

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE

**Forging a proletarian party
in the class struggle today**

— PAGES 7-11

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 33 SEPTEMBER 2, 2024

War on Hamas defends Israelis from Jew-hatred, deadly pogroms

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Israeli government's decision to continue its attack on Hamas in Gaza — despite constant pressure from the U.S. government to end the war — has been decisive in dealing big blows to the Jew-hating thug outfit.

Israel's goal is to destroy the ability of Hamas, backed and funded by Tehran, to launch yet another anti-Jewish pogrom like it carried out Oct. 7, murdering 1,200 people, wounding thousands, taking 250 people hostage and raping and mutilating dozens of women and men.

Advances by the Israel Defense Forces in Gaza and the fighting spirit of Israeli soldiers — Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and Ethiopian immigrants alike — are having a significant impact.

Despite threats to retaliate against Israel for the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran July 31 and Hezbollah military leader Fuad Shukur in Beirut the day before, both Tehran and Hezbollah have hesitated, weighing the serious consequences of any provocative action they might take.

Hezbollah — despite its stockpile of
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Socialist Workers Party presidential campaign Rachele Fruit • Dennis Richter

'Working people need our own party, a party of labor'



Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. president, met Aug. 19 in Manchester, England, with Festus Igho, center, and Israel Akanji, rail gateline workers who are active in the fight to win recognition for the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union on the job.

Richter speaks in Australia, backs construction workers

BY MIKE TUCKER

SYDNEY — The Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, Dennis Richter, campaigned here for several days in mid-August along with
Continued on page 4

Fruit in UK: 'Workers need to take political power'

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

MANCHESTER, England — "Workers need to rely on ourselves if we're to fundamentally change the conditions we face," Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, told participants at a Militant Labour Forum here Aug. 18. This was the start of her weeklong tour in the U.K. organized by the Communist League.

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Canadian rail workers walk out over jobs, wages, safety

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — Almost 10,000 rail engineers, conductors and dispatchers, members of the Teamsters union, walked off the job at 12:01 a.m. Aug. 22 after Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City railroads, Canada's two cross-country rail lines, refused to sign an acceptable contract. Solidarity with their fight from unions and fellow working people is crucial.

It's the first joint walkout by workers at both railroads in some 50 years.

**EDITORIAL:
Solidarity with Canadian
rail workers! No to
government intervention!**
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CN workers gathered outside the company's headquarters in Montreal waving union placards. Hotel workers showed up to protest outside the Bonaventure across the street, part of the fight of some 3,500 CSN union members for a new contract at 30 hotels in Quebec. The rail workers joined their action.

Workers set up pickets at the entrance to CN's main yard in Quebec. They were joined by other unionists who came to show support, including a number of seafarers and other port workers.

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Working people in Russia speak out against Putin, war on Ukraine



Deep State

Russian soldiers surrender in Kursk, Russia. Opposition to Putin's war on Ukraine is growing.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Ukrainian forces are still advancing more than two weeks after entering Russia's western Kursk region Aug. 6. Kyiv is seeking ways to push back against Russian President Vladimir Putin's efforts to use Moscow's preponderant numbers and resources to advance his goal of conquering Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Aug. 18 the Kursk incursion was to create "a buffer zone on the aggressor's territory," and "destroy as much Russian war potential as possible."

Kyiv is not trying to "wage war on the civilian population," Mykhailo Podolyak, Zelensky's top aide, said Aug.
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Higher prices keep getting higher, despite gov't claims inflation is over

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Democrats and the liberal media are claiming that inflation has been conquered, but workers keep facing ever-higher prices on many essen-

tial items. And now working people also face a rise in layoffs. While the monthly pace of price increases has slowed over the past year, they never came down. This continues to wreak havoc with workers' lives.

According to the government's Consumer Price Index, prices rose 2.9% in July on an annual basis. However, over the past two years rents and mortgages are up over 13%, and water, sewer and trash-collection

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Florida prison ban on 'Militant' upheld, next hearing Aug. 29. Join in the fight!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Florida Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee has upheld the ban on *Militant* issue no. 17 that was put in place by the Jackson Correctional Institution in Malone nearly four months ago. More letters are needed in the fight to get this reversed!

"The impoundment was upheld on July 18," wrote Library Services Administrator Saritza Legault to *Militant*
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Loss of electricity in Puerto Rico result of capitalism, colonial rule

BY SETH GALINSKY

Puerto Rico is in the heart of “hurricane alley” in the Caribbean and has been the target of many brutal storms over the years. In 2017 Hurricane Maria slammed into the island with 155 mph winds and torrential rain, right on the heels of Hurricane Irma. It caused a social catastrophe, mainly because of the effects of Puerto Rico’s colonial status and capitalist social relations.

This year tropical storm Ernesto, much weaker than Maria, hit Puerto Rico Aug. 14. “Even though it really wasn’t that bad a storm,” retired teacher Mildred Laboy told the *Militant* by phone from Humacao, Puerto Rico, Aug. 16, “we’re still without electricity and water.”

Ernesto left 728,000 households and businesses without power and thousands without water, including in Humacao, one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Maria in 2017. A week after Ernesto, there were still more than 41,000 households lacking power, Luma said.

Since then, the U.S. colony’s already fragile electrical system has deteriorated — while prices went up. Making everything worse, the government privatized the electrical system, Laboy said.

They gave control of the grid to Luma Energy, a U.S.-Canadian venture, in 2021, and control of the generating plants to Genera PR, a subsidiary

of U.S.-based New Fortress Energy, in 2023. Many workers on the island were opposed, seeing this as one more move to take advantage of Puerto Rico’s colonial status to enrich foreign capitalists.

“Luma said it was prepared, but they didn’t even keep up trimming the trees that threaten power lines during a storm,” Laboy said. Blackouts are common, including two just in the days before the storm arrived, she said.

In fact, Luma admits there has been a 19% increase in blackouts over the last year.

The contracts to Luma and Genera PR are lucrative. Under the terms of its 15-year deal, the government is paying Luma more than \$100 million a year. In addition Luma controls some \$10 billion from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, ostensibly to modernize the antiquated and deteriorating equipment, a result of decades of decapitalization when it was government run. Luma claims that’s not enough and is asking for \$200 million more a year.

The government pays Genera PR \$22.5 million a year.

When Luma took over the grid, it refused to honor the contract with UTIER, the electrical workers union, and most union linesmen took other government jobs or retired.

“Privatization has been a failure,” José Rodríguez Vélez, organizational secretary of the Movimiento Sindical union federation, which organizes workers at Pepsi, Coke and other workplaces, told the *Militant* from San Juan. “Luma and Genera PR don’t care if people have light or not, all they care



Jornada Se Acabaron Las Promesas

July 3 march in San Juan protests privatization of electrical system. “Contract with Luma is the theft of the century,” says sign. Number of blackouts has risen 19% over the last year.

about is their profits.”

Instead of putting the utility in the hands of capitalist privateers, “the government should guarantee electricity as an essential service provided at a reasonable price,” he said.

Carlos Rodríguez, a truck driver and leader of the Broad Front of Truckers, said that when the electrical system was turned over to Luma and Genera PR, the government said it would turn around the long-neglected electrical system.

“They blamed the workers, the UTIER union, the linesmen” for the disaster after Maria, he said. But “since privatization it’s just gotten worse.”

Laboy said working people in Humacao have become accustomed to the frequent blackouts. “We do what we always do, help each other,” she said, noting that Arecma, a community group she belongs to, set up a kitchen to provide low-cost meals to those who need them.

When fire last year gutted Lahaina, working people stepped up to help

BY JOHN STUDER

While on a vacation in Hawaii, Socialist Workers Party campaign supporter Val Libby visited Maui, which was devastated one year ago by a wildfire caused by errors made by the power company there, driven by its thirst for profit.

“Today Maui looks pretty much the same as before, with the stark exception that the historic town of Lahaina on the coast, where the fire was the most fierce, is completely gone,” Libby told the *Militant*. Over 100 people were killed in the fires Aug. 8, 2023. Damage was estimated at \$5 billion, including to homes that were utterly wiped out.

“Signs are up in restaurants and hotels asking visitors not to ask workers there

about the fire,” she said. “I did speak to one hotel worker who told me his family lived about 4 miles away and didn’t get any fire damage. They were without electricity, water, cell service and internet for over a week.

“I asked why the signs are up, and he said many people there were still traumatized by what had happened.

“But the main thing he wanted to tell me was that the news media never explained what really happened after the fire,” she said. “He said boats of all sizes converged on the area to bring supplies. People on shore gathered together to unload and bring the aid to distribution centers for people to get.

“He said the way average people

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The ‘Militant’ is taking a one-week vacation break. The next issue will be mailed Sept. 5.

THE MILITANT

Working-class solidarity is the road forward

When three children were stabbed to death in the U.K. July 29, both rightist and left forces intervened, threatening the rights and interests of working people. Only the working class responded by coming together with initiatives to bring aid to immigrants under attack.



Chanaka Balasuriya, inset, outside his looted shop where workers helped fix damage.

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Canadian rail workers

Continued from front page

“There are lots of attacks on workers right now,” Martin Trudel-Racine, a deckhand on an icebreaker and member of the Public Services Alliance, told the *Militant*. “This one is special because the bosses are putting economic stress on the whole country to push for the contract they want.”

Jagmeet Singh, the leader of the New Democratic Party, came to the picket, shaking hands and telling rail workers the party wouldn’t support any move by the government to intervene.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in the U.S. said they will stand with their fellow workers in Canada, and told the unions members they can refuse to cross any picket line set up by Canadian rail workers.

Canadian rail workers had voted to strike by 98%, rejecting the companies’ demand to let a new contract be imposed by an arbitrator and for concessions that “could tear families apart” and “jeopardize rail safety,” said Paul Boucher, president of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference.

After the Canadian Industrial Relations Board ruled Aug. 9 that the rail workers have the right to strike, Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon rejected the rail bosses’ demand that he bar a strike and impose compulsory arbitration.

Both railroads announced that they would lock workers out Aug. 22 unless they agreed to make dangerous concessions in their work schedules and safety. The union refused and announced a coast-to-coast walkout.

“CPKC wants to gut the collective agreement of all safety-critical fatigue provisions,” the union said. “Train crews would be forced to stay awake even lon-

ger, increasing the risks of derailments and other accidents.” Canadian National wants to impose “a forced relocation scheme, which would see workers ordered to move across the country for months at a time to fill labour shortages” and “extend workdays in all provinces west of Ontario.”

Transit authorities say commuter trains that carry 32,000 passengers a day in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver will be suspended as result of the walkout.

For decades bosses in Canada and the U.S. have been running longer and longer trains with smaller train crews and fewer maintenance workers. While this has yielded massive profits for the railroads, it’s increasingly dangerous for rail workers and those who live near the tracks.

An explosion in Lac-Mégantic from a runaway train in 2013 killed 47 people. Since then, at least 22 more rail workers have died and 110 seriously injured on the job. Neither the government nor the railroads make these figures public. In addition, over the past 10 years, 637 people have died in collisions at unsafe crossings and other incidents and 470 have been seriously injured.

Workers at both CN and CPKC, as well as in the U.S., have been fighting for safer working conditions for years. In 2015 Canadian Pacific rail workers walked off the job for two days with signs saying “Fatigue kills.” In 2019 Canadian National workers fought an eight-day “strike for safety” and more human work schedules. One of their slogans was, “We’re tired of being tired.”

“The fight for safety is a vital question for workers on the tracks and all those living around it,” Philippe Tessier, a CN rail conductor and Teamsters picket captain in Montreal, told the *Militant*.

“We need to use union power to fight for workers control over safety and to



Teamster rail workers at Canadian National join picket of CSN hotel workers at the Bonaventure in Montreal Aug. 22. Rail workers at CN and Canadian Pacific Kansas City have walked out in nationwide fight for safety.

reach out and win solidarity from other unionists and working people as a whole. This is the only road to win safer, larger crew size; shorter trains; and control over our working conditions.”

In 2022 four U.S. rail unions voted to strike over similar issues. However, President Joseph Biden rammed through bipartisan legislation imposing a contract on them and banning their strike.

Like Washington, Ottawa backs the rail bosses. Walkouts by Canadian Pacific rail workers in 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2022 all ended under threat of federal strikebreaking intervention.

The Quebec division of the Public Service Alliance of Canada union issued a statement of support for rail workers, calling on railroad bosses “to resolve this dispute through collective bargaining and by addressing the workers’ key demands at the table,” not through locking workers out and trying to impose compulsory arbitration. They also opposed any attempt by Ottawa to impose back-to-work legislation.

Canada’s railroads transport roughly 1 billion Canadian dollars (\$735 million) worth of goods a day, including half the country’s exports. The rail shutdown will be “a catastrophe,” claimed Greg Northey, vice president at Pulse Canada, which represents major food exporters. “Literally nothing will move,” he said.

The capitalist media has been full of

similar warnings from business associations and corporations in an effort to beat back support for the workers and to pressure the government to intervene.

The boss press is especially keen to pit farmers and rail workers against one another.

An article in the *Calgary Herald* was headlined, “Southern Alberta farmers say potential rail strike or lockout would harm Canada’s international reputation.” David Bishop, the only farmer quoted, is a long-time member of the Alberta barley, wheat and grains boards, representing the interests of large capitalist farmers. The article didn’t mention he is also a member of Canadian National Railway’s “Agricultural Advisory Council.” The council’s purpose is to promote pro-company, anti-union propaganda while giving the impression it speaks on behalf of small, family farmers.

In their 2019 strike for safety, CN workers won solidarity from these farmers.

Workers on both railroads walking out together greatly increases their striking power. As a result of a joint action in 1950, rail workers won their demand to reduce the workweek from 48 to 40 hours for the same pay, a victory that has been under attack ever since.

Philippe Tessier, a CN rail conductor and member of the Teamsters, contributed to this article.

Lahaina fire

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pulled together gave him confidence in a recovery.”

This is an all-too-often ignored aspect of all social catastrophes. While the bosses and the government try to evade responsibility, it is working people who come together to try and help out.

Most of the area has been cleaned up by now, Libby said, but there is very little rebuilding. “I was told people have filed for permits to do so, but they’re all tied up in red tape.”

A successful class action lawsuit charged that Hawaiian Electric and its parent company bore major responsibility for the disaster because they didn’t cut off their power despite warnings high winds could blow its lines down and spark wildfires. Other defendants included the state, Maui County, Hawaiian Telcom and Kamehameha Schools.

The lawsuit has been settled, and the utility said Aug. 2 they would cover roughly half of the \$4 billion judgment.

But no money is going to those who were injured because there’s still a legal dispute. Insurance companies that shelled out some payments to people who had paid premiums for years sued to be paid back from the settlement before any money goes to the victims. That would leave little left over for them.

A Maui court ruled Aug. 13 in favor of the plaintiffs, telling the insurance bosses they had to drop those lawsuits. Of course, that’s not the end. They can still appeal, pushing back further any payouts to those who lost everything.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Chicago nurses strike for more staffing, higher pay

CHICAGO — After voting overwhelmingly to strike, hundreds of members of the Illinois Nurses Association walked off the job at the University of Illinois Hospital here when their contract expired Aug. 19. This kicked off a weeklong work stoppage, in a fight for more staffing, pay raises to keep up with rising prices and safer working conditions.

“I’ve been here 33 years, and this is the worst I’ve seen it,” Veyon Rowland told the *Militant*, referring to the way hospital management is treating them. “They want to ‘float’ us into specialty areas that we are not trained for. I work in the mom-and-baby area, and they want to send me to labor and delivery.”

Hospital management is proposing raises for nurses averaging just 1.8% per year over a four-year contract. The Illinois Nurses Association is demanding 10% per year over three years.

The union represents some 1,700 nurses at the hospital. The bosses got a court injunction ordering about 600

emergency room, intensive care and other nurses to stay on the job. Management had pushed for a broader injunction, bemoaning the fact it would be harder to house scab nurses during the Democratic National Convention.

The nurses picket from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Chicago Federation of Labor has called a solidarity day for the final day of the strike Aug. 25.

— Naomi Craine

Dallas rally backs Black dancers fired for forming a union

DALLAS — In 105 degree heat, Dallas Black Dance Theatre performers and 200 of their supporters turned out for a spirited rally and picket in front of One Arts Plaza here Aug. 17. After the dancers voted to join the American Guild of Musical Artists union in May, the company fired them and was holding auditions to replace them inside.

“This is an experience of union busting,” Griff Braun, national organizing director of the union, told the rally. “We are here today to let the Dallas Black Dance Theatre know

that what they are doing is wrong.”

“No Screen Actors Guild, no AGMA and no other unions will work for the Dallas Black Dance Theatre,” Kim Titus from Actors’ Equity, the union that represents actors and stage managers, told the rally. “We stand with you.”

“We are here for justice,” Elijah Lancaster, an AGMA member and fired dancer at the Dallas Black Dance Theatre, told the *Militant*, “and for a better destiny for others.”

Several city officials spoke in solidarity with the fired union members.

Antuan Byers, vice president of the union, said, “These dancers have the right to organize, especially in Texas, which is a right-to-work state. Byers added that he is a former student at the Dallas Black Dance Theatre.

Other speakers at the rally included Louis Luckhardt, secretary-treasurer of the Dallas AFL-CIO; Stewart Williams, president of the Dallas-Fort Worth Professional Musicians Association; several fired dancers; and an actress from the Screen Actors Guild.

— Josefina Otero

Richter backs workers' struggles in Australia

Continued from front page

Robert Aiken, the Communist League candidate for mayor of Liverpool. CL campaigners took advantage of building for the visit by taking the word to union actions by electrical and construction workers, and campaigning door to door and at street venues.

Richter joined Aiken Aug. 15 campaigning at the Liverpool Railway Station, and the two candidates addressed a public meeting in the city Aug. 17.

"The Communist League campaign raises a voice for working people in face of rising prices, unemployment, inadequate housing and health care, and attacks on our rights," Aiken said. "We champion union fights and encourage solidarity. Right now we urge defense of the construction workers' union in face of a major union-busting assault by the ruling class and its government.

"We call for solidarity with Ukraine's fight to defend its independence in the face of Moscow's invasion," he said, "and oppose rising Jew-hatred and the deadly Iran-backed pogrom carried out by Hamas in Israel last October."

Political questions are class questions

"Every question we face in the U.S. election is a class question," Richter told the meeting. "The Socialist Workers Party campaign explains the need to build a party of labor to unite all working people to fight. Such a party will strengthen workers as they act together and gain confidence and class consciousness. We produce everything and we have the power to challenge the bosses and their political parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

"Workers need our own foreign policy, as the capitalist rulers world-

wide are driven into deeper rivalries with their competitors and the threat of new wars spreads," he said.

In the lively discussion period, one participant described the low wages and substandard conditions for contract workers from Pacific Island countries in fruit-packing sheds in a rural region where she had been working. "Migrant workers are used by the bosses to force down wages," Richter said. "That's why the unions need to demand that they have the same rights as other workers, to unify the working class."

Another participant asked Richter to say more about U.S. politics and the new stability shown in the two main capitalist parties. "Six months ago they were in a crisis," he answered. "Now they're both unified around their candidates. But they still have to convince working people to vote for them. Our campaign finds many workers don't trust either of them, and our program and candidates get a hearing, and some want to get involved with us.

"As you're drawn into labor battles, you want to learn more about class society and its history," Richter said. "You need free discussion and debate. That's why we fight for civil discussion and against shutting down free speech."

Richter was asked, what does the rise of antisemitism tell us about the world today? "Jew-hatred took on a new and distinct function after the onset of the imperialist epoch, as we saw in Germany in the 1930s," he said. "In times of crisis, the rulers scapegoat Jews to turn attention away from themselves, and mobilize reactionary Nazi gangs against the workers movement.

"Rising Jew-hatred today is a reflection of capitalism's growing world

disorder. It's built largely in the middle class, who increasingly see they face ruin. But we find a different response among workers.

"The contradictions we face today will continue until there is a new rise of working-class struggles that show a road forward," he said. "For now, it is necessary to stand up to any instance of Jew-hatred."

'I want to join in'

"I want to go out campaigning" for Aiken's campaign, Julie Musgrove, a pathology-laboratory receptionist, told the *Militant*, "and to have more meetings with speakers from abroad, so we can learn about what is happening in the real world, rather than what the media tells us."

Although she is employed by a multi-billion-dollar company, she said the bosses won't fix broken doors and switches that threaten worker and patient safety where she works.

Tammy Koro, a pick-and-pack warehouse worker, said, "I came because I wanted to learn more about what the working class is, and I really liked what Dennis explained. I think working people should have our own party."

On Aug. 16 Richter and Aiken had coffee with Kelvin Ozurumba, a nurse at Canterbury Hospital and branch president of the Nurses and Midwives Association there. They discussed the conditions facing nurses in New South Wales



Militant/Mike Tucker
Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, speaks at campaign meeting in Sydney Aug. 17.

and in the U.S., including in Louisiana where Richter had joined nurses fighting for a contract in July.

"Here we're fighting for a decent pay rise," Ozurumba said. "Prices are going up and we are losing nurses." He said that student fees are high and "student nurses can't find part-time jobs. So they're forced to move elsewhere."

"In the U.S. we face similar problems. Education is class-based," Richter said. "My campaign backs fights for decent wages to live on, so nurses and others can do their job and have a life at the same time. In Louisiana the nurses stress they are taking action for both nurses and patients."

"The crisis falls heaviest on the rural population," Richter said. "In the countryside hospitals don't yield enough profits, so they're being closed."

"We face the same problems," Ozurumba responded. "More and more doctors are leaving rural areas and going to the cities."

Nurses and midwives here are planning to take further industrial action, he said. The most important thing is the unions acting in solidarity. "We find as we campaign that working people are in a mood to fight today," Richter said. "The starting point is solidarity."

Linda Harris contributed to this article.

Bakery workers endorse SWP campaign in Fort Worth

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

FORT WORTH, Texas — A lively discussion followed an Aug. 10 Militant Labor Forum I gave here as the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, on why the working class needs its own party, a party of labor.

Ysmenia Silva Rosales, who is from Venezuela, said she was a lawyer in her country and is not allowed to practice in the U.S. She is now a production worker at the Bimbo bakery near here in Grand Prairie, along with SWP members Gerardo Sánchez and Hilda Cuzco. "Would your campaign do

something about workers who come here with licenses and are not allowed to use them?" she asked.

I explained how the immigration laws are used to allow the capitalists to exploit workers from other countries to make higher profits. "That is why the SWP candidates support fighting for amnesty for any worker who lives and works here. This is a key question for the labor movement and to unify working people," I said. "If the working class took power we would be able to create a society to meet human needs, which would include using all of the

knowledge and skills that immigrant workers bring with them."

Keashia Davis wanted to know, "Do these forums reach out to workers who have been incarcerated?" She said this was important to do.

Davis is one of 11 workers at Bimbo, members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 111, who have endorsed the SWP campaign of Rachele Fruit for U.S. president and Dennis Richter for vice president.

I described the Prisoners' Fund that makes it possible for workers who are incarcerated to subscribe to the *Militant* and get Pathfinder books. "The forum reaches out to fights organized against police brutality like the one by the family of Anthony Johnson Jr., who was killed by jailers at the Tarrant County jail. We will be organizing a forum on this soon."

Davis' son said he liked what the SWP campaign said about 30 hours of work for 40 hours of pay to prevent layoffs and create jobs, and that as prices go up, wages should go up automatically. Her grandson wanted to know more about what was going on in the Middle East.

Following the meeting, Rosales and her husband, Angel Montezuma Peña, who is a construction worker, signed up to endorse the SWP campaign. Later in the week both joined Sánchez, Cuzco and myself outside a nearby Walmart to campaign and publicize the upcoming Aug. 24 forum with Dennis Richter.



Militant/Hilda Cuzco
Ysmenia Silva Rosales and Angel Montezuma Peña sign up to endorse SWP campaign Aug. 10. At left, Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate. Keashia Davis, with grandson at right.

Fruit: 'We need our own party'

Continued from front page

"There's no easy, quick fix. But we can't be looking for solutions from those responsible for the assaults on working people. We need a class break from the capitalist rulers and their parties, a course of independent working-class political action.

"Our campaign is the only voice in the U.S. representing the interests of our class and I mean our class *world-wide*," Fruit said. "That's why it's a joy to be here. Workers face similar conditions. And we face a common international challenge — forging a working-class leadership in a world marked by an unending capitalist crisis, social convulsions and war."

Communist League leader Hugo Wils chaired the meeting. Several of the 25 participants had learned about the event through the CL's campaign during the recent U.K. general election. The party's candidates found serious interest as they discussed a working-class alternative to the Conservative, Labour and other capitalist parties, and the need to build a party of labor.

Fruit pointed to the key development in U.S. politics. "As conditions of life for the working class deteriorate, and wars escalate, millions of workers are being drawn into politics," she said. "More workers are organizing unions and using their unions to fight." And it's among fight-minded workers that the SWP's campaign gets a response.

The following day, Fruit met with ticket collectors at Northern Trains, fighting for recognition of their union, the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers. Fights like this begin to lay the conditions for building a mass working-class party, a party of labor, Fruit told meeting participants. It would organize working people of all nationalities, religions, skin colors and both sexes to deepen our struggles.

"I realize from what Rachele explained, that it's down to us, to working people," Derick Osei Appiah, a delivery driver attending the meeting, told the *Militant*. "We have to unite in struggle, build unions, build a working-class movement."

The SWP campaign points to the importance of "defending constitutional freedoms won by working people in the U.S. through years of struggle. They will be critical in our

future battles," Fruit said. But they're under attack today, especially by the Democratic Party, "through frame-ups — the stock-in-trade method for going after working-class fighters — and attacks on freedom of speech."

Similar questions are posed in the U.K., Fruit said, following the recent murder of three girls and ensuing riots. The government has targeted people for arrest based on what they say and write using thought-control "hate-crime" laws.

Presenting a road forward for working people "also means opposing the rulers' march to war. For decades, the U.S. imperialists have deployed tens of thousands of troops, warships and jet fighters in Europe and across the Middle East to protect their interests. They've expanded their presence in Asia and the Pacific seeking to contain China's influence. And both parties are discussing raising the military budget. The SWP opposes U.S. military deployments anywhere in the world."

Watershed in world politics

"This is especially important with the watershed in world politics marked by Putin's invasion of Ukraine, and Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel with the help and direction of the capitalist regime in Tehran. At the center of a working-class program today is fighting Jew-hatred and pogroms, including defense of Israel's existence as a refuge for Jews," Fruit



Militant/Jonathan Silberman
Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. president, is touring U.K., hosted by the Communist League. Above, she views display of CL's revolutionary political program and activity with League leader Pete Clifford, center, and delivery driver Derick Osei Appiah at Aug. 18 forum.

said. Following the meeting, she was interviewed by the Manchester-based weekly *Jewish Telegraph*.

The solution to all these questions — the march to war, national oppression, Jew-hatred — involves the working class taking political power, Fruit said.

"It's a revolutionary perspective in continuity with Lenin and the Bolsheviks. It's not only necessary but possible, as shown by what struggles of revolutionary proportions in the U.S. have accomplished — from the victorious war for independence against British rule, the Civil War against

slavery, gigantic workers' struggles that led to organization of industrial unions in the 1930s, the proletarian-led struggle for Black rights that brought down Jim Crow segregation.

"We can resolve the question of questions, which class rules. Only by taking power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers can working people stop the march to fascism and war. That's true in every capitalist country in the world: the U.S., Britain, Israel, Iran, Russia, Venezuela. It's the SWP's and the Communist League's reason for existence. We hope that you will join us in this effort."

Fruit discusses road forward with rail workers in the UK

BY MARY MARTIN

MANCHESTER, England — Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, met with rail workers fighting to win recognition for the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union here Aug. 19.

Israel Akanji and Festus Igho are gateline workers who scan tickets for Carlisle Support Services, a contractor that refuses to recognize the union. Some 150 gateline workers have joined one-day strikes in recent months. Pete Clifford, a train dispatcher, RMT member and a leader of the Communist League, joined the discussion.

Akanji asked Fruit "to explain the *Militant* and its connection to your campaign."

"The *Militant* builds solidarity with workers' struggles like yours," Fruit said. "For decades the unions were driven back, but today workers are fighting for higher wages and better working conditions," pointing to strikes planned by machinists at Boeing in the U.S. and freight rail workers across Canada.

Central to the SWP's campaign is the idea that "workers need to build a party of labor that will take on the social crisis we face," she said.

"Unity is what we concentrate on to steel the workers," Akanji said. "The bosses threaten the most vulnerable workers to try to make them give up. We talk one-on-one and let them know they have a right to join the union. We're making progress every day. But how can we translate the union struggle to the political struggles you raise?"

"Once workers engage in a struggle, they start to see they need a better political instrument to fight for all our needs," Fruit said, "to fight against unemployment, for higher wages, decent housing and health care. A party of labor would organize union and nonunion workers, small farmers, fishermen and truck drivers.

"We are talking about a party of millions," she said. "To transform society it's going to take a revolution. We start with what we are for — the kind of society that human beings need. We point to the example of the Cuban Revolution where workers and peasants overturned the U.S.-backed capitalist government and put working people in power."

"But how do we encourage workers who want a part of the profits and a future for themselves to connect to these politics?" Akanji asked.

"It starts with workers beginning

to struggle where they are up against the bosses and the government," Fruit said. "This opens workers' minds to want to learn how to fight better. The SWP gets out books that teach the history of the working class and lessons from successful revolutions." She pointed to books by Thomas Sankara, the central leader of the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso.

"Thomas Sankara, he is my hero!" Igho said. "But we can't bring him back."

"We're keeping Sankara's ideas alive," Clifford said. Igho asked Clifford to bring him the titles at work after payday.

The discussion turned to the recent rioting here after three young girls were murdered in Southport near Liverpool. Igho said the government had done nothing to counter lies falsely accusing an immigrant of carrying out the killings.

"The rulers use every possible division against working people," Clifford noted. "This is why we have to build a movement to focus on the real enemy, the capitalist ruling class. When workers are on the move it shatters these divisions."

"I see that you always bring everything back to the workers!" Akanji said.

"Yes," Clifford replied, "Only the working class has an interest in and the ability to make a revolution."

"I've learned a lot today," Akanji said. "Not everyone in the union struggle will agree with all these ideas, but I know many who want to learn more."

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War on Hamas targets Jew-hatred, pogroms

Continued from front page

more than 150,000 missiles, including GPS guided — is no match for the Israeli army, although an all-out war would mean widespread casualties in Israel. The same is true for Tehran, whose antiquated air defense systems Israel can breach. Even more worrisome to Iran's capitalist rulers is the widespread opposition by working people in Iran to its expansionary military adventures in the region and attacks on Israel.

Israeli troops have killed thousands of Hamas fighters, destroyed hundreds of tunnels, and taken control of Gaza's border with Egypt, blocking the Islamist outfit from getting weapons and ammunition. They have also killed more than 350 Hezbollah fighters in response to Hezbollah missile and drone attacks on northern Israel.

Hamas is getting weaker by the day. One sign of this is its return to encouraging individual suicide bombers to blow themselves up inside Israel's borders. On Aug. 18, a Hamas supporter's backpack bomb exploded prematurely in Tel Aviv, injuring a passerby. On Aug. 19 Hamas prominently featured on its internet site a poster in English, Arabic and Hebrew titled "We are coming," with the painting of a suicide bomb vest in front of the remains of a passenger

bus in Tel Aviv. Hamas has sworn that it will continue to organize pogroms until all the Jews are dead or gone.

The Joseph Biden administration and the Kamala Harris presidential campaign want to put an end to the war in Gaza and the skirmishes between Israel and Hezbollah. The U.S. capitalist rulers look to turn their attention to advancing their economic and strategic interests and broader alliances in the region, including reaching a detente with the rulers in Tehran. This includes a nuclear deal.

They are pressing the Israeli government to accept a hostage deal and permanent cease-fire, regardless of whether it would leave Hamas intact and capable of organizing new deadly attacks on Jews. In his speech at the Democratic Party convention Aug. 19, Biden said that pro-Hamas protesters outside "have a point. A lot of innocent people are being killed on both sides."

But Hamas bears full responsibility for both its pogrom against Jews in Israel and for the deaths and destruction in Gaza. Hamas uses Palestinian civilians as human shields, placing its command posts, prisons and weapon stores in schools, mosques and hospitals. They say any Palestinians killed there are martyrs to their Jew-hating cause.

Hamas is also the biggest obstacle

Palestinian workers and farmers face in being able to defend their national aspirations and to freely join with others — including Jewish workers — to defend their class interests. After defeating Fatah, its main rival, in bloody street fighting in 2007, Hamas set about breaking unions, restricting women's rights, and jailing, torturing and assassinating political opponents.

Hamas was set up in 1987 as the Gaza chapter of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, which like its close ally, Amin al-Husseini, the decadeslong Mufti of Jerusalem, collaborated with the Nazis in World War II. Al-Husseini met personally with Adolf Hitler in November 1941 and helped organize an SS force in Bosnia, hoping to bring Hitler's war to the Jews in the Middle East.

Hamas' goal is to complete the Nazis' Final Solution — the removal of the Jews from the face of the earth. This is explicit in its founding covenant.

Israeli troops have found copies of Arabic translations of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in Hamas strongholds in Gaza.

Jew-hatred has taken new meaning in the imperialist epoch. It gets a hearing among middle-class layers, who face ruin by the dog-eat-dog workings of capitalism. When the crisis of capi-



Poster on Hamas internet site promotes suicide bombings to kill civilians in Israel, reflecting its scorn for working people, Jewish and Arab. It also shows how Israeli blows degraded Hamas' ability to mount missile attacks.

talism deepens, wings of the capitalist rulers will finance and foster fascist groups. This is the lesson of the rise of the Nazis in the 1930s.

To defend the dictatorship of capital, they will scapegoat Jews and unleash Nazi thugs to destroy and demoralize the labor movement and divert attention from the real enemy, the capitalist system itself. This is why the fight against Jew-hatred is a life-and-death question for the working class.

Solidarity 'unprecedented' for Iran nurses strike



Coordination Council of Nurses' Protests

"A sea of nurses across the country is demanding their rights," the Tehran-based Iranian Labour News Agency reported Aug. 18. Their strike, which began in Karaj and Shiraz, has spread to dozens of hospitals, involving thousands. The nurses are demanding higher pay, better work conditions and an end to forced overtime.

Hundreds of striking nurses in Ahvaz, Khuzestan province, Aug. 19, above, were joined by other hospital workers and strike supporters.

The nurses are often forced to work 16-hour shifts, face abuse from supervisors and receive low wages. "We have to cover 40 to 50 patients in each shift," a nurse at Amir Hospital, a cancer treatment center in Shiraz, told the press. According to Aftab news, the nurses earn just \$200 a month, less than nurses in other Middle Eastern countries. And they're often paid late.

Nurses say the poor quality of medical facilities and equipment and shortages of supplies and medicine are obstacles to providing adequate care.

The strike takes place amid rising prices — a 25% increase in the cost of bread in some provinces — growing opposition to the government's increasing use of the death penalty and the capitalist rulers' inability to whip up support for their threats against Israel. Supervisors have threatened to fire them or have them arrested but have failed to intimidate the nurses back to work. "Don't be afraid, we are all in this together," is a popular chant at the protests.

"This strike is unprecedented. We have had rallies and sit-ins for months, but such a prolonged strike has never happened before," Mohammad Sharifi Moghadam, secretary general of the Nurses' House, which organizes many nurses, told the Labour News Agency.

What is also unprecedented is the solidarity from independent unions and other workers. "Today, it is our turn to rise in support of the dedicated nurses," wrote the Union of Truckers and Drivers of Iran on their internet site. The truckers' union has organized numerous work stoppages over the last year, demanding higher pay for drivers and protesting fuel shortages.

Independent unions of teachers, Tehran bus drivers, metalworkers and retirees have also called for solidarity with the strike.

— SETH GALINSKY

Russians speak out against Putin's war

Continued from front page

15. In stark contrast, Moscow has been bombarding residential areas across Ukraine for the past two and a half years, with devastating consequences for the Ukrainian people.

The rout of Moscow's forces in parts of Kursk has left the Ukrainian government controlling over 400 square miles of Russian territory. Despite shifting troops to Kursk, Moscow has so far been unable to reverse the incursion.

Kyiv's forces have occupied the town of Sudzha, disrupting Russian military supply lines. At the same time, Moscow's forces occupying eastern Ukraine have intensified their assaults and are threatening to capture the town of Pokrovsk.

Putin's war not popular

Over 200,000 people have fled from the Kursk region and the neighboring Belgorod region, with many residents abandoned to fend for themselves by Russian authorities. The high command claimed "the situation is under control," but "local residents [were] left to die," a Kursk resident said in a video posted online two days into the fighting.

Comments by other residents reflect opposition among working people to Putin's war. Not one of the local authorities "so much as lifted a finger to protect or evacuate the population," a resident of Sudzha told media outlet Holod. But they "were among the first to leave."

Many people found Putin's war and lies "deeply repulsive from the start," she said.

Kyiv plans to create evacuation corridors from the Kursk region and to open access to international aid missions from

Ukraine's northern region of Sumy.

"The citizens abandoned by Russia are mostly elderly people, people with disabilities, and families with children. They need food, water and medicine," Ukraine's interior minister, Ihor Klymenko, said Aug. 16.

Over 2,000 Russian soldiers, mainly newer conscripts, are now prisoners of war. Relatives are pressing Putin to negotiate their swift return.

The capture of conscripts has exposed Putin's lies about the conduct of the war. He had promised that draftees as young as 18, who are required to serve in the military, wouldn't be sent into the war zone with Ukraine. Now online petitions have appeared, one with nearly 10,000 signatures, asking for the return of the conscripts from the Kursk front.

The families of conscripts have often been the lightning rod for the emergence of anti-war movements, as during the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s and Russia's war in Chechnya in the 1990s.

"People are horrified. We are overwhelmed with requests," Ivan Chuvilayev from Go by the Forest, a Russian group helping young men to avoid the draft, told the *Financial Times*.

"Kremlin propaganda tries to portray that everybody in Russia supported Putin and his war on Ukraine. It is a lie," Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian opposition leader freed in a recent prisoner exchange, told *Time* magazine Aug. 14.

There are "millions of people in Russia who reject Putin's dictatorship, who are against his aggression in Ukraine," he said. These are the people "who are the future of our country."

Forging a proletarian party in the class struggle today

Socialist Workers Party uses Marxist program and party's experiences to set course

BY STEVE CLARK

"Every class struggle is a political struggle." With that statement Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, opened his report to an International Socialist Educational Conference in Oberlin, Ohio. "That's a reality more and more workers in the United States are bumping up against in their own lives and battles today."

Barnes was quoting an 1895 tribute by communist leader V.I. Lenin to Frederick Engels, who along with Karl Marx founded and led the modern revolutionary workers movement. In October 1917, after the horrors of more than three years of imperialist war, the Bolshevik Party, under Lenin's leadership, led the working class and exploited peasants in Russia to the conquest of power and establishment of the first workers state in history. It was the world's first victorious socialist revolution.

Lenin's proletarian internationalist course, Barnes said, provides the Marxist foundation of all the SWP's mass work. "The more such activity we're engaged in together with other workers and exploited producers," he said, "the more we draw on and use our communist political continuity, our program, the experiences of our party history."

Some 330 participants attended the June 13-15 conference. Among them were members of the SWP in the U.S. and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, along with party supporters and invited guests from those countries as well as France, Greece, Iceland, and Norway.

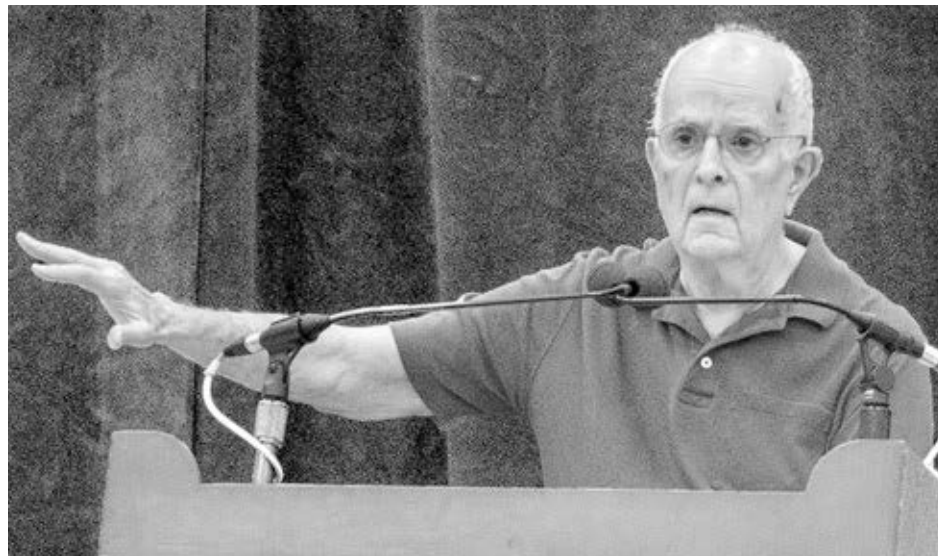
Marx and Engels were the first to show that the working class — as well as the social and political demands workers fight for — are a product of the capitalist system, which "creates and organizes the proletariat," Lenin said in his 1895 article. It is the only class with the social power, organization, and experience in common struggle to effectively combat the bosses, their political parties and their state. The only class with no stake in exploitation and oppression of any kind, and with a class interest in workers developing the confidence, capacity and political consciousness to fight capitalist rule and win.

The bigger the working class, Lenin said, "the greater is their strength as a revolutionary class, and the nearer and more possible does socialism become." Above all, Lenin said, Marx and Engels taught this new class "to know itself and be conscious of itself" — to be politically conscious of "acting as an independent social force."

That remains true to this day, Barnes emphasized, calling attention to the banner hanging at the front of the conference hall: "For a political break from the bosses' parties. For a party of labor. Build the Socialist Workers Presidential Campaign."

His report politically armed and oriented participants with the SWP's program and line to forge a revolutionary proletarian party whose members and branches are actively engaged in the class struggle in the U.S. and worldwide.

In addition to Barnes' report, there were plenary presentations by party leaders Dave Prince and Mary-Alice Waters, as well as classes and an event the closing night addressed by



Above, Association of Professional Flight Attendants; below, Militant Jack Barnes, national secretary of Socialist Workers Party, in his opening report to International Socialist Educational Conference in Oberlin, Ohio. Above, American Airlines flight attendants protest at Dallas-Fort Worth airport Sept. 5, 2023. There has been a renewal of fights and solidarity activity by workers, unionists in U.S.

the Socialist Workers Party's 2024 presidential campaign ticket: Rachele Fruit for president and Dennis Richter for vice president.

Low point of resistance behind us

The low point of working-class and labor resistance in the United States is behind us. That was a central political conclusion of the Socialist Workers Party's December 2022 convention, Barnes said. After a retreat in struggles by workers and the oppressed for several decades, recent years have seen a renewal of fights and solidarity activity. Party members have been an integral part of this resistance in the unions and more broadly, alongside co-workers and fellow unionists.

Over the past half decade, workers in the U.S. — railroad workers, aerospace workers, truck drivers and warehouse employees, port workers, nurses, autoworkers, car service drivers, flight attendants, farmworkers, workers in factories, mines, and mills, large and small — have organized strikes and other fights in face of intensifying pressures from the employers. They've taken part in united actions and social protests in the interests of the working class and oppressed.

These take place as the capitalist rulers have stepped up attacks on working people. Starting a

family and providing for it has become more and more difficult for workers — women and men, of all skin colors and nations of origin, in big cities, small towns and rural areas. Workers are resisting declining real wages, rising prices, speedup, work schedules that damage health and families, cuts in the size of train crews, bouts of joblessness and shrinking openings for employment. Workers pay with their lives for defective, unsafe machinery and equipment — on the job and in communities like East Palestine, Ohio, hit by devastating "accidents."

These conditions in the working class bear down with even greater weight on the oppressed Black nationality. Living standards for the big majority of African Americans get worse, even as the size of privileged middle-class and professional layers expands. Given Blacks' large numbers and centuries-

long history in the U.S., the national question of African Americans is a decisive one in the U.S. class struggle, the SWP leader said. Just look at "the vanguard place and weight of workers who are Black in broad proletarian-led social and political struggles in the United States," Barnes pointed out in his book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

Growing numbers of immigrant workers face miserable living and job conditions, cynically played on by the employing class and the Democratic and Republican parties that represent them. The capitalists loosen or tighten flows to meet their demand for low-wage labor, squeezing profits from the pariah status of these workers and intensifying competition and divisions in the working class.

Progress by women who were drawn into the workforce in growing numbers for several decades during and after World War II — including into jobs previously held only by men — began leveling off a quarter century ago. Faced with sharply rising costs of child care, schooling, groceries, rent and mortgage payments and other needs, it is women who shoulder the heaviest burden of conflicting pressures on their families. Get a job to bring in more income? Or leave the workforce to reduce expenses for child care?

Using our unions to resist

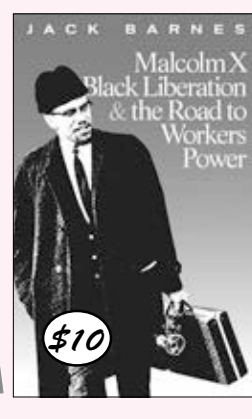
As workers, organized and unorganized, look for ways to resist, Barnes said, union members are finding ways to use these basic organizations of our class to defend wages and conditions and to mobilize solidarity with others engaged in fights with the bosses. Among those who are not union members, still the great majority, more are becoming open to joining a union or organizing along with other workers to win union recognition and a contract.

Workers are learning to work together through the unions in order to strengthen them, earning mutual respect and trust for their discipline as fighters. At an SWP leadership meeting a few weeks after the conference, Barnes recalled a discussion with a party member who, as part of his communist political activity over decades, has done effective work in his union organizing strike solidarity with workers across the country. In his various industrial jobs and unions, he told Barnes, he has held to two guidelines:

First, always work safe, no matter the pressure the bosses bring down on

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Learn more about Socialist Workers Party program



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Forging a proletarian party in today's class struggle

Continued from page 7
you and your co-workers.

Second, don't act on your own or "pop off" to managers or supervisors in anger or frustration. Drawing a spotlight on yourself makes it more difficult to organize the collective strength of the union and fight together effectively. It gives the company an arbitrary handle to weaken the union and victimize or fire you and other workers.

Barnes pointed to another important guideline in his conference report, one especially decisive as opportunities for mass work begin opening up. Ultra-left temptations, he said, can be our biggest obstacle: the impulse "to make opportunities happen," rather than responding to openings and acting on them together with other workers.

Organizing resistance and solidarity takes not only consciousness and determination, Barnes said, but time and resources as well. Workers need to travel to bring solidarity to strikes elsewhere in the country and to take part in local, regional and national meetings and activities of their unions and the labor movement.

Individual workers and their families can't take upon themselves all these costs and possible penalties for lost time. That's what paid union time off is all about: to lift such obstacles and strengthen union activity. Union resources can be used effectively to build the labor movement, including organizing the unorganized.

The 2022 SWP convention, Barnes said, increased the party's readiness to make the most of the "breeze at our backs" being felt by workers starting to fight. Among other steps, delegates reinforced the multiple generations of worker-bolsheviks represented on the party's National Committee by electing several more cadres who've proved themselves in the party's mass work.

No end to capitalist world disorder

At the opening of the 1990s, with the collapse of Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and across Central and Eastern Europe, there was a burst of triumphalism among the ruling classes of the U.S. and other imperialist powers. Capitalism and "democracy" — *democratic imperialism* — would now reign supreme. It was "The End of History," in the words of a global best seller.

This brief jubilation was reinforced in early 1991, when a Washington-organized military coalition quickly and brutally defeated the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, which had invaded and occupied neighboring Kuwait. This "victory" came at the cost of the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqi, Kuwaiti, Kurdish and other soldiers and civilians.

The Socialist Workers Party said, "No! U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War, not won it. The fall of the Stalinist apparatuses eliminated a class-collaborationist crutch the imperialist rulers had relied on for more than six decades to undermine national and class battles the world over and block extension of the socialist revolution.

As for Washington's murderous "victory" in the first Gulf War, the outcome did not foster peace in the Middle East or anywhere else, said the SWP. It marked the "opening guns of World War III."

As Lenin had polemicized in re-

sponse to class-collaborationist opponents in the socialist movement during World War I, in the imperialist epoch rival national ruling classes no longer offer any road forward for humanity. The rival imperialist powers resort to trade conflicts and wars to redivide the world, in order to maximize profits by exploiting hundreds of millions of workers and other toilers in every corner of the earth.

Today imperialist crises are proliferating — wars and prospects of more wars; global breakdowns of production, finance, trade, and "supply chains"; economic and military rivalries among bourgeois governments and ruling classes. While voices in capitalist politics spout self-serving rationalizations about restoring "global stability," others are more frank. In his conference report, Barnes pointed to the example of Richard Haass.

Under two White House administrations between 1989 and 2003, Haass had been a top foreign policy adviser and evangelist of both the first (1990) and second (2003) Gulf Wars. Then, for two decades, he was president of the U.S. ruling-class institution, the Council on Foreign Relations. By late in those years, Haass' earlier bravado had been deflated. *A World in Disarray* was the title he gave a 2017 book. Asked last year by the *Wall Street Journal* what he might entitle a sequel today, Haass answered: *Disarray on Stilts*.

Meanwhile, despite their climate doomsaying and alarms over a "resurgent far right" in the U.S. and Europe, the middle-class left, including Stalinist currents in Maoist or other garb, promote their own myths of global "stability." As they say in their classless jargon, "we" need a more peaceful "multipolar world."

Many of them put their money especially on the governments of the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, and to a growing extent the Islamic Republic of Iran. They look to "the Global South," the "BRICS" (a loosely tied "bloc" of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and others), and Tehran's "axis of resistance" — conglomerations of capitalist governments and armed militias that petty-bourgeois radicals pretend are a "counterweight" to U.S. imperialism.

Growing numbers of workers in the United States, however, sense from our own lives and experience that no capitalist government or political party, anywhere in the world, has solutions to the wars and breakdowns threatening humanity. These crises are *produced* by the workings of capitalism, not ameliorated by imperialist governments or bourgeois alliances.

The Socialist Workers Party, Barnes said, has pointed to this developing world imperialist crisis for decades and explained its inevitable consequences. Above all, the SWP patiently explains a revolutionary working-class program and course of action: *what working people can do* to combat imperialism's relentless march toward fascism and world war, a deadly march that in the 20th century and opening years of the 21st has cost the lives of *hundreds of millions*.

"We explain and act on the working-class line of march toward workers power and a socialist world," Barnes said.

The titles alone of resolutions, ar-



Militant photos: above, Mary Martin; below, Paul Mailhot
Above, Rachele Fruit, front, SWP candidate for president, joined hotel workers at UNITE HERE Local 11 picket line in Los Angeles on April 5. Below, Dennis Richter, center, party's vice presidential candidate, campaigns May 24 in New York among delivery workers, many of whom are from West African countries. Workers face capitalist exploitation the world over, Richter said.

ticles, and books by Jack Barnes and other SWP leaders in recent decades offer a guide to such a working-class alternative: "US Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," "Capitalism's World Disorder," "The Opening Guns of World War III," "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun," "Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power," "The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record," "Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning under Capitalism," "The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party." And — most recently — "The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us" and "The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class."

There have been two great socialist revolutions in the past century, Barnes said. The first was the Bolshevik Revolution led by Lenin in 1917. The other was Cuba's socialist revolution, brought to victory under the leadership of Fidel Castro at the opening of the 1960s.

"As Cuban toilers reached out to be led," Barnes said, "Fidel listened and showed, both in word and deed, that he and others in the leadership of that revolution would respond by organizing working people to fight for and win their own demands.

"The communist leadership forged by Fidel won the confidence of millions of workers and peasants, who were convinced — as they were organized and led in revolutionary struggle — that this was their revolution to make. It was their socialist revolution.

"That's the only test that counts for a revolutionary leadership, a proletarian leadership," Barnes said. It's the only

road that makes a socialist revolution possible. And it changed the course of history and the class struggle ever since.

Building a party of labor

The working class in the United States needs to break from the Democratic, Republican and other capitalist parties and candidates, Barnes said. "Through experience in struggle, we need to forge our own political party, a party of labor, based on the trade unions and organizing to lead the working class as a whole, as well as other exploited and oppressed producers and nationalities.

"We're not talking about an electoral machine," Barnes emphasized. "Although a party of labor will run candidates in elections for federal, state and local offices against the bosses' representatives and campaign for a working-class program.

"Workers and our allies need a party of *independent working-class political action* — class against class — in factories and other workplaces, in army barracks, and in the neighborhoods, towns and streets where working people live and labor."

This is at the center of what the SWP presidential ticket of Rachele Fruit and Dennis Richter are explaining using the arena of the 2024 elections.

The energies and resources of workers and the unions shouldn't be diverted into financing and "getting out the vote" for candidates who speak and act on behalf of the capitalists and their legislative schemes, whether fancied up as "labor friendly," "job-creating," or whatever. The unions need to act politically in their own right — in workplaces and the streets, not just at the ballot box — in



order to fight effectively and maintain workers' hard-won gains.

There is no all-encompassing "we" in capitalist society and politics, Barnes said. On one side, there are the ruling capitalist families and a large professional and upper-middle-class layer who serve and rationalize the ruling families' profit system. On the other are the vast majority of workers, other exploited producers, and small rural and urban proprietors. The class interests of the two sides irrepressibly conflict; they are polar opposites.

Socialist Workers Party members explain this pressing need for a class break to other workers — at doorsteps, on picket lines, at work and elsewhere — as we point out why we encourage them to endorse the 2024 SWP ticket of Fruit and Richter. The interest we're finding in prospects for a party of labor, Barnes said, is registered, among other ways, by those who want to take a stand, sign an endorser card, and find out more about the SWP's revolutionary working-class program.

A labor party, Barnes said, would chart both a working-class domestic policy and a working-class foreign policy. It will approach workers and exploited producers in other countries as part of our class, not as enemies.

It will be a party that aims to take the power to make war, which always includes the threat of nuclear annihilation, out of the hands of the capitalist rulers.

One that ends for all time the U.S. imperialist rulers' more-than-six-decades-long economic and military drive to destroy and erase Cuba's socialist revolution.

That joins in the international fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms, from the Middle East to the U.S. and other countries the world over.

A party that champions the right of Ukrainians, Kurds, Palestinians, Puerto Ricans and other oppressed peoples to national self-determination.

A party that joins in the global struggle for national liberation and to establish workers states that cooperate in the battle to eradicate exploitation and oppression in all forms, along the road to a socialist world.

Malcolm X and workers power

There was one prominent leader of the U.S. class struggle in the latter

20th century, Barnes said, whose political trajectory converged with such a proletarian internationalist and independent working-class course. That was Malcolm X.

Through his political evolution the last year of his life, Malcolm became "the face and the authentic voice of the forces of the coming American revolution," Barnes explains in *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. Malcolm was not only the outstanding leader of the oppressed Black nationality in the United States, but also a revolutionary leader of the working class. A leader of the exploited and oppressed the world over.

Malcolm X was won to this proletarian course, Barnes said, by advances in the *world revolution* and his own political attraction to them. As Malcolm told a large audience in February 1965, a few days before he was assassinated, "It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of Black against white, or as a purely American problem." Rather, he said, "We are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter."

Malcolm X rejected the class-collaborationist political perspectives of Martin Luther King and other top figures in the Black rights movement in the 1960s. Malcolm publicly rebuffed their call on Blacks, as well as opponents of Washington's war against the Vietnamese people, to subordinate their struggles in the streets to the electoral needs of the imperialist parties.

Malcolm unmasked the Democratic Party's claim to be anything other than one of the two U.S. parties of racism, capitalism and imperialist war. He answered the illusion, which the rulers promote widely among the oppressed, that the fight for Black liberation can be achieved under capitalism. Stop trying to escape the wolf by fleeing to the fox, he said; neither one is the "lesser evil."

Barnes reminded conference participants that a decisive reason for Malcolm's break with the Nation of Islam in early 1964 was his moral and political revulsion at Nation leader Elijah Muhammad's sexual exploitation of young women. Malcolm's increasingly outspoken championing of the importance of advancing women's emancipation in the United States,

Africa and elsewhere set an example for fighters the world over.

Reshaping 'two-party system'

While capitalism's instability and disorder have no end in sight, the related shakeup inside each of the two dominant imperialist parties is beginning to be stabilized. Shifts in both the Democratic and Republican parties — registered especially since the election of Barack Obama in 2008, and then Donald Trump in 2016 — are reshaping aspects of the capitalist two-party system. Both ruling-class parties are now in better shape in 2024, Barnes said.

The Obama administration, as Barnes explained in his 2016 book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*, signaled a move away from the Democratic Party's self-proclaimed image as the party of the working class and unions. Those pretensions — opportunistically bolstered for decades by top union officials, the Stalinist Communist Party, Social Democrats and bourgeois liberals — go back to Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" administrations during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Democrats' class objective, shared by their Republican rivals, was to rescue crisis-wracked U.S. capitalism by joining the second imperialist world slaughter and coming out on top of the heap — of both enemy and allied powers — militarily and economically.

Despite decadeslong efforts by top union officials to keep labor tightly bound to the Democrats, by the end of Obama's two terms in 2016 his campaign pledge of "Change!" rang increasingly hollow to tens of millions of workers and their families, who'd borne the brunt of so much social devastation. Joseph Biden's replacement this year by Kamala Harris as the Democrats' presidential candidate has furthered the party's makeover.

Both Harris and Obama are products of what Barnes described in his book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* as "the explosive growth" of "a new stratum of bourgeois-minded professionals and middle-class individuals — of all colors and hues — in cities, suburbs, and university towns across the country." A social layer interested, first and foremost, in advancing their own *individual* careers and monetary rewards.

Those who count themselves as part of this self-proclaimed "enlightened meritocracy," Barnes wrote, "truly believe that their 'brightness,' their 'quickness,' their 'contributions

to public life' ... give them the right to make decisions, to administer and 'regulate' society for the bourgeoisie — on behalf of what they claim to be the interests of 'the people.'"

The growing social and moral gap between the working class and this meritocracy is understood by more and more workers, including those who are Black.

When Joseph Biden was abruptly removed from the ballot by Democratic Party leaders on July 21, he dutifully deferred to Harris as his successor. Like South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn — who had salvaged the current president's sagging 2020 bid midway during the primaries that year — Biden is a discarded vestige of Democratic machine politicians associated with the party's New Deal social promises.

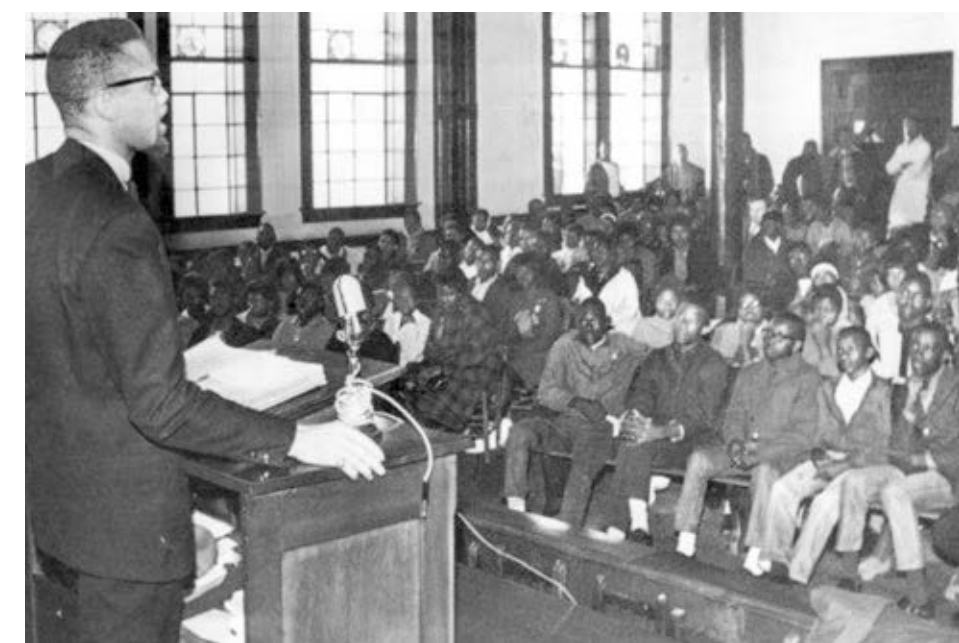
But it was Barack Obama's videotaped phone call on July 26 — "It appears that people feel very strongly that you need to be our nominee" — when Harris was truly "anointed." The crown prince of the meritocracy, himself no longer eligible for the throne, had settled the succession.

The same causes that resulted in millions of workers not voting for Hillary Clinton in 2016 also led many either to vote for Donald Trump that year or to stay away from the ballot box altogether. Trump, himself a wealthy New York real estate developer, demagogically pitched his campaign to workers and those in the worse-off middle classes, including substantial numbers who had voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. Trump got an assist from Clinton's declaration that at least "half" of those considering a vote for Trump were both "deplorable" and "irredeemable."

Trump has tried to relegate to the sidelines the Republicans' longtime image as a largely "business-oriented" party of low tariffs, immigration of "cheap labor," "entitlement" foes, and bipartisan war-makers. Republicans, Trump says, are now the "real workers party," determined to reverse the (very real) "carnage" facing working people in both industrial and rural areas. He has doubled down on that pitch in 2024, among other means, by choosing southern Ohio-born J.D. Vance as his running mate and by inviting the president of a major trade union, Sean O'Brien of the Teamsters, to address the Republican national convention in July.

Despite such strides toward stability in the two imperialist parties, and a shift in the particular "lesser evils" that each campaigns on, growing numbers of workers are questioning whether either party offers anything more to

Continued on page 10



Malcolm X speaks to 300 young people, Feb. 4, 1965, in Selma, Alabama, where Black rights militants faced cop attacks, racist violence. Attracted to revolutionary national liberation struggles worldwide, he charted proletarian internationalist course in last year of his life.

Forging a proletarian party

Continued from page 9

those who work for a living than added belt-tightening, sacrifice and wars.

High prices and families

Two of the biggest scourges for the working class and other toilers today, Barnes said, are rising prices, on the one hand, and the decline in steady work at livable wages, on the other. Both account for the mounting difficulty of workers' families in meeting the costs of food, housing, medical care and other necessities.

The bosses, their government, and their mass media prattle about "controlling inflation," or "cracking down on price gougers." They mystify the class truth that rising prices are a necessary result of production for profit and capitalist government. They are a by-product of capitalist promises.

Liberals pledge to resolve the economic and social crises of their system through big government spending and budget deficits. Both bosses' parties manipulate interest rates and "monetary policy," and lavish enormous amounts on imperialism's state bureaucracy and war spending.

Capitalist economic instability, Barnes told conference participants, is made worse, not "solved," by vast government debt. These policies, the hallmark of Democratic Party liberals and their class-collaborationist backers in the labor movement, result in price hikes that are offloaded onto the working class and their families. These government policies, Barnes said, quoting the words of a Wall Street financial columnist, "willfully cheapen the purchasing power" of workers' wages and "steal human heartbeats."

Communist workers — through SWP election campaigns for a party of labor, through its press, and through its mass work — must answer bourgeois mystifications about "inflation," "monetary policy," and "fiscal policy," Barnes said.

"We explain that the capitalist rulers, their government, and their parties are the cause of high prices. In order to combat the ruinous consequences for the exploited and oppressed in town and country, the unions need to fight for full cost-of-living escalators to protect both wages and government benefits such as Social Security and others."

At the same time, in face of capitalism's accompanying curse of unemployment, the working class and unions must fight for a shorter workweek, *with no cut in pay*. And for a massive, government-

funded program of public works to provide jobs at union-scale wages building housing, schools, hospitals, child care centers, rural development and other things working people need.

Defend constitutional protections

"Defending and extending the freedoms protected by the US Constitution is at the center of the class struggle today," says the opening sentence of the SWP's 2022 political resolution. "Workers and farmers must organize and act to prevent the federal government's assaults on these freedoms, which have been won in class battles over some two and a half centuries."

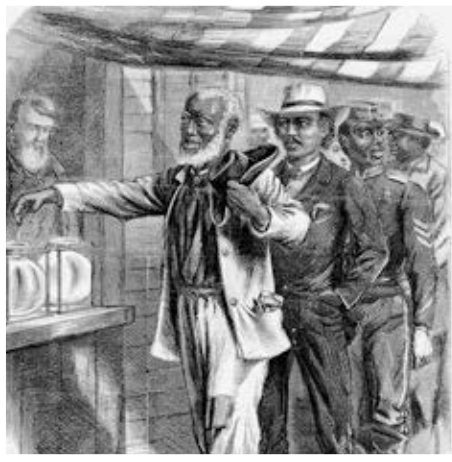
That judgment is truer than ever some two years later, Barnes told conference participants. Democratic Party liberals at federal, state and local levels are pressing to silence, criminalize, prosecute and imprison their political opponents. The biggest immediate target is the Democrats' challenger in the U.S. presidential election, Donald Trump — "a convicted felon," they chant without end — as well as others whom liberals and middle-class radicals seek to tar with the same brush.

"Under conditions of the bourgeois regime," Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky reminded us in 1939, "all suppression of political rights and freedom, no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning, in the end inevitably bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced elements."

"That is a law of history."

The Biden White House and "Justice" Department, along with their backers in city halls and state houses, have unleashed political police raids, handed down indictments and empowered unconstitutional "special prosecutors." All this highlights the stakes for the working class, labor movement and all the oppressed in defending constitutional guardrails that *protect us against* the U.S. imperialist state.

The Constitution's separation of powers between the White House, Congress, and the Supreme Court — an important protection for the working class — is now under fire by the Biden administration and other Democrats. The gunsight is focused first and foremost on the U.S. Supreme Court, with Biden floating proposals to revoke the Constitution's lifetime appointment of justices and impose term limits. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has introduced articles of impeachment in Congress against two of the nine court justices.



The Maryland Historical Society

Six-mile-long march in Baltimore, Maryland, May 19, 1870, celebrates Black men winning right to vote. Inset, drawing of former slaves casting first ballots. The rights and protections guaranteed by U.S. Constitution were won in class battles over two and a half centuries.

In addition, there are expanding attacks on the Constitution's first 10 amendments. Often called the Bill of Rights, they were won by toilers in the wake of the victorious First American Revolution, which defeated British colonial rule and established the world's first modern republic.

Efforts are mounting to roll back First Amendment protections such as "the free exercise" of religion, and the freedom of speech, press and assembly. In recent years, these efforts are increasingly driven from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois left. The First Amendment, say its vilifiers, is being "weaponized." In plain words, Barnes said, they want to make it easier to "cancel" or "shut down" anyone who disagrees with their views on any question central to working-class struggle.

At the same time, he added, conference participants should welcome a May 2024 Supreme Court decision overruling efforts by the state of New York to gag support for the Second Amendment's "right of the people to keep and bear arms." First Amendment rights would be rendered defenseless against suppression, the SWP leader said, without the right to protect ourselves, our unions and other mass organizations from the capitalist rulers' "legal" and "extralegal" violence.

The working-class vanguard has a life-and-death stake in also defending the three constitutional amendments won through the victory of the Second American Revolution — that is, the U.S. Civil War and postwar Radical Reconstruction.

Those three — the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments — were more than simply additions to the Constitution. They changed the entire document — in ways that are of central importance to the toiling classes, Barnes said. The Constitution and Bill of Rights had largely guaranteed only freedoms and protections from the *federal* government, not from *state* or *local* governments. That included decisions concerning the institutions of chattel slavery and bonded labor, as well as the right and qualifications of U.S. citizens to vote, both previously reserved for individual states to determine and enforce.

That changed with the three "Reconstruction Amendments," which ended slavery "within the United States," or any place subject to its jurisdiction (13th); declared that no state shall deprive "any person within its

jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" (14th); and forbade states from denying any citizen voting rights "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (15th).

By codifying these hard-fought rights in a bourgeois constitution — one with the paramount aim of legitimizing and entrenching the dictatorship of capital — those amendments also accomplished something more, Barnes said. Whatever the authors' intentions, those protections against the state serve a political and educational purpose — a purpose very useful to the working class.

"They help expose what class-divided society is all about," Barnes said.

Hamas' Nazi roots and imperialism

During summary presentations the final afternoon, Barnes talked about the book newly published by Pathfinder Press for communist workers to campaign with, *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class* by communist leaders V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Farrell Dobbs, James P. Cannon, Dave Prince, and himself.

The front cover features two photographs that several party speakers focused attention on.

One is a 1943 photo of Nazi storm troopers rounding up Jewish children, women, and men in Warsaw, Poland, for deportation to the Treblinka death camp. Some 7,000 Jews had just been slaughtered in Warsaw, as the Nazis crushed a monthlong uprising in the city's Jewish ghetto, the first major urban revolt in Europe against German imperialist occupation.

The other photo, taken inside Gaza on Oct. 7, 2023, is from a Hamas "bodycam" video of a young Jewish woman brutalized and taken hostage in Israel earlier the same day. That was the day of the single most murderous pogrom since World War II and the Holocaust.

Politically, Barnes said, that's the only cover this book could have had. "The juxtaposition of the two photos tells the truth: that Hamas' roots lie in the organization of the Nazi Holocaust. Jew-hatred wasn't something Hamas tacked on to their reactionary program. It lies at the heart of who they are." Like the Nazis, Hamas is a deadly enemy of Jews the world over, as well as all the exploited and oppressed, including Palestinians.

The cover reminds us that in the imperialist epoch the character and social



German Federal Archives

Amin al-Husseini, a forerunner of Hamas, salutes Bosnian Nazi SS units he organized during World War II to extend Hitler's "Final Solution" to Mideast, Africa. He later led war to block Holocaust survivors from Palestine and destroy newly established Israel as a refuge for Jews.



Wide World Photos

Fidel Castro, speaking at left, in Colon, Cuba, Jan. 7, 1959, week after victory over Batista dictatorship. Cuban leadership won confidence of millions of workers and peasants who were convinced in struggle this was their revolution to make, their socialist revolution. Inset, V.I. Lenin, who led October 1917 Russian Revolution. Marxism, the Bolshevik leader wrote in 1895, teaches working class to be “conscious of itself” and act “as an independent social force.”

weight of Jew-hatred changes. It becomes more virulent and develops a global reach; it’s an integral part of the social convulsions of imperialism.

In face of their own irresolvable crises, sections of the ruling classes seek to divert the anger of the insecure or ruined petty bourgeoisie, as well as small numbers of discouraged workers, away from capitalism as the source of their problems. The rulers point the finger at Jews, promoting Jew-hatred as the banner of international reaction.

They foster declassed lumpen gangs, unleashing thugs against Jews, assaulting other organizations of the oppressed, and mobilizing to destroy trade unions and communist organizations. The “traditional” bourgeois parties, the officer corps, the church hierarchy, businessmen, sections of the Nazi Party itself and many others are targeted. The overall aim is to divide and dehumanize — to make pariahs of sections of working people — thus demoralizing growing numbers of workers seeking to unite and lead a fight to establish working-class rule, as in Russia in 1917 and in Cuba at the opening of the 1960s.

The Jewish question is a national question that cannot be resolved under imperialism. Like other national questions brought to the fore by the death agony of capitalism, including the national aspirations of the Palestinians, it will be resolved only as working people of all religions and ethnic roots across the region join each other in revolutionary struggles to take state power and end capitalist rule.

“It’s incorrect to say Hamas’ roots lie in fascism, since not all fascists end up organizing a Final Solution,” Barnes said. “It was the Nazi Party and Hitler’s imperialist regime that — during the closing years of World War II — decided and carried out that massive effort to annihilate the Jewish people.”

Barnes described the wartime collaboration in Germany between the Nazis and Amin al-Husseini. Al-Husseini was not only a notorious forerunner of Hamas, but the organizer of repeated pogroms in Palestine from 1921 on and chairman of the Arab Higher Committee throughout its 1948 war to liquidate the just-established State of Israel. The new book describes that collaboration in some detail, including the ultimately failed plan by the Nazis and al-Husseini to extend the Final Solution in Europe to the wholesale annihilation of Jews across North Africa and the Middle East.

More than 75 years after the Nazis’ planned Final Solution, the Oct. 7 atrocities announced Hamas’ intention (and that of the bourgeois regime in Tehran) to carry out that aim: Drive the Jews into the sea! Exterminate every one of them!

Stalinism’s glorification of violence

The glorification of Hamas’ butchery by middle-class radicals poses a broader threat to the working class in the United States and worldwide, Barnes emphasized.

Political currents in the U.S. have attacked the homes of Jews and others they associate with Israel, smearing walls and doors with fake blood and inverted red triangles, the symbol used by Hamas death squads to finger their targets. Synagogues have been vandalized and individual Jews harassed and assaulted on the streets, at restaurants and in other public places.

“We’re seeing a return of the thug violence inflicted by similar political forces in the 1960s and 1970s,” Barnes said.

“It had deep roots in Maoist and other Stalinist groups at the time, which cultivated strong-arm youth cults,” he said. They emulated the Red Guards unleashed during the so-called Cultural Revolution in China to humiliate and crush political opponents of cult leader Mao Zedong. Terrorist groups were spawned, such as the Weathermen in the United States, the Red Army Faction in West Germany, Sendero Luminoso in Peru, and the Pol Potists in Kampuchea, all originating among and led by middle-class student youth and professionals.

Barnes recalled the blows dealt to workers’ struggles and union militants in coal mines and other industries in the 1970s by the ultraleft and thugish conduct of Maoist groups such as the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Communist Workers Party. The CWP’s notoriously provocative “Death to the Klan” rally in North Carolina in November 1979 ended in the shooting deaths of five of its members and the wounding of several others. It did real damage to both the fights for Black liberation and defense of constitutional protections.

Barnes also pointed to the sensation at the time among Stalinists and other radicals of the “therapeutic violence” championed by psychiatrist Franz Fanon, whose writings are today being resurrected and cited to rationalize Hamas’ murders and sexual crimes. “Violence is a cleansing force,” wrote Fanon in *The*

Wretched of the Earth. “It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude.”

The conduct of pro-Hamas demonstrators in the United States, United Kingdom, and elsewhere today is a product not of their youthful age, Barnes said. It is an intended consequence of the counterrevolutionary political course of leaders of various Stalinist parties and other historical political currents who attract and train these forces.

This is the opposite of the political course and proletarian morality of the communist leadership of

Cuba’s socialist revolution, led by Fidel Castro. From the origins of the revolutionary struggle in the 1950s, Fidel insisted on the principle that no revolutionary leadership carries out actions “in which innocent people might be killed.”

Nor were enemy prisoners ever murdered, tortured, or left without medical care under Fidel’s leadership and command. “That was a matter of principle, of ethics, in our armed forces, one Fidel strictly demanded from the beginning of the revolutionary struggle,” said José Ramón Fernández, commander of the revolutionary forces that routed the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and later a general of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces and vice president of Cuba.

That principle is what led Fidel in 2008 to publicly condemn the course of the leadership of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia for taking civilians hostage and holding them, sometime for years, under harsh conditions. “These were objectively cruel actions,” Fidel wrote that year. “No revolutionary aim could justify them.”

How can the malignant ultraleftism and worship of violence among those hailing Hamas as national liberation fighters be pushed back and isolated? That will happen, Barnes said, as the class struggle expands and as unions and mass organizations of the oppressed become weightier in the leadership of these political battles. It will happen as the steady hand of the working class and its communist vanguard comes to the fore in revolutionary struggles.

Building proletarian parties today

“The class composition of the party must correspond to its class program,” wrote Leon Trotsky in 1940. After Lenin’s death in early 1924, Trotsky led the worldwide political battle to continue the proletarian internationalist course of the communist movement reversed by the Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Communist International.

Since the mid-1930s, Barnes explained, Trotsky had waged a political effort in the new world movement he had helped launch to win its leaders to make a turn toward party-building mass work in the industrial working class and unions. Most of these parties at their origins were substantially middle class in composition. Trotsky’s primary ally in this political battle was the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party.

SWP cadres in those years had helped lead mass strikes and organizing drives

in Minnesota and across the Midwest that brought hundreds of thousands of workers into the Teamsters union. They had set an example in organizing a union defense guard and mobilizations to combat anti-labor activity by nascent fascist groups. They explained in the unions and beyond the pressing need for a labor party independent of the bosses’ Democratic and Republican parties and of allied formations such as the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota. And they led the political campaign nationwide against the U.S. rulers’ drive to advance their class interests by entering the imperialists’ Second World War.

The Trotsky-led international struggle for a proletarian party reached a crisis point in late 1939, when a petty-bourgeois minority in the SWP National Committee — buckling to patriotic war pressures from the U.S. imperialist rulers — launched an attempt to throw overboard the party’s Marxist program, theoretical foundations and organizational norms. Trotsky advised SWP leaders that the party could politically defeat this fundamental challenge only by leading the entire party cadre and leadership more deeply into the working class and its class organizations. And that’s what they did.

The 1939-40 struggle in the SWP led by Trotsky, and the victory in that fight, Barnes said, are recorded in the book *In Defense of Marxism*, a new edition of which is being prepared by the party leadership to be published later this year.

That programmatic foundation, that struggle for a proletarian party has been led forward ever since. It’s the political course of the generations won to the Socialist Workers Party and its leadership in the 1960s and 1970s under the impact of the Cuban Revolution, the struggle to bring down Jim Crow segregation and the fight to end Washington’s war against the Vietnamese people. It remains the political course of the communist movement in the United States and internationally today.

It’s along that historic line of march, Barnes said, that a tested proletarian party will be forged in class battles, capable of organizing and leading the great working-class majority in the United States in a mass revolutionary movement that will decide which class will rule.

Forging a proletarian party in today’s world



pathfinderpress.com

Tessie Prevost and the battle to desegregate New Orleans schools

BY SAM MANUEL

ATLANTA — Tessie Prevost, one of four 6-year-old girls who faced down violent mobs to desegregate New Orleans schools, died July 6. Sixty-four years ago Prevost, along with Leona Tate and Gail Etienne, were escorted by federal marshals as they climbed the steps to enter the all-white McDonogh 19 school. That same day marshals led a fourth Black child, Ruby Bridges, into William Frantz Elementary School.

The school was named after John McDonogh, a slave owner and trader in the early 1800s, who amassed a great fortune. Living a contradiction, he left half of that fortune to the New Orleans school system, with the proviso that it be used to create schools “wherein the poor (and the poor only) of both sexes of all classes and castes of color shall have admittance.”

The girls’ ages, courage and discipline that day, and in the years that followed, is a window into the mass working-class social revolt that exploded in actions across the South in the late 1950s and early 1960s against all forms of Jim Crow.

Under a strict court order in 1960 the Orleans Parish School Board devised a plan for desegregation. It began with having 136 kindergarten-age Black children tested to see if they could “qualify” to be placed in an all-white school. Five students, all girls, met the exacting criteria. Only four took the challenge.

In several interviews the three girls assigned to McDonogh 19 described what unfolded that day, Nov. 14, 1960. Prevost said she knew something was very different because nobody was going to work. Her father was a postal worker and her mother a seamstress. They gathered for morning prayer before beginning the day.

Federal marshals arrived in a black sedan outside the girls’ homes in the city’s mostly Black Lower Ninth Ward. They escorted them into the school and picked them up at the end of the day. They did so for the next year and a half.

Prevost’s father went with his daughter. “Once we get out of the car,” he instructed the 6 year old, “give me your hand and look straight ahead.” The throng of determined opponents of desegregation massed outside the school spewing racial epithets.

There the family met Tate and Etienne. They were kept waiting for hours outside the principal’s office — for so long that the girls began to play hopscotch in the hallway.

After being taken to their classroom, Etienne recalled trying to talk with one of her classmates. “She didn’t respond. It was like I was invisible.” Some of their classmates later said they’d been told by parents not to play with the Black kids because they would turn Black if they touched.

Then white parents began to arrive and take their kids out of the school. By the end of the day the three girls, their teacher and a few staff were the only ones there. It would remain that way for the next two years.

The windows of their classroom were covered with brown paper from the inside, and the girls were not allowed to take recess outside. They had to bring their own food and water.

One bright spot was their first-grade teacher, Mrs. Meyers. Prevost described her as one of the unsung heroes of the civil rights struggle in New Orleans.



Associated Press

Mob rallies for segregated schools outside McDonogh 19 Elementary in New Orleans Nov. 14, 1960. Federal marshal’s car, right, carries Tessie Prevost, two other courageous Black girls.

“She made us feel safe and comfortable,” Prevost said in a later interview. “I can’t imagine how difficult that time was for her, a white woman raised in New Orleans, teaching Black children.”

Meyers began their formal education.

Campaign of threats

The fight to end segregation in the schools had to be carefully planned by parents and leading civil rights organizations. Tate recalled how her parents worked closely with the NAACP and attended meetings to coordinate with other parents and supporters.

Much was at stake for these parents — their safety, that of their children, their jobs and homes. In a Feb. 22, 2022, documentary “New Orleans School Desegregation: Through a Mother’s Eyes,” Dorothy Prevost recalled the challenges they faced.

For years Charles Prevost relied on a white co-worker for a ride to work. The day after the news broke that his daughter was desegregating the all-white school he no longer had a ride.

Dorothy Prevost also recalled that risks were involved in all their everyday tasks. “The marshals were always outside the house.” When people came to visit, they had to come inside. The children couldn’t play outside.

They received hate mail. Packages came containing rats, roaches and animal manure.

Dorothy Prevost recalled how one of the Caucasian families who decided to

continue to send their children to the school was hounded by the segregationists until they left the state.

New challenges

Things would get worse for the three girls as they entered third grade. They were transferred to T.J. Semmes school, where racist forces had decided to make a stand.

There were no more marshals, cameras or reporters. The three were the targets of daily acts of violence sanctioned by teachers and school administrators. Tessie Prevost said it was the “worst time in my life.” Students hit them, ripped their clothes and spit on them. Tate was hit in the stomach with a bat and no one did anything about it.

Tessie Prevost recalled one man holding her after she got off the school bus and ordering his daughter to hit her. Prevost, who was big for her age, started to fight back, often getting the better of her attackers. Dorothy Prevost was repeatedly called to come down to the school office. “It wouldn’t be for anything Tessie did.” She advised her daughter to grab the foot of one boy who continuously tried to kick her. “After that he stopped,” she said with a smile.

After the sixth grade Charles Prevost agreed to his daughter’s request to leave the school to attend a majority Black school.

After the Supreme Court ruled that school segregation was unconstitutional in 1954, it took a decadeslong fight by

Blacks and co-fighters of all skin colors to build a social movement in the North and South to take down Jim Crow.

A number of initial skirmishes were lost. In 1956 a court order was won forcing the University of Alabama to admit Autherine Lucy, its first Black student. Segregationists rioted in response. Lucy was suspended and then expelled for “criticizing” the university.

That same year the Virginia legislature called for “massive resistance” to school desegregation orders.

In 1959 Prince Edward County, Virginia, officials closed *all* public schools rather than desegregate them.

As the fight against Jim Crow spread, victories were won. In 1962 the University of Mississippi was forced to admit Black student James Meredith, despite the fact his arrival on campus was met by a racist riot of 2,000.

And in 1963 Democratic Gov. George Wallace stood in the doorway in a failed attempt to block two Black students from registering to attend the University of Alabama.

The courage of these students, their parents and supporters can never be forgotten. A historic change in social relations was being wrought. It changed the working class in the U.S. forever.

History for future fights

McDonogh 19 was closed in 2005. That year Hurricane Katrina devastated the Lower Ninth Ward. The families of the three girls who shattered segregation there all lost their homes.

In 2009 Leona Tate and some supporters organized to purchase the building. She noted that not even the members of the school board were aware of the historic significance of the school. “It was like what happened had just been forgotten.”

The building was repaired and reopened in 2022 as the TEP Center, the name used the initials of the three girls. Today it is a multiuse and educational center to preserve the story of the fight to desegregate New Orleans schools.

“I just think that if we just keep telling these stories, they won’t die,” Tate said to a group of visitors. “Our older generation is dying off now. And we have to get these stories told by these younger people. They have to realize they’re going to pick up this torch and keep going with it.”

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Solidarity with Canadian rail workers! No to government intervention!

A battle with big stakes for all working people and the labor movement is unfolding in Canada. Almost 10,000 rail workers at Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City have walked out or been locked out in a fight against the bosses' demands for concessions that endanger workers' lives and threaten the safety of others who live near rail tracks.

Like employers everywhere, rail bosses are pushing to do more with fewer workers. They're demanding fewer hours' rest between shifts and they want to be able to order workers to take jobs hundreds of miles from home for months at a time to avoid more hiring. They want to extend the workday for workers west of Ontario. Their demands can only worsen conditions that have led to deaths and serious injuries for scores of workers.

The big boss associations, led by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, are demanding the federal government in Ottawa "take immediate action to ensure the continuation of rail services," like barring strike action and ordering binding arbitration.

When workers strike, bosses turn to their business associations, their news media, their political parties and their government. They all turn to protect the interests of their class.

Workers should respond as a class — by defending each other and acting on the fact that an injury to one is an injury to all. Let the rail workers know

they don't fight alone. Spread the word! Win support from your union, friends and co-workers, and build their picket lines. Messages of support and contributions to union strike funds can help build workers' confidence and make a vital difference to the strike's outcome. Reach out to win support from other producers, especially small farmers, who are squeezed relentlessly by the big capitalists.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has refused to rule out intervention. Trudeau is no stranger to wielding state power on behalf of the bosses against working people. He invoked the Emergencies Act to try to crush protests by truck drivers defending their livelihoods in 2022 and has brought frame-up cases against their leaders.

It's vital that unions demand the government keep out! When the government talks about defending the "national interest," it means the bosses' profits.

Working-class solidarity is a mighty weapon. A victory for the rail workers can set an example for all other workers to build on. It will deepen class consciousness and solidarity.

As workers organize to join each other's struggles, we unify our forces, strengthen our resolve and grow in confidence. We also come to recognize the fact that every class struggle is a political struggle. Workers need a party of our own, a party of labor.

Rising prices wreak havoc with workers' lives

Continued from front page
prices jumped nearly 11%.

"Inflation Hurts Most for the Things We Can't Skimp On" an Aug. 12 *Wall Street Journal* article admitted. It noted, "Shoppers might be able to trade down from prime steak to cheaper cuts of meat at the supermarket, but they can't really do the same thing with the water bill."

In July alone, beef prices rose 8% and fresh fruit prices jumped 10%. Over the past three and a half years, grocery prices are up 22%, electricity rose 32%, car insurance is up nearly 40%, and gasoline, 50%. Over this same period, workers' average wages have declined 3.9%.

The Labor Department said Aug. 21 that job openings for the past year ending in March were actually 818,000 less than the government had reported. The Biden administration had tried to disguise the depth of job losses.

In response to the squeeze on living standards, many workers are turning to their unions to fight for better wages and conditions. And more working people are looking for a political alternative to the bosses' two main parties.

Neither Kamala Harris nor Donald Trump offer any answers to the capitalist economic crisis. In Raleigh, North Carolina, Aug. 16 Harris presented her "strategically vague economic message" that's "light on detail," as the *New York Times* described it.

Among her proposals are tax breaks for the wealthy owners of construction companies to press them to build more housing, and government deals with pharmaceutical companies to lower sky-high prices.

On Aug. 15 Harris showed what a government deal to ameliorate high drug prices would be like, joining with Joseph Biden to hail a deal with pharmaceutical companies. It didn't offer anything in the way of affordable prescriptions.

The deal affects 10 drugs, including for cancer, diabetes and blood clots. For a month's supply, Embrel, an arthritis drug, will cost \$2,355, down from \$7,402; Imbruvica, a blood-cancer drug, \$9,319, down from \$16,391; and Eliquis, a blood thinner, will cost \$231, down from \$594. None of these changes take effect until 2026. And at that point many of them will become available as generics.

According to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 20% of U.S. households owed medical debts in 2022, totaling \$88 billion. Much of this gets compounded by annual interest rates of over 20% charged

by banks on unpaid credit card balances, tightening the squeeze on workers. This forces many into deeper debt and harassment by collection agencies.

Families are also paying higher costs for child care, which rose 6.4% over the past two years. In some cases workers face bills as high as their rent payments. The median price to put an infant in center-based care in 2022 was over \$1,400 a month in major metropolitan areas, according to the Labor Department.

Squeeze on Social Security recipients

Millions of older workers are increasingly dependent on Social Security payments, but with rising costs for food, rent and medical care they're finding it more difficult to get by. Some 40% rely on Social Security for half or more of their income, according to AARP.

For next year estimates are that the cost-of-living adjustment on Social Security will be just 2.6%, the average for the past 20 years. This is below the government's inflation figures, imposing a cut in payments that millions depend upon to make it each month. On top of that, out of this meager increase, even higher amounts are automatically deducted to cover increased Medicare premiums.

It's also becoming harder for workers to get decent full-time jobs. Hiring by bosses in a number of categories — from retail workers and airport cleaners to industrial workers — is beginning to slow. A number of companies have been conducting what the *Times* describes as a "big silent layoff" by shrinking workforces through attrition and hiring fewer workers in a drive for profits.

Direct layoffs are also on the rise. Stellantis announced Aug. 9 the layoff of 2,450 autoworkers at its Ram truck plant in Warren, Michigan, beginning Oct. 8. John Deere, the world's largest manufacturer of farm equipment, has cut 2,100 production jobs since November, 15% of its workforce. Thermon, a manufacturing and services firm in Austin, Texas, has cut 5% of its workforce in the past two years.

Spirit Airlines has stopped recruiting flight attendants, who have been protesting lousy pay and work schedules. The company is now asking some of them to take voluntary unpaid leaves of absence to cut costs. The airline is also furloughing about 240 pilots. Other job cuts announced earlier this year include 12,000 at UPS, about 3,000 at Xerox, and 2,350 at Macy's. Continually higher costs and now layoffs highlight the need for a union-led fight to combat the twin scourges of joblessness and rising prices.

'Militant' prison ban

Continued from front page

attorney David Goldstein Aug. 21. "I have set the Publisher's Appeal and all of the associated letters of support to be reviewed at the next meeting on August 29, 2024."

No reason was given why the ban was upheld.

"This fight has stakes beyond just the *Militant*. The impoundment violates prisoners' constitutional rights to read political literature of their choice and the right of the *Militant* and other publications to reach their subscribers behind bars," said *Militant* editor John Studer.

"Now is the time to step up the fight to get the ban reversed. Dozens of letters have been sent. More are needed to speak out against this blatant attack on prisoners' constitutional rights. Help spread the word," he said.

The confiscated issue contained an article reprinting the opening chapter of Pathfinder's latest book, entitled *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*.

Prison authorities expressed objections to a photo there that shows the body of a Jewish man murdered by Hamas during its Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel being driven around Gaza City to cheers by Islamist thugs and their supporters.

Jackson Correctional Institution officials wrote, "Picture shows dead person being paraded around on a motorcycle. Magazine depict hatred toward a specific race." They then claimed the photo and the newspaper itself are "dangerously inflammatory," encouraging "riot, insurrection, rebellion" and "organized prison protest."

"It is worth noting that the photo in question," David Lefrancois, a professor at the University of Quebec, wrote to the Literature Review Committee, "is in no way intended to promote hate speech or racial prejudice. To understand the meaning of the photo, it is imperative to consider its historical and geographical context, which is well explained in the article."

"Like other observers throughout the USA, Canada and elsewhere," he said, "I appeal to you to resolve the matter as soon as possible by ensuring respect for the rule of law and constitutional rights."

Upon learning of the impoundment in mid-May, *Militant* attorney David Goldstein appealed. After two months of silence, the Literature Review Committee wrote him it would review the ban July 18. It took another month before the *Militant* was informed of the committee's ruling.

Since 2013 Florida prison officials have tried to suppress issues of the *Militant* nearly 50 times. The paper challenges every ban and has won the vast majority.

From the Florida American Civil Liberties Union to the Florida Press Association, Amnesty International USA, to a number of prisoners in Florida, numerous organizations and individuals have sent letters urging the committee to overturn the ban. Join them!

Fight prison ban on the 'Militant'

The following are among the dozens of people and organizations that have sent statements calling on Florida prison officials to lift the ban on *Militant* issue no. 17

Amnesty International USA
American Civil Liberties Union - Florida
ACLU - National Prison Project
Florida Press Association
PEN America
Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press
Southern Center for Human Rights
David Menefee, Secretary Treasurer
BCTGM Local 111
Mark Lee and Earl Farris, BCTGM Local 57

Get letters of support from unions, churches and defenders of workers rights and free speech. Send to Literature Review Committee, Florida Department of Corrections, 501 South Calhoun Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399, or email to Saritza.Legault@fdc.myflorida.com, with copies to themilitant@mac.com

Send a check to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, earmarked "Prisoners Rights Fight."