

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE
Cosmetics, Fashion, and Exploitation
of Women: Preface to 2024 edition
 — PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 41 NOVEMBER 4, 2024

Boeing strikers discuss, vote on a tentative new contract

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

RENTON, Wash. — The 33,000 Machinists at Boeing voted Oct. 23 on a third contract offer from Boeing. It includes a 35% pay hike over four years, a \$7,000 ratification bonus and an increase in the company's contribution to the 401(k) plan. The result of the vote wasn't released before the *Militant* went to press.

Despite the wage increase, the latest offer does not include reinstating the pension plan, a key demand of the strike. Jon Holden, president of International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District 751, told members the new offer was "worthy of your consideration" but stopped short of recommending it, saying it's up to the membership to decide.

The Machinists rejected the company's first offer of a 25% wage increase Sept. 13, walking out on strike. Boeing was unsuccessful in a later attempt to bypass the union and take a 30% wage offer directly to the members.

"It sounds like a good offer, but it's not what we asked for. Pensions

Continued on page 10

Fruit for president, Richter for vice president 'Defend Israel as a refuge from Jew-hatred, pogroms'



Militant/Mary Martin
 Rachele Fruit, left, SWP candidate for president, is interviewed by press at Holocaust Memorial Oct. 10, 2023, in Miami, while at rally of 3,000 after murderous Hamas pogrom.

Iran rulers' threats to Israel and Jews imperil all working people

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA — "Oct. 7 was a declaration of war against the existence of Israel, a refuge for 7 million Jews and home to 2 million Palestinians and Arabs," Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party

Continued on page 4

Fruit: 'Working-class solidarity in North Carolina an example'

BY SUSAN LAMONT

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — "We started with no supplies, but within a few days we had to open a warehouse to hold all the contributions that were pouring in for victims of the hurricane," Isabel Beteta told Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, outside the BeLoved Asheville aid center here Oct. 18.

Continued on page 5

Live from Cuba Workers step up solidarity in face of the US embargo

BY RÓGER CALERO AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA — Countless expressions of working-class solidarity have spread across Cuba, accompanying government efforts to confront the impact of two recent major emergencies — a three-day collapse of the national electrical grid and the damage caused by Hurricane Oscar in eastern Cuba.

On the evening of Oct. 17, the unprecedented blackout left the entire island in darkness. With electrical workers laboring intensely round-the-clock, power began to be restored after 72 hours in Havana and 24 hours later in other provinces. Many local areas are still without reliable power, which workers are pressing to restore.

Government authorities mobilized all available resources to maintain vital services, from hospitals to bakeries. And working-class solidarity came to the fore everywhere.

If your only source of information is the international capitalist media, whether liberal or conservative, the picture you're given is that Cuba's working people are about to throw in the towel, or, at best, are poor helpless victims. "Cuban government faces backlash

Continued on page 3

End US rulers' economic, trade and political war against Cuba!



Fidel Castro addresses million-strong rally in February 1962 as workers and farmers made socialist revolution in Cuba. "Second Declaration of Havana" adopted there was call to action to working people across Americas, world to join in fight against U.S. imperialism.

For more than six decades, the U.S. capitalist rulers have tried by every means possible — from organizing

EDITORIAL

the Bay of Pigs invasion to nuclear confrontation to terrorist bombings to an over 60-year-long, ever-tightening

economic embargo — to try to overthrow the socialist revolution made by workers and farmers in Cuba. Washington wants to crush revolutionary Cuba's example in Latin America, around the world and in the U.S.

Millions of Cuban working people, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, were transformed as they changed

Continued on page 12

Why fight to defend constitutional freedoms is key for working class

BY TERRY EVANS

Safeguarding freedom of speech, assembly and worship, the right to bear arms, and other constitutional protections are at the center of politics and the class struggle, and will remain so

regardless of which party controls the White House after the Nov. 5 election.

These freedoms have come under serious assault throughout the nine-year-long campaign by the Democrats, Never Trump Republicans and middle-class left aimed at driving Donald Trump and his "deplorable" working-class supporters out of politics. This goes side-by-side with a broader offensive by these forces to dictate what working people can read, say and do.

Continued on page 12

Dominican gov't deports 1,000s of Haitians as crisis in Haiti deepens

BY RÓGER CALERO

The capitalist rulers of the Dominican Republic stepped up their crackdown on Haitian immigrants, announcing Oct. 2 they would deport 10,000 every week. Dominican President Luis Abinader demagogically claims this will defend the interests of "the Dominican people," who, he says, are threatened by immigration from Haiti.

Abinader pledged to continue the

Continued on page 7

Inside

NY Proposition 1 is threat to rights, ploy to boost Democrats 2
 US presses Ukraine to settle as toilers defend nat'l sovereignty 7

— On the picket line, p. 6 —

Hundreds of United flight attendants demand new contract

Unionists help prevent closure of New York state birth center

NY Proposition 1 is threat to rights, ploy to boost Democrats

BY PAUL MAILHOT

NEW YORK — Proposition 1, often referred to by its Democratic Party boosters as the “Equal Rights Amendment” or the “Equal Protection of the Law Amendment,” will be on the ballot in New York Nov. 5. The measure is being sold as a way to “enshrine abortion rights in our state Constitution,” Gov. Kathy Hochul said in an Oct. 16 opinion piece in the *New York Daily News*.

“A woman’s right to choose to have an abortion is not under threat in New York state,” Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from New York, told a recent Militant Labor Forum. “Abortion was effectively decriminalized in the state in 1970 — three years before *Roe v. Wade* went into effect. It has been protected by statute under New York law since 2019.

“Proposition 1 is a vote-catching gimmick by the Democratic Party, with some dangerous implications for the rights of working people. It seeks to exploit widespread support for women’s rights to draw working people more tightly into capitalist politics. What we need is to break ourselves out of that grip. Working people should vote ‘No’ on Prop 1,” Lobman said.

The proposition never mentions the words “women” or “abortion.” Instead, the proposed amendment would add a host of categories for “protected status” into the Constitution — “ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or sex.” In case anyone would mistake the term “sex” here to mean outlawing discrimination against *women*, the proposition defines it instead as

“including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy.”

The second section of the proposition, hidden text that will not even appear on the ballot, says any action taken to correct past unfairness against the newly protected classes, even if it fosters discrimination against others, is acceptable.

“Opposition to discrimination is a deeply held sentiment in the working class and among broad layers of society — the product of mass mobilizations of the labor movement, and on the part of women, Blacks and other oppressed nationalities,” Lobman said. “Backers of Proposition 1 seek to exploit this sentiment to settle social questions, which are very much still in debate throughout society, with a vaguely written proposition that promotes discrimination.”

The New York State Constitution already guarantees every person “equal protection of the laws” and prohibits discrimination “because of race, color, creed or religion.” There are laws on the books that protect older workers against age discrimination.

The new amendment’s proposal to ban age discrimination opens the door to overturning age-of-consent laws, which protect children from abuse. It poses other troubling questions, as well.

Should school authorities and individuals be free to promote or pressure children to “change their gender”? Can children be given drugs or surgeries without their parents’ permission?

Should males who now identify as



AP Photo/Mary Altaffer

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado at primary election night party, June 28, 2022, in New York. Democratic-backed Proposition 1, falsely posed as a road to expand political rights, is in reality the opposite, a “woke” move to strengthen capitalist politics.

women be able to compete in women’s sports? Or enter women’s locker rooms?

At a demonstration near City Hall in New York City in late August, opponents of the proposition carried signs saying, “Don’t ERAse girls sports.”

“What this proposal will actually do is force spaces and opportunities, including sports, prisons, locker rooms, domestic abuse shelters, any single-sex space meant for women to include men,” Inez Stepman from Independent Women’s Voice told the *Gothamist* at the rally.

What is the road forward?

A number of strikes and labor battles are going on today, where working people are beginning to use our unions to address the deteriorating conditions we face, and the assaults on workers’ rights that are a result of the crisis of capitalism. The rising costs of housing, food, child care and medical care fall hardest on women. Lack of full-time, good-paying jobs make it difficult for young people to move out of their parents’ home, let alone choose to raise a family.

The campaign to pass Proposition 1 points away from fighting around those and other very real challenges working people face. It points away from mobilizing the labor movement, made up of the main organizations of the working class, to speak

out and act as tribunes of the people on all economic and social questions, including war.

“In the course of our own independent struggles, workers gain confidence in ourselves as a class,” Lobman explains as she campaigns for the Socialist Workers Party ticket in 2024.

“There is an answer to fighting discrimination where it exists — against Blacks, women and others. It’s through independent working-class struggle, not support of the capitalist system that breeds and thrives on divisions and discrimination. It’s through breaking with Democrats and Republicans and building a party of labor. It’s through joining the fight for the working-class to take political power and begin organizing society in the interests of the vast majority in the U.S. and around the world.

“If you’re going to vote on Nov. 5, vote Socialist Workers Party!”

THE MILITANT

Free speech, right to worship ‘worth fighting for’

After years of court fights to defend his right to refuse to design cakes with messages that ran counter to his religious convictions, Jack Phillips felt vindicated when the Colorado Supreme Court dismissed charges against him Oct. 8. “If I lose,” he said, “we all lose these rights.”



Alliance Defending Freedom
Jack Phillips, the owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop, located in Lakewood, Colorado.

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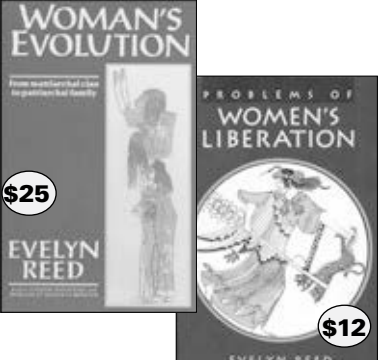
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Cuban workers step up solidarity in face of US embargo, crisis

Continued from front page

amid massive blackout” was a typical headline, this one in the French daily *Le Monde*.

Militant reporters in Havana found a very different response among working people, even in face of the hardships and frustrations, largely a product of Washington’s 60-plus year economic war on Cuba’s socialist revolution.

Evelina Cardet, a retired teacher in Holguín, in eastern Cuba, sent the *Militant* a sampling of half a dozen text messages circulating among neighbors and friends offering each other solidarity and support.

“We have electricity — anyone who needs to charge their phone or lamps, we’re here, ready to help each other,” was the message from Dania Murciano in Holguín.

“Hello, if anyone needs to put something in the fridge, or even share a coffee, don’t hesitate to just come over,” said Frank Padrón.

“In one hour, for anyone who isn’t able to cook, we’re offering free helpings of spaghetti right next to the church,” wrote Egner Leyva in the town of Banes, Holguín province. “It’s time for all of us to come together.”

In the Vedado neighborhood of Havana, *Militant* reporters visited a home that ran a power generator a few hours each day of the blackout, inviting neighbors to come and charge their devices there. A constant stream of people came.

The workers at Casa Vera, a bed and breakfast that caters to international students, distributed free coffee on the sidewalk one morning. Giving priority to the elderly living alone, these workers also put out a huge pot of caldosa, a hearty soup traditionally served in Cuba for community festivities. “I always take pride in what I cook,” said Alberto Castillo, the cook at Casa Vera. “But I put much more love into this caldosa.”

Similar initiatives were taken by individuals as well as state-owned and small private restaurants, who prepared meals for those in need.

In response to Hurricane Oscar,

which caused major flooding in the eastern province of Guantánamo, the revolutionary government carried out well-planned evacuations of thousands of people to safer ground. Cuba’s mass organizations, from the trade unions to the Union of Young Communists, called on their members to join brigades to help residents clear debris and rebuild from hurricane damage.

The prolonged blackout came just weeks after hundreds of thousands of Havana residents were without water for several days when the system’s turbines crashed due to aging infrastructure and lack of resources for ongoing maintenance, a product of Washington’s punishing embargo. This accumulation of acute difficulties and challenges leads many, including among supporters of Cuba’s socialist course, to express frustrations about bureaucratic red tape or aspects of how the crisis has been handled. The U.S. capitalist rulers and other opponents of the revolution never stop trying to play on these pressures to foster discontent toward the government.

The U.S. imperialist rulers have waged an unrelenting economic and political war to try to undermine and overthrow the Cuban government. A summary of this assault, “Cuba: ‘End Washington’s economic, trade war against our revolution!’” was run in the last issue of the *Militant*, which is available at themilitant.com.

Oppose Washington’s economic war

Efforts to recover from the blackout and hurricane are “a major task given the economic and financial conditions the country is living through due to the tightened blockade against Cuba and the inclusion of our country on the State Sponsors of Terrorism List,” Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel said in an Oct. 21 national address.

By putting Cuba on this outrageous list, Washington threatens sharp sanctions on companies and banks around the world that trade with or facilitate credit to Cuba. This drastically restricts Cuba’s ability to purchase food,



Above, Militant/Róger Calero

Isbel González charges neighbors’ cellphones at Casa Vera, a private student residence that made its power generator available to community during blackout. Inset, online post by Dania Murciano, resident of Holguín, eastern Cuba, with photo of devices being charged. Her post says: “You can still come here to charge. This is the moment to give a hand to each other.”

medical supplies, fuel, equipment and spare parts, magnifying shortages of basic goods and crippling transportation and other services.

The U.S. rulers, however, continue to underestimate the capacities of Cuba’s working people. Cardet, the retired Holguín teacher and staunch partisan of the revolution mentioned earlier, pointed with pride to a message circulated by one of her former students.

“I suffer the effects of the blackouts like anyone else,” he said. “But you

know, I don’t feel like blaming Díaz-Canel or the government. I don’t feel like banging pots in the street,” as opponents of the revolution urge Cubans to do. “In any case, I would bang a pot to demand the blockade be lifted and that we be removed from the list that prevents Cuba from obtaining hard currency.

“In short, I don’t feel like ceasing to believe in the people who go out every day — despite the blackout — to teach, to cure patients, to produce.”

Washington economic war fuels the blackouts in Cuba

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Millions of people across Cuba were without electricity over several days as the island was hit by a fourth nationwide blackout Oct. 20. The Cuban power grid repeatedly collapsed, choking the economy and making daily life a challenge.

This energy crisis, the worst in the nation’s history, has been brought on by a trade, economic and financial war waged by the U.S. rulers for over six decades, aimed at crushing the Cuban people and overturning the socialist revolution they made.

After weeks of long blackouts, the total disconnection of the national electricity grid was triggered by the sudden shutdown of the Antonio Guiterras thermoelectric power plant in the city of Matanzas, east of the capital, Havana. Hurricane-force winds had prevented an oil tanker from docking and unloading for several days the previous week.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel said Oct. 18 that the government is “giving absolute priority to solving the energy emergency” and “would not rest until [power] is reestablished.”

He pointed out that the “surging economic war and financial and energy persecution by the United States” makes it difficult for Cuba to import oil and industry supplies.

Nonessential businesses were closed, along with schools, most government offices and entertainment centers. Only “indispensable workers” were asked to go to their jobs. Hospitals were kept open.

Cuba has long been heavily dependent on oil imports from Venezuela. The Venezuelan government, also hit by Washington’s sanctions, halved its low-priced exports to Cuba this year. This forced the Cuban government to seek more costly oil on the world market, chiefly from Mexico and Russia.

A shortage of foreign currency has hindered Cuba from getting sufficient supplies. Additional damaging financial sanctions were imposed by the Donald Trump administration and maintained by President Joseph Biden, restricting access to financing from foreign banks and the collection of payments for services provided by Cuba to other countries.

For a majority of people across the

island, no power means no running water or functioning fans. Millions are seeing their food spoil without refrigeration. Fuel shortages and sometimes a lack of essential foodstuffs have long been worse outside of Havana, but the capital has now been hit too.

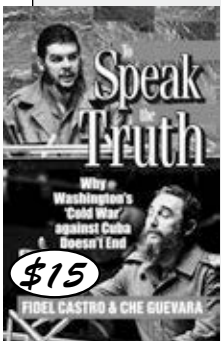
People with sufficient funds run small generators on scarce and increasingly expensive fuel. But portable power generators in Havana currently cost \$1,500.

By the evening of Oct. 21 authorities said the Matanzas power plant was now working again and power has been restored to over 80% of Havana residents and to some provinces outside the capital.

The course of the U.S. rulers is to continue tightening their squeeze against Cuba with the aim of intensifying hardship, spreading demoralization and provoking opposition toward the Cuban government, like the street protests that occurred there in 2021.

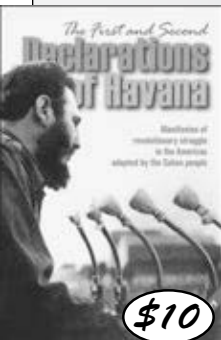
For defenders of the Cuban Revolution in the U.S., getting out the truth about Washington’s unrelenting economic aggression and organizing public opposition to the U.S. rulers’ attacks remains paramount (see editorial).

To Speak the Truth by Fidel Castro & Che Guevara



In speeches before UN bodies, Castro and Guevara address the peoples of the world, explaining why Washington fears the example of the socialist revolution and why its effort to destroy it will fail.

The First and Second Declarations of Havana



Nowhere are questions of revolutionary strategy in the Americas addressed with greater truthfulness and clarity than in the First and Second Declarations of Havana, adopted by million-strong assemblies of the Cuban people in 1960 and 1962.

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Iran rulers' threats to Israel, Jews

Continued from front page
presidential candidate said at an Oct. 20 campaign meeting here.

"At that moment, the defense of Israel as a refuge for the Jews became the center of world politics," she said. The massacre carried out by Hamas was orchestrated by the reactionary capitalist regime in Iran.

"They slaughtered 1,200 people, mostly Jewish civilians, and seized 251 hostages," Fruit said. "Rape was organized against women and men, strategic, deliberate, celebrated and documented by the perpetrators."

Fruit pointed to a statement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu following the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, who worked with Tehran to organize the Oct. 7 pogrom. He said the death of Sinwar brings the end of the war closer, but it is not over and it continues to exact a heavy toll.

Fruit noted that the *New York Times* reported that when news of Sinwar's death spread in Gaza, many people celebrated. The *Times* quoted one man who said the Hamas leader "started the war, scattered us and made us displaced, without water, food or money."

Today a showdown is unfolding in the Middle East. Fruit pointed to the SWP's continuity with V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who led the 1917 Russian Revolution, an important part of which was the fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms.

"The persecution of Jews goes back 2,000 years," Fruit said. "But in today's world, the fate of the Jews is tied to the struggle of the international working class. The dawn of imperialism opened the epoch of the fight for workers power." But "the physical extermination of the Jews," she said, "is the banner of reaction against proletarian revolution." That underscores why fighting Jew-hatred is crucial for the working class.

The imperialist "democracies" care

nothing for the Jews. Washington and London shuttered their doors to Jews before, during and after the Holocaust.

"This is why Israel had to be and why it has to be today," she said. Israel is a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms, but not a solution. "Only the working classes of Israel, Palestine, Iran and the whole region can find solutions in their common class interests."

Fruit spoke about Israel's war against Hezbollah, Tehran's most advanced armed proxy. Over the last year Hezbollah has launched almost 10,000 rockets, forcing the displacement of some 60,000 Israelis. After killing top Hezbollah leaders, Israel is now working to destroy the group's 150,000 missiles and drive it away from the border.

"What Israel is doing to prevent the annihilation of the Jewish people deals heavy blows to the pogromists and Tehran, helping forestall the next world war," Fruit said.

"The most important obstacle to the dangerous course of the regime in Tehran is Iran's working class and oppressed nationalities. They have protested in massive numbers in cities, villages and rural areas in defiance of the regime. The class struggle in Iran, a country with a proud working-class revolutionary heritage, is central to helping to overcome the national divisions and uniting the toilers of the Middle East."

During the discussion one person asked about Hamas' use of the term "martyrs" to describe Palestinian deaths in the conflict. Hamas "thinks that Palestinian deaths will gain them sympathy from countries around the



German Federal Archives

Hamas forerunner, Amin al-Husseini, salutes Waffen SS troops in Bosnia, 1943. "Hamas has a Nazi-like program and record," SWP presidential candidate Rachele Fruit told Atlanta meeting.

world," Fruit said.

"Hamas has a Nazi-like program and history," she said. "What Israel has done to weaken Hamas, what they are doing to defeat Hezbollah and stay the hand of Tehran is important for opening up space for working people in the region to organize and discuss how they can live together side by side."

Power of working-class solidarity

Fruit described the resolve of dockworkers on the East and Gulf coasts and Machinists at Boeing in recent strikes and the solidarity they won.

"These workers understand that the union is their vehicle to defend themselves. They are learning that these economic struggles are political struggles too," she said.

"Workers who have been on picket lines see each other in a new light. And

they often say they're fighting, not primarily for themselves, but for future generations of workers," she added. They are "learning there are no individual solutions. This is the beginning of our consciousness as a class."

As conditions of life for the working class deteriorate and the threat of new wars spread, millions are being drawn into politics, she said.

She pointed to the need for a party of labor, based on the unions, "completely independent of the bosses' parties, to mobilize and unite all working people."

"The presidential campaign of the Socialist Workers Party is the only voice representing the interests of our class, and I mean the working class worldwide. We face similar conditions, and the same challenge of developing a leadership that can lead the revolutionary fight for workers power."

SWP campaigners find real interest in 'Militant,' party

BY TERRY EVANS

"When the Key Bridge collapsed, truckers were promised funds by the government. But that doesn't mean we saw any money," Ernest Beard, a trucker and a veteran, told James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for D.C. delegate to the U.S. Congress, and SWP campaigner Kaitlin Estill at a truck stop in Jessup, Maryland, Oct. 16.

"Bills were signed, articles were written, so people think we got it. But there was never any money," he said. The Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed after it was struck by a fully loaded container vessel that lost power March 26. The Port of Baltimore was closed for 11 weeks after the disaster.

"I was thrown out of work and two days away from being evicted," Beard told the SWP campaigners. "My landlord said, 'I don't care that the bridge fell, what does that have to do with me getting my money?' I was only able to stay because the Veterans Administration stepped in."

"Truck drivers and workers at the Port of Baltimore should be fully compensated," Harris said. "The collapse of the bridge did not need to happen. It was the result of the shipping

bosses' drive for profit and their complete indifference to the lives and safety of working people. It's one example of why working people must organize to take power out of the hands of the capitalist class and begin to use the wealth that we create for the benefit of all rather than the wealthy few."

Beard described how truck drivers at the port have been discussing the need to unionize to defend themselves. He subscribed to the *Militant*.

Rachele Fruit and Dennis Richter, the SWP's presidential ticket, and members of the Socialist Workers Party and of the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. are at the midway point in the fall campaign to win 1,300 readers to the *Militant*, and the same number of books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries. The drive ends Nov. 19.

In the U.S. they're raising \$140,000 for the SWP Party-Building Fund.

'Solid response' to SWP fund

SWP campaigners in Atlanta have gotten \$8,955 pledged toward their goal of collecting \$10,000 for the fund, with \$4,100 already in hand. "We had a solid start," Susan LaMont, the organizer of the party's branch there, told the *Militant*. "Élan is high among SWP campaigners because of what the party is doing in response to the big turning points in world politics we're living through."

In every area plans are being laid to meet the fund quotas in full and on time. The fund is important to financing the work of the SWP, which relies on contributions from working people attracted to the party's program and activity.

The party encourages *Militant* read-

ers and endorsers of the SWP campaign to get involved in the effort.

In Seattle, SWP campaigners report a good response when they introduced the party and the *Militant* to working people in the South Park area of the city Oct. 16. The day before a large rally had been held in the neighborhood by striking members of the International Association of Machinists at Boeing.

"The team got five subscriptions and sold six books," Rebecca Williamson, the organizer of the Seattle SWP branch, reports.

Kaylie Hartsock, a psychology student who works as a billing coder, and her boyfriend, Ryan Kuehn, a 3-D artist, talked with the SWP candidate for governor of Washington state, Vincent Auger. "The system is set up so that you don't have time to read, to study," Kuehn said. "And you have to go to work or you won't be able to feed your kids or spend time with them," Hartsock added.

Auger pointed to a number of recent labor struggles where workers have fought to push back mandatory overtime and end onerous schedules that make family life impossible. "Like at Boeing," Kuehn added. "That company has been screwing them over for generations."

Hartsock and Kuehn got a *Militant* subscription and copies of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Learning, and Privilege Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs. To endorse the SWP ticket and help get out the word about the party's campaigns, contact the SWP branch nearest you listed on page 11.

Campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, SWP fund Sept. 21 - November 19 (week four)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta	55	31	55	20	\$10,000	\$2,700
Chicago	90	58	90	46	\$14,000	\$5,630
Cincinnati	50	18	50	20	\$5,000	\$1,775
Fort Worth*	55	38	50	30	\$5,000	\$680
Los Angeles	115	63	115	56	\$15,000	\$2,430
Miami	35	11	35	6	\$5,000	\$800
Minneapolis	65	39	65	39	\$5,500	\$2,081
N. New Jersey	70	35	70	37	\$7,500	\$2,970
New York	100	50	115	73	\$20,000	\$8,056
Oakland	85	53	85	37	\$15,000	\$9,925
Philadelphia	60	24	60	19	\$6,500	\$1,230
Pittsburgh	40	18	40	15	\$6,000	\$1,432
Seattle	60	28	60	22	\$14,500	\$3,320
Washington	50	22	50	26	\$4,500	\$760
Other		10		65		\$250
Total U.S.	930	498	940	511	\$133,500	\$44,039
Prisoners		68				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London*	45	38	70	104		
Manchester	40	36	40	29		
Total U.K.	85	74	110	133		
Canada	90	52	90	57		
Australia	30	19	30	23		
Total	1,135	711	1,170	724	\$133,500	\$44,039
SHOULD BE	1,300	650	1,300	650	\$140,000	\$70,000
*Raised goal						

Fruit: 'Working-class solidarity'

Continued from front page

"Hundreds of volunteers have come from all over the country — Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Kansas and other states, as well as from right here in Asheville" after Hurricane Helene devastated the area, Beteta said.

What Fruit and her campaign supporters saw was the power of working-class solidarity in the face of the indifference of the capitalist rulers and their government.

People in need can come to BeLoved for food, clothing, soap, diapers and many other necessities. Thousands of people in Asheville and nearby lost everything in the flood. Hundreds of houses, mobile homes, small businesses of all kinds, roads and other infrastructure were damaged or swept away. Many of the homes left standing are uninhabitable due to water and other damage.

People have thrown up make-shift distribution centers at gas stations, store fronts or empty lots, where goods are being dropped off and picked up for free. Homemade signs advertise "hot meals here" and "hot showers here."

Many places still don't have running water or potable water. Porta-potties are up at post offices, distribution centers and elsewhere.

"I experienced Hurricane Katrina in 2005 as a child in New Orleans," Beteta told Fruit. "I have friends who are still living in FEMA housing there, nearly 20 years later. What will happen here?"

"An experience like this can affect people for a lifetime," Fruit said. "What a contrast to Cuba. Although they have far fewer resources, the Cuban government's starting point is that no one is left on their own when a disaster like this happens.

"Solidarity is everything," Fruit said. "The army and popular organizations in Cuba are mobilized in advance to evacuate people and their pets, and when the storm has passed, everyone works together to help rebuild.

"This is only possible because working people took power in 1959 and made a socialist revolution. Here, in the

richest capitalist country in the world, working people also try to help each other," Fruit added. "But most of those in need are left on their own, trying to get a little bit of help from indifferent and inadequate government agencies." Beteta took pictures of Fruit's campaign literature to read later.

Fruit also spoke to several immigrant workers from Mexico who were picking up supplies from bins set out in the parking lot. One woman told Fruit she had lost her job and her house. Another said a tree fell on her house, but she's still living there. It can cost thousands of dollars to remove a downed tree.

The workers took Fruit's Spanish-language campaign leaflets and wished her well.

Fruit visited the Asheville area with a campaign team that included Jose Alvarado, a retired rail worker who lives in nearby Otto.

"People who need housing are being given vouchers to stay in motels that are 50 miles or farther away," Alvarado told the *Militant*. "But some people don't want to go so far from their homes and their families, and are staying in tents near where they lived."

Asheville, a city of 93,000, is surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina. The levels of rain that washed down from the higher elevation mountains surrounding the city compounded flooding from the areas' rivers and reservoirs, the worst in hundreds of years in some places.

Fruit visited Black Mountain, east of Asheville. It's on the Swannanoa River, which, along with the French Broad and other rivers in the area, burst their banks, leaving massive amounts of mud and debris behind.

The SWP candidate stopped at The Railyard, a music venue that has become a donation drop-off site and one of many places in the area where people can get much-needed free meals and supplies. Musicians perform for free for those stopping by.

"We've been so moved by the support we've gotten from the community,"



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit, left, SWP candidate for president, speaks with Polly Augenstein Oct. 18. Coming from Pittsburgh, she is staffing free shower, laundry facilities in Swannanoa, North Carolina.

Hannah Louw, an information technology worker told Fruit. "I evacuated to Winston-Salem before the storm and just came back last week. My house was damaged, but I can stay there now. Most insurance doesn't cover flood damage.

"The way people are helping each other is part of the Appalachian spirit," Louw said. "It would be good if things could stay this way, even after we've rebuilt."

"I've been campaigning around the country, bringing solidarity to union picket lines wherever I can," Fruit told Louw. "One of the most important questions I raise is the need for workers to form a party of labor, based on the unions and break from the capitalist parties.

"I've also been talking to workers about the need for the unions to fight against Jew-hatred and defend Israel's right to exist as an unconditional refuge for the Jews," Fruit said.

"I agree," said Louw, who is originally from South Africa. She told Fruit she was opposed to the South African government's attempt to blame Israel for the deaths in Gaza since Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom.

In Swannanoa, another hard-hit community, Fruit met many volunteers, including two young men covered in mud who told her it was their first day helping out some neighbors whose house was still standing. At first they were surprised that the SWP presidential candidate wanted to meet them, but they took time to talk to her for a few minutes.

Across the parking lot was a trailer outfitted with two hot showers and a washer/dryer set up. Residents and vol-

unteers can come anytime to wash up and have their laundry done.

"I've been here a week," said Polly Augenstein, who was staffing the trailer. "The laundry runs day and night. My son has a bulldozer and when we saw that heavy equipment was needed to help dig out the whole area, my husband and I and our son decided to come down. We contacted the Cajun Navy and they told us what to do." Her husband and son run the bulldozer, while Polly takes care of the mobile laundry. They sleep in their RV at night.

Fruit met Kyrie Hutchinson and her two daughters, who drove down from Laconia, New Hampshire, to bring supplies and donations, including gift cards.

"My neighbors and customers from my cleaning business donated all kinds of things that they hoped people could use," Hutchinson said. "Everything was in excellent condition. We tried to contribute what we brought to the Red Cross center, but they said they wouldn't take anything unless it was brand new."

Hutchinson and her daughters took campaign literature and signed up for a *Militant* subscription, to follow Fruit's campaign when they get home.

"The tremendous mobilization of volunteers, mostly working people, in response to this disaster shows the ability of the working class to organize society," Fruit told the *Militant* after the visit. "But to unleash the powerful potential force of organized solidarity to take on challenges like this, the working class has to take political power into its own hands."

Mary Martin contributed to this article.

Philadelphia rail worker endorses SWP campaign



Militant/Mary Martin

PHILADELPHIA — Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, sat down with Victor Guzman during her campaign stop here, Oct. 16.

Guzman is a freight rail conductor and member of the SMART-TD union. He met with Fruit at a local diner near the rail yard where he works.

"I don't want to work more hours than scheduled," Guzman told Fruit as they discussed the challenging schedules rail workers face. "I want to go home to my kids. They are at an age where it matters a lot if I'm around or not."

"You want to have a life!" Fruit said.

"Yes!" Guzman replied.

Fruit said defending Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews and the fight against Jew-hatred are central issues internationally and a union issue. Guzman decided to get a copy of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*. He renewed his *Militant* subscription and endorsed the SWP campaign.

Fruit also spoke at a public meeting here later the same day.

— OSBORNE HART

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about workers' struggles for a union movement in every workplace today. It gives a voice to those engaged in battle and helps build solidarity. We need your help to make it a success. If you are involved in a skirmish or strike or know other workers who are, please contact us at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story gets told.

Hundreds of United flight attendants demand new contract

CHICAGO —Some 500 Association of Flight Attendants-CWA members at United Airlines and their supporters ringed the Willis Tower in Chicago's downtown in a spirited picket line that stretched for four blocks Oct. 17. The skyscraper — formerly known as the Sears Tower — houses United's headquarters. A truck circled the streets with an illuminated billboard reading "Ready to Strike!" while determined and boisterous workers picketed.

Attendants flew in from around the world, including London, China and Guam. Other unionists marched in solidarity, including union pilots, air traffic controllers and flight attendants from American Airlines who had recently won a new contract that includes paid boarding time.

"We are not paid until the door of the plane closes," Kayla Smith, who has worked at United for two years, told the *Militant*. "If I get injured assisting a passenger with luggage, that injury is my responsibility because I'm not on the clock. Also, the low wages mean many of us have what we call 'crash pads,' with beds that we share because rents are so high. We deserve what we are demanding."

Many flight attendants told the *Militant* that they live paycheck to paycheck. They said they were incensed when United recently reported that CEO Scott Kirby's compensation had nearly doubled, from \$9.8 million in 2022 to \$18.6 million last year.

"United is demanding concessions while they are recording record profits," Scott Pejas, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA in Chicago, said. "Inflation goes up, but we haven't had a wage increase in three years. United just announced a stock buyback of \$1.5 billion. This is a kick in the face.

On Aug. 28 our union members voted 99.99% to authorize a strike. It's time for United Airlines to pay us or face CHAOS." Create Havoc Around Our System is the union's plan for unannounced strike actions targeting specific flights rather than a system-wide shutdown.

— Lisa Rottach

Unionists help prevent closure of New York state birth center

ALBANY, N.Y. — At the Capital District Area Labor Federation's Annual Gala Oct. 11, Save the Burdett Birth Center Coalition received the federation's Solidarity Award. Ashley Saupp, a leader of the coalition, said they could not have succeeded without the support of organized labor.

The coalition of community groups, unions and families in this area won an important victory when St. Peter's Health Partners bosses announced in April that they would relent and keep the Burdett Birth Center open for at least another five years. Burdett, the maternity ward at Samaritan Hospital, is the only birth center in Rensselaer County. It serves predominantly low income and rural families.

Even though Burdett averaged 900 births a year, in June 2023 St. Peter's said it was going to close it down, claiming the company was losing \$2.3 million a year. This came on top of the Albany Medical Center shutting the birth center at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Hudson in 2020 after taking it over several years earlier.

Nearly 30 maternity wards have closed in New York state over the last 15 years.

The coalition comprises midwives and doulas from the center, as well as a wide swath of area groups and unions. This included the YWCA, church groups, local firefighters, the New York State Nurses Association, Ser-



Militant/David Rosenfeld

Members of Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, supporters picket United Airlines headquarters in Chicago Oct. 17 in fight for contract, sizable wage raise, pay for all time worked.

vice Employees International Union Local 1199, Troy Labor Council, Capital District Area Labor Federation, Planned Parenthood and others.

They organized rallies and informational programs. Troy firefighter union members who work with the town's ambulance department helped get out the word that short staffing makes it hard to help expectant mothers get to Burdett in time. NYSNA members from Albany Medical Center and Bellevue Woman's Center described how both hospitals have short staffing issues as well, and many times expectant mothers face long waits for procedures and tests.

— Mike Fitzsimmons, member of New York State Nurses Association at Albany Medical Center.

Locked out for four months, Prelco unionists stand firm

MONTREAL — Over 100 locked-out Prelco workers and their supporters gathered in front of this industrial glass manufacturer here Oct. 18 for a solidarity concert and food. The 90 members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) have been locked out since June 19.

Members of area unions, including Teamster rail workers and Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers unionists, brought solidarity.

The CSN members responded to

the lockout by voting to go on an unlimited strike. A key issue is higher wages to protect against inflation. The starting wage is 20 Canadian dollars (\$14.40) an hour here, CA\$5 less than at the company's plant in Riviere-du-Loup in eastern Quebec.

"The boss raised the price of his thermal windows. What about the employees?" one locked-out worker told the *Militant*. "He's made millions because of the workers. This is about going back with our heads held high." He asked his name not be used for fear of retaliation by the bosses.

"This is to better divide us, to better rule us," Michelle Pelletier, a leader of the fight, said, pointing to a letter the company sent to union members Oct. 8, circumventing the union negotiating team.

"We are very sorry about the impact of this situation on your life and families," the letter read. "He's the one who locked us out!" exclaimed Pelletier. "He says he has an offer to present to the union. So far, we haven't seen anything."

CSN union members at Kronos in Varennes on Montreal's south shore donated CA\$10,000 to the Prelco workers. "That's where you see what solidarity is," Pelletier said.

The CSN has launched a "Donate \$50" campaign for Prelco union members that supporters can donate to. Make checks out to "STT Prelco-Montreal," and send them to CCM-CSN, 1601 Avenue De Lorimier, Montreal, QC H2K 4M5. Join the picket line at 3740 Rue Dollard-Desjardins in Montreal.

— Katy LeRougetel

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

November 8, 1999

DES MOINES — A fund-raising meeting to aid in the production and distribution of the titles printed and distributed by Pathfinder Press was held here October 23. The featured speaker was Migdalia Jiménez, a member of the Young Socialists who participated in a reporting trip to Puerto Rico for the *Militant*. Her talk took up the nationalist and labor upsurge reflected in protests demanding the release of the independence fighters held in U.S. jails and that the U.S. Navy leave the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

"Many among the new generation of Puerto Ricans are being drawn to the idea of independence," Jiménez said. "The books that Pathfinder publishes are tools for these fighters." Pathfinder's newest title, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, takes up the increasing weight of national liberation struggles in the context of the crisis of capitalism.

THE MILITANT

November 8, 1974

NEW YORK —The largest action ever held in the United States in support of Puerto Rican independence took place here Oct. 27 when 20,000 people filled Madison Square Garden for a four-hour rally. The rally was cosponsored by scores of organizations and individuals.

The principal speaker was Juan Mari Bras, general secretary of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. He described how U.S. imperialism exploits and dominates Puerto Rico, and he sharply criticized Puerto Rican capitalist politicians as "a clique of lackeys." The pro-independence leader ended with an appeal for continued support to the independence struggle.

Over the speakers' platform hung large pictures of five Puerto Rican nationalist political prisoners held in U. S. prisons: Lolita Lebron, Irving Flores, Andres Figueroa Cordero, Oscar Colazo and Rafael Cancel Miranda.

THE MILITANT

November 7, 1949

TOLEDO, Oct. 29 — A bitter struggle involving labor's future in this area has broken out over the pension issue. The United Auto Workers announced a few weeks ago that it would seek an area-wide pension agreement with 125 companies presently under contract. Last night, a group of millionaires representing industrial, banking and newspaper interests announced the formation of the "Committee to Save Toledo Payrolls."

The union pension demands here represent an improvement over the weak agreement negotiated at Ford's. But it will take a real fight to win a better plan against the kind of opposition that has developed in this area.

What is needed is a call by Local 12, which has some 25,000 members, for a citywide Union Defense Committee, representing the entire labor movement, to combat the attempts being organized to smash the union.

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US presses Ukraine to settle as toilers defend nat'l sovereignty

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Ukrainian working people are at the forefront of the fight to resist Moscow's assault on their national sovereignty. But they also confront efforts by Washington and its allies to pressure the Ukrainian government to end its resistance. Moscow's invasion has spawned the largest war in Europe since World War II. The U.S. rulers seek stability for their own interests in the region as they try to bolster their place at the head of the disintegrating imperialist world order.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wants Washington and Berlin, Ukraine's largest arms suppliers, to lift restrictions that prevent their long-range missiles from being used to strike military targets deeper inside Russia. Zelensky also proposes Kyiv be invited to join the U.S.-led NATO military alliance.

President Joseph Biden made a one-day visit to Berlin Oct. 18 where he discussed Zelensky's proposals with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. They then met with French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Scholz says his government will not supply Ukraine with Taurus long-range cruise missiles.

A divergence surfaced at the meetings. Biden and Scholz oppose offering Ukraine NATO membership for now. But Macron and Starmer want to dangle future NATO membership as an incentive to try to push Kyiv into talks with Moscow.

A White House statement after the meeting only acknowledged that the four government heads had "discussed" Zelensky's requests. The Biden administration has provided Ukraine with just enough weaponry to avoid defeat, but not enough to repel the invading forces.

The key allies of the Ukrainian toilers are working people in Russia, who also confront the deadly consequences of Putin's war. There is growing opposition to the war among Russian soldiers and their families, and other working people.

BRICS summit in Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted a summit Oct. 22-24 of government heads from the BRICS alliance — which was founded by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — in Kazan, Russia.

Moscow and Beijing are in increasingly sharp conflict with Washington, but some other governments in the BRICS group are either neutral or U.S. allies.

Putin says the summit shows his invasion of Ukraine hasn't isolated Moscow. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended, but told Putin he was for a "peaceful solution" to the "Russia-Ukraine problem."

The restrictive and slow pace of weapons delivery to Ukraine by Washington and Berlin means Kyiv has to rely more on its own resources to try to blunt Putin's invasion. Ukrainian-built missiles are now hitting targets in Russia hundreds of miles from the front.

In early October, Ukrainian drone strikes hit ammunition and missile

caches inside southwestern Russia. Hundreds of Iranian-made Shahed attack drones as well as stores of glide bombs and North Korea-supplied munitions were destroyed.

Moscow sent 1,300 kamikaze drones in daily attacks on cities across Ukraine in September. Some 90% were shot down. In the three months to Aug. 31 nearly 600 Ukrainian civilians were killed in Moscow's attacks and 2,700 injured.

Heaviest Russian casualties

Moscow's forces suffered the bloodiest month of the war so far in September with 38,000 killed or severely wounded. Putin's war of attrition uses soldiers in "meat wave" attacks with high casualty rates to try to overwhelm stretched and outgunned Ukrainian defenses on the Donbas front. Russian casualties have reached over 600,000 — 115,000 killed and 500,000 wounded — since the war began.

Over 18,000 Russian troops, over half of them conscripts, are estimated to have deserted their posts along the front lines this year. These staggering losses are a state secret in Russia but word filters back despite the Kremlin's tight media controls.

Moscow is struggling to recruit despite having quadrupled the financial incentives it offers soldiers. It is enlisting mercenaries from Syria to Central Africa to fill gaps in its front



Ukrainian National Police

Ukrainian troops inspect crashed Iranian-made drone. Moscow has targeted Ukraine with 8,000 drones since 2022. Even with 90% shot down, thousands of civilian casualties resulted.

lines. But Putin continues to avoid a full-scale mobilization of young men. He fears it would trigger deeper opposition to his regime's war among working people and the oppressed nationalities of the Russian Federation.

During Modi's July visit to Moscow, he asked Putin to release dozens of Indian nationals who had been "misled" about noncombat jobs they had applied for in the Russian army. They had actually been pressed into active combat in Ukraine. At least four Indian soldiers have died at the front so far.

Putin complied, having 85 Indian nationals released from the Russian army in time for Modi's latest visit. The Indian government says 20 re-

main to be discharged.

Half of all the artillery shells Moscow uses to bombard Ukraine are now supplied by the North Korean government. It's readying thousands of troops to support Putin's war, with 1,500 of its special forces already training in Russia's Far East. In response, the South Korean government has threatened to lift its ban on exports of military aid to Ukraine.

After 40 North Korean soldiers were left without food or orders in the forest in Russia's Kursk region near the Ukrainian border, 18 were reported to have deserted. They were recaptured by the Russian army, the Oct. 21 *Newsweek* reported, and may be forced into assault operations.

Dominican gov't deports Haitians as crisis there deepens

Continued from front page

weekly roundups, which if met could double the 250,000 Haitians expelled from the country in 2023. The measure is especially egregious given the thousands of Haitians who have recently sought safety across the border from the widespread and deadly gang violence there, and the economic and protracted political crisis that has engulfed the country.

Since June, the people of Haiti have faced foreign intervention from a Kenyan-led multinational police force, tasked with imposing "stability" and backed by Washington.

Every day of the first week after Abinader's announcement, dozens of trucks arrived at border crossings filled with workers to be deported. Some 11,000 people were detained that week.

Many were Haitian-born workers who have lived their entire life in the Dominican Republic, but who still do not have legal resident status. There were also Dominicans of Haitian descent who have been denied citizenship and identity documents under the country's draconian laws. And there were others who simply didn't present their papers quick enough before they were thrown into the back of a police truck.

The government claims that "the human rights and dignity of the repatriated will be respected." However, even people with legal documents are being deported. Many have been picked up on their way to work or arrested in nighttime raids, with their children left behind on their own. There are allegations of extortion by cops and soldiers demanding \$200 to \$300 even when someone has their papers in hand.

"It's a kind of persecution against black people and against all those who are presumed to be Haitian," said William Charpentier of the National Coalition for Migrations and Refugees.

"If you get picked up in the streets and don't have your documents, you get taken to the Haina detention center and by 5 a.m. the next day you're on your way to the border," Jesús Núñez, national coordinator of the Sugarcane Workers Union (UTC), told the *Militant*. The organization is well-known for its involvement in fighting for pensions, health care and better working and living conditions for thousands of Dominican and Haitian cane cutters who toil on the country's vast sugar plantations.

Many of those detained were from the eastern province of La Romana, where there is a high concentration of Haitians working in construction and agriculture. Núñez explained that more than once the UTC has had to rescue members from the clutches of the police.

"We send a group after the bus to show the authorities these workers' pay stubs and other documents demonstrating they work at the sugar mills," Núñez said.

Far from looking after the interests of working people in the Dominican Republic, as Abinader claims, his mass deportations are aimed at fomenting divisions between Haitians and Dominicans in order to deepen the exploitation of all workers.

"Capitalists have one approach to the border," Núñez said, "they set up businesses and use the cheap labor of workers with or without documents.

"They speak about needing tens of thousands of workers in construction, banana and poultry plants and other in-

dustries," he said. "Instead of granting legal status to these workers, they keep them threatened with deportation. They whip up anti-immigrant sentiments."

Capitalist politicians talk about "the burden" Haitian immigration creates for the Dominican Republic. "What burden?" Núñez said. "It's the Haitian immigrants who are forced to live in miserable conditions."

"The poultry plant owners build a shack a few meters away from the farm to house the workers, and they don't allow their families to live with them," he said. "Dominicans don't accept those conditions, and leave."

Similar things happen in construction. Bosses "allow" some workers to "live" on the construction sites and save themselves from hiring security guards, he said. "Big farm owners have Haitian workers looking after the farm in exchange for 'living there.'"

The capitalist rulers' anti-immigrant campaign — in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere — seeks to mask the fact that the lack of adequate health care, schools and other services is because the wealth produced by all workers — native- and foreign-born — is pocketed by the billionaire capitalist families who force low wages, high rents and other sacrifices onto working people.

Núñez pointed to the need for the labor movement in the Dominican Republic to speak out against the prejudice against Haitians, and to take on the challenge of organizing Haitian and Dominican workers to fight together in their common interests.

"The Sugarcane Workers Union defends the right to a good job, a livable wage and access to health care for all," he said.

‘Cosmetics, Fashion, Exploitation of Women’ A book about capitalism and class struggle

Below is the preface by Mary-Alice Waters to the new 2024 edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by Waters, Evelyn Reed and Joseph Hansen, available in December. Waters is a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press.

The next issue of the Militant will print two other chapters from the book: “Norms of Beauty and Fashion Are Inseparable from the Class Struggle,” by Waters, and “As Though It Were Written Today,” by Isabel Moya. Moya was a leader of the Federation of Cuban Women and director of its publishing house Editorial de la Mujer. Copyright © 2024 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

PREFACE TO NEW EDITION

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Title notwithstanding, *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* is not a book about cosmetics.

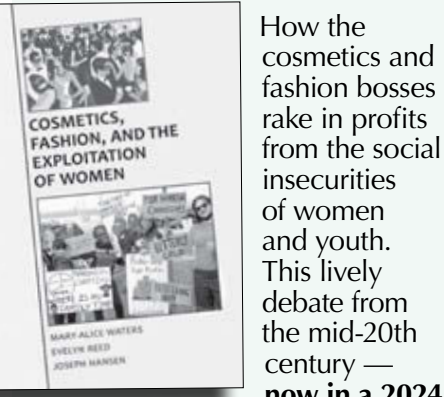
It is about capitalism.

It is about the social relations that are created and perpetuated at this stage of history by the property-owning class that appropriates the raw materials provided by nature. (With cold disregard for the human consequences, whatever they may be.) To obtain the labor they need to transform those materials into products they can sell — commodities — they buy our labor power by the hour: two, ten, twenty hours a day, whatever they can get away with. (Again, with callous indifference to our health, safety, or the needs of our families.)

Then, like the “merchants of beauty” you will read about in this book, they sell those products of our labor back to us, reaping what they consider to be their justly deserved profits.

With clarity and humor, in his 1954 article “The Fetish of Cosmetics” Joseph Hansen laid bare these workings of capitalism. He helps us understand how the economic system that continues to dominate the world today turns

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How the cosmetics and fashion bosses rake in profits from the social insecurities of women and youth. This lively debate from the mid-20th century — now in a 2024 edition with a new preface and an opening article by Mary-Alice Waters — offers a Marxist understanding of the origins of women’s oppression and fight for their liberation as part of the working-class struggle for power.

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Striking workers at Frito-Lay in Topeka, Kansas, May 2021, demand better job conditions and end to forced overtime. Capitalists obtain labor they need “with callous indifference to our health, safety or the needs of our families,” says Mary-Alice Waters. “Then, like the ‘merchants of beauty,’ they sell the products of our labor back to us, reaping enormous profits.”

not only cosmetics but all our economic and social relations into commodities to be bought and sold.

Everything — and everybody — has a price. Ever heard that cynical phrase? It’s the international banner of capital. And meant literally.

‘Capitalism turns not just cosmetics but all human social relations into commodities to be bought and sold . . .’

Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women is also about the place of women in this economic order. To quote one of Evelyn Reed’s contributions to this delightful collection, capitalism in its highest and final stage (*the imperialist stage*, which we’re living through today) has largely advanced “from selling women as commodities, to selling commodities to women.” And to men.

To achieve this, they promote sexy, come-hither images of women intended to convince other women how — by buying “the right things,” and *buying more of them* — they can vanquish their competitors and fetch a “higher price” in the dog-eat-dog marketplace for happiness, security, money, and a mate.

As a memorable billboard on the streets of San Francisco once urged, “Be someone. Buy something.”

To the dismay of the capitalist class worldwide, the rate of profit these days may not be as spectacular as during the African slave trade of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (the times of the primitive accumulation of capital). The cosmetics trade, however, which in the name of “beauty” promotes everything from skin whiteners to grossly disfiguring “body sculpting” and genital mutilation, is today one of the most lucrative “in-

dustries” spread far and wide across every continent of the capitalist world.

Understanding how and why women and adolescents are most vulnerable to the hucksters of these grossly imagined and grossly expensive commodities is the second gift this book brings to its readers.

The oppression of women, the half of humanity that delivers new human life to the world, is not a product of our biology. Its roots are not to be found in the animal kingdom. Women were reduced to the “second sex,” subordinate to men, a mere ten thousand years ago, give or take a few thousand. That’s hardly a blink of the eye in the six million years since our first known human ancestors emerged from the primate world. As Reed points out, this subjugation of women was inextricable from the rise of class divisions based on private as opposed to communal ownership of land and the products of social labor.

The universal second-class status of women in class-divided society is a *social* relationship, an economic relationship. How and why did that condition come about? And how can it be ended?

What does any of this have to do with the material and emotional insecurities

of women and adolescents today? How do capitalists play on these conditions to generate profits as they sell their snake oil — and try to persuade women they need and *want* to have their bodies surgically mutilated.

These are some of the questions explored in this book. And Reed and Hansen answer with an unequivocal affirmation: That the road to ending the oppression and exploitation of women is inseparable from the revolutionary battle by the working class and its exploited allies the world over to take state power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women was first published in book format by Pathfinder Press in 1986. The introductory article, “Norms of beauty and fashion are inseparable from the class struggle,” tells the story of how the correspondence and articles collected here came to be written in the 1950s and preserved as a mimeographed discussion bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party.

A Farsi edition of the book appeared in Iran in 2002, published by Golâzin, a Tehran-based publishing house led by

‘Ending women’s oppression is part of the working-class battle to take state power out of capitalists’ hands . . .’

women, and has been reprinted three times since then. The first Spanish edition came out in 2010, published in Cuba under the imprint of Ciencias Sociales. Pathfinder’s first Spanish-language edition followed in 2014, incorporating the lively comments about the book delivered by Isabel Moya, a leader of the Federation of Cuban Women, at the 2011 Havana International Book Fair.

For nearly four decades the book has been one of the most popular titles published by Pathfinder Press, with cumulative sales topping 18,000.

Continued on next page



Capitalists use come-hither images to convince women that buying “the right things” can help them beat out rivals in the dog-eat-dog market for happiness, security and a mate. Ad says: “Wear Riding Hood Red at your own grave risk ... we warn you, you’re going to be followed!” It’s a risk wearing this “tantalizing invitation.”

Working people in Iran stand up to rulers’ warmongering

BY SETH GALINSKY

Despite attempts by the reactionary capitalist regime in Iran to whip up support among working people for its escalating confrontation with Israel and convince workers now is not the time for protests, growing numbers of workers are taking to the streets.

This includes workers at oil refineries, platforms and other oil facilities who have been holding weekly protests for over a year — and occasional work slowdowns — demanding higher wages and pensions, better work conditions and job safety. Oil exports are the mainstay of Iran’s capitalist economy.

“The current situation in Iran has made a war with Israel and its main supporter, the U.S., inevitable,” the Tehran daily *Jahan-e-Sanati* reported Oct. 21. Amid “turbulent” stock, gold and currency markets, the paper complained, there is “widespread dissatisfaction among teachers, wheat farmers, retirees, nurses, and other social groups.”

The government arrested three people and warned 16 others for criticizing the Tehran-led “resistance front” with Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and militia forces in Syria and Iraq, calling it an “unforgivable sin.” In reality this is a sign of deep opposition to the regime’s goal of destroying Israel and killing the Jews.

Hoping to quell the protests, high-ranking government officials have been meeting with oil workers. They “act as if the situation is so dire that we should accept a lesser evil,” said the call for an Oct. 21 union meeting in Asalouye province. “But no, no, no! We will die

before accepting this humiliation.” Oil workers protested at more than a dozen sites Oct. 20-21, including hundreds in Asalouye.

After the protests, one worker wrote that some argue “Israel’s goal is to create dissatisfaction in society to achieve its objectives. Well, we don’t even need Israel for that, since our own officials are imposing salary caps, depriving workers of their rights, taking taxes. ... At least Israel declares its goals, so you know who you’re dealing with — there’s no hypocrisy. But the official who brings these miseries upon the people and is hypocritical about it is the worst oppressor.”

Workers who held a meeting on Lavan island, a major oil terminal, vowed to protest twice a week “with even greater passion and determination.”



Oil workers in Ahvaz, Iran, at weekly “protest Tuesday” Oct. 22, one of more than a dozen at oil facilities to demand higher wages, full retirement benefits, improved conditions on the job.

Canada port, rail workers back each others’ right to strike

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — Port and railroad union members in Quebec and across Canada are fighting for better pay to cope with high prices and more livable schedules.

On Oct. 7, Longshoremen’s Union Local 375, an affiliate of Canadian Union of Public Employees, announced that its 1,197 members at the port of Montreal who work for the Maritime Employers Association would refuse overtime beginning Oct. 10.

A week earlier, 300 unionists at two terminals run by Termont, which handles 41% of container traffic at the port, went on a three-day strike.

The longshore workers at Canada’s second-largest port rejected the employ-

ers’ last offer by over 99% and voted 98% to authorize a strike. As soon as picket signs went up, union members were greeted with solidarity from passing truckers and others.

Port workers are required to call in every afternoon to find out if, when and where they are working the next day. They can be forced to work 19 days out of 21 all year-round. This makes family, social and personal life unmanageable.

Among those at the picket in solidarity with the port workers has been Teamsters union members who work on the Canadian National Railway. In late August, after some 10,000 freight rail workers went on strike at CN or were locked out by Canadian Pacific Kansas City bosses for three days, Ottawa ordered them back to work, claiming their actions were harming the “economy.”

The presidents of port workers unions from Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax held a press conference here to back the rail workers’ right to strike. “Port workers across Canada will not allow the right to strike to be

put in the shredder,” Montreal CUPE spokesman Michel Murray said.

The day after the longshore workers announced plans to indefinitely refuse overtime, 10 boss associations, from the Chamber of Marine Commerce to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, sent an open letter to the federal government demanding action to stop the threat of strikes in the transportation industries.

Federal Labor Minister Steven MacKinnon proposed Oct. 14 that the dockworkers’ union and Maritime Employers Association take their dispute before a special mediator for 90 days. During that time union members would be barred from refusing overtime. The union rejected the mediator’s plan.

“The labor movement and all working people need to mobilize solidarity with the Montreal port workers and defend our right to use our unions to bargain and to strike,” said Philippe Tessier, a rail worker and Teamster member. He is also the Communist League candidate for the Quebec National Assembly.

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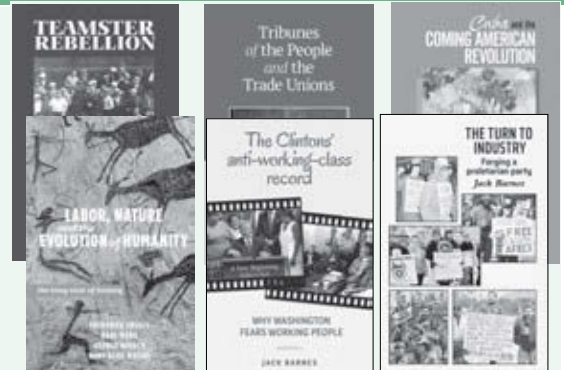
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Columbus 'deserves our respect, deserves to be remembered'

BY JANET POST

The attempts by liberals and the middle-class left to eradicate Columbus Day, a national holiday in October since 1937, honoring 15th-century explorer Christopher Columbus, along with statues and other tributes to Columbus, stepped up this year. These ahistorical political forces say the holiday should be renamed "Indigenous Peoples' Day."

In 2021 President Joseph Biden issued an official proclamation creating Indigenous Peoples' Day, a move backed by Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris and other capitalist politicians, as they attempt to portray a more "politically correct" capitalist rule.

In many cities, governments have provoked confrontations with Italian American communities over the holiday and local statues of Columbus. Dozens of the statues have been defaced, removed or destroyed. And Columbus Day has been "cancelled" on many college campuses.

Similar actions have been carried out by some governments in Latin America and the Caribbean. The government of Trinidad and Tobago announced it would redraw the nation's coat of arms, replacing Columbus' ships — the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria — with a steel drum.

In its July 13, 2020, issue of the *Militant*, Managing Editor Terry Evans wrote an article entitled "Destruction of statues seeks to erase history we need to know." It said, "Behind the destruction and removal of monuments lies the notion that by erasing symbols from the past, reflecting different stages of class development, you can 'cancel' them and pretend they didn't happen.

"Knowing the real history of past class struggles is key to charting a road forward. Along that road working people will decide what statues and other historical monuments we want to keep and where, and what new ones to erect.

"We don't need small self-appointed groups imposing their own will on others tearing down statues, putting barriers in front of working people learning from our history, and gaining confi-

dence in what we can become."

He pointed out that working people today can't judge past civilizations by comparison with conditions today, many the result of mighty class struggles and revolutionary transformations. Things that we reject today have accompanied important social advances in the past. That's true of Columbus' "discovery" of the Americas.

Holiday amid anti-Italian violence

Columbus Day was originally called Discovery Day, a national celebration to be held Oct. 21, 1892, declared by President Benjamin Harrison on the 400th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the Bahamas.

This came amid anti-immigrant violence aimed at soaring numbers of Italians coming to the U.S. in search of jobs and a new life. In 1880 Italian immigration was 44,230. In 1890 it had jumped to 484,027. The Ku Klux Klan and other racist and nativist groups went after Italians — as well as the Irish — because they were Catholic. In 1891, 11 Italian immigrants were captured in New Orleans by a mob led by many of the city's political leaders, and then lynched.

Harrison, whose reelection campaign was faltering, had no special interest in Italian or other immigrants but hoped to reap a new pool of political support by appealing to Catholic voters. He also appealed to the Irish, as an 1887 speech shows: "What Ireland needs is not coercion, is not the constable, is not the soldier with musket and bayonet. What Ireland needs is liberal laws, that emancipate her people from the results of long centuries of ill government."

Columbus and the Americas

The four voyages of Columbus and his crews to the Caribbean and South America between 1492 and 1504 opened a door to the advancement of human history, as well as a clash of social systems



Prison in New Orleans, Louisiana, where 11 Italian prisoners were lynched by mob organized by city leaders, March 14, 1891. Violence against Catholic immigrants soared in late 1800s.

that begat brutal colonial enslavement.

Armando Hart, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution and longtime minister of culture, gave an interview to *Granma* published in February 1991. He explained, "The Europeans made these discoveries in order to expand trade and the known world. These events, in and of themselves, were revolutionary events that extended human culture into a dimension unknown until that moment.

"Since the fall of the Roman empire, 1,000 years before, nothing of that magnitude had taken place. Actually, it's hard to find a more significant event before 1492, and after that date it is comparable to the splitting of the atom."

But, he stated, "The conquest had three serious consequences: the strategic backwardness in Spain; the annihilation of the indigenous peoples and cultures; and African slavery. These last two phenomena cannot be accepted or justified in any way, today or ever, and we must reject them wholeheartedly.

"The essence of the problem is that with each scientific achievement in the history of man there is a dramatic dichotomy: the possibility for enormous progress in human liberation, on the one

hand, and the interests of the decadent classes, on the other," he said.

"Medieval obscurantism and reactionary interests in Spain overshadowed the prestige and authority of the great discoveries made by Christopher Columbus."

In October 1992, marking the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas, Hart said in Holguín, Cuba, "Before 1492 there was no world in the modern sense. What was the world was only a fragment of the Earth.

"Columbus deserves our respect, deserves to be remembered, because what he really discovered five centuries ago was the road to the world. That discovery was greater than what the Admiral imagined he had found."

This is what it means to see past events along humanity's road forward. This is Marxism.

To learn more about the clash between the indigenous societies of the Americas and the social system that was beginning to emerge in Europe in Columbus' time — capitalism — *Militant* readers are encouraged to read the book *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History*, published by Pathfinder Press.

Boeing strikers discuss, vote on tentative new contract

Continued from front page

are one of the biggest issues," Myles Sims, a wing panels machine operator with 12 years at Boeing, told the *Militant*. Sims would get a partial pension because his start date was before pensions were lost in a 2014 contract that narrowly passed.

That bitterly contested concession contract froze pensions for workers, eliminated them for new hires, increased employee medical insurance expenses, and gave a measly 0.5% wage raise annually over an eight-year contract, with a no-strike clause.

"We're already dealing with inflation from the last 16 years," Sims said. "If we don't deal with it now, we might have to go out again four years from now.

"A lot of us want to go back to work, send kids to college, get back to our lives," he continued. "It used to be you got a job at Boeing, you had it made. Now you have to get a second job. That's not just here, that's through the rest of the country." It's why, he explained, they have stood strong throughout this struggle with 24/7 pickets.

Vincent Auger, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Washington state, met Sean Mulvihill, a ver-

tical painter, on the picket line Oct. 21. They discussed how workers at Spirit AeroSystems, which makes fuselages for the Renton plant, went on strike in 2023 and made gains on pushing back mandatory overtime.

"That's one of the big issues here," Mulvihill, a father of two small children, said. "I want to spend time with my family — you can't put a price on that. Working a lot puts stress on my family.

"The pension is my top priority. I'm shooting for an hourly wage bump and an increase in 401(k). The health insurance is manageable, and ideally we'll get more say on overtime," he said.

Machinist members prepared and counseled new hires to gear up for a strike this year. "But things are starting to get tight," Mulvihill admitted. "I don't talk to a lot of people, but most people I talk to say 'no' across the board to the company's offer. We're going to stand strong as long as everyone else does. It's a really good mood on the lines."

The union slogan on T-shirts and signs says, "This is our future, our fight!" This attitude has been evident throughout the struggle. They get a steady stream of support from workers passing by, from school bus drivers to Boeing firefight-

ers, nurses, hotel workers, electricians, railroaders, retail workers and others, strikers told the *Militant*.

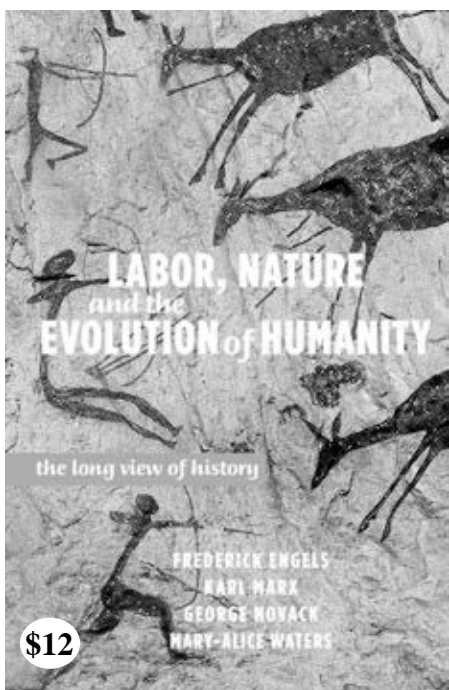
Pressure has increased on Boeing as the strike continues, with the company losing an estimated \$1 billion a month. The bosses are already facing difficulty after two deadly 737 MAX crashes and other challenges. CEO Kelly Ortberg has announced plans to cut 17,000 jobs and sell up to \$25 billion in stock. The company delivered just one 737 jet this month, its best selling model, as production is shut down tight.

Suppliers for Boeing have also begun to be affected. Spirit AeroSystems announced it was furloughing 700 workers. Senior Aerospace, a U.K. based company, is also weighing layoffs.

Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su has been meeting with union and company representatives, pushing for a settlement.

"Boeing has been hobbled by investigations into crashes and a mid-air mishap, production delays and a strike. A breakup or bankruptcy are no longer unthinkable," the *Wall Street Journal* wrote Oct. 21.

The strike is one of a number of important labor battles unfolding today.



Where did humanity come from? How did we arrive where we are today? Why is that even important? Because without understanding how human society, since our remotest ancestors, has been created through social labor, working people remain prisoners of the capitalist epoch in which we live.

pathfinderpress.com

Pathfinder was born with the October 1917 revolution in Russia

Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution by Mary-Alice Waters is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October. The excerpts below are based on Waters' presentation to a conference on "Political and Social Publishing in the 1990s," held Feb. 2-3, 1998, in Havana. She was one of several speakers who addressed the meeting, sponsored by Casa Editora Abril, publishing house of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba. Copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Pathfinder Press was born with the October Revolution. As a publishing house, our direct line of continuity goes back to the earliest publication in the United States of speeches and writings by Lenin, on the eve of the 1917 revolutions in Russia. That is when magazines like the *International Socialist Review*, produced in the United States by left-wing militants in the Socialist Party, began publishing articles by the Bolshevik leader.

Following the victorious October 1917 insurrection of the workers, peasants, and soldiers of the tsarist empire, which opened the road to the first socialist revolution, revolutionary-minded working people the world over sought



V.I. Lenin, leader of Bolshevik Party that led Russian workers, peasants in world's first socialist revolution, speaks in Moscow in May 1920. Standing next to podium is Leon Trotsky. Pathfinder distributes works by Lenin, Trotsky, Fidel Castro, Malcolm X, Evelyn Reed and many others.

to understand and follow the example of the first worker-bolsheviks. By 1919 a regroupment of left-wing Socialists, members of the Industrial Workers of the World, and others had come together in the United States to found something truly new — the communist movement in North America, whose explicit goal was to emulate the Bolsheviks. Through many and varied channels they began to publish the periodicals, pamphlets, and books that for the first time in the twentieth century brought to the working class in our hemisphere a communist perspective that drew on the toilers' initial experience of taking power, defending it, and using it worldwide.

I start with this because it is the clearest way I can explain what guides the editorial policy of Pathfinder to this day. For more than eighty years, Pathfinder and its various predecessors (from Merit and Pioneer, all the way back to the Literature Department of the Workers Party of America) have had one and only one objective: to publish and distribute as widely as possible the books, pamphlets, and magazines that are necessary to advance the construction of a communist party in the United States — an objective inseparable from the building of a communist movement internationally.

From 1917 to today, we have sought to defend a course true to Lenin's leadership of the Russian Revolution and the early years of the Communist In-

ternational. Lenin's political trajectory was the opposite of the course that later became identified with the Stalin-led Communist Party of the Soviet Union — the consequences of which are being registered in the colossal events of recent years that continue to unfold throughout Central Europe, the Balkans, and the former Soviet republics. Pathfinder has always prioritized printing works created by revolutionists who exemplified Lenin's internationalist and proletarian

'Communism is not a doctrine, but a movement'

— Frederick Engels, 1847

course in deeds as well as words.

We begin with the world and the ongoing facts before us, with the most important challenges of the world class struggle, thinking about how to strengthen the fighting vanguard of the working class so it is better armed to understand the world in which we live; to understand the history of the modern working-class movement; to become more conscious of its strength and historic responsibilities; and to chart a line of march toward taking power in order to open the road to the construction of socialism.

We have always subscribed to Engels's famous response to Karl Heinzen, written in 1847 a few months before

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels drafted the founding document of the modern workers movement, the Communist Manifesto. "Communism is not a doctrine, but a movement," Engels wrote. "It proceeds not from principles but from facts. Insofar as it is a theory, [it] is the theoretical expression of the position of the proletariat" in its struggle with the bourgeoisie and the "theoretical summation of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat" and its allies from exploitation and oppression. . . .

Since 1928 when the *Militant* first began publishing — and 1931 when Pathfinder's predecessor Pioneer Publishers produced its first title — there has always been a close working collaboration between the newspaper and the publishing house. Many of the materials that eventually find their way into Pathfinder publications first appear in the pages of the *Militant*. It couldn't be otherwise with a publishing house that is always in the thick of struggles and seeking to promote a clear class perspective.

From the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, for example, the *Militant* has been the main periodical in the United States that published important documents and speeches by leaders of the Cuban Revolution. These were often then rapidly reprinted by Pioneer Publishers as pamphlets and used widely by the active defenders of the Cuban Revolution both in the United States and Canada, many of whom organized themselves during the revolution's opening years as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

In the days before photo-offset printing, it was especially important to be able to reuse the hot-lead type set for the newspaper, which was by far the costliest element in the printing process.

Pamphlets such as *The Second Declaration of Havana* were first published this way, for example — another title that Pathfinder has kept continuously in print, in this case since 1962. Tomorrow, in fact — February 4 — we will be marking the 36th anniversary of that call to action to the toilers of the Americas. We still use it widely as one of the best and most basic pieces of literature we have to explain the character of U.S. imperialist domination of Latin America, the inevitable resistance to it, and the place of the Cuban Revolution in that uncompromising resistance.

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End US rulers' economic war against Cuba

Continued from front page

which class wielded power in 1959. They defended their revolution arms in hand against Washington's aggression.

The embargo, pursued by every U.S. administration — Democrat and Republican alike — has had a devastating impact on Cuba's working people. Cuba suffered four island-wide blackouts Oct. 17-20 as the aging Cuban electrical grid, deprived of spare parts and oil, repeatedly collapsed. Millions of Cubans were left without power for several days. The outages came as parts of the island faced destructive winds from Hurricane Oscar.

Cuba offers aid to toilers worldwide whenever calamity strikes, from Ebola in Africa to COVID in Italy, while the rulers in Washington gloat at the crises the Cuban people face.

The U.S. rulers' long financial and trade embargo has been exacerbated by extra sanctions inflicted in the name of Washington's outrageous designation of Cuba as a "sponsor of terrorism." These have deepened the power shortages and other crises confronting the Cuban people.

The centerpiece of the U.S. rulers' relentless war is the "economic, commercial and financial blockade" of the island, Cuba's minister of foreign affairs, Bru-

no Rodríguez, told the U.N. Sept. 28. It is meant, he said, to "cut off the country's financial revenues; bring about the collapse of the economy and create a situation of political and social instability."

The damage caused by Washington's economic warfare "has an impact on the life of all Cubans," Rodríguez told the U.N. Estimated losses to Cuba totaled over \$5 billion last year.

The U.S. rulers' sweeping embargo imposes countless obstacles to Cuba's ability to purchase foodstuffs, medical supplies and equipment worldwide. International banks, fearing reprisals from Washington, refuse the most elementary banking services.

The labor movement needs to draw on the example of the California State AFL-CIO, whose July convention overwhelmingly passed a motion protesting the Biden administration's "inclusion of Cuba on the list of state sponsors of terrorism."

Unionists on the front lines of today's struggles have a great deal to learn from the rich example of how millions under the leadership of Fidel Castro carried through their socialist revolution in Cuba. The Socialist Workers Party demands that Washington lift its cruel embargo of Cuba, take Havana off the "State Sponsors of Terrorism" list and end its interference in Cuba's internal affairs.

Striking Boston hotel workers score a win

BY EMILY FITZSIMMONS

BOSTON — The "Make them pay!" chants, blaring air horns and drumming of the UNITE HERE Local 26 strikers can be heard blocks away from the Downtown Theater District here. Three weeks into their strike at the Hilton Park Plaza hotel, workers are keeping the picket line strong.

"The Omni contract is a great thing, a win for hotel workers and our union. They won all six of their demands," Lotfi Mokrane, a strike captain for Local 26, told the *Militant*. The contract ratified Oct. 20 by almost 700 hotel workers at the Omni Boston at the Seaport and Omni Parker House hotels includes a \$10 raise for non-tip workers and \$5 for tipped workers over the course of the four-year contract. It also includes pension and health care improvements, better job protection and the June-teenth holiday.

Some 600 UNITE HERE members are still on strike at the Hilton Park Plaza and Hilton Boston Logan Airport hotels, part of the 4,400 union hotel workers on strike nationally today.

"We just need to stay firm," Alberto Hernandez, a bellhop with 25 years at the Park Plaza, said. "We are way behind hotel workers in other cities, and Boston has one of the highest costs of living in the U.S."

Why fight to defend constitutional freedoms is key for the working class

Continued from front page

Every time workers defend ourselves, organize unions or engage in political activity, we make use of constitutional freedoms won during the First and Second American Revolutions and in the class struggle since.

The U.S. Constitution enshrines the class rule of the U.S. propertied owners. But the class battles that led to its adoption and the passage of subsequent amendments forced the inclusion of crucial protections against government interference.

Workers who get caught up in the capitalist "justice system" rapidly learn that the state and its courts and cops are not neutral. These lessons are driven home during experiences on union picket lines and in other battles with the bosses.

Over decades unionists, Black rights fighters, opponents of Washington's wars and the Socialist Workers Party have faced spying, harassment and disruption by the rulers' political police, the FBI, under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

The class character of U.S. society underscores the high stakes for working people in the unqualified defense of constitutional protections from the rulers' state.

That's true whether the target of their attack is a Colorado baker fighting to defend his livelihood and uphold freedom of speech and the right to worship as he chooses; the National Association of Letter Carriers, rail workers and other unionists who are told going on strike is illegal; leaders of the African People's Socialist Party, framed-up because some of their political views align with those of the Vladimir Putin regime in Moscow; or Donald Trump, who faces a slew of lawsuits generated by President Joseph Biden's Justice Department with the goal of rigging the 2024 election.

Liberal forces lead the attack on political rights today, yet they insist that Trump is the real "threat to democracy."

Democratic vice presidential candidate Timothy Walz told MSNBC in 2022, "There's no guarantee to free speech on misinformation or hate speech and especially around our democracy."

When he was challenged on this on Fox News Oct. 13, Walz said his support for restricting free speech is backed by comments made by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. The judge approved jailing two members of the Socialist Party under the witch hunt Espionage Act for passing out flyers opposing conscription during World War I. Holmes said it was like admitting there's no free speech "if you yell fire in a crowded theatre."

But the First Amendment doesn't contain any "ifs." It says, "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." Period.

Under the rubric of combating "disinformation," Biden's administration has attempted to impose censorship on challenges to their stances on climate change, "gender identity" and other questions.

Free speech 'hamstrings the government'

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Kentanji Brown Jackson attacked First Amendment protections earlier this year in a case challenging attempts by the White House and the FBI to compel big tech companies to self-censor the websites they run. On March 18, Jackson told Louisiana Solicitor General Benjamin Aguiñaga, "My biggest concern is that your view has the First Amendment hamstringing the government."

But that's the point of the First Amendment. It was adopted to "hamstring" the government. It bars it from interfering in discussion and debate, including against those who hold views the capitalist rulers oppose.

Hillary Clinton complained Oct. 5 that if Facebook, X or Instagram "don't moderate and monitor the content, we lose total control." Similar views are expressed across the Democratic Party, including by Democratic Socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who says, "We're going to have to figure out how we rein in media."

The "we" Clinton and Ocasio-Cortez seek to protect is the U.S. state apparatus. But when they talk about the government, they try to strip it of its actual class character. They hide the fact that the U.S. government exists to serve the capitalist class, their profit-driven offensive against working people, and their imperialist interventions and wars abroad.

Workers have an opposite starting point — the need for protection from that state and all of its institutions, from the government and courts to the FBI, and the ever-growing number of federal regulatory agencies that intrude into workers' lives and impose the political agenda of the liberal meritocrats who run these agencies.

Liberals are increasingly calling for the Constitution as a whole to be dumped. They say it was written by slave owners. They ignore the fact that it was the product of a mighty revolutionary struggle against the oppression of the British monarchy, alongside subsequent battles of farmers and other sections of the toiling population.

One example is a widely touted new book *No Democracy Lasts Forever: How the Constitution Threatens the United States*, by Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the University of California, Berkeley law school.

"Trump owes his political assent to the Constitution," Jennifer Szalai asserts in her favorable *New York Times* review of the book. She adds that the Constitution fosters "the widespread cynicism that helps authoritarianism grow."

Liberal venom against the Constitution is ultimately aimed at the working class. In 1939 Leon Trotsky, a leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, explained, "Under conditions of the bourgeois regime, 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."

Richter: 'Workers, farmers need to fight together'



Militant/Laura Anderson

PLANT CITY, Fla. — Dennis Richter, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, talks with Plant City farmer Karl Butts, Oct. 17. One hundred mph winds from recent storms wreaked havoc on what only two weeks earlier had been growing farm fields. "For a family farmer raising strawberries it's a high-stakes operation. It costs \$10,000 or more per acre to get the fruit planted," Butts told Richter. Family farmers are natural allies of the working class who need to fight together against the capitalist exploiters, Richter told a Miami campaign meeting the next day.

— STEVE WARSHALL