supporters.

"Far from depicting hatred toward any race, the *Militant* calls for uniting Jewish, Arab, immigrant and other workers to defend their common class interests," said *Militant* editor John Studer.

Prison authorities claim the photo is "dangerously inflammatory" and violates prison rules, including the encouragement of "riot, insurrection, rebellion" and "organized prison protest."

"Nothing in the photo, even standing alone, could possibly be construed as *advocating or encouraging* riot, insurrection, etc.," writes *Militant* attorney David Goldstein in appealing the paper's impoundment.

"The question here," Goldstein writes, should not be about the "objectively false accusation that the 'Magazine depict[s] hatred toward a specific race,' but why Jackson was so determined in the first place to prevent its inmates from reading articles that condemn Hamas' atrocities, the Iranian government, and anti-Semitism."

"The U.S. Constitution is violated by your ruling," David Menefee, secretary-treasurer/business agent for Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 111 in Fort Worth, Texas, wrote to prison authorities July 1. "The freedoms

contained in it are necessary and must be defended at all costs, including freedom of speech and freedom of the press. To that end, you must reverse your action and allow subscribing inmates to receive the *Militant* without interference."

Petitions from workers at BCTGM-organized plants calling for overturning the ban have been sent to the Literature Review Committee from over a dozen workers in Grand Prairie, Texas, and a BCTGM-organized plant in Chicago, among others.

"We demand you reverse the banning of the *Militant* and let prisoners read literature of their choice," said the letter signed by five BCTGM Local 1 members in Chicago.

Letters demanding the ban be lifted have come from the American Civil Liberties Union Florida; Florida Press Association; Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press; PEN

America; Amnesty International; Inna Stravitsky, former president of the Holocaust Memorial Committee of Brooklyn; and Mark Lee, financial secretary/treasurer of BCTGM Local 57 in Mount Gilead, Ohio.

The ban is "an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment rights to free speech," wrote Carl Weinberg, Executive Committee member of American Association of University Professors/American Federation of Teachers union in Bloomington, Indiana. "Prisoners everywhere (and all Americans) have the right to receive information of their choosing. Please reverse the impoundment of issue no. 17."

Letters can be emailed to Saritza. Legault@fdc.myflorida.com or sent to the Florida Department of Corrections, Literature Review Committee, 501 South Calhoun St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500, with copies to themilitant@mac.com.

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ENGLAND: London: 5 Norman Road (first floor). Seven Sisters. Post code: N15 4ND. Tel: 020-2038 8900. Email: cllondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** 329, Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Post code: M2 7PE. Tel: (0161) 312-8119. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com

Rulers' gov't is class enemy of working people

Rail and airline workers in the U.S. face the notorious anti-labor Railway Labor Act, which bars their right to strike for years with various deadlines, "cooling-off" periods and other government interference. And, when a strike finally becomes legal, the law empowers the president and Congress to step in and impose a contract to the bosses' liking. That's what Joseph Biden did in 2022.

Millions of other workers in North America face similar schemes limiting the right to strike — from government agencies like the National Labor Relations Board to court interference and other obstacles. The goal of all these measures is to preserve the domination of the capitalist ruling class and protect their profits, privileges and ability to compete against rivals abroad.

For five years flight attendants in the U.S. have been fighting for a new contract that includes wages for work that currently goes unpaid and for schedules that allow for rest, a family life and participation in union and political activity. They're restricted from taking strike action.

U.S. rail workers face a new round of national negotiations for a contract beginning this fall.

In Canada, members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association at WestJet went on strike June 28 despite a federal government order seeking to force them into compulsory arbitration. Bosses claimed the strike was "illegal" and threatened to fire workers who joined the picket line.

Canada Labor Minister Seamus O'Regan has banned 9,300 rail workers at Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City from striking until yet another government-spawned outfit — the Canadian Industrial Relations Board — determines if any shutdown would affect "essential services." If so, they will bar a strike there. The rail workers

have overwhelmingly voted twice to strike.

The Canadian government claims it represents the interests of "the people of Canada." But its pretense of neutrality is a fraud. It is acting for the class interests of the profit-driven employers.

Government regulatory agencies will do nothing to prevent more disasters like the Norfolk Southern derailment and toxic "vent and burn" in East Palestine, Ohio. Rail bosses everywhere will continue to cut crew sizes, impose unlivable schedules and dangerous conditions. They will drive for profit with utter disregard for the safety and lives of rail workers and people living near the tracks.

As long as capitalist governments hold power, they will use their state to try to hog-tie workers and our unions. This is the role of *all* government bodies under capitalism, from the president to the local mayor, the cops and the courts, and their military, armed to the teeth. And when these government institutions aren't enough, they turn to scabherders, gun thugs and fascist goons.

Workers need to break with all reliance on the capitalist rulers, their government and their political parties.

Workers have shown that we are capable of wielding tremendous power when we act independently of the exploiting class and all its political servants, relying on the power of our own class and our exploited allies. There is absolutely no reason for us to place our trust in the government, nor look to so-called friends of labor among the Democratic, Republican or other capitalist parties.

We need to break from the bosses' parties and to build a party of our own, a party of labor, that can organize working people in our millions to advance our own class interests — at home and with fellow working people worldwide.

Building a party of labor opens the door to the fight to oust the capitalist rulers and put in power a working-class government of our own. The working class in control of the state power will be in the strongest position to end all the horrors wrought by capitalist exploitation and to open the door to the true potential of working people.

Canada's rail workers fight for right to strike

BY PHILIPPE TESSIER

MONTREAL — Some 9,300 train conductors, yard workers and dispatchers at Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City, the two largest rail companies in Canada, cast a second overwhelming strike vote June 29, with a 98.6% yes in an 89.5% turnout. The workers are members of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference union.

Under Canadian labor law, the first strike mandate voted in on May 1 only covered 60 days. Liberal Minister of Labor Seamus O'Regan claimed that a strike limiting the movement of "essential goods," mainly propane, but also food and other products, had to be prevented. He suspended workers' right to strike as well as any lockout by the bosses until the Canadian Industrial Relations Board rules.

The second strike mandate means the union can give a 72-hour strike notice the moment the Industrial Relations Board rules on what "essential" shipments are. There is no time limit for the board's ruling.

Both the union and rail bosses attacked the government's moves to prevent a work stoppage. Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City bosses have implemented lockouts against workers in the past. The Teamsters Canada Rail Conference said the only ones pushing for restrictions were "industry associations with financial interests in averting a strike."

CN and CPKC bosses have walked away from the negotiating table, demanding the federal government impose binding arbitration, which the union opposes.

"Both companies have demanded major concessions," the Teamsters said June 7, "on articles pertaining to crew scheduling, hours of work, and fatigue management. Their demands undermine rail safety in Canada and remain a major stumbling block."

Machinists Local 11 in British Columbia sent a solidarity message to the rail workers. "The concessions demanded by management ... are unacceptable. Your fight is in the interest of all workers and deserves the support of the entire labour movement," the union said.

"Your 98% strike vote is a strong enough message to the Canadian government that has taken the side of the companies in this conflict by opposing your right to strike in referring this conflict to the Industrial Relations Board. An injury to one is an injury to all."

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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

Oil workers strikes, protests against the death penalty take place in Iran

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working conditions for equal work," the Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers said on the first day of the strike.

The workers are demanding the dismantling of the contract system and that they be hired directly by the companies; an immediate 35% wage increase "considering that inflation is 45%"; 14 days off after working 14 days in a row, what they call "14-14"; and "improvement of dormitory conditions, food quality and workplace safety."

At some sites the contractors have threatened to fire striking workers "or to pay more wages to get new workers to do the unfinished work left on the ground. But no one is willing," the Organizing Council said June 27.

The oil project workers often spend weeks at work camps in the desert and remote areas. "Being away from our families is one of the reasons for family breakdowns," Nozar, a striking pipefitter in the Asaluyeh region, told Etehad, an online publication of the Free Union of Iranian Workers, underscoring the importance of 14-14. "By achieving this demand, families will become more stable."

Despite the fact that the bourgeois clerical regime blocks the formation of independent unions, the strikes "span a wide geographical area without any formal workers' organizations," Etehad notes. This is not the first time these workers have gone on strike.

Each year they have made progress, Nozar said, getting some wage increases and more days off.

The Iranian Labor News Agency wrote about the struggle in the oil fields July 1, noting that there have been "many rallies." Although it didn't mention the strike, it interviewed Maziar Gilaninejad, who is in-

involved in the current fight.

He noted, "Sometimes the dormitories do not have air conditioners and are full of insects. Sometimes they don't even have a toilet.

"Why should one worker work under an air conditioner and rest in a clean room and have satellite TV and get good money, while another worker, despite 12-hour days in the worst conditions and living in dirty dormitories, gets paid less?" he asked.

The contractors often pocket money that is supposed to go for workers' social security retirement, he said, as well as some of the money the companies pay that is supposed to go for decent food. And they're late paying wages.

The strike is winning support in Iran and internationally. The IndustriALL Global Union; National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers in the U.K.; and the Mining and Energy Union of Australia have sent solidarity messages to the striking workers.



Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers
Striking oil contract workers organize protest in Ahvaz, Iran, July 3.

At the same time, working people and political prisoners have been campaigning for the abolition of the death penalty, one of the tools the bourgeois clerical regime uses to terrorize workers and oppressed nationalities.

The Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers has demanded abolition of the death penalty.

In the wake of the protests that rocked Iran after the death of Zhina Amini, a young Kurdish woman who died following her arrest by the "morality" police in September 2022, the regime stepped up the use of the death penalty.

According to Amnesty International, the Iranian government put to death at least 853 people in 2023, the highest number in the world except for China. That's up from 576 in 2022 and 314 in 2021.

Most of the executions in Iran are for alleged drug offenses. Those killed are disproportionately Kurds, Baluch, Arabs and other oppressed nationalities.

In June, Iran's Supreme Court overturned the death sentence of Toomaj Salehi, a well-known rapper who was imprisoned and charged with "corruption on earth" for songs criticizing government repression and supporting the protests after the death of Amini. The decision was made following national and international protests in his defense.

The fight is far from over. At least 15 political prisoners have recently been accused of "armed rebellion," and could face execution. A "Black Tuesdays. No to Executions!" campaign organizes one-day hunger strikes by prisoners demanding the abolishment of the death penalty. They began 23 weeks ago and inmates at nine prisons are now involved.