

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
**Democrats attack Constitution,
 weaken checks on gov't power**
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

Defend Ukraine independence! Anti-war views spread in Russia

BY ROY LANDERSEN

A month after Ukrainian forces drove into the Kursk region of Russia Aug. 6, opposition to the war is growing among Russian conscripts and their families. The Ukrainian offensive is aimed at dealing blows to Moscow's invasion led by Russian President Vladimir Putin that aims to wipe out Ukraine's independence and conquer its people.

Unlike Ukrainian working people volunteering to fight to defend their country's sovereignty, there is little patriotic fervor among working people in Kursk.

When Kyiv's forces swept across the lightly protected Kursk border, they overpowered Russian conscript soldiers there. Hundreds surrendered and were taken as prisoners of war.

The Ukrainian government allowed the Moscow Times to interview several captive Russian conscripts, whose names were withheld for their protection. All wanted to return home, but said their experiences have led them to see through the lies Moscow tells about its invasion.

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Rail workers battle combined forces of bosses, Canadian gov't

BY JOHN STEELE AND BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — “We haven't seen a class confrontation in Canada on this scale in decades,” Philippe Tessier, a Canadian National rail conductor and Teamster union strike picket captain, told a Militant Labor Forum here Aug. 24. In the final analysis, “every class struggle is a political struggle,” he said, something made especially clear by the federal government's move to intervene in support of the rail bosses.

The forum was organized in solidarity with rail workers at Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific Kansas City in their fight for safety and the right to strike. The meeting took place just after the Canada Industrial Relations Board, on the demand of Ottawa's Liberal Party government, ordered the country's 10,000 freight rail workers back to work, imposing binding arbitration.

“Thank you for holding this meeting,” Canadian National conductor Sebastian Santamaria said during the discussion period. Some 30 people took part, including four CN rail workers. “The rail-

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— Endorse the Socialist Workers Party ticket of Rachele Fruit and Dennis Richter —

‘The working class needs its own party, a party of labor’



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, speaks at public meeting in London Aug. 24, organized by Communist League, at end of her weeklong visit to the U.K.

Rachele Fruit: ‘Workers in the US, UK face common enemy’

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, ended her weeklong visit to the U.K. at a public meeting here Aug. 24, organized by the Communist League's London branch. Fruit had visited Coventry the day before to meet Amazon warehouse workers and learn about their fight for a union.

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Dennis Richter: ‘Back fights by truckers, all workers!’

BY JACOB PERASSO

FORT WORTH, Texas — “We need to build a party of labor for all of us workers,” Dennis Richter, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, told truck driver Patrick Edgar Brooks at the Pilot truck stop here Aug. 28, part of a three-day campaign tour in the area. Truckers Richter met described protests that

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Workers at national hotel chains on rolling strikes, rally across the US



Militant/Eric Simpson

Hotel workers march outside Marriott hotel in San Francisco Sept. 2 during three-day strike. Some 15,000 workers are demanding higher wages, hiring more workers at largest hotel chains.

BY ERIC SIMPSON

SAN FRANCISCO — More than 2,000 hotel workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 2, went on a three-day strike here Sept. 1, part of a nationwide fight against moves by hotel chains Marriott, Hyatt and Hilton to increase workloads while cutting schedules, as well as raise workers' cost for health care.

The union reports that 25 hotels in six states, from Maryland to Hawaii, went on rolling strikes over the Labor Day weekend, with over 10,000 workers involved — almost half in Hawaii alone. Another 5,000 union members nationwide so far have voted to authorize strikes.

Workers at five hotels here mounted

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Defend Israel as a refuge against Jew-hatred and pogroms today

BY SETH GALINSKY

The cold-blooded murder of six Israeli hostages by Hamas in late August is further proof that defeating the Tehran-backed group and demolishing its command structure is essential for

defending Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews. And for opening space for Jewish, Arab and other working people to come together and find a way forward to defend their class interests against the capitalist rulers and their governments in the region.

While expressing “outrage” at Hamas for the executions, President Joseph Biden and the liberal bourgeois media charged that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was “not doing enough” to end his assault. They want

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Monthslong fight continues to end Florida prison ban on ‘Militant’ issue

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The four-months-long fight continues to end the ban on *Militant* issue no. 17, imposed by prison authorities at Jackson Correctional Institution in Malone, Florida, at the end of April.

The Florida Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee upheld the impoundment at its July 18 meeting, but gave no reason for maintaining the ban. Library Services Ad-

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United flight attendants picket, demand new contract

Democrats attack Constitution, weaken checks on gov't power

BY TERRY EVANS

President Joseph Biden announced proposals July 29 to gut the power of the U.S. Supreme Court and muzzle its justices in an attack on the constitutionally mandated role of the judiciary. Days later, Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer deepened the Democrats' attack.

These moves come alongside growing calls in the liberal press to scrap the Constitution altogether, along with its protections against government interference in political activity, including struggles of importance to the working class.

Democrats are furious at many of the court's recent rulings, including the 2022 decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*. This decision properly returned the needed debate over abortion rights to the states and the people.

They were also furious with the Supreme Court ruling that overturned Biden's use of an executive order to cancel student debt, a transparent move to muffle majority opposition in Congress. And they opposed this year's court ruling curtailing broad powers that Democratic presidents have granted to unelected federal regulatory agencies. The ruling reasserted that courts no longer have to defer to "experts" running these bureaucracies.

Like their ruling on student debt, this decision is a blow to the tendency under capitalist rule in the U.S. toward greater concentration of government powers in the hands of the president.

Democrats have also railed at recent Supreme Court rulings defending the

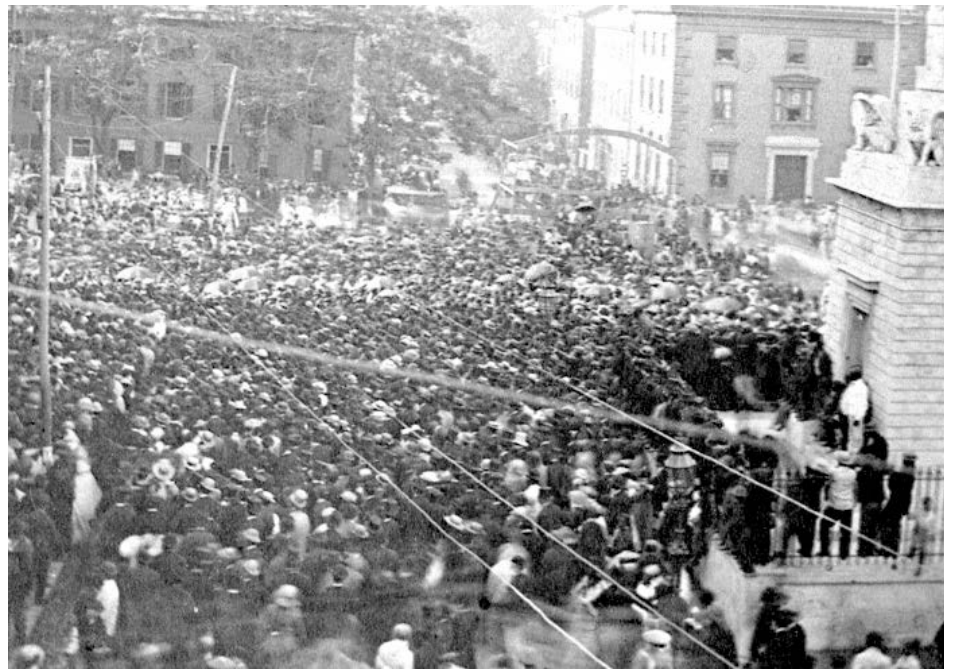
Constitution's protection of the free exercise of religion, including the reversal of discriminatory restrictions state officials imposed on the size of religious services during COVID lockdowns, while such restrictions weren't placed on casinos.

And they were incensed when the court ruled Donald Trump had a measure of immunity from prosecution in cases where actions he had taken were done in his official capacity as president. This was a blow to their seven-year drive to either impeach or use the courts to jail Trump and prevent him from running again.

The attacks pushed by Biden and Schumer would transform the Supreme Court from the apex of an independent judiciary into a body subordinate to Congress. This would breach the separation of powers the Constitution enumerates between the three branches of government — the legislature, the presidency and the Supreme Court.

Biden wants Congress to impose an 18-year term limit on Supreme Court justices. Ever since the adoption of the Constitution, all federal judges hold their seats for life. Despite numerous sharp conflicts between previous administrations and the Supreme Court, no president until now has ever sought to impose a term limit on the justices. The Constitution says they have a lifetime appointment.

If the Democrats had their way, the proposed term limits would push the three longest-serving justices off the Court — Chief Justice John Roberts



The Maryland Historical Society

March in Baltimore in 1870 celebrates passage of 15th Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing Black men the right to vote. Partisan measures proposed by liberal Democrats today would undermine constitutional freedoms, restrictions on power of the capitalist rulers.

and Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas. All three have backed rulings that Democrats fiercely oppose.

Assault on basic freedoms

For months the liberal media has targeted Clarence Thomas, charging him with accepting too many gifts and other moral improprieties. They demanded he step down from some cases, blaming him for his wife's political activity.

Biden, Kamala Harris — who has replaced him on the Democrats' ticket — and congressional Democrats are pushing to impose a so-called ethics code on the justices. And they're pushing for a constitutional amendment that would overturn the Supreme Court's decision on presidential immunity.

In a striking denial of basic constitutional rights, Schumer announced a bill called the "No Kings Act." It would bar any president convicted of a crime from being able to appeal the conviction up to the Supreme Court. They would be limited to appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in Washington, D.C. Schumer hopes compliant judges there will make rulings more to Democrats' liking, especially their attempts to imprison Trump.

These proposals are also aimed at promoting the Democrats' main 2024 campaign plank — that Trump is a deadly threat to "democracy." But they are the ones conducting an assault on constitutional freedoms.

In recent weeks a number of liberal commentators have called for out-and-out junking of the Constitution. Jennifer Szalai argues in the *New York Times* Aug. 31 that "what ails the country's politics isn't simply the president, or Congress, or the Supreme Court, but the founding document." She says, "Trump owes his political ascent to the Constitution."

"The Constitution is Broken and Should Not Be Reclaimed," headlines an Aug. 19 *Times* article by Harvard and Yale professors Ryan Doerfler and Samuel Moyn. Congress "openly defying the Constitution" is the way forward, they say, to "insulate the law from judicial review," obliterating any constitutional check on what the rulers can do.

The Constitution and its enumerated rights, protections and separation of powers were won in the course of revolutionary battles by the toiling population. After the victory of the North in the Second American Revolution abolished slavery, the 13th, 14th and 15th "Reconstruction" amendments further strengthened and extended these protections to *all*.

These freedoms are used whenever workers use unions and fight for our own class interests. Defending them is crucial on the road to working people overthrowing capitalist exploitation and oppression and taking political power into our own hands.

THE MILITANT

Crisis in Puerto Rico result of US colonial rule

Hundreds of thousands lost power after tropical storm Ernesto hit Puerto Rico Aug. 14, adding to rising blackouts since government privatized the system. These companies "don't care if people have lights or not, all they care about is their profits," a union leader told the 'Militant.'



Jornada Se Acabaron Las Promesas
July 3 march in San Juan protests privatization of electrical system, rise in blackouts.

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

UAW strikes Monogram Aerospace on wages, health care

COMMERCE, Calif. — “The rents went up, the groceries went up and they don’t see that. They say that with the money they give us we can survive, but we can’t,” said Arturo Morales on the strike picket line at Monogram Aerospace Fasteners here Aug. 14. “I don’t think that’s fair. Ever since the strike we’ve been more together.”

The monthlong strike by nearly 300 United Auto Workers Local 509 members halted production of airplane parts for Boeing and Airbus. Workers are fighting for a three-year contract, a wage increase of more than the 2% offered by the bosses, and against increased health care premiums, which already take a significant portion of their pay.

Workers also carry signs saying “No to Article 21!” “This article gives the company total control to organize and change labor grades whenever they want,” Eusedio Sosa, who has worked at Monogram for 12 years, told the *Militant*. The bosses recently changed or eliminated job descriptions and cut workers’ pay. “We just want our fair share and they just want to give us lower wages.”

The strike is solid with spirited picketing. Lots of workers come by bringing solidarity and contributions of food.

“We are asking for free medical, dental and vision, and for modifying or removing Article 21,” machine operator Jorge Almeida said. “It’s not fair the company makes millions of dollars, and we earn very little of what they make.”

— Bernie Senter

United flight attendants picket, demand new contract

CHICAGO — Over 200 United Airlines flight attendants and their supporters picketed at O’Hare International Airport here Aug. 28, demanding a new contract. Similar actions took place the same day at some 20 other airports. Chants included “What do we want? Contract! When do we want it? Now!”

“This is the three-year anniversary of when the amendable contract came up,” Scott Pejas, president of Association of Flight Attendants-CWA in Chicago, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent. This is federal-government-speak for when the union could begin negotiations for a new contract under the anti-union Railway Labor Act, which ties up flight attendants in red tape and delays.

“That means we have gotten no pay increases for three years,” Pejas said. “Look at how prices have increased in the same period. During the pandemic we were furloughed and now with record company profits United Airlines wants more concessions. Negotiations are proceeding at a snail’s pace.”

The union is fighting for double-digit pay raises, more flexible schedules and pay for all time they are working.

The same day as the pickets, the union announced its members nationwide voted by 99.99% to authorize a strike.

— Dan Fein

Airport refuelers strike for pay, more hours in Australia

SYDNEY — “What’s outrageous? Airport wages!” chanted 20 plane refuelers as they walked off the job in a four-hour strike at Ampol Aviation at the airport here Aug. 23. Night and afternoon shift workers also stopped work.

The workers “have only had a 3.5%

pay increase over the last three years,” Richard Olsen, New South Wales/Queensland state secretary for the Transport Workers Union, told a press conference attended by the striking workers, “while the cost of living keeps going up.” They are among the lowest paid in the industry.

The workers are also fighting for better part-time hours and more full-time positions. Only 24 out of the 68 workers are full time. Ampol, a major petroleum company here, recorded an annual profit of 1.7 billion Australian dollars (\$1.15 billion) in the 2023 financial year.

The union met with the company 15 times over the past six months, Olsen said, but Ampol has refused to budge. This is the first time the workers have taken strike action.

— Janet Roth

CFMEU workers strike against Etex bosses’ attacks in Sydney

SYDNEY — Striking workers on the picket line at Etex in Matraville in eastern Sydney told the *Militant* Aug. 30 they had voted overwhelmingly to reject the company’s new contract offer. The workers, members of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union, had been picketing since Aug. 12, alongside electricians at the plant, in the Electrical Trades Union.

Firdous Hameed, one of the CFMEU delegates at Etex, had told this reporter during an earlier visit to the picket line the company wanted “to get rid of the union.” They work in four crews of seven doing 12-hour shifts processing raw gypsum into a powder to make plasterboard. They have a union delegate on each crew, and another in the warehouse. Without the union “it won’t be safe,” he said. Recently workers had suffered three serious hand injuries, all on the night shift.

The company was pushing a two-year deal with wage increases of 4.5% and 4%, Hameed said, while workers want

Canada rail workers battle both bosses and government

Continued from front page

way bosses make billions in profits with our work. I agree with you that working people need our own labor party.”

The two other panelists were Naomi Craine, a freight rail conductor in Chicago and member of the SMART-TD union, the largest rail union in the U.S., and Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress from Illinois, as well as Michel Prairie speaking for the Communist League.

“Rail workers in the U.S. have similar safety issues as workers in Canada,” Craine said. She pointed to the recent death of a young conductor in Chicago who had just completed his training. “Two years ago, President Joseph Biden led a nonpartisan majority of Democrats and Republicans to bar rail workers from striking, saying it would damage the economy.”

Prairie pointed to the example of 55,000 Ontario union education workers who used their union power in 2022 to take on an attack by the bosses. They went on strike despite the provincial government declaring the labor action illegal. The workers won backing of the entire labor movement and made significant gains. Ontario’s Progressive Conservative government was forced to repeal the law banning their right to strike.

US Labor Day actions marked by union battles



Militant/Betsy Farley

Labor Day actions across the country were marked by strikes by 10,000 UNITE HERE hotel workers, 17,000 AT&T workers and other union fights.

Hundreds joined the Labor Day parade in Detroit Sept. 2, above, including contingents from several locals of the United Auto Workers. “We gained ground with the Big Three strike last year, but we’re still fighting,” autoworker Dave Sandoval told the *Militant*. Sandoval works at the Stellantis assembly plant in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

He described ongoing safety and supply problems. On Aug. 21, 53-year-old Antonio Gaston was crushed to death at the Stellantis Jeep plant in Toledo, Ohio. And the company announced in August they would not reopen the assembly plant in Belvidere, Illinois, in 2024. The bosses had promised to do so to help settle the recent contract fight. “My 21 years of experience with this company tells me we’re going to have to go on strike again,” Sandoval said.

Fairfax, Virginia, school staff — teachers, custodians, bus drivers and food workers — were honorees at the Northern Virginia AFL-CIO Labor Day picnic in Alexandria Sept. 1. Some 27,000 workers voted overwhelmingly to join the Fairfax Education Association after getting state officials to concede public workers had the right to organize for the first time in over four decades. “We need to get more money and better benefits. We need the union, because it takes all of the workers together,” teacher Emily Van Derhoff told the *Militant*.

Communications Workers of America members on strike against AT&T in the Southeast joined the Labor Day Celebration in Atlanta. The Association of Flight Attendants had a table, garnering support for the Delta flight attendants’ union-organizing campaign and for flight attendants’ fight for a decent contract at United Airlines.

— BETSY FARLEY, SARAH ULLMAN AND JANICE LYNN

a 6% increase each year for three years to offset the effects of high prices. They also want a “clarification on manning levels.” They currently work on skeleton crews, with workers called in from other shifts on overtime to cover absences.

The Etex strikers also joined thousands of workers protesting in the downtown business district here Aug. 27 over government moves to take over their union.

— Robert Aiken

This is an important example, he said.

“Look at the power of the rail workers in this fight,” bakery union member Katy LeRougetel said during the discussion. “We begin to gain confidence and class consciousness we need to organize and change society through our experiences on the picket line.” LeRougetel is the Communist League candidate in the Sept. 16 Montreal federal by-election. Forum participants donated 223 Canadian dollars (\$165) to her campaign.

The Teamster rail workers received widespread working-class support, across Canada and the U.S. “There is growing frustration among workers due to rising cost of living, economic inequities and lack of safety on the job,” said Lana Payne, national president of the Unifor union. Unifor is the largest private-sector union in Canada, with 315,000 members.

Union leaders representing dockworkers in Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax told reporters here Aug. 29 they are ready to mobilize against Ottawa if the government interferes in their industry the way it did in the railway lockouts.

“The decision sets a dangerous precedent for future labour disputes and sends a signal to Canadian companies that when negotiations get tough, the

federal government will always come to their rescue to help them trample on their employees’ rights,” they said in a joint press release Aug. 28.

Three years ago, Montreal’s 1,150 longshoremen went on strike, causing the port, one of the busiest in Canada, to shut down. They were ordered back to work and forced to accept binding arbitration when the House of Commons passed an anti-strike law a few days after the start of the walkout.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has defended his government’s move to demand the Canada Industrial Relations Board impose binding arbitration and force an end to the rail strike. During an Aug. 28 speech to a meeting of the International Union of Operating Engineers in Winnipeg, Trudeau extolled his government’s track record on labor law and claimed the call for binding arbitration at the two railroads was made out of necessity, and “reluctantly.”

The Teamsters Canada Rail Conference filed a court motion seeking to quash the industrial relations board ruling ordering them back to work, saying the order infringed on the railway workers’ “associational rights guaranteed under section 2(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.”

Workers are looking for a way to fight.

Richter: Back fights by truckers

Continued from front page

fellow drivers held recently against conditions on the U.S.-Mexico border, where they're forced to wait in their trucks for hours unpaid and without bathrooms.

"A labor party would be based on the unions, with the 14 million workers in this country who are organized, but needs to include the many millions more who are not in unions, like independent truckers," he said.

Brooks told Richter that he and his wife are concerned that they will not be able to provide what their children need due to persistently high prices and their job options. Richter pointed to the need for a union-led fight for jobs with wages, schedules and conditions that make it possible for workers to sustain families.

He also spoke to Shawnta Hamerter, a driver from San Antonio.

"The last time I voted was for Obama," Hamerter said. "He did nothing for us. They always say they will do things for us but they never do. We need to break from the entire government. We keep the country going."

"Workers produce the wealth and we get wages that are not enough to survive on," Richter said.

"The company I work for gave us a 4% wage increase but took it away by increasing other things we pay for. What can we do?" Hamerter asked.

"A lot of workers think it is just me and feel powerless," Richter replied. "A party of labor would unify working people into a social movement to fight in our interests."

"I have never qualified for assistance," Hamerter added, "but yet they send billions to other countries."

"What the government does abroad is to maintain the interests and profits of the capitalists," Richter said, pointing to the need for the working class to advance its own foreign policy based on workers' common class interests worldwide.

"They do to them as they do to us," Hamerter said. She got a subscription to the *Militant* and endorsed the SWP presidential ticket.

Richter recently returned from campaigning in Australia. When he spoke at an area-wide meeting here Aug. 24, he explained that working people in that country follow what is happening in the U.S. because of the role the

rulers here play in the world. He noted that Washington has the world's biggest military, including tens of thousands of soldiers stationed in Asia.

Richter described how the Republican and Democratic parties have taken steps to refurbish their image. The Democrats now increasingly base themselves on the millions-strong upper middle class, a self-designated "enlightened meritocracy." Meanwhile, "the Republican Party is trying to set itself up as the party of the working class," he said. More and more workers question whether either of the two main bosses' parties have anything to offer other than assaults on living standards, high prices and more wars.

"Every class struggle is a political struggle," Richter said. "This understanding is what workers in the U.S. are finding out in their own lives and battles."

"And every political question we face in this campaign needs a class answer," he added.

He described the picket lines of striking nurses that SWP campaign supporters have joined in many states, and also in Australia where he campaigned alongside members of the Communist League.

The SWP candidate pointed to the tens of thousands of workers in North America — IAM mechanics at Boeing, dockworkers, hotel and postal workers — in crucial contract fights, preparing to, or already on strike. Solidarity with these fights is crucial, he said, alongside support for rail workers in Canada who went on strike recently and are fighting both the bosses and the government over schedules and safety.

"The working class and our unions had been in retreat since the 1990s. But this retreat has come to an end," Richter said, pointing to strikes and other battles waged by the unions in the last five years.

Example set by Cuban Revolution

A participant at the meeting asked why some commentators were comparing protests at the recent Democratic National Convention with those that took place there in 1968. "The anti-Vietnam War movement was different than what is happening today," Richter said. "That movement targeted Washington's imperialist assault and it built on the victories being won



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Dennis Richter, SWP vice presidential candidate, discusses truckers' fight for better conditions with Shawnta Hamerter, a truck driver, at truck stop in Fort Worth, Texas, Aug. 26.

by the civil rights movement that overturned Jim Crow segregation." Those protesting at the DNC today, he said, are supporters of Hamas, a reactionary anti-working-class outfit.

Richter noted that there were political currents in the 1960s that didn't look to the working class, particularly Maoist currents. They influence the pro-Hamas actions today. These middle-class radicals "look to violence and ultra-left actions. They look at the masses as objects, the opposite of the course advanced by V.I. Lenin and Fidel Castro," the central

leaders respectively, of the Russian and Cuban revolutions.

Richter pointed to remarks by Asela de los Santos, a leader of the Cuban Revolution, when she was asked to summarize the Cuban Revolution in one word. She said, "participation."

Organizing solidarity and deepening involvement in the class struggle today opens the door to advancing workers' self-confidence, fighting capacities and class consciousness. That's the course the SWP presents as the only road to advance the fight for workers to take power into our own hands.

Fruit discusses road forward for women's emancipation with workers at Chicago Labor Day celebration

During a four-day campaign visit to the Chicago area, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Rachele Fruit joined the Labor Day parade and festival organized by the Chicago Federation of Labor in the historic Pullman district of Chicago Aug. 31. Her campaign set up a large literature table of the Socialist Workers Party, meeting scores of fellow workers. Fruit is a hotel worker and member of UNITE HERE.

Alona Smooth, a medical records worker and member of SEIU Local 73, told Fruit, "During the pandemic my eyes were really opened up to how little the politicians cared about us. If they ever do anything, it is never exactly what we need. The amount of work and low pay was more than many people in the health care industry could take and they left. The union fought for pay raises before and after COVID. We have to keep organizing."

"As part of the labor movement's fight for the interests of the working class, our campaign defends women's right to reproductive and maternal health care, sex education that is not gender indoctrination, access to the safest and most reliable contraceptive methods and safe and legal abortion procedures," Fruit said. "Workers need our own party, a party of labor, to lead a fight for universal child care and medical care as part of the fight for jobs, wages and cost-of-living protections. This is the road to advancing the fight for women's emancipation."

— ILONA GERSH

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Workers face common enemy

Continued from front page

“Everywhere I’ve campaigned, I’ve had similar experiences,” she told the meeting. “It’s a reflection of a new mood within the working class.

“I went to the refuse depot in Redbridge, east London, where I spoke with Unite members who were due to strike. They told me they’d just voted to accept a new offer of improved sick pay, reduced hours, paid overtime and a commitment to maintain their trucks — a key demand to reverse speedup and the erosion of safety.

“As workers find ways to resist, they’re bumping into the reality that to be successful, they have to address politics,” Fruit said. “Rival capitalist parties — Democrat and Republican in the U.S., Labour and Conservative in the U.K. — are responding to the crisis of their system in the only way they know, by making working people pay.

“We’re finding openness to the need for a political break, the need to forge a party of labor that charts a course of independent working-class political action in both domestic and foreign policy.

“Growing numbers of workers sense that capitalist governments have no solutions to the crisis faced by millions of working people, let alone to the wars and breakdowns threatening humanity,” she said. “My campaign explains that these crises are produced by the workings of capitalism. We act on the working-class line of march toward workers power.”

Such a course involves seeing that the working class is an international class, Fruit said. “We have to counter the efforts of the employers and their parties to get us to think of exploited producers in other countries as enemies.” She read from a strong statement of solidarity sent to striking rail workers in Canada by Jim Hopkins, branch secretary of the train drivers’ union, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, at Longsight in Manchester.

“Such solidarity is a great example,” Fruit said. “This is one of the issues that union leaders at Amazon in Coventry have also had to deal with. To build the union, they had to overcome divisions along national lines promoted by

the company; they put out literature and held meetings in different languages. Winning 1,400 workers to join the union depended on this.”

Another expression of international solidarity, Fruit reported, was a London demonstration of 200 in solidarity with strikes and protests in India following the rape and murder of a trainee doctor there. Fruit talked to Vilya Navarayan, a doctor in London, at the action. After protests in the past, the Indian government promised to create safer conditions for women, Navarayan said, “but nothing has changed.”

“The fight for women’s emancipation will never be joined by capitalist governments, let alone solved by them,” Fruit told the meeting. “We have to look to the working class, the only class with no stake in exploitation and oppression of any kind.”

Among the 38 people present at the meeting were participants who had come from Belgium, France, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. A two-person delegation from the Cuban Embassy in London, press officer Arístides Hechavarría and his soon-to-be replacement, Orestes Martínez, attended the meeting.

Fight against Jew-hatred

“As the rulers seek to divert anger away from capitalism as the source of our problems, more are pointing the finger at Jews,” Fruit said. “This has grown significantly since the deadly Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel carried out by Hamas, part of the Tehran-led ‘axis of resistance.’” Fruit reported that she’d been interviewed by the Manchester-based *Jewish Telegraph* and *Jewish News* in London.

A lively discussion followed Fruit’s presentation. “Is it possible to simultaneously defend Israel’s right to exist and the right of Palestinians to self-determination?” one person asked.

“Our campaign defends Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews,” Fruit said. “There’s no other country that will fight arms-in-hand as a refuge. People on the left of capitalist politics paint Hamas as some sort of liberation movement. It’s the opposite. Its roots lie in alliance with the Nazis.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman
Rachele Fruit, left, interviewed by Sandy Rashty in London for article run in Aug. 27 *Jewish News*, “Meet the Jewish grandma standing to be president of the United States.”

Its goal is the destruction of the Israeli state and the extermination of Jews.

“Defeating Hamas and rendering it militarily incapable is a precondition for addressing the national aspirations of the Palestinians,” she said. “Hamas treats working people in Gaza as sacrificial fodder and human shields. It fights any action by working people, especially across national lines. It denies women’s rights, steals food from convoys, engages in arbitrary detention and tortures political opponents.

“But defeating Hamas is not sufficient. There can be no real safe haven for Jews under imperialism. Both the Jewish national question and the national aspirations of the Palestinians will only be resolved as working people of all religions and ethnic roots across the region join in revolutionary struggles to take state power and

end capitalist rule,” Fruit said.

Responding to a related question, she said that in the U.S. and other imperialist countries “those hailing Hamas and its worship of violence will be pushed back as the class struggle expands and as unions and mass organizations of the oppressed become weightier in the leadership of political battles.

“History shows that national enmities can be overcome. But that takes revolutionary struggle and leadership,” Fruit said, pointing to the example of the Russian Revolution.

“We look to Lenin and the Bolsheviks. We’re building a party in their image — proletarian in program, composition and habits of conduct. And we look to Cuba’s socialist revolution and Fidel Castro’s insistence that ‘to be a revolutionary means more and more to be a communist.’”

17,000 AT&T workers strike over wages, health care in the Southeast

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA — Over 17,000 members of the Communications Workers of America in nine states across the Southeast went on strike Aug. 16 against telecommunications giant AT&T. Service technicians and customer service representatives walked out in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

The workers had been on the job since their old contract expired Aug. 3. One of the main issues is the increase in health care costs the company wants to impose.

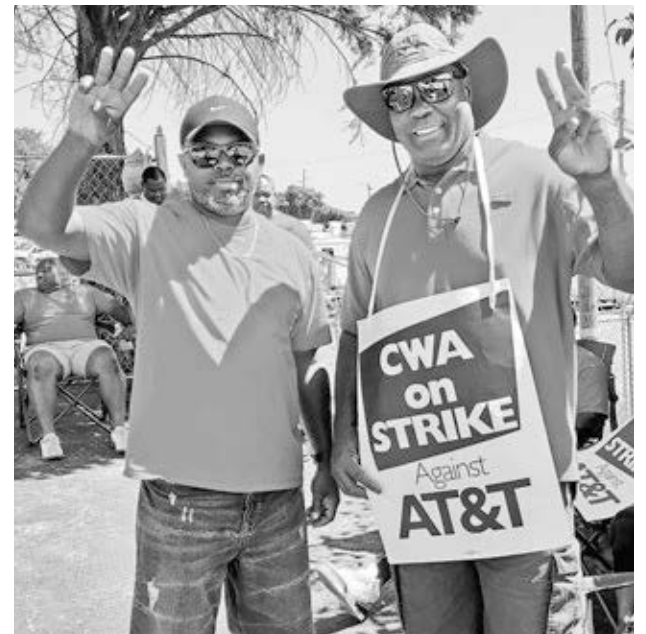
“We are just looking for a fair benefits package and a decent wage increase that can keep up with rising prices,” technician Kelvin Gordon told the *Militant* Aug. 26 at the picket line at AT&T’s service facility in East Point. He pointed to the gains that had been won in the recent union fights by autoworkers and UPS drivers.

“We have gotten a lot of support from other unions and cars honking as they drive by,” added striker Dennis Lawrence. “The Teamsters UPS drivers are not

crossing our picket line.” The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 613 brought lunch to pickets around the city one day.

“The company wasn’t talking to us about wages and benefits and still refuses to do so,” Ed Barlow, president of CWA Local 3204, told the *Militant* at a Sept. 2 Labor Day picnic. Negotiations had begun in late June.

The CWA announced Sept. 1 that they no longer planned to go along with the company’s proposal for federal mediation. The company was just using it as a way to avoid bargaining seriously.



Militant/Marklyn Wilson
“We have gotten a lot of support from other unions,” striker Dennis Lawrence, right, told the *Militant* on picket line Aug. 26 in East Point, Georgia. CWA member Kelvin Gordon on left.

Fruit, UK Amazon workers discuss union battles



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

COVENTRY, England — Warehouse workers Ceferina Floresca, left, and Garfield Hylton, second right, discuss their fight for a union at Amazon’s BHX4 facility here, with Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Rachele Fruit, center; SWP leader Mary Martin, second from left; and Communist League member Dag Tirsén, right, Aug. 23. Floresca and Hylton wanted to learn more about the class struggle in the U.S.

Unable to attend Fruit’s London meeting, Floresca sent written greetings. The SWP candidate’s “passion for empowering workers and challenging systemic injustices resonated deeply with us,” she wrote.

The fight for a union at Amazon showed “the importance of solidarity and grassroots organizing,” Floresca wrote, “not just crucial for our current struggle but for future unionization efforts.”

“Our campaign may have faced setbacks, including the recent narrow loss in the union-recognition ballot, but our resolve remains unshaken. We are here to stay, united in our quest for dignity and respect in the workplace.”

— JONATHAN SILBERMAN

Workers strike US hotel chains

Continued from front page

24-hour pickets and hosted a Labor Day rally and march in downtown San Francisco Sept. 2, which drew over 1,000 unionists and supporters and expanded their picket lines.

It's a fight to defend what Local 2 has won over years, strikers told the *Militant*. A strike against Marriott hotels here in 2018, part of a nationwide battle, lasted 62 days and won over \$4 in hourly wage increases.

Some workers on the picket line said they are veterans of as many as four different strikes.

Cuts in hours are making it hard for many workers to keep their health care benefits, pickets told the *Militant* outside the Westin St. Francis. Now the companies are demanding further deductions from their already short checks. "It's a big fight," Teo Mercedes, a housekeeper, told the *Militant*. "They want us to pay hundreds more for medical care."

"They aren't hiring enough people. They ask workers to work double shifts and to work faster to make up the difference," cafe worker Zelfhia Connor said. "I tell them no."

"I'm tired of the unfair workloads," Flor Salazar, a telephone operator at the hotel for 48 years, told the media. "Before, there was up to five of us per shift. Now, there's only me during the morning shift handling all the phone call requests from within and outside the hotel."

Despite bosses' talk about their fear of falling bookings due to rising prices and the social crisis hitting workers today, the fact is the hotel chains are

raking in record profits. But for hotel workers, the result is that things are getting worse. Short hours force many to seek a second or third job to try and put together enough to live on and raise a family. New workers often quit because the lousy pay for short hours is unsustainable.

A retiree on the picket line, Duc Nguyen, said he gets a pension from the union and medical care as well. But the hotels want to cut back what they pay into the retiree fund. The strike "is basic," he said. "Without us they can't run the hotels."

Hotel workers in Boston walk off the job as contract expires

BOSTON — The annual Greater Boston Labor Council's Labor Day breakfast here was transformed into an expanded picket line and rally for UNITE HERE Local 26 after hotel workers walked off the job Sept. 1 as their contract expired. They voted by 99% to go out on strike, demanding wage increases, improved benefits, more staffing and better safety measures on the job.

The nearly 900 workers at the four struck hotels in Boston are part of 4,500 union members in the area that voted to authorize a strike.

"I'm out here for respect. We need the money, but we also need the respect," Yves Devaris, who has worked at the Hilton Boston Park Plaza for 38 years, told the *Militant*.

"The work is too much," said Paula DeRosa, a housekeeper at the hotel for 22 years. Staffing levels at the hotels are still below COVID pandemic levels, but



Militant/Emily Fitzsimmons

UNITE HERE Local 26 picket at Hilton Boston Logan Airport hotel Sept. 1. "All they care about is how much money they can squeeze out of us," striking worker Stefica Trtanj told the *Militant*.

room occupancy rates have fully recovered, and the hotels' profits have soared.

"All they care about is about how much money they can squeeze out of us. They don't care about the guests, or the hotel itself, and especially not about us," Stefica Trtanj, a worker at Hilton Boston Logan Airport, said.

Ray Chin, who has worked at the Hilton Boston Park Plaza for eight years, said that he needs to look for a second job. "The main struggle is for more money." Chin lives with his brother so the two of them can make ends meet.

— Willie Cotton

'Respect our work!' Baltimore UNITE HERE workers demand

BALTIMORE — "We work, we sweat, put a raise on my check!" and

"Respect our work!" chanted UNITE HERE Local 7 members as they joined in the nationwide strike Sept. 2. They punched out at 9 a.m. and joined the picket line in front of the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor. Over 200 workers struck, keeping their picket line up throughout the day. Their supporters included family members, a drumroll marching band and a drill team, as well as supporters from other area unions.

Workers said they are living paycheck to paycheck on wages that begin at \$16.20 an hour. They are demanding higher wages, better conditions and more staffing. "Going on strike is hard, but not nearly as hard as trying to get by on what we're getting paid," said Jerome Roberts, a dishwasher.

A Hilton spokesperson said the company is committed to negotiating in good faith.

— James Harris

Workers fight Australia gov't seizure of construction union

BY MIKE TUCKER

SYDNEY — Chanting "Hands off our union!" tens of thousands of construction workers marched off the job and rallied in major cities across Australia Aug. 27. The action was a resounding protest against the federal Labor Party government, which days earlier seized control of the construction division of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union, placing it under control of a state administrator.

CFMEU construction workers here were joined by maritime, electrical and manufacturing workers, plumbers and others in a sea of union flags. "This is an attack on every working man and woman in this country," Paddy Crumlin, national secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia and national president of the CFMEU, told the crowd.

The CFMEU is one of the largest industrial unions in Australia, with over 115,000 members.

With bipartisan support, the government rushed the takeover through Parliament. Hundreds of elected union officers were dismissed and ordered to hand over union property, including cars, credit cards, computers and documents.

"If they think by sacking the leadership our union is going to disappear, they are very wrong," Darren Greenfield, CFMEU New South Wales state secretary, said at the Sydney rally. Workers walked off the job despite threats they could face penalties.

Crumlin said Sept. 1 the government move emboldened employers to walk away from contract negotiations and ended the union's ability to en-

force safety on the job.

The government attack was prepared by a two-month media campaign that sensationalized allegations of criminal links, intimidation and bribe-taking by some union officials. An editorial in the Aug. 27 *Sydney Morning Herald* dismissed the sizable protests as "addle-headed support of lowlifes and gangsters."

As part of the ruling-class campaign to weaken the construction workers and divide the unions, meritocratic layers in the Labor Party and media have sought to portray CFMEU and

other industrial workers as backward, thuggish and misogynist. "The average trade union member these days is not a big boofy bloke in a hard hat and black T-shirt, but a 46-year-old female nurse," wrote Phillip Coorey in the *Financial Review*.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions, the national union federation, has backed the federal government assault on the CFMEU construction division and suspended its affiliation to the ACTU.

This is the biggest ruling-class assault on a union in Australia in decades.

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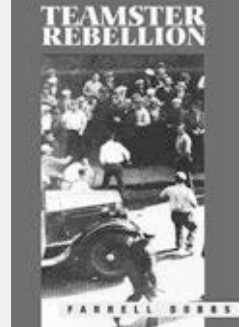
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Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle. — \$16



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Build solidarity with hotel, AT&T strikes

Strikes by 10,000 hotel workers and 17,000 AT&T workers are being fought over issues of vital interest to all working people. Members of UNITE HERE are fighting for needed hiring as hotel bosses' press them to get more work done in fewer hours; for higher wages; for more control over working conditions and safety; and for improved health and retirement benefits. Communications Workers of America members are demanding better wages and combating AT&T's push to raise the cost of their health insurance.

These struggles show a way forward to workers everywhere who face the crushing impact of higher and higher prices, especially on essentials like food, child care and housing; and the bosses' drive for hours and schedules that destroy family life.

Workers' determination to fight is on the rise. Contract deadlines are imminent for 32,000 International Association of Machinists members at Boeing, Sept. 12; for 45,000 International Longshoremen's Association members across the East and Gulf coasts, Sept. 30; and for 200,000 members of the American Postal Workers Union, Sept. 20.

And many workers, like the ILA members, thousands of flight attendants and some 10,000 rail workers in Canada, also face strikebreaking action in support of the bosses by the capitalist government.

Every union victory won today advances the field

for all workers and can reinforce our capacities as a class to stand up to the bosses and their relentless drive to take more in profits out of our labor.

Each of these union struggles can be won. But to score victories, solidarity from the labor movement and fellow workers is crucial. Every strike is a broader struggle — class against class. And every labor battle is a political fight as well.

Every act of support to the strikers makes a difference. Join efforts to get out the word about the just fight of the UNITE HERE and CWA members. Visit their picket lines and win contributions to their strike funds. Ensure that workers on the front lines of working-class struggle can stand strong, with the labor movement at their backs. Solidarity brings workers together and helps us see our class's inherent power.

All too often, the priority for many top labor officials is to use union resources to promote getting Kamala Harris installed in the White House. This course is an obstacle, not a help to workers.

We need to rely on ourselves and the power of our unions, not on one of the two main political parties that serve the capitalist class. Neither the Democrats nor Republicans are working-class parties. We need our own party, a party of labor.

Join today's union fights! Build solidarity with them and with the struggles of working people worldwide.

Defend freedom of speech! Drop charges on UHURU

This statement was released by Laura Anderson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida, Sept. 3.

The U.S. government's frame-up trial against Omali Yeshitela, chairman of the African People's Socialist Party, and Penny Hess and Jesse Nevel, leaders of the party's UHURU support group, began in Tampa Sept. 3. They face up to 10 years in prison, accused of being covert agents of the Russian government seeking to disrupt elections in the U.S.

The charges are based on the notorious Foreign Agent Registration Act, which the capitalist rulers have used before to target constitutionally protected free speech and political activity. If your views are similar to those of a foreign government's, the government can sic the FBI to spy on you, disrupt your political activity and prosecute you.

A fourth defendant, Augustus Romain Jr., a former APSP member, also is on trial.

Offices of the African People's Socialist Party were broken into and raided by armed FBI agents in St. Petersburg, Florida, and St. Louis, July 29, 2022. This was within weeks of the infamous FBI

raid on Donald Trump's home in Mar-a-Lago. Both raids were organized by President Joseph Biden's Justice Department.

The pretext of serving a foreign power has been used by the government for decades to go after militant workers, Black rights fighters, the Socialist Workers Party, opponents of Washington's wars and others.

The stakes in this trial have nothing to do with agreement or disagreement with the political views of those on trial. They have everything to do with constitutional freedoms crucial to the struggles of working people today and going forward amid the deepening crisis of capitalism.

Free speech, the right to join together in political activity, the right to worship freely, to bear arms and more are all conquests of bloody battles by working people over decades. And codified in the Constitution.

As the SWP explained in its 2022 political resolution, "Defending and extending the freedoms protected by the US Constitution is at the center of the class struggle today."

The Socialist Workers Party says: Drop the charges!

Packaging workers strike in UK over pay, dignity

BY ANNE HOWIE

CHESHIRE, England — "The guys are absolutely 100% determined we're going to win," Gary Fairclough, Unite regional officer, told the *Militant* at their lively picket line outside Abriso Jiffy pack-

aging plant here. "We can't be having any withdrawal of sick pay whatsoever."

Over 50 union members mounted their second two-week strike here Aug. 5. Fairclough said workers' anger had been building up over management harassment at work, including spying on workers.

Workers were given a choice of a 1.1% pay rise if they kept sick pay at up to eight weeks full wages, then eight weeks half pay — or a 2.9% rise if they agreed to a reduction in sick pay to up to two weeks full pay and two weeks half pay.

Either offer is a real-terms pay cut given the higher prices workers face today. The union has asked for 8%.

The bosses are now approaching individual workers offering a pay rise if they quit the union, Fairclough said. "One union rep with 41 years in the plant was fired the day the union served notice of strike action." After the union protested, he was reinstated.

The union has announced another two weeks of strike action from Sept. 2-14. Bosses responded with a threat to lay off 40% of the workers.

'Militant' prison ban

Continued from front page

ministrator Saritza Legault informed *Militant* attorney David Goldstein of this decision Aug. 21, a full month after the meeting. She wrote that "the Publisher's Appeal and all of the associated letters of support" will be reviewed at the committee's next meeting, set for Aug. 29.

As we go to press, neither Goldstein nor the *Militant* have heard if the meeting was held or what was decided.

Upon learning of the impoundment in mid-May, Goldstein appealed. Since then dozens of letters from organizations and individuals have been sent urging the Literature Review Committee to overturn the ban.

"I have just read that you have recently upheld the ban on the *Militant* issue no. 17," wrote August Nimtz, a professor of political science at the University of Minnesota, Aug. 27, "and without reason."

The banned issue contained an article reprinting the opening chapter of Pathfinder's latest book, *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*. Prison authorities also objected to one of the photos, an Associated Press picture widely printed in papers worldwide. It 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 authorities 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."

This "charge is unfounded," wrote Nimtz. "A read of the article itself surrounding the photo reveals just the opposite. It's actually a condemnation of what the photo shows." He added, "If my students can read such articles, which I occasionally assign, then the incarcerated should have the same right."

Prisoners' constitutional rights

At issue is prisoners' constitutional rights to read political literature of their choice, and freedom of the press — the right of the *Militant* and other publications to reach their subscribers behind bars.

Over the past decade 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.

"I respectfully urge you to rescind the ban on *Militant* no. 17," wrote Jay Ressler, an artist from Hamburg, Pennsylvania, Aug. 27. "There is not one word in the banned issue that can possibly be construed as incitement to riot or violence as charged by Jackson officials. It is well known (and a matter of Federal Court findings) the *Militant* newspaper has a long record of counseling peaceful and legal methods of petition as guaranteed by the Constitution."

From North Aurora, Illinois, Patricia Thompson wrote, "As one of millions of people who are trying to be a point of support for an incarcerated family member, I have been closely following the case of the Jackson Correctional Institution's continued impoundment of the *Militant* newspaper issue no. 17.

"This newspaper consistently enlightens and educates and never 'depicts hatred toward a specific race,'" she said, in urging the impoundment be ended.

Keep sending letters! See addresses in box below.

Fight prison ban on the 'Militant'

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."

In Defense of the US Working Class

by Mary-Alice Waters

INCLUDES "The Fighting History of the United Mine Workers," which tells the story of the 1977-78 strike, the longest coal strike in U.S. history. "In 1978, the UMWA strike brought out once again the well-known fact that under capitalism workers are forced to fight for everything they get."

www.pathfinderpress.com



Anti-war views spread in Russia

Continued from front page

One conscript from Moscow said he was glad they were able “to get through the war alive.” When he gets home, he wants to make sure “a war like this never happens again.” He added, “I’m not going to die for these bastards. I don’t owe Russia anything.”

“We heard that they [the Ukrainians] torture, torture, torture. But in reality, it turned out to be different,” another captured conscript said. “We feel good here.”

“They feed us three times a day. We have a place to sleep,” another said. “We have a kitchen. We have everything we need for our lives.”

A conscript from Bryansk said that his platoon was ordered to fight to the last man. Instead, the 11 young men surrendered without any problems.

Another from St. Petersburg is receiving full medical treatment for his injured legs. Scared about what would happen after his capture, he tried to blow himself up with a grenade. When the war eventually ends, “the guys in the Kremlin will sit down with serious faces and say we have achieved peace,” he said. “Go to hell, guys!”

All Russian men aged between 18 and 30 are required to serve in the army

for a year. Unlike contract soldiers paid and drilled for combat, they lack training and experience. Early in the invasion of Ukraine, conscripts were sent to the frontlines despite Putin’s promise that they would not be deployed there. This led to an angry response from their mothers and wives.

Moscow reacted by transferring conscripts to guard Russia’s border regions, seemingly far from the conflict. Now that has backfired, with families furious over their loved ones being killed or captured. Thousands have signed online protest petitions against the use of conscripts there.

The comments of the conscripts and protests by their families underscore the fact that working people in Russia are the most important allies of Ukrainians fighting to defend their country.

Moscow’s costly advances in east

Putin claimed Sept. 2 that Kyiv’s plan “to stop our offensive actions in key parts of the Donbas” by forcing the diversion of Russian troops to fight inside Russia has failed. Ukrainian forces now control over 500 square miles of territory in Russia’s west. Kyiv’s forces have been slowed but not stopped by extra troops Moscow has sent to Kursk from



Workers from Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine at damaged Kapitalna coal mine in Ukraine’s southeast Donetsk region. Russian missile attack Aug. 6 injured several miners. Mykhailo Volynets

African deployments and elsewhere.

In response to the Ukrainian counteroffensive, Putin’s regime is stepping up its bombardment of Ukrainian cities. In the deadliest airstrike so far this year, Moscow hit Poltava in central Ukraine Sept. 3, killing 51 people and injuring 271.

On Ukraine’s southeastern front, Moscow’s forces were within 6 miles of Pokrovsk. The city is a coal mining and rail hub that supplies Ukraine’s military. Once home to 80,000, it is being evacuated.

Ruslan, 42, a former miner and now a commander of Ukrainian forces defending the frontlines around the city, described how Russian troops march forward as their fellow soldiers are mown down around them. “This is just waves of meat,” he told the *Washington Post*, pointing to the Kremlin’s utter contempt for the lives of the workers and farmers who serve in its armed forces.

“When we push [the Russian invaders] out, we will come back,” Volody-

myr Porosyuk told the *New York Times* as he left the city with his grandmother.

The coal mine, the city’s biggest employer and a supplier for the country’s industry, now runs with just over half the 8,000 workers it had before the war. Miner Oleksandr Dichko explained that miners also work to bolster the city’s defenses. “You come to work, clock in, and then you receive the call to go dig [trenches],” he told the *Wall Street Journal*. Like at other mines, dozens of women work there now, as men leave for the front.

An Aug. 26 statement by the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) denounced deadly missile attacks by Moscow on workers, members of the KVPU and residents across 15 regions of Ukraine. The targets included mines and energy infrastructure.

The union appeal for solidarity said: “Ukrainian workers, members of trade unions, continue to work despite the danger and are also fighting the Russian occupiers on the front lines.”

Defend Israel as refuge for Jews

Continued from front page

The Israeli government to make more concessions in negotiations over a cease-fire. This would allow Hamas to recover and prepare future anti-Jewish pogroms, as it promises to do.

Five of the six hostages — Eden Yerushalmi, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, Alexander Lobanov, Almog Sarusi and Ori Danino — were kidnapped from the Nova music festival Oct. 7. The sixth, Carmel Gat, was grabbed at Kibbutz Be’eri. Israeli soldiers found their bodies in a 65-foot-deep tunnel in Rafah, near the Egyptian border, Aug. 31 — all shot multiple times at close range a day or two before.

Hamas has publicly taken credit for murdering the six and vowed to keep killing hostages anytime Israeli forces come close to liberating them.

According to Israel Defense Forces spokesperson Daniel Hagari, the site of the executions was less than a mile from the tunnel where hostage Farhan al-Qadi was rescued a few days before. Al-Qadi, a Bedouin Arab citizen of Israel, spent 326 days in captivity.

When they realized Israeli troops were getting near, Hamas thugs fled, leaving him in a booby-trapped room. Al-Qadi was working as a security guard at a packaging plant at Kibbutz Magen when Hamas attacked Oct. 7. They shot him in the leg when he refused to tell them where to find Jews.

The Oct. 7 pogrom led by Hamas — and financed, planned and coordinated with the reactionary regime in Tehran — was the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust during World War II, leaving 1,200 dead, thousands wounded and 251 people kidnapped. The thugs raped dozens of women, often mutilating their bodies. Israeli officials believe that of 97 hostages still in Gaza, at least 33 are dead.

competing factions.

Many of those killed, mutilated or taken hostage by Hamas and its allies on Oct. 7 were from kibbutzim and communities with ties to bourgeois opposition parties or who considered themselves part of Israel’s “peace” movement that promotes ties between Jews and Arabs in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The Hamas assassins and rapists couldn’t care less. They strongly oppose friendly relations between Jews and Palestinians. Hamas’ roots are as the Gaza branch of the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood, which actively collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. They hoped the Nazi army would come to the Middle East to complete its “Final Solution,” the extermination of the Jews. Hamas’ founding covenant explicitly states that its goal is to kill the Jews and establish an Islamic Caliphate in all of Palestine.

To Hamas, the Palestinians are just human shields they cynically use as “martyrs” to win sympathy and funding from imperialist governments in order to pursue their goal: driving out the Jews through the complete destruction of Israel.

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum in Israel organized a demonstration of tens of thousands Sept. 1, calling on Netanyahu to accept Hamas’ demands for freeing the remaining hostages. The group includes relatives understandably distraught over the fate of their loved ones.

The Histadrut labor federation called a several hour strike the next day in support. Histadrut head Arnon Bar-David said that “a deal is more important than anything else.” The labor federation was backed by the Israel Business Forum and by Yesh Atid, the main bourgeois opposition party.

Obstacles to a ‘deal’

A key bone of contention in the negotiations between Hamas and the Israeli government over the release of the remaining hostages and a cease-fire is Hamas’ demand that Israeli troops totally abandon control of the Egypt-Gaza border, known as the Philadelphi Corridor.

Until Israeli troops took it over in May, Hamas continued to use it to smuggle in massive amounts of weapons by bribing Egyptian officials.

Netanyahu told a Sept. 2 press conference that maintaining troops in the corridor is necessary “to ensure that we don’t have another Oct. 7 and another Oct. 7, as Hamas has promised to carry out.” That view is backed by a majority of Israelis.

The hostages were shot “in the back of the head,” Netanyahu said. What message would making concessions now “send Hamas?”

“I won’t let them rearm,” Netanyahu said. “It’s a strategic, existential issue for the State of Israel.”

Divisions in Israel

Not everyone in Israel agrees. One member of the cabinet, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, voted against insisting on maintaining control of the corridor.

Israel — like the U.S. — is a class-divided country, including a significant middle-class meritocratic layer. Israel’s capitalist class is riven with

Nurses strikes spread across Iran



Coordinating Council of Nurses’ Protests

Thousands of nurses in Iran have joined strikes that began Aug. 2 and spread to over 60 hospitals and health centers in 40 cities across the country. Hundreds of EMTs have joined the strike. Along with some supporters, they lined both sides of a busy street in front of Isfahan University’s hospital Aug. 31, above, chanting “No to forced overtime” and “We’ve heard a lot of promises, but haven’t seen action.”

The government arrested a handful of strikers in Arak, Isfahan and other cities, including Zahra Tamandon, the head nurse at Masih Daneshvari Hospital in Tehran on Aug. 21.

The government deposited money Sept. 2 to cover months of unpaid wages to nurses, hoping to quell the strike. “Nurses Criticize the Deposit of Paltry Amounts Into Their Accounts,” the headline in the Iranian Labour New Agency reported the next day. That doesn’t touch the real root of the problem, one nurse said.

They say wages are too low, the patient load too high, and they face chronic shortages of medicine and other basic supplies.

“One hour of overtime for a nurse is equivalent to the price of an ice cream,” strike placards say, reports the Nurses House, a government-recognized association of nurses.

“Iranian nurses have clearly understood that they can achieve their goals only by united and massive protests,” reported Tehran-based Economy 24 news reports. And the solidarity they get “shows that the problem of nurses has become a wider social issue.”

The nurses’ struggle is inspiring other labor battles. More than 1,000 workers at the Pars locomotive and rail car factory in Arak briefly clashed with police Sept. 2 during a march at the end of their fifth week on strike. Miners in Tabas, in eastern Iran, went on strike Aug. 28 protesting low wages.

These spreading labor actions show the reactionary Tehran regime is incapable of convincing workers they should sacrifice to support Hamas.

— SETH GALINSKY

Behind Moscow’s war on Ukraine

Nurses in London strike over hours, need for staffing

BY PAMELA HOLMES AND DAG TIRSEN

LONDON — Around 100 day-surgery nurses at Guy’s and St. Thomas’ hospitals have been in a fight with bosses since June over unsustainable increases to their work shifts. Management first increased hospital hours from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. to 7 a.m.-8 p.m., and added Saturday hours. Then they raised hours to 9 p.m. with no increase in staffing.

Three days of strike action began Sept. 3, with nurses at rallies across London saying, “Protect patients, stop exploiting nurses.”

At the picket line outside the London Bridge Hospital, nurses told the *Militant* they regularly work beyond their contracted hours to ensure patients are sufficiently recovered to be safely discharged. The new 9 p.m. “finish” time really means they work until 10 or 11 when surgeries run long. “Extending the working day is no substitute for increasing staffing levels,” one said. “The strike is for patient safety as well as sustainable hours for nurses.”

The nurses, members of the Unite union, say that union membership has nearly doubled since the dispute began.

US seizes Maduro plane in attack on Venezuela sovereignty

BY ROY LANDERSEN

In yet another escalation in Washington’s aggression against Venezuela’s sovereignty, U.S. officials seized a private jet used by Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro for state business and flew it from the Dominican Republic to Florida Sept. 2. The seizure takes place as Washington continues to interfere in the country’s internal affairs over the disputed July 28 presidential elections.

The U.S. government says the plane had been illegally purchased and “smuggled” out of the U.S., in violation of its imperialist economic sanctions that seek to bring down the government in the oil-rich country. The plane, however, has been openly used for Venezuela government official business, including in a recent prisoner swap between Washington and Caracas.

The Maduro government denounced the U.S. rulers’ “piracy,” part of “coercive measures that they unilaterally and illegally impose around the world.” Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil said this showed how Washington uses “its economic and military power to intimidate and pressure states.”

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel said that once again Venezuela is the center of U.S. “aggressions and blackmail.”

This isn’t the first plane the U.S. rulers have seized from the Venezuelan government. In June 2022 the government of Argentina collaborated with the White House to confiscate a Boeing 747-300M belonging to a Venezuelan state air-cargo company. This February the Joseph Biden administration had the aircraft transferred to Florida, where it was torn apart.

Within hours of the seizure of Maduro’s plane, a Venezuelan court issued an arrest warrant for Edmundo González, the opposition coalition presidential candidate. Opposition politicians claim González won the election with twice as many votes as Maduro, while the election com-

mission, dominated by supporters of Maduro, declared he had been re-elected. The opposition demands that the tally sheets produced at polling stations be made public, which the Maduro government refuses to do.

Three Latin American presidents known for opposition to Washington’s bully tactics — from Mexico, Brazil and Colombia — have urged Maduro to release the vote totals. The governments of Colombia and Brazil also proposed a “power-sharing” agreement with the opposition and holding new presidential elections. These were rejected outright by Caracas as an affront to the country’s sovereignty.