

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**Norms of beauty and fashion are inseparable from class struggle**  
 — PAGES 7-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 42 NOVEMBER 11, 2024

## UN votes to condemn US economic war against Cuba

BY JOHN STUDER

In a special two-day session, the United Nations General Assembly met Oct. 29-30, debated and voted overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution submitted by Cuba calling for an end to Washington's punishing 65-year economic war against the island's people and their revolution. The vote was 187 in favor, with only two opposed — the U.S. and Israel, and one abstention, Moldova.

The U.N. has passed a similar resolution every year since 1992.

This assault on Cuba has been pursued by every U.S. administration since 1961 — Democratic and Republican alike. It is the policy of the capitalist ruling families in the U.S.

Speakers also denounced the Joseph Biden administration's outrageous decision to keep Cuba on its witch hunt list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, which subjects the Cuban people to additional privations.

The embargo was announced in 1960, as President John Kennedy

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## Boeing workers vote to continue their strike, win broad support

BY VINCENT AUGER

SEATTLE — Members of the International Association of Machinists District 751 and W24 decisively voted down Boeing's latest contract offer — by 64% — Oct. 23. Some 33,000 workers at the aerospace manufacturer from here in Washington to Southern California have been on strike since Sept. 13.

The bosses' offer included a 35% wage increase over four years, along with a 4% annual bonus and a \$7,000 bonus now to try to get workers to pass the contract. But it didn't include reinstatement of the pension plan, a central demand of the strikers.

In 2014 the union passed a concession contract after bosses threatened they would move production from the Seattle area, throwing thousands here out of work. That contract froze the pension plan, eliminated pensions for new hires, increased medical insurance costs and locked workers into 0.5% annual wage increases for eight years.

Getting the pension back is the most important part of the next contract, one

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## Rachele Fruit for president • Dennis Richter vice president

# Vote SWP! The working class needs to take political power!



Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for president, speaks in Washington, D.C., Oct. 26, alongside James Harris, SWP candidate for Congress. "We need to build a party of labor," she said.

## Back the working-class alternative to capitalist exploitation, oppression

BY SAMIR HAZBOUN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "As conditions of life for the working class in the U.S. deteriorate and wars abroad escalate, millions of workers are being drawn into politics," Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, told an Oct. 26 campaign meeting here.

Prior to her Washington visit Fruit had been in North Carolina where she expressed support and talked with people whose lives had been upended by the social disaster left in the wake of Hurricane

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## Join us in expanding the reach of SWP, 'Militant'

Vote for Rachele Fruit and Dennis Richter, the Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice president, and the party's candidates for Congress and Senate around the country Nov. 5!

## EDITORIAL

And join party members in the days and weeks ahead bringing solidarity to strike picket lines, strengthening the unions and expanding the party's reach. Help to bring home the party's fall campaigns. Win readers to the *Militant* and

Continued on page 13

## SWP leaders explain deepening showdown in the Middle East



Hamas thugs in Khan Younis, Gaza, with woman brutally taken hostage from Israel Oct. 7, 2023. Anti-Jewish pogrom by Tehran-backed terror group launched war across Middle East.

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — "One year after the Oct. 7 pogrom in Israel, there is no change in the decadeslong reactionary aims of the regime in Tehran and the organizations it leads, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and others," said Dave Prince, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee. He was speaking on today's deepening showdown in the Middle East at a Militant Labor

Forum here Oct 13.

The pogrom announced another Holocaust, Prince said. It hoisted the blood-soaked banner that Palestine "will be free" — *free of Jews*. This includes the Iranian capitalist regime's threat to use nuclear weapons to achieve that goal, with horrendous consequences for millions of Jews, Palestinians and Arabs in that region, as well as for the toilers worldwide.

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## Democrat, Republican campaigns have no answers for working people

BY TERRY EVANS

For eight years Democrats have hammered away on one central point — telling the world that Donald Trump is "dangerous" and has to be stopped at all costs.

Lacking any positive program to deal with the crisis conditions working people face, Democratic Party presidential candidate Kamala Harris and a broad swath of her supporters have taken to insisting Trump is a full-fledged "fascist." This includes ex-Army General Mark Milley, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with basketball executive and Shark Tank performer Mark Cuban and John Wojcik, editor-in-chief of the Communist Party's *People's World*.

Their hyperbolic alert is aimed at convincing working people we must subordinate our own class interests and back the Democrats, one of the U.S. capitalist rulers' two main political parties.

The Republican candidate is "fascist to the core," Milley declares in a new book by Bob Woodward published Oct. 15.

With the election days away, Harris tells people who plan to vote for Trump that doing so is politically and morally

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## Inside

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Carlos Harris released from prison after 20-year frame-up 12

Workers face scourge of high prices, bosses get rich 12

— On the picket line, p. 11 —

UK food workers strike against wage cuts, for union rights

Montreal port workers plan strike at Termont Terminals

# Boeing workers continue strike

Continued from front page

worker, who did not want to give her name, told the *Militant*. “Boeing said this is a nonstarter,” she said. “However, the 401(k) is so unpredictable. You don’t know how much it’ll be worth once you need it. We need something more guaranteed than that.”

Under a pension plan workers collect a fixed monthly benefit for the rest of their lives. Payouts from a 401(k) — which are overwhelmingly funded by deductions from a worker’s paycheck and invested in stocks — go up or down depending on stock market fluctuations.

“The most important thing to me in this contract is having a livable wage,” Debra Harrington told the *Militant* at a picket line at Boeing’s Renton plant. She works on the P-8 Navy aircraft there. “We want to catch up on 16 years of low wages, and then after that Boeing should pay us what we deserve.”

Harrington pointed to the high amount of overtime many of them put in to stay on top of basic life expenses and to meet the profit-driven production goals of the company. “I know some workers here were doing over 50 days of work in a row just to pay their mortgages. They have families they are trying to take care of, but some of them hardly get to see them.”

## Solidarity is pouring in

Raymo Natalizio, 34, a Tacoma port worker, was at the picket line in Renton. He was recently part of an organizing drive to win recognition for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. “My family has been in the ILWU and I’ve been to many picket lines. Joining others on strike gives you a sense of

community,” he told the *Militant*. His partner is one of the Machinists currently on strike at Boeing.

Members of the retiree group of the ILWU here contributed \$500. “Four of us went to the union hall in Seattle and gave them the check,” Mark Downs, one of the retired ILWU workers, said. “We also went to the picket line with our signs.” The ILWU wouldn’t have won strikes it fought in previous decades “if it wasn’t for solidarity from other unions,” Downs said.

Members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace union, which represents the engineers at Boeing and Spirit AeroSystems, have shown up regularly to join the picket lines bringing sandwiches and water.

The engineers’ union is donating up to \$99,000 to IAM District 751’s hardship fund, depending on the length of the strike: \$33,000 has already been donated and another contribution of \$16,500 is scheduled for this week.

Local businesses and farmers have been donating pounds of fruit, coffee and fresh meals to the pickets and union halls. “Seattle Strike HQ has been the



Militant/Rebecca Williamson

IAM strikers outside Boeing plant in Renton, Washington, Oct. 21, before bosses’ contract offer voted down Oct. 23. Proposal didn’t include return of pensions, key issue in the strike.

bearer of crates of produce from Artemis Farms in Woodinville and Goblin Farm in Woodinville. Just last week, IAM 751 members were gifted nearly 1,200 pounds of grapes,” an Oct. 28 strike update by the union says.

Additionally, local restaurants and other businesses have been offering

striking workers temporary jobs.

More help is needed. To send messages of support and make a donation, go to [www.iam751.org](http://www.iam751.org) and click on “Contract 2024.”

Rebecca Williamson contributed to this article.

## BRICS meets in Russia, tries to cement anti-US bloc

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The BRICS alliance, led by Beijing and Moscow to counter Washington, held its annual summit Oct. 22-24, hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Behind its veneer of unanimity, the conference highlighted the divergent interests within the bloc, tensions over Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, and worldwide economic uncertainty and rising military conflicts.

The summit was held in Kazan, the capital of the Russian republic of Tatarstan, and drew representatives from 36 governments. Putin hoped to use the largest gathering of government heads in Russia since his forces invaded Ukraine to highlight the difficulties Washington and its allies have had isolating his regime.

In recent years Moscow and Beijing expanded BRICS, whose initials reflect the founding governments — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. It now includes the governments of United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia. At the end of last year, the new Argentinian government pulled back from joining, as did the rulers of Saudi Arabia.

Like every other multinational bloc across the capitalist world, the BRICS alliance is riven by competing national interests. Moscow and Beijing try to harness it to advance their challenges to Washington’s world economic and po-

litical supremacy and to seek more trade and investment opportunities. But other BRICS governments are more aligned with Washington or try to balance between it and Moscow and Beijing.

## World capitalist crisis deepens

Nations whose governments are in BRICS now account for over half the earth’s population and a third of its economic output, with China predominating. The grouping aims to rival the G7, a club of the seven largest imperialist powers, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S.

More than 30 other nations from North Africa to the Mideast and Latin America to Southeast Asia have asked to join BRICS. They all hope to gain economic and political advantage against their rivals as the world capitalist crisis deepens.

The sheer economic size and increasingly assertive foreign and trade policy

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# THE MILITANT

Columbus ‘deserves our respect, to be remembered’

*“Before 1492 there was no world in the modern sense,” said Armando Hart, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution, in 1991. “Columbus deserves our respect.” Knowing the real history of past class struggles, including prejudice against Catholics, is key to charting a road forward.*

New Orleans prison where 11 Italians were lynched by mob led by city officials in 1891.

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# UN condemns embargo on Cuba

Continued from front page

acted on a secret State Department memorandum from Lestor Mallory. Noting that “the majority of Cubans support Castro,” Mallory proposed an economic war that “makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation, and overthrow of government.”

Cuba’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodríguez, addressed the U.N. session Oct. 30. “For five consecutive days, from Friday, Oct. 18 to Wednesday, Oct. 23, Cuban families had no electricity, except for a few hours,” he said, adding that these difficulties were exacerbated by the effects of Hurricane Oscar, which hit hardest in Guantánamo Province.

“The primary cause of the National Power System failure was the lack of fuel,” as well as “the precarious conditions of our power plants,” he said, both “a direct consequence of the extreme economic warfare measures applied by the U.S. government.”

“In the last few years the Cuban economy has experienced unprecedented difficulties,” he said. The causes “are varied,” but “in the case of Cuba, what makes this situation unique and extraordinary is the deliberate determination of the United States to asphyxiate the national economy; sabotage and impose insurmountable obstacles to prevent our growth and development.”

He pointed out, “Under Joseph Biden’s presidency, the losses caused to Cuba by the blockade amount to more than \$16 billion.”

“More than 80% of our population has only known Cuba under a blockade.”

“Our people and government highly appreciate and are deeply grateful,” he said, “for all the valuable expressions of support and solidarity received” at the meeting.

## Strong support for Cuba

During the debate over 50 governments and international organizations spoke in favor of the resolution.

Many of the most heartfelt and strong comments came from governments in

the Caribbean, and others who have benefited from Cuba’s solidarity. Ché Phillip, speaking both as the representative of Grenada and on behalf of Caricom, the Caribbean Economic Community, said, “Grenada stands with Cuba!” He described the political and material solidarity between the two peoples and strong diplomatic relations between the two governments.

Like virtually every other speaker from a Caribbean government, he placed the blame for the recent collapse of the electrical grid in Cuba on Washington, saying the U.S. government had strangled Cuba’s access to fuel, as well as its access to world credit and banking channels. He spoke of the selfless aid Grenada and other Caribbean countries have received from Cuba, in health care, sports and more. “Such solidarity makes the world a better place.”

“Belize unequivocally condemns the illegal and unjust unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States of America and calls for its immediate and unconditional end,” said a statement submitted by that country’s U.N. representative, Carlos Fuller. He also condemned “the arbitrary and baseless designation of Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism ... which only serves to perpetuate a narrative that is not reflective of the principles or actions of the Cuban government and people.

“Cuba has continued to exemplify resilience, solidarity and generosity, providing invaluable support to our region,” he added. This has been “transformative for Belize, significantly enhancing our national capacity in key areas such



Militant/Paul Mailhot

Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez, center, addresses supporters Oct. 30 at U.N. where resolution against U.S. embargo on Cuba passed 187-2 with one abstention.

as healthcare, education, sports and cultural development.”

Similar sentiments were expressed by Kereeta Whyte, representative of Barbados. She expressed their “deep gratitude for Cuba’s ongoing contributions to our national health service, particularly through the deployment of medical personnel to assist us during the COVID-19 pandemic,” honoring Cuba’s “unwavering commitment to solidarity.”

Speaking for Saint Lucia, Menissa Rambally pointed to the wide-ranging effects of Washington’s economic war on Cuba. “It affects and restricts access to foreign currency, inputs, raw materials, fuels, machinery, fertilizers, chemical products, technologies and the imposition of penalties on shipping companies that would otherwise service Cuba.”

“The unjust and abusive blockade against Cuba constitutes, without a doubt, one of the most serious, prolonged and systematic violations of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations,” Sophia Tesfamariam, ambassador to the U.N. from Eritrea, said.

“Cuba exports solidarity, not violence,” she said. “Since 1963, this small country has been showing to the world the true meaning of both solidarity and cooperation, by sending countless medical brigades to communities in need.”

The representatives from Dominica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago spoke along similar lines, as did the representatives from Vietnam and from Namibia, who called the U.S. embargo “a system of oppression unthinkable in the 21st century.”

# BRICS meets in Russia, tries to cement anti-US bloc

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of China’s rulers have given them a dominant influence in BRICS. Many countries asking to join have a heavy trade and debt dependence on Beijing.

Amid its worst financial crisis in decades, the government of Sri Lanka, with over half its foreign debt of almost \$50 billion owed to Beijing, has applied to join BRICS. In 2017, the island’s rulers were forced to turn over the port of

Hambantota to Beijing to get part of their debt cancelled.

Putin’s proposal to invite the government of Venezuela to join was vetoed by the Brazilian government. Brazil’s president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, doesn’t accept the result of July’s election in which Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro claimed a narrow win.

Just before the summit, the governments of India and China reached a deal to defuse tensions on their Himalayan border after deadly clashes between their troops took place there four years ago. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met formally in Kazan with China’s President Xi Jinping for the first time in five years.

The rulers of the two nations remain rivals for influence in their region. Beijing is a close ally of the rulers of neighboring Pakistan, who are in conflict with the Indian government. New Delhi is trying to offset Beijing’s growing economic and military weight. At the same time it is in BRICS, the Indian government is part of the Quad grouping with the imperialist rulers of the U.S., Japan and Australia.

The final statement from the summit condemned U.S.-led trade and financial sanctions against Russia, which fall hardest on working people there. The governments of China and India are buying Moscow’s oil at a heavily discounted rate, a crucial lifeline for Putin. But the summit gave no backing to the Putin regime’s invasion of Ukraine.

Putin led the push for BRICS governments to reduce their reliance on the U.S. dollar as a global currency. While bilateral trade in national currencies is

increasing, this hasn’t shaken the dollar’s world dominance.

Putin hoped to use the summit to showcase Moscow’s role in the world, but in reality its power has been diminished as a result of his regime’s long draining attempt to conquer Ukraine.

## Putin desperate for recruits

Across the Russian Federation, Moscow’s recruitment and arms production can’t keep up with heavy losses by its army. Men and armor are being depleted in suicidal attacks to try to wear down Ukrainian defenses.

Putin’s forces have had difficulty dislodging Ukrainian forces from hundreds of square miles of Russia’s Kursk territory they hold at the same time that Moscow is pursuing its offensive in Ukraine’s east.

Several thousand North Korean soldiers are reported to have been sent to Russia, possibly to be used in its western Kursk region. Putin signed a mutual defense treaty with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang in June.

The Ukrainian government launched a new Korean-language video Oct. 23 as part of its project “I Want to Live.” It calls on North Korean soldiers entering the war to surrender to Ukrainian forces. It says, “You must not die senselessly in a foreign land. You must not repeat the fate of hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers who will never return home!”

In the statement, North Korean troops are guaranteed safe conditions of detention, food, and medical care by the Ukrainian side. It is unclear whether the North Korean troops are involved in any combat.

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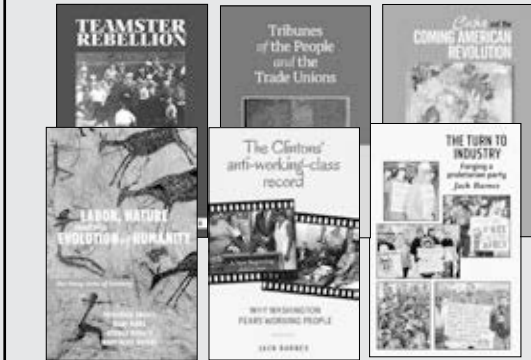
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# Join last 3 weeks in 'Militant,' books and SWP fund drive!

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

FORT WORTH, Texas — Marthen Goo, a member of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua, met Socialist Workers Party members George Chalmers and myself in Enid, Oklahoma, Oct. 20. Goo recently moved there and was encouraged by other members of his group to contact the SWP branch here.

Goo described the struggle of West Papuan's for independence from Indonesia, a fight he has been part of for many years. West Papua is the western half of the South Pacific island of Guinea.

With the backing of Washington, the Indonesian rulers invaded in 1963 and annexed the ethnically and culturally distinct West Papuan territory. West Papuans face brutal conditions under Indonesian government domination: lack of electricity, poverty, racist abuse and military repression. Capitalists, both from Indonesia and overseas, profit from mining and forestry on the island.

After hearing about the SWP program and 2024 election campaign, Goo endorsed. He also signed up for a one-year subscription to the *Militant* and bought copies of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch; Stakes for the International Working Class; Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power; and Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*. He contributed \$20 to the SWP's Party-Building Fund.

Party members are getting prepublication orders for the new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion and the Exploitation of Women*. "We are contacting new subscribers and campaign endorsers about the book and so far have sold four copies," SWP member Josefina Otero reports from Fort Worth.

There are three weeks left in the

campaign to win 1,300 readers to the *Militant*, get out the same number of books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries and to raise \$140,000 for the SWP Party-Building Fund. Members of the SWP and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. are mapping out plans to close in on their quotas for the campaign. The drive ends Nov. 19.

## Contribute to Party-Building Fund

Timothy Frankland, a retired postal worker, wrote a letter to the *Militant* thanking Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Rachele Fruit for taking part in a picket line of his union, the American Postal Workers Union. This was published in the Oct. 14 issue. This past week he also sent a contribution to the SWP Party-Building Fund with a note saying, "Keep up all of your amazing work."

The fund finances the work of the party, which relies on contributions from working people attracted to its program and activity. Keep the contributions coming!

In Philadelphia, SWP campaigners met *Militant* reader Troy Wynn at his home. "Why does the coverage in the *Militant* seem one-sided against the Democrats?" he asked. "The Republicans are bad too, they're not for us."

"What workers in the U.S. need is to build a party of labor independent of both of the two main capitalist parties," replied Ved Dookhun, the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania.

"I defend Israel and believe they have to defend themselves," Wynn said, "but more has to be done to prevent the loss of Palestinian lives."

" Hamas is responsible for the loss of Palestinian lives by imbedding itself and its weapons in hospitals and schools," Dookhun replied. "That's part of its campaign to pressure Israel." Hamas' defeat is necessary to

## 'Glad I stopped to talk,' rail worker tells Richter



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

CINCINNATI — Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, brought the party's working-class program to rail workers at the CSX Queensgate yard here Oct. 28. Jennifer Noell was among those who stopped to talk.

"I've seen your campaign supporters out here at the gate over the weeks," Noell said. She said she's currently working as a clerk, "but I've done all kinds of jobs in different yards, including driving forklifts and other equipment, both here and in upstate New York. I'd like to know what you think can be done to improve things for those of us who work for the railroads."

"I was a rail worker for over 16 years," Richter replied. "Today workers on the railroads are fighting against increasingly dangerous working conditions. The companies' drive for profits threatens lives every day. And not just the lives of rail workers." He pointed to the derailment of a Norfolk Southern freight train in East Palestine, Ohio, last year and the subsequent fire and burn off of toxic chemicals. "These so-called accidents show the danger of the bosses' profit drive to all working people."

"The Socialist Workers Party's campaign poses the need for working people to quit relying on the Democrats and Republicans, the parties of big business," Richter said. "It presents a fighting program to address the conditions of all workers, those of us who are unionized and those without unions. We need our own party, a party of labor. Workers need to take power away from the class of ruling billionaires. We need workers power."

"I'm glad I stopped to talk with you today," said Noell. She signed up to get a subscription to the *Militant* and wished Richter, "all the best in your campaign."

— JACQUIE HENDERSON

prevent more pogroms.

Wynn renewed his subscription for six months and picked up two books, *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* and *The Fight*

*Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*. He also kicked in \$5 for the Party-Building Fund.

In Hollywood, Florida, SWP campaigners met Hanna and Paulo Hidalgo

Continued on page 5

## Campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, SWP fund

Sept. 21 - November 19 (week five)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta	55	38	55	26	\$10,000	\$4,600
Chicago	90	64	90	58	\$14,000	\$5,849
Cincinnati	50	21	50	25	\$5,000	\$3,345
Fort Worth*	55	42	50	36	\$5,000	\$3,050
Los Angeles	115	70	115	60	\$15,000	\$5,730
Miami	35	14	35	9	\$5,000	\$1,425
Minneapolis	65	45	65	50	\$5,500	\$2,081
N. New Jersey	70	43	70	43	\$7,500	\$5,099
New York	100	58	115	83	\$20,000	\$11,136
Oakland	85	63	85	42	\$15,000	\$9,925
Philadelphia	60	34	60	31	\$6,500	\$2,545
Pittsburgh	40	20	40	17	\$6,000	\$2,082
Seattle	60	33	60	22	\$14,500	\$6,230
Washington	50	27	50	28	\$4,500	\$760
Other		10		65		\$1,240
Total U.S.	930	582	940	595	\$133,500	\$65,097
Prisoners		78				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London*	50	43	130	123		
Manchester*	45	40	40	32		
Total U.K.	95	83	170	155		
Canada	90	58	90	60		
Australia	30	20	30	27		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>\$133,500</b>	<b>\$65,097</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>\$140,000</b>	<b>\$87,500</b>
*Raised goal						

## Who are Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. president, and Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for vice president?

**Rachele Fruit**, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, joined the SWP in Philadelphia in 1970, where she was active in the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. As a high school student she participated in civil rights protests in 1964 during Mississippi Freedom Summer.

She explains that the Oct. 7, 2023, Tehran-backed Hamas pogrom in Israel marks a watershed in world politics. She makes defense of Israel as a refuge against Jew-hatred and pogroms a key part of her campaign.

In 2018 Fruit joined a solidarity brigade to Cuba and has built demonstrations opposing Washington's economic war against Cuba's socialist revolution. In 2023 and 2024, Fruit testified on behalf of the SWP for independence for Puerto Rico at the U.N. hearing on Decolonization. She attended an international conference of the Sugarcane Workers Union in the Dominican Republic last year.

Fruit first ran for office for the SWP in 1973 in Detroit, where the party was active in the fight against a police terror squad. She ran for governor of Georgia in 2018 and governor of Florida in 2022, campaigning for solidarity with labor struggles, against Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and in defense of Cuba's socialist revolution.

Today Fruit is a hotel worker in Miami and a member of UNITE HERE Local 355.

**Dennis Richter**, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, grew up in rural Minnesota. After joining the SWP in 1972 he worked with party members who came out of the labor struggles of the 1930s whose continuity went back to the Bolshevik Revolution. Richter organized and participated in demonstrations against the U.S. rulers' wars from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan. He has spoken out in defense of Ukrainians' fight to defend their national sovereignty.

An industrial worker for over 50 years, he has been active in the unions on the railroad, in meat-packing and in the steel and garment industries. He fights for workers control over rail transportation to guarantee safety.

Richter traveled to Cuba in 1971 and 2018, learning firsthand about the socialist revolution to bring the perspective of emulating its example to workers here.

He ran for mayor of Los Angeles in 2017 and for governor of California in 2021.

Today Richter works as an airline food service worker and is a member of UNITE HERE Local 23 in Fort Worth, Texas.

# The working-class alternative

Continued from front page

ricane Helene. She witnessed the widespread solidarity among working people who had been left by the government to fend for themselves.

“A campaign supporter sent me a video of coal miners from West Virginia bringing earth-moving equipment to rebuild a road in North Carolina. That shows how the working class can organize to respond with solidarity in the face of challenges,” Fruit said. “In just three days the miners — all volunteers — rebuilt a 2.7-mile stretch of a road allowing residents to return to their homes in an area that many say was abandoned by government agencies.”

Fruit pointed to the strike battle being waged by 33,000 Machinists at Boeing. “When I was on the picket line in Everett, Washington, we found the workers upbeat and determined to get more of what they need. In response to Boeing’s announced layoff of 17,000 workers the union organized a huge rally at the union hall two days ago. The bosses came back with a 35% wage offer but no pension, and once again the union membership has voted it down.

“More workers today are organizing unions and using them. Using our basic defense organizations, the unions, can increase our prospects for survival as a class,” the socialist candidate said.

“Despite their rhetoric about ‘hard-working families,’ the Democratic and Republican parties will not defend the lives and livelihoods of working people. They defend the interests of the capitalist class, and they make sure that the U.S. military is strong enough to defend their imperialist interests in the world,” said Fruit.

Fruit highlighted the anti-working-class policies and programs of both bourgeois candidates.

“In the presidential debate, Kamala Harris left no doubt that she wants to step into the shoes of commander in chief of the last imperialist empire when she stated, ‘We have to sustain America’s standing in the world and maintain a lethal fighting force.’

“Donald Trump has a proposal for an ‘efficiency commission’ headed by

Elon Musk — one of the richest men in the world — who says any workers who strike will be immediately fired.”

Both candidates seek to deepen divisions within the working class, Fruit said. They promise the U.S. ruling class that they can chart a course back to stability and greater profits off the backs of working people.

## Question is which class rules

“The fight for workers power will open the door to ending the exploitative and oppressive conditions that are the source of the capitalists’ wealth,” Fruit said.

“Hundreds of thousands of workers in the U.S. have been on picket lines just in the last couple of years. We say that the low point of labor resistance is behind us. Working people see each other in a new light. They see their humanity and their capacity for solidarity.

“Through union battles we learn that there are no individual solutions. It is our collective action that counts. This is the beginning of class consciousness.

“We need to chart a course to build a leadership capable of taking political power into our own hands. That’s why we call for the construction of our own party, a party of labor,” Fruit said.

She urged participants to join and build the SWP campaign and help introduce it to others.

Fruit also addressed the deepening showdown between Israel and the reactionary capitalist regime in Iran and its proxy forces. She pointed to airstrikes the previous evening by the Israel Defense Forces on Tehran’s military installations. The IDF dealt blows to the expansionist capitalist regime in Tehran and strengthened the protection of Israel as a refuge for the Jews.

“This war was declared by the Iranian regime,” she said. “But the capitalist media and governments are uniformly accusing Israel of escalating things every time Israel takes defensive action.

“We back Israel’s steps to prevent the annihilation of the Jewish people,” she said. The stated goal of Hamas is to repeat more pogroms like it did on Oct. 7 when it carried

## Fruit discusses road forward with workers in Charleroi



CHARLEROI, Pa. — Hanna Rudovsky, left, a member of United Steelworkers Local 53G, spoke with Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Rachele Fruit, third from left, during the shift change at Anchor Hocking’s Pyrex plant Oct. 29.

Anchor Hocking, which recently took over the plant, announced in September that it will close it and all production will be transferred to its Ohio facility. Some 300 workers will be laid off in this small town.

“I just got hired in March. Now I have to start all over again,” Rudovsky told Fruit. Fruit discussed with her and other workers she met at the gate that the working class has to unite and organize to fight attacks like this.

“Working people need to build a different kind of party, a party of labor that can mobilize us to fight collectively, to use our power to deal with unemployment and low wages. The fight of the Boeing workers for pensions and better wages is an example all working people should support.”

Rudovsky said that she works with some of the Haitian immigrants who have come here recently.

The two competing capitalist candidates, Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, have been vying with each other over who will be the most effective in regulating immigration to serve the interests of the bosses. In the course of their conflicts, Haitian workers, who are in the U.S. legally, have been slandered.

“I couldn’t believe the hatred,” Rudovsky said. “People just need to get to know them. They are decent people, just like us.”

“This is part of unifying the working class,” Fruit agreed.

— CANDACE WAGNER

out the worst massacre of Jews since the Nazi’s Holocaust in World War II. “Another Holocaust would be a brutal setback for all the toilers of the world, for humanity.”

## Workers need a party of labor

The next day Fruit met several cafeteria food service workers who are members of UNITE HERE Local 23 in Washington.

Siddique Shukrullah had attended the campaign meeting the night before. “When will a labor party take power in the U.S.?” he asked.

“I have no way of knowing,” Fruit replied, encouraging Shukrullah to “join

in the fight to make that possibility a reality. Steps toward independent political action will come as workers transform our unions into effective, powerful instruments of struggle. What we need is a political party, based on the unions, completely independent and counter to the interests of the bosses’ parties, to mobilize and unite all working people.

“A working-class party could organize all working people to fight for the things we need. But it will take a fight for workers power to win them,” Fruit said.

“Even if we are just at the beginning of that fight, I am with you,” Shukrullah said.

## ‘Militant,’ books and SWP fund

Continued from page 4

on their doorstep Oct. 27. The discussion turned to workers’ resistance to the bosses’ offensive, including wage gains made by the International Longshoremen’s Association during their recent strike at East Coast and Gulf Coast ports. The union is still negotiating on other key issues, with a strike deadline set for Jan. 15.

“Over the years, teachers and other public workers in Florida have lost most of their union rights,” Hanna Hidalgo told the SWP campaigners. “The teachers union is no longer recognized at my

school. We have a long road to travel before we win our rights back. We will have to do what workers at Boeing are doing today.” She got a *Militant* subscription and a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

To join in the fall subscription and book campaigns or contribute to the SWP Party-Building Fund contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 12.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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## Socialist Workers Party in 2024

### The working-class alternative

## Rachele Fruit for president

## Dennis Richter for vice president

### California

Laura Garza, U.S. Senate  
 Eric Simpson, U.S. Congress

### Florida

Laura Anderson, U.S. Senate

### Georgia

Lisa Potash, U.S. Congress

### Illinois

Naomi Craine, U.S. Congress

### Minnesota

Kevin Dwire, U.S. Senate  
 Gabrielle Prosser, U.S. Congress

### New Jersey

Joanne Kuniarsky, U.S. Senate  
 Lea Sherman, U.S. Congress

### New York

Sara Lobman, U.S. Senate  
 Willie Cotton, U.S. Congress

### Ohio

John Hawkins, U.S. Senate  
 Ned Measel, U.S. Congress

### Pennsylvania

Ved Dookhun, U.S. Senate  
 Candace Wagner, U.S. Congress

### Texas

Alyson Kennedy, U.S. Senate

### Washington, D.C.

James Harris, delegate to Congress

### Washington state

Henry Dennison, U.S. Senate  
 Vincent Auger, Governor

# Deepening Mideast showdown

Continued from front page

Similar forums have been held in cities across the U.S., and in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

The pogrom was carried out by “trained death squads,” Prince reminded the 40 forum participants. “They can’t be defined in any other way. Hamas has historical roots in Hitler’s Nazi party” and shares its goal of the “Final Solution.”

“During the pogrom, the death squads slaughtered 1,200 men, women and children, regardless of age, nationality or sex. They employed special brutality toward women, inflicting rape and sexual abuse,” Prince said. “And abuse of men.”

“Why? *Because they were Jews.*”

Hamas death squads slaughtered dozens of Arab citizens of Israel, immigrant workers and others who weren’t Jewish, as well. “They were deliberately targeted because they associate with Jews.”

“Hamas took 250 hostages,” he said. “More than 100 have been released, others killed. All the hostages should be freed. There is no need for a cease-fire for Hamas to release the hostages.”

“Following the Oct. 7 pogrom,” Prince said, “the Socialist Workers Party placed itself unhesitatingly in defense of Israel’s right to defend the safety of a refuge for Jews.

“The SWP is not neutral,” he said. “We’ve campaigned widely for the defeat of the capacity of Hamas and Hezbollah, led by Tehran, to carry out expanding pogroms. The party looks at this, like every question, in class terms: What is in the interests of the working class.”

Prince described the deep opposition and abhorrence to the pogrom in the working class in the U.S. That’s the response of the big majority of unionists in labor and broader struggles, in working-class communities and among exploited producers worldwide.

Millions of toilers are entering into politics today, Prince pointed out. They want to know: What is the origin of pogroms and Jew-hatred? Is the world heading toward World War III?

The centrality of fighting Jew-hatred is not a Middle East question, but an international question, a class question. As the irresolvable crises of their system of exploitation

deepen, sections of the ruling class will seek to divert the anger of insecure or ruined middle-class layers, as well as small numbers of discouraged workers, away from capitalism as the source of their problems.

“Jew-hatred and pogroms are the banner used by reactionary forces around the world against *all* the toilers,” Prince said. “This will be more and more sharply posed as the class struggle deepens. The greatest illusion is that Washington’s imperialist ‘democracy’ was, is, or can be a safeguard against fascist reaction.”

## U.S. imperialist interests

“Washington has never acted in the Middle East on the basis of fighting Jew-hatred,” Prince said. “It acts on only one thing: the U.S. ruling capitalist families’ economic, military and political interests in the Middle East. It acts on their determination to remain the dominant imperialist power.”

In the discussion period SWP leader Steve Clark pointed out that when five reactionary Arab regimes launched a war against the newly established State of Israel in 1948, Washington imposed an ironclad arms embargo on Israel. “If it hadn’t been for the short period when the Stalinist regime in Moscow found it useful to do so, allowing the government in Czechoslovakia to sell arms to Israel,” the Jewish state would have had no arms to defend itself.

Today there are tactical divisions within the U.S. ruling class. But the Joseph Biden administration has pressed Israel to end the war on Hamas, accept a cease-fire in Gaza and back off from dealing blows to Hezbollah. In doing so, Biden is following in the footsteps of the Barack Obama administration, which sought to appease Tehran in order to advance U.S. interests.

If the Israeli government had followed the course pushed by Washington, it would have led to a disaster. Hamas — backed by Tehran — has said over and over that it will never rest until Israel and all the Jews there are eliminated.

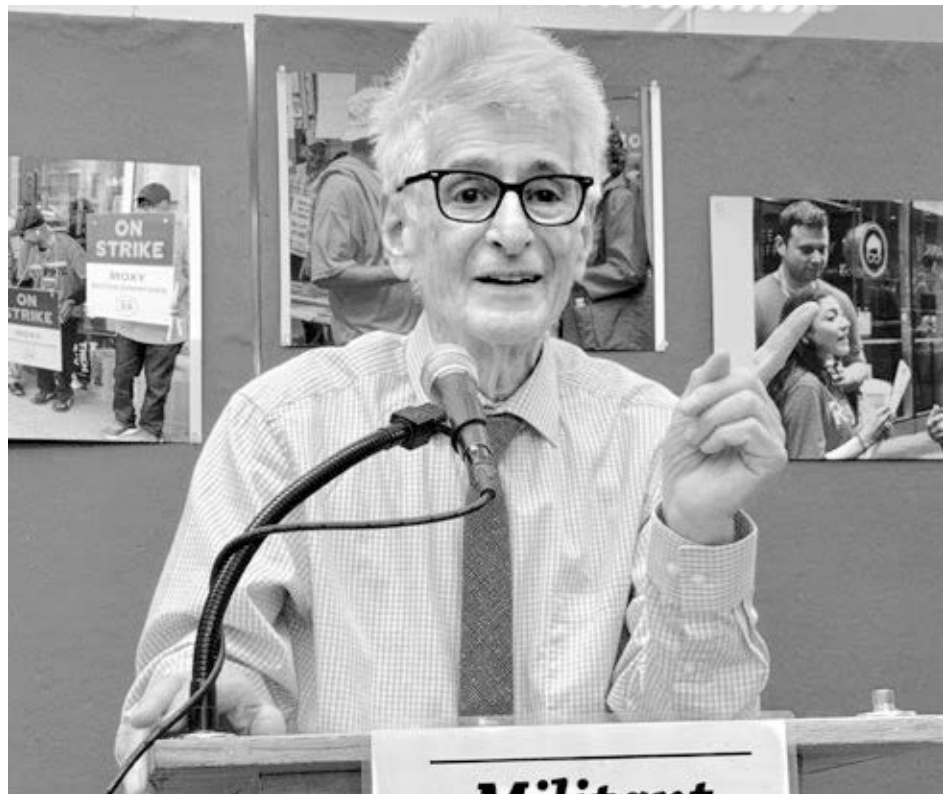
There are two big centers of the Jewish population in the world today, Prince pointed out. There are some 7 million Jews in Israel, 7 million in the U.S. and another 2 million worldwide. At its longest point, Israel stretches for 260 miles, Prince noted, “and at its widest about 70 miles, tapering down to 10.”

These facts show that Israel can lose a prolonged war of attrition.

A large percentage of Israel’s population lives in its three largest cities: Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa. A nuclear strike from Tehran would be disastrous, annihilating Palestinians, Arabs and Jews alike. Some 20% of Israel’s population are Arabs.

## Israel is capitalist, class divided

In response to a question about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Prince replied that he is a capitalist politician who “wants and needs U.S. imperialism’s support. What distinguishes him, however, is that he understands that Israel must act — and does act — to defend itself, despite the U.S. rulers’



Militant/Mike Shur

SWP National Committee member Dave Prince, editor of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*, speaks at Militant Labor Forum in New York, Oct. 19.

‘advice,’ because he knows *there can be a world without Israel and Jews.*” That lesson of the Holocaust cannot be forgotten.

Netanyahu knows the U.S. rulers, during World War II and ever since, have acted irrespective of the consequences for Jews and Israel. Another Holocaust would be a devastating setback not just for Jews, but for working people in the Middle East and around the world.

“I have a message for you,” Netanyahu said in an appeal for support at the U.N. General Assembly Sept. 27. “Israel will win this battle. We’ll win this battle because we don’t have a choice.”

The Socialist Workers Party stands with the fight to defend the safety of a refuge for Jews, Prince said.

But that fight, he added, is weakened by the fact that Israel is a capitalist state. Jew-hatred is intrinsic to the imperialist epoch and it will continue to raise its head unless the working class takes political power — in Israel and Palestine, across the Middle East, in the U.S. and the world over.

The same thing is needed in Israel that is needed in the U.S. and around the world. Revolutionary parties rooted in the working class must be built that can unite workers, whatever their religious beliefs or national origin, to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters. On that road, solidarity will be built that can resolve seemingly intractable conflicts among peoples of differing national and racial origins.

In response to a question on the national rights of Palestinians, Prince pointed out that “Hamas has nothing to do with the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

“Hamas has placed its military operations in the middle of population centers, schools and hospitals. Yahya Sinwar was known for his brutality toward Palestinians.

“The fate of the Palestinians is tied to the fate of the Jews,” Prince said. “It’s going to be in the struggle against capital and imperialism, in the struggle for which class rules, that working people will find the road forward, including resolving national questions.”

## Where were the Jews to go?

“A capitalist Israel became inevitable coming out of the Second World

War and Holocaust,” Prince said. “That history is central to understanding what’s unfolding today.

“Israel’s 1948 independence war,” he said, “did not come out of Zionism, a bourgeois movement dating back 125 years organized for a Jewish religious-national homeland. Israel emerged from the outcome of the second imperialist slaughter and betrayals by Stalinism of revolutionary developments from the late 1920s through the war and postwar years — including in France, Germany, Spain, Greece, and elsewhere, where workers had lost opportunities to take power.

“The Stalinists betrayed promising developments by Jews and Arabs in the region in building communist parties. This included supporting reactionary Arab regimes in bloody assaults on Jews. The Stalinists also betrayed promising developments in the U.S. labor movement.”

If workers had taken power in any of these cases, “it would have stopped or greatly changed the course of how the Second World War unfolded and its outcome,” Prince said.

At the same time, the U.S. imperialist rulers and their allies in Canada, the U.K., Australia and elsewhere shut their doors to Jews before, during and for several years after the Nazi Holocaust. Israel is the only country on earth that offers unconditional refuge to Jews, and defends them arms in hand.

“Where were the Jews to go?” Prince asked.

“The scourge of Jew-hatred and pogroms in the imperialist epoch,” Prince said, “can only be resolved as working people of all religions and ethnic origins join together in revolutionary struggles to make a socialist revolution.”

In response to a question about political resistance to the regime in Iran, Prince said, “Tehran acts on its expansionist aims to dominate the region politically and economically. This has come at great cost to the toilers in the region and inside Iran.” The Iranian regime is increasingly hated at home, and its military adventures abroad and attacks on toilers’ conditions spur resistance by oil workers, nurses, teachers, bus drivers, farmers and other working people.

Many forum participants stayed afterward for a reception and to continue the lively discussion.

**The fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms in the imperialist epoch**

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# Norms of beauty and fashion are inseparable from the class struggle

Below are the first two chapters of the new 2024 edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by Mary-Alice Waters, Evelyn Reed and Joseph Hansen, available in December. *Waters* is a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press. In the last issue, the *Militant* printed *Waters*' preface.

The two chapters are "Norms of Beauty and Fashion Are Inseparable from the Class Struggle," by *Waters*, and "As Though It Were Written Today," remarks by *Isabel Moya* at the presentation of the Cuban edition of *Los cosméticos, las modas y la explotación de la mujer* at the Havana International Book Fair Feb. 14, 2011. *Moya* was a leader of the Federation of Cuban Women and director of its publishing house *Editorial de la Mujer*.

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## BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

*Beauty has no identity with fashion. But it has an identity with labor. Apart from the realm of nature, all that is beautiful has been produced in labor and by laborers.*  
EVELYN REED

In the early 1950s a revolutionary socialist newsweekly based in New York — one whose masthead proudly proclaims that it is "published in the interests of working people" — ran a humorous, if at the same time serious, exposé of plans by the cosmetics arm of the "fashion industry" to conspire once again to bolster sales and increase profit margins. It was capitalist business as usual, the *Militant* reported in 1954.

The merchants of "beauty" were ramping up another advertising campaign, aimed at convincing working women *they simply had to have* a new line of products in order to be happy, secure, employable, and sexually desirable.

A few readers of the paper responded with angry letters to *Militant* editor Joseph Hansen, attacking the author of the exposé, Jack Bustelo. They accused Bustelo of ridiculing working-class women and attacking their "right" to strive for "some loveliness and beauty in their lives." It turned out that "Bus-

telo," the brand name of a dark-roast coffee popular in New York City among Puerto Ricans and Cubans, and much liked by the paper's editor, was the pen name under which Hansen himself had drafted the article.

The lively polemic that ensued — first in exchanges carried by the *Militant* and then continued in a discussion bulletin for members of the Socialist Workers Party — became a textbook in the fundamentals of Marxism. Hansen's article "The Fetish of Cosmetics," originally published in the bulletin, provided a popular introduction to Karl Marx's *Capital*, the most comprehensive critique of political economy ever written. Hansen rendered the seeming mystery of "commodity fetishism" understandable to the newest reader.

In clear and pedagogical responses to Bustelo's critics, SWP leader Evelyn Reed joined the debate. She explained that norms of beauty and fashion are, above all, *class* questions and cannot be separated from the history of the class struggle. She explained how and why ever-changing standards of "beauty" and "fashion" imposed on women — and men — are integral to the perpetuation of women's oppression. How mil-

**"Millennia ago, as labor productivity accelerated, class society arose from bloody struggles. Women were reduced to a form of property ..."**

lennia ago, as the productivity of human labor grew at an accelerating rate, private property and class society emerged in the course of bloody struggles, and women were reduced to a form of property. They became the "second sex."

Today the fight to eradicate women's subordinate status is not simply a "woman question," Reed explained. It is an integral part of the working-class struggle to take state power out of the hands of the families that dominate large-scale industry, banking, and trade. Only that historic step forward for humanity can open the door to women's equality through ending *all* forms of exploitation and oppression, as well as the increasing threat of worldwide imperialist war and



Political offensive after World War II promoted the "feminine mystique." Aimed at women being replaced in factory jobs by returning soldiers, it told them they were first of all "homemakers" not workers — a trend that was soon reversed as hiring again picked up. **Above**, 1950s ad for "upside-down refrigerator." **Right**, "See Red" 1955 lipstick advertisement.



nuclear catastrophe.

Hansen's opponents in the "Bustelo controversy," as the polemic became known in the ranks of the SWP, found fertile ground in the relative prosperity and working-class retreat that marked the post-World War II years in the United States. The early 1950s, often referred to as the McCarthy period, were characterized above all by the emboldened offensive mounted by the capitalist rulers to housebreak militant sections of the trade union movement that had emerged from the labor battles of the 1930s and mid-1940s. Women — and African Americans — who had joined the industrial workforce by the millions during the capitalists' wartime labor shortage were pushed back and down.

Within a few short years after the Bustelo affair, however, that political landscape changed dramatically.

The 1959 victory of the Cuban Revolution brought renewed proof of the capacity of ordinary working people to take state power and begin transforming the world they inherited. It provided unimpeachable evidence, moreover, of the vulnerability of the US rulers.

In the United States, a broad political radicalization accelerated in the 1960s, propelled above all by the victorious class battles, spearheaded by African American workers in the major industrial cities of the South, that brought down the system of Jim Crow racial segregation. The American model for "apartheid," a model that had been in place for the better part of a century, was uprooted. Race relations in the US were changed forever. Known more broadly as the civil rights movement, that historic struggle awakened millions of all races, including new generations of young people, to political life.

The high point of the civil rights movement intersected with Washing-

ton's expanding war against the Vietnamese people fighting for the national sovereignty and unification of their country. Hundreds of thousands of youth — Black, Caucasian, Puerto Rican, Native American, Mexican American, Asian American — conscripted to fight and die in that war saw with their own eyes the true face of US imperialism. Some 58,000 Americans and an estimated three million Vietnamese lost their lives in Washington's imperialist adventure, before Vietnam's liberation fighters emerged victorious. Many US soldiers came home to join millions across the country and the world demanding "Bring the troops home now!"

An integral part of this deepening politicization and radicalization was the birth of a new wave of struggles against the millennia-long oppression of women as the "second sex." Women took to the streets. Along with their allies, they demanded equal pay for equal work, the expansion of childcare facilities, an end to involuntary sterilizations, and above all, the repeal of every law criminalizing abortion.

And, as during the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam War movement, many often displayed a good dose of both liberalism and ultraleftism as they began organizing.

This "second wave" of the modern fight by women to cast off the shackles of their second-class status exploded in the 1970s and began to spread internationally. As it did so, the exchange of letters and articles that were part of the "cosmetics debate" became a powerful educational tool, one that was often in demand.

Dog-eared copies of the mimeographed SWP Discussion Bulletin containing the materials published here as *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploita-*

Continued on page 8



AP photo

Black rights leader Gloria Richardson pushes aside National Guard bayonet at 1964 protest in Cambridge, Maryland. Nationwide movement awakened millions of all races to political life.

# Norms of beauty and fashion are inseparable from the class struggle

Continued from page 7  
*tion of Women* passed from hand to hand among hundreds, even thousands, of young women — and men — who were searching for explanations of women's oppression and how to fight to end it.

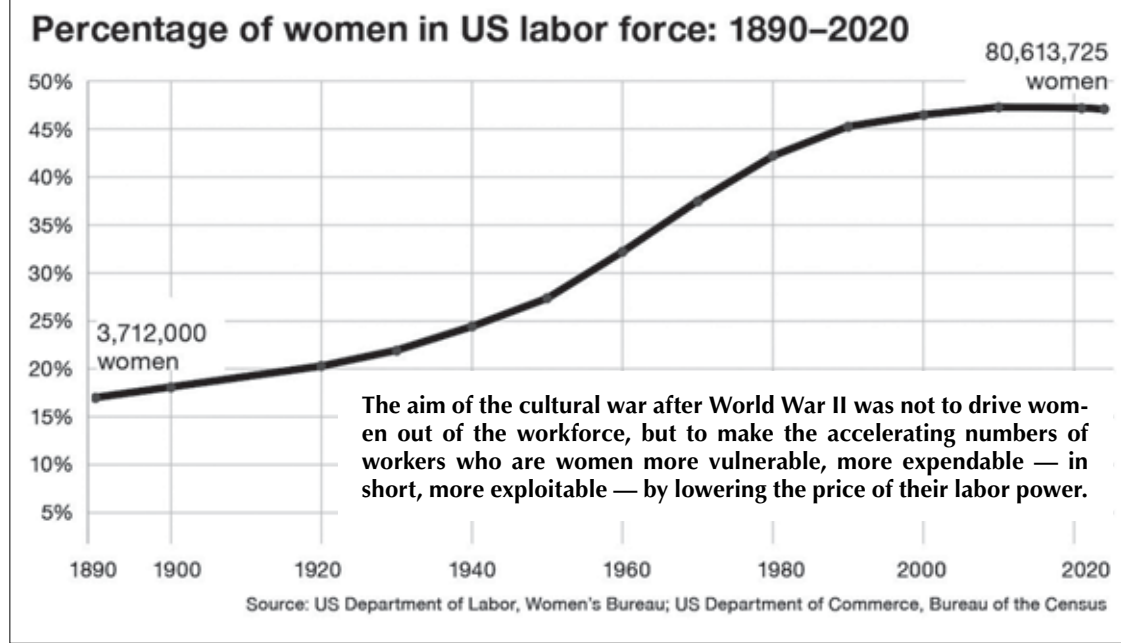
The uncompromisingly historical materialist approach and working-class perspective they found there helped many to become communists — or better, more conscious communists. It helped them understand that the fight to end women's oppression is inseparable from the political struggle to replace the dictatorship of capital and its universal fetishism of commodities with the state power of the working class.

And with it, the eradication of capitalist property relations.

The “cosmetics debate” entered its third life in 1986 when it was published for the first time as a book. By then the post-World War II rate of expansion of production and trade had slowed. The rising living standard won by the US working class in the postwar years came under increasing attack as the capitalists' rate of profit declined worldwide. The roots of the long, grinding capitalist crisis that has marked the last decades had begun to manifest themselves. Many gains for women won by battles in the 1960s and '70s came under assault by the employers and their government.

In the US access to medically safe, legal reproductive health services, including abortion — a precondition of women's emancipation — was again being curtailed, state by state.

Affirmative-action programs initiated in the 1970s by the United Steelworkers and a few other trade unions to reduce race divisions within the working class were beginning to be rolled back by the employers. What's more, programs claiming to promote such equality were turned into their opposite by middle-class layers seeking their own self-advancement. “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,” as it became known, blossomed well beyond the elite campuses where it was born. It became a source of executive, professional, and academic perks for an



upper-middle-class layer of women — and men — of all skin colors. Unlike the affirmative action fought for by the labor movement, “DEI” served only to sharpen divisions of race and class.

An ideological campaign — a “culture war” against working women — was mounted by the capitalist rulers and their privileged spokespeople. The

**“The civil rights movement awakened millions of all races to political life. It inspired new struggles against oppression of women as the ‘second sex’ . . .”**

target was the tens of millions of women who had entered the labor market in unprecedented numbers during and after World War II, especially those who had led the way into occupations previously considered male preserves.

The purpose of this political campaign was not to drive women out of the workforce. To the contrary. The aim was to make the growing numbers of workers who are women more vulnerable, more expendable — in short, more exploitable — by lowering the price of their labor power and thus slowing the pace at which the bosses' profit rates were declining.

The mass media that serves the interests of capital (“social media,” serving the same class interests, had not yet been devised) was full of articles seeking to convince readers that advances by women in job opportunities and pay are unfair to men, especially men who are Black. That job exclusions and wage differentials between men and women are justified. That they are to be expected. After all, *biology is woman's destiny*, and her primary social responsibility and source of “fulfillment” is motherhood. Hearth and home is not only where she belongs, but the only place she can ever belong.

In face of this concerted counteroffensive against women's greater social equality, the diverse class forces that had comprised the rising women's liberation movement in the 1970s fractured. It was a rout that mirrored the retreat that was happening in the organized labor movement.

When published in 1986, *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* placed these mounting pressures in a broader class and historical framework. It opened — and still opens — a win-

dow onto the post-World War II decade, when a similar economic, political, and ideological offensive was pressed by the class whose wealth comes from the exploitation of our labor.

That earlier political offensive was broadly promoted as the “feminine mystique.” It was designed to convince women who had joined the workforce by the millions during the labor shortages of World War II that they were solely “homemakers” who should sell their “attractiveness” — not workers, who could sell their labor power.

The broader political perspective found in these pages helps clarify what was again bearing down on even the most politically conscious women and men in the closing decades of the twentieth century. It helps explain why the “women's movement” of the 1970s had become thoroughly bourgeoisified, little more than an electoral appendage of the capitalist class, especially the Democratic Party.

Each day's news accounts bring home to us ever more sharply that we are today living through the opening of what will be years of worldwide economic, financial, and social convulsions, class battles, and wars. The opening guns of World War III are already being heard, but the unimaginable is not yet inevitable.

That depends on which class rules. The international working class is today far larger and potentially more powerful than in the years that preceded the two inter-imperialist slaughters of the twentieth century.

What's missing is growing *working-class* consciousness that can — and will — develop only in the course of struggle.

What's missing is trusted, battle-tested, genuinely communist — not Stalinist — leadership, leadership of the kind provided by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party he forged in the tsarist empire. Leadership of the kind exemplified by Fidel Castro and the cadres of the July 26 Movement and above all the Rebel Army in Cuba, who opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

What's missing is leadership of the exploited producers of all skin colors and nationalities like that demonstrated by Malcolm X in the final years of his life, a leadership with moral courage and integrity.

And those kinds of leadership, too, can only be forged in the heat of class battles.

This is the world context in which the qualitative increase over the last century in the percentage of women taking part in the international workforce is a vital factor. Women will shoulder greater leadership responsibilities than ever in the revolutionary, working-class-based battles to come.

With this new edition, *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* has begun its fourth life — and not a moment too soon.

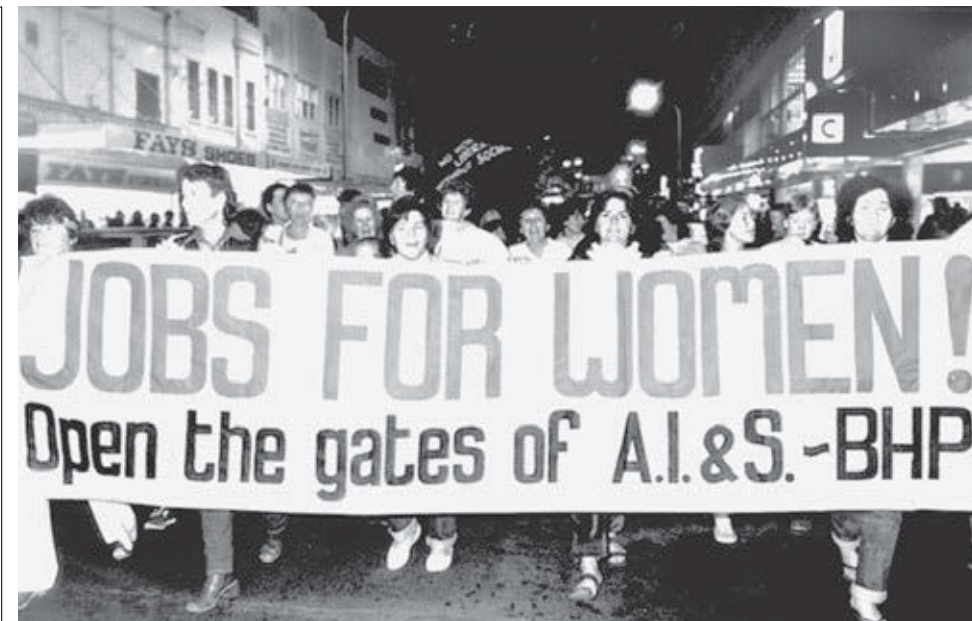
Two questions asked by thoughtful readers since the initial publication of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* are useful to consider.

First, are the issues addressed in a debate about cosmetics and fashion many decades ago still relevant? Aren't they long bypassed?

Second, isn't Reed's article on “Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?” outdated? Hasn't knowledge of the earliest human societies moved far beyond what was known in the mid-1950s?

The response to the first question is underscored by Hansen's rhetorical question in “The Fetish of Cosmetics.” In the whole history of capitalism, Hansen asks, “has the bourgeoisie ever gone about cultivating the fetish of commodities more cold-bloodedly than American big business?”

It's worth recalling that the birth of industrial capitalism itself was based on the production of textiles, wiping out domestic labor by women on home spinning wheels, looms, and sewing. One



Contingent in International Women's Day march, Wollongong, Australia, March 1984. Successful fight forced Port Kembla BHP steelworks to end ban and hire hundreds of women.

of the earliest promoters of the lucrative rewards to be had from the textile trade was a speculator and economist named Nicholas Barbon, cited a number of times by Marx in *Capital*.

All across Asia and much of Europe, Barbon noted in 1690, apparel “is fixed

**“As capitalism heads into more social convulsions and wars, the outcome will be decided by fights for workers power and socialism worldwide . . .”**

and certain.” While in England and France “dress alters. Fashion or the alteration of dress is a great promoter of trade,” he observed. “Because it occasions expenditure for clothing before the old ones are worn out . . .

“It is the spirit and life of trade.”

More than three centuries later, the resources devoted by capitalist enterprises to advertising and the creation of markets — that is, *creating “needs”* where none yet exist — are still expanding astronomically. Under the profit system, instead of advances in the productivity of social labor breaking down this mystical animation of objects that working people ourselves have made, the working class and lower middle classes are pushed into “needing” more and more *things*. Everything from each new cell phone release, to the latest model automobile, \$500 torn blue jeans, and an exploding array of “cosmetic” surgeries, skin bleaches or tanning salons, designer handbags, and cosmetics-designed-to-make-you-look-like-you're-not-using-cosmetics.



In the whole history of capitalism, Joseph Hansen asks, “has the bourgeoisie ever gone about cultivating the fetish of commodities more cold-bloodedly than American big business?” Above, TikTok “skinfluencers” push “beauty” products on 10- to 12-year-old girls known as “Sephora Kids.”

All these and more are pushed on hapless “consumers” — even younger and younger children! — without pause.

The pressure to be “fashionable” — that is, to be “employable,” and attractive to a potential mate — has penetrated even more deeply into the working class. Under bourgeois domination, the internet and the misnamed “social media” have become new and more grotesquely powerful tools by which capitalist ideology, morals, and commodities intrude into our lives every minute of the day. And now looms “artificial intelligence” at the service of capital.

The manufactured compulsion to “shop” — playing above all on the emotional insecurities of women and adolescents created by capitalist social relations — has only deepened and spread. The “marketing” Hansen pokes such fun at in the 1950s seems amateur compared to the sales methods deployed against us today. “Shop until you drop” has gone from being a humorous exaggeration to a description of an actual social condition pushing increasing numbers of working-class families into more and more debt, often at usurious rates.

The impact of the twenty-first century capitalist advertising “industry” is, if anything, even more insidious as it spreads into areas of the globe previously buffered to some extent from the imperialist world market. In large areas of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, marked by imperialist-enforced agricultural and industrial underdevelop-

**“As their share of the workforce multiplies, women will shoulder more leadership in revolutionary working-class battles . . .”**

ment, as well as in countries previously part of the now-defunct economic and trading bloc once dominated by the Soviet Union, the siren song of the commodity fetish is an imperialist weapon like none other.

What's more, the “cosmetic surgery industry” penetrates more and more deeply into these countries as opportunities for socially useful production are squeezed out by competition from stronger capitalist powers.

In the eloquent words of the Communist Manifesto, “the cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which [the bourgeoisie] batters down all Chinese walls. . . . It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.”

As the not-so-outdated polemic of the 1950s makes clear, in periods of working-class retreat such as we've lived through for the last decades — a period of retreat far longer and more devastating than the relatively brief post-World War II years described in these pages — the “heavy artillery” of capitalism takes its toll, including among the most politically conscious layers.

The answer to the second question is equally important.



Top, March 2023 rally, Bridgeport, Connecticut. Above, 1971 march in Austin, Texas. As more women joined the workforce, women and allies demanded equal pay for equal work, expansion of child care access, end to involuntary sterilizations, repeal of laws criminalizing abortion.

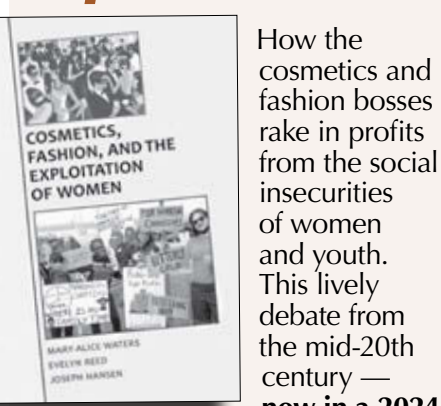
The articles by Evelyn Reed — “The Woman Question and the Marxist Method” and “Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?” — are two of the earliest she wrote on these subjects. They were, in effect, “first drafts” of work that she continued to edit, expand, write about, and speak on for another twenty-five years. This edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women*, in fact, incorporates Reed's editing on “The Woman Question and the Marxist Method” when she prepared portions of it in 1969 for inclusion in *Problems of Women's Liberation*. That title, along with *Sexism and Science, Is Biology Woman's Destiny?*, and Reed's widely

acclaimed book *Woman's Evolution*, all initially published by Pathfinder Press, have appeared in editions around the world in more than a dozen languages.

The focus of the sharp polemic in *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* is what Reed often referred to as the “Hundred-Year War in Anthropology.” Here, as elsewhere, Reed defends the historical materialism of nineteenth-century anthropologist Lewis Morgan, whose work Karl Marx and Frederick Engels drew on extensively in their writings on the subject, as well as Morgan's twentieth-century continuator Robert Briffault.

Continued on page 10

## Pre-publication special offer!



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.

**\$7 (cover price \$15)**  
[pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)



Courtesy Shaira Embate  
 Capitalist advertising industry becomes even more insidious as it spreads to Africa, Asia and Latin America, marked by imperialist-enforced agricultural and industrial underdevelopment. Silka soap ad in the Philippines promises “the true sign of whitening” in seven days!



# 'Reads as if it had been written today'

BY ISABEL MOYA

*"Is the use of cosmetics worth the attention of a Marxist?"*

JACK BUSTELO

"Naked or clothed, dressed in linen or polyester, shaved, plucked, tattooed, painted, adorned with pearls or ceramic beads, siliconed, liposuctioned, covered with visible or invisible scars, with piercings in the most unimaginable places, dyed, bleached, with gray hair, highlights, subjected to diets and sessions at the gym or abandoned to the reign of carbohydrates and fat, the human body is a representation, an expression of one's self and of other men and women."

I wrote these reflections for the article "This body trimmed in beautiful things," which appears in another book that was presented here at the Havana International Book Fair a few days ago. However, the debate about the body and women, and in particular about the dictates and control exercised over them, which could appear very much something belonging to the third millennium, sparked a debate more than half a century ago in the New York workers paper, the *Militant*, and continued in a bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

This debate is available in the book we are presenting today, *Los cosméticos, las modas y la explotación de la mujer* [Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women], by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, and Mary-Alice Waters. Waters, who is with us this afternoon, wrote an enlightening preface that explains the context in which the debate occurred.

This book has several merits, in my opinion. First, it takes up the issue of the control of women's bodies in the framework of the reproduction of patriarchal values during the explosive development of the consumerist phase of imperialism — a phase that today, paradoxically, has reached its highest expression and its deepest structural crisis.

Although we know that promises of youth and beauty go back to the origins of humanity, the exalted expression in advertising today — which promise youth and beauty not only from creams and all kinds of alchemy but also from surgery — emerged in its modern form in the 1950s.

In addition, the debate applies Marxist feminist analysis and a class perspective to the woman question. This is extremely useful in our context, where some men and women still see feminism as something foreign and of dubious origin and importance.

I must acknowledge that, unlike some of his contemporaries, I very much enjoyed the irony of the article by Joseph Hansen (alias Jack Bustelo). It hit a nerve, preparing the way for important essays, "The Woman Question and the Marxist Method" by Evelyn Reed and "The Fetish of Cosmetics" by Hansen himself, which are printed in this book.

The inclusion of letters from women readers, not just those of theorists, offer a rich example of how the ruling powers get the exploited classes to internalize views about female beauty that the

ruling powers themselves developed; and how, at the same time, obeying this cultural mandate is required for entering the labor market.

In the Cuban context, where there are more and more gender studies programs — we now have some thirty-three women's or gender studies programs, various master's degrees, and dozens of related theses — this book enables us to approach the issue from a Marxist perspective.

But the part of the debate that perhaps moved me the most, and that I think could be an inspiration for the Cuban people in general and for specialists in particular, are the speculations sketched in the pages of this book about what beauty will mean under socialism, about how women's bodies will be valued in the new society.

As Hansen himself writes, this type of debate should not be seen as something secondary or subordinate. I quote: "What we have in cosmetics is a fetish, a particular fetish in the general fetishism that exists in the world of commodities. The special power that cosmetics have derives from the fact that in addition to economic relations, sexual relations attach to them. That is the real source of the 'beauty' both men and women see in cosmetics."

*Los cosméticos, las modas y la explotación de la mujer* is a book that could be approached as work of philosophy, esthetics, economics, or gen-

## Norms of beauty, fashion and the class struggle

Continued from page 9

As Reed points out, one of the major battle lines in this century-plus war over historical materialism has been the question, Does something akin to the modern bourgeois "patriarchal system of marriage and family relations [go] all the way back to the animal kingdom?" Or did what is often referred to as the "patriarchy," and the second-class status of women, arise in much more recent millennia as a cornerstone of class-divided societies?

Here as in her other writings, Reed answers these questions in clear, understandable terms. As agriculture and animal husbandry were developed, and the productivity of human labor increased, a surplus of food beyond that needed for mere survival began to accumulate. Over time this surplus was appropriated by a few — priests, tribal leaders, warrior chiefs — who were charged with guarding the communal reserves until needed. From such origins private property and all its class institutions eventually emerged and came to dominate all social relations, including relations between men and women.

Repeated many times and in different ways all over the globe, small numbers of men began emerging for the first time as a ruling class. In bloody conflict, they subjugated other men. Along with cattle and other domesticated animals, women and their children became valuable private property, the producers of new labor to be exploited. *Familia*, the Latin root of the term "family," meant "a man and his slaves."

"Concealed behind the debate,"



Militant/Naomi Craine

Mary-Alice Waters, left, and Isabel Moya, at Feb. 14, 2011, Havana launch of Cuban edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women*. The book takes up "the explosive development of the consumerist phase of imperialism," Moya said, "a phase that today, paradoxically, has reached both its highest expression and its deepest crisis."

der studies — or perhaps as a bibliography. In my opinion, however, it is above all intended to provoke an ongoing debate in theory, in political practice, and in daily life — a debate both on how we relate to each other and on the communications media.

In the midst of the proliferation of so much garbage in the media, Evelyn Reed's analysis seems as though it were written today. I quote: "Our task, therefore, is to expose both the capitalist system as the source of these evils and its massive propaganda machine which tells women that the road to a successful life and love is through the purchase of things. To condone or accept capitalist standards in any field — from politics to cosmetics — is to prop up and per-

petuate this ruthless profit system and its continued victimization of women."

In her own way, a Cuban woman with a universal outlook, Dulce María Loynaz, also demanded, as does Reed, the right of women to their diverse and multiple beings.

*If you love me, love me whole,  
not by zones of light or shadow ...  
If you love me, love me black  
and white, and gray and green,  
and blonde and dark ...  
Love me by day,  
love me by night ...  
And by morning in the open window!  
If you love me, don't break me  
in pieces:  
Love me whole ... or don't  
love me at all!*

Reed explains, is "a question of class struggle and class ideology."

If class society and the accompanying subordinate status of women are only a stage of human history, one that arose at a certain historical juncture for specific reasons, then it can be eliminated at another historical juncture for other specific reasons.

If there has been an evolution of social relations through distinct stages of the prehistory and history of human society, determined by increasing levels of labor productivity and changing property relations — accompanied by enormous, and extended, conflict and violence — *then capitalism and capitalist rule are no more permanent than the different property and social relations that preceded them.*

Those studying and writing today about the development of social labor and the earliest stages of social organization are able to draw on a larger and richer body of research than the earliest anthropologists, or even those of Reed's generation. Of that there is no doubt. Light will continue to be shed on the complexities, contradictions, and variety of human social evolution. But as Reed points out, recognition of diversity "is no substitute for probing into social history and explaining the evolution of human society as it advanced through the ages."

There is no merit whatsoever to the argument that since different forms of marriage are found in the relics of primitive groups the world over, then "all you have to do is pay your money and take your choice," Reed explains.

That's like saying "that because there are still relics today of feudalistic and even slave class relations, there was no historical sequence of human societies based on slavery, feudalism, and capitalism; that all we have is merely a 'diversity of forms.'"

The hundred-year war in anthropology is far from over.

If anything the debate is sharpened today by the obfuscations of "politically correct" ideologues, comfortable in their middle-class academic and professional sanctuaries, who hide from difficult class questions of history and social emancipation behind proclamations that the entire planet has been "colonized" by white Europeans.

Contrary to this privileged middle-class world view, the historic tasks confronting humanity remain struggles against the subjugation of women, unresolved national questions the world over, and class solidarity and battles against every form of capitalist oppression and exploitation — the worldwide fight for workers power and socialism.



"The class struggle is a movement of *opposition*, not *adaptation*," Reed underscores. And that "holds true not only for workers in the plants, but for women as well, both working women and housewives." This new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* is offered as a contribution to that movement and that struggle.

As Reed expressed it in her dedication of *Woman's Evolution*, "To women, on the way to liberation."

# —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.

### UK food workers strike against wage cuts, for union rights

WREXHAM, Wales — “We are here, we are stronger, and we will win this fight. It’s not impossible!” Joanna Kowalska, a striking Unite union member, told a rally of hundreds of food production workers here Oct. 18. Six hundred workers have been on strike at Oscar Mayer since Sept. 12.

The rally was also addressed by Sharon Graham, the union’s general secretary. The union is not recognized by the company.

The workers produce ready-made meals for major supermarkets and are being threatened with dismissal if they refuse to sign new contracts. The company is attempting to impose an up to 3,000 pounds (\$3,890) pay cut by reducing breaks from three to two during a 12-hour shift and making all breaks unpaid. The company also wants to stop extra pay and days off for those who work on public holidays.

The new contract was issued only in English to the workers, who are mostly from Poland, Bulgaria and Romania. Some workers have already been fired as they did not understand the company’s deadlines for accepting the contract changes.

“We have a small salary and they want to take away even this. We just want to keep what we’ve got,” Kowalska said. “I know that these people will stand till the end, nobody will leave. They will fight.”

Some 200 workers gathered near the Oscar Mayer plant when this reporter joined with them Oct. 24. Then they drove in procession toward the local shopping center to stage one of the protests they hold each week. Many held union signs in Polish, Romanian and English reading “Stop the wage theft!” and “Fire and rehire, the disgrace of Oscar Mayer!”

“In April this year we had less than 50 union members, but by June 600

had joined up,” said Leigh Williams, a Unite union organizer.

In the first week of the strike a picket of hundreds was mounted outside the factory gates and many truck drivers decided to turn away in solidarity. In response, the company threatened legal action.

Bosses have brought in agency workers to maintain some production along with nonunion workers. Strikers say that less than a third of the production lines are working.

“I learned that the union is a good thing, that were not fighting just for now, but for the future,” striker Alex Lordache told the *Militant*. He came to the U.K. from Romania four years ago.

“I have been working here for 29 years, and I never thought this would happen. I was shocked. But it’s because people have had enough,” Rob, a Welsh-born striker, said.

— Andrés Mendoza

### Montreal port workers plan strike at Termont Terminals

MONTREAL — Montreal port workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 375, are stepping up their fight for safe and livable working conditions. They’ve been working without a contract since the beginning of the year, and their last contract was imposed by forced arbitration in 2021. Local members voted by over 99% against the port companies’ latest offer and by 98% to authorize a strike.

They carried out a 24-hour strike Oct. 27, holding an extraordinary general meeting where they discussed and voted on giving strike notice to the bosses of Termont Corporation Terminals, to begin Oct. 31 at 11 a.m.

They also voted to provide financial support to the 320 workers who will be affected by the strike. It will stop 15% of the shipping volume of the port. The



Courtesy of Joanna Kowalska

Members of Unite union on strike against Oscar Mayer rally in Wrexham, Wales, Oct. 18 against company demands for wage cuts that include reducing breaks and not paying for them.

workers have also been refusing to work overtime since Oct. 10.

Termont is targeted because it is the only company at the port to retaliate against workers by modifying their schedules in a punitive way.

“Termont is provoking longshore workers and their local by using schedules that have negative impacts on work-life balance,” Michel Murray, the CUPE union’s representative, told the press. “If we reach a permanent agreement on this issue, we could avoid a strike.”

Federal Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon proposed Oct. 14 that the longshore union and the Maritime Employers Association take their dispute before a special mediator for 90 days, and guarantee that during this time there would be no strike or lockout. The union turned this down.

Attacking the port workers’ right to strike, Jasmin Guenette, the national vice president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, called for government intervention. “It’s time the federal government made ports an essential service, so that they remain operational at all times,” he said.

— Joe Young

### San Francisco hotel workers join expanding UNITE HERE strike

SAN FRANCISCO — Hundreds of UNITE HERE Local 2 members at the Palace and Marriott Union

Square hotels here have joined the strike launched a month earlier at three other hotels. Some 2,000 workers are now picketing and chanting. Their signs read, “All day, all night – Local 2 knows how to fight!” “Respect our work!” and “Make them pay!”

“It makes no sense that the hotel chains are making billions and we are struggling,” Miguel Marquez, a banquet server at Marriott’s Palace Hotel, told the *Militant* Oct. 20. “We are striking so that the hotel owners can see the strength of the union.

“The Palace is a luxury hotel,” he said. “Room rates have skyrocketed but wages have not kept pace with the rising cost of living.”

“Our wages are down because tips were a big part of our income,” Renato Manalang, a striking bellman at the Westin St. Francis on Union Square, said. “Many people don’t carry cash anymore.”

Another big issue for many strikers is defending their medical insurance. The hotel bosses are demanding that they pay hundreds of dollars more each month.

— Eric Simpson

### Strikers at Bakkavor in UK say fight is strengthening their union

SPALDING, England — As they enter their fifth week on strike for higher pay, Unite members at the food giant Bakkavor say their union is getting stronger. Over 100 workers in the plant have now joined the 700 who initially went on strike, said shop steward Mark Preston.

Two hundred strikers, some bringing their children, marched through the town center here Oct. 22, blowing horns and passing out leaflets. Bakkavor bosses “have made a pay offer which will mean our wages are still way behind the recent cost-of-living rises,” their leaflet says. “Only by standing together and withdrawing our labour can we show the company how we feel.”

A similar number showed up when Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham visited their picket line Oct. 16. “If the company thinks our members will go quietly and give in, they have another thing coming,” Graham said. “Bakkavor will be facing the full force of Unite.”

“This is a very important fight,” Andrea Badarau told the *Militant* Oct. 27. Badarau, a butcher in a nearby cut-and-kill meat plant, spoke of the stakes for workers in local factories. “If they win, we all win.”

— Pamela Holmes

## — 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —

### THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

#### November 15, 1999

NEW YORK — The crash of Egypt Air’s Flight 990 from New York to Cairo, which killed all 217 passengers and crew members, has highlighted once again the disregard of the airline bosses and aerospace manufacturers to safety in the air. The *New York Post* and some other big-business media have struck an antilabor note in writing about the Boeing 767 plane.

*Post* staff writer Bill Sanderson pointed out that when the plane was built Boeing Machinists were preparing to go out on strike, and did so on Oct. 4, 1989. The headline read, “Jetliner built during a time of labor strife.”

Sanderson wrote, “In addition to the money, a major issue in the 48-day strike was the heavy amount of overtime required of production workers, many of whom complained of being too tired to do their jobs properly.” Some television reports raised similar innuendo.

### THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

#### November 15, 1974

HOUSTON — In an ominous escalation of the drive against undocumented workers, U.S. Attorney General William Saxbe has called for the deportation of one million “illegal aliens.” Playing on the fears created by the mounting recession, Saxbe asserted that the presence of undocumented workers constitutes a “severe national crisis.”

When the economy is on the upturn the undocumented workers are permitted to slip across the border to fill the hardest, dirtiest, lowest-paying jobs. With the economy sinking the drive is on to get rid of the “surplus” and make the victim the criminal.

Mass deportation of the undocumented will not bring better jobs, schools or homes. It will not bring unionization to agriculture. It will only create the kind of division that capitalism consciously promotes in order to intensify oppression and exploitation.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

#### November 14, 1949

The people of Harlem are ready to fight against police brutality whenever they get a chance. They showed this once again when the police broke up a parade for Benjamin Davis, the Stalinist candidate for City Council. The cops charged the crowd, not only the paraders but everyone on the sidewalks.

At this point the people living in the adjacent buildings entered into the picture. They had been looking out of their windows, attracted by the music of the sound trucks. But what they saw taking place before their eyes — a brutal police attack on defenseless people — is an old and familiar story in Harlem, and it moved them to action.

Bottles, tin cans and other household implements began pouring out of the windows and off the roofs. It was a spontaneous action by the residents and all the more revealing of the people’s hatred of police brutality.

# Carlos Harris released from prison after 20-year frame-up

BY ANDREA MORELL

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Carlos Harris walked out of Santa Clara County Jail Oct. 22, after having spent 20 years in California state prisons for a crime he did not commit.

“I can’t believe that I’m out!” Harris, 53, exulted outside the jail. Prison life, he told reporters, “is not easy. It’s ups and downs, a lot of hardships, but don’t give up.” He said he was looking forward to returning to work as a barber.

Harris’ release was met with jubilation by family, friends, and others who, led by his cousin Aisha Hampton and mother Rachel Hampton, waged the long public fight to overcome his wrongful conviction in 2005 for robbery and attempted murder.

In a statement Oct. 22, Aisha Hampton thanked “all of you for standing with Carlos during this incredible fight for freedom and special shout out to DeBug, NAACP, the *Militant*, local media, newspapers and journalists and each and everyone of you that have showed up for Carlos.”

Harris steadfastly maintained his innocence and demanded a jury trial, rejecting prosecutors’ offer of a plea bargain. He was found guilty and sentenced to 14 years and two months in prison. The judge doubled that sentence under California’s infamous three-strikes law that allowed judges to double a sentence if a defendant has prior convictions.

After exhausting avenues to get the unjust conviction overturned, Harris filed for “resentencing” under new legislation enacted last year. It allows a court to review a sentence if it could not be imposed today, and to issue a new, lesser sentence.

But “eligibility” for resentencing must be won in court. The prosecution vigorously opposed resentencing for Harris in a Sept. 26 court hearing full of members of Harris’ family and other supporters. An assistant district attorney — claiming to speak “for the people” — argued that Harris had committed a “heinous” crime, and a jury had convicted him; that his achievements in prison occupational and educational programs were irrelevant; and that the court could not substitute for a parole board review to assess his suitability for release.

Katherine Hallinan, Harris’s attorney, told the court that the district attorney’s harping on the original trial and its outcome ignored Harris’ participation in vocational and other programs as well as the intent of the 2023 statute.

Judge Benjamin Williams ruled Oct. 17 he was “recalling” the original sentence because of “the progress Mr. Harris has demonstrated,” and reduced it by five years. This judgment, along with “credits” Harris had amassed in prison, meant he had served out his sentence. With instructions to report to a parole office within 48 business hours of his release, Harris, the judge said, was free to go.

But the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation kept Harris in jail for five more days.

On Oct. 21, the Silicon Valley NAACP and Harris supporters held a press conference outside the Santa

Clara County Jail protesting the delay. “We are calling for Carlos’ immediate release right now,” NAACP board member Lynn Rose, a stalwart in the fight to free Harris, told the press.

Paul Thacker, a longtime friend of Harris, also spoke. “This needs to end for the sake of Carlos, his mom and family,” he told the *Militant*. “Each day is more abuse.”

News of the judge’s order and the press conference protesting the delay received prominent TV coverage. Harris was released the next evening.

*Betsey Stone contributed to this article.*



Courtesy of Harris Family

Family and supporters of Carlos Harris at Santa Clara County courthouse Oct. 17 after judge ordered his release after serving 20 years for crime he never committed. In front row, third from left, is Harris’ cousin, Aisha Hampton. Harris’ mother, Rachel Hampton, is fifth from left.

## Workers face scourge of high prices, bosses get rich

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While Joseph Biden administration officials and boosters of Kamala Harris’ campaign insist the battle against inflation has been won, working people know from real life experience it just isn’t true. High prices on food, energy, housing, health care and just about everything else workers need are far higher than they used to be. Over the past four years prices have soared at least 20%, and they’re not coming down.

“When you get to the cash register” to pay for your groceries, Christian Cook, an internet technician in Leland, North Carolina, told the *Wall Street Journal*, “I didn’t really get a whole lot here and it’s still over \$100.”

It’s the same story for Jeff Harvey in Erie, Pennsylvania, who lost his job at a boat-supply store in September while his wife, Karen Harvey, took a pay cut at the car-service place where she works. “It’s extremely painful, because I know what things used to be,” she told the paper.

“Why has your Big Mac become so much more expensive?” posed the *Financial Times* Oct. 16. Because of what it called “cheapflation.” The prices of inexpensive items have risen faster than more costly products, hitting those with the least money the hardest.

You can see this in a big way in relation to higher rents and home mortgages, which many young peo-

ple wanting to move out of their parents’ homes and raise a family simply can’t afford. In mid-2014 the average home price was \$288,000. Today it’s \$426,800, a 48.2% increase!

For the wealthy and their upper-middle-class hangers-on who make big bucks off investments in stocks, hedge funds and other speculative endeavors, home prices and expensive upgrades aren’t an obstacle. Those living in multimillion-dollar mountain homes in Telluride, Colorado, 10,500 feet above sea level, spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to install special oxygenation systems in their bevy of bedrooms to assure everyone can sleep comfy.

Kevin Rost, the retired boss of a pipefitting company, spent \$18 million on construction of his home equipped with oxygenation units. “People spend a lot of money on their homes in the mountains,” said Adams Roberts, chief operating officer at Altitude Solutions in Colorado, the company that installed Rost’s roof. “But what’s the point if you can’t enjoy it?”

Oh, Rost also had a gondola installed to get him and his guests up and down from the mountain when it snows.

For these people, thinking about prices is worlds away from what working people face.

The Biden administration points to “strong” consumer retail sales as a sign the economy is doing great. But, as The Associated Press admit-

ted Oct. 18, “wealthier Americans are driving retail spending.”

### Soaring credit-card debt

For working-class households taking in less than \$60,000 a year, spending on consumer goods has declined since mid-2021. To cover costs they’re having to put more of their purchases on credit cards, which piles up debt fast from exorbitant interest rates.

The average annual credit-card interest rate was 21.5% in May. Some cards, like those issued by Synchrony, charge 34.99%. The average balance that people carry on their cards has climbed to around \$6,300 today, up 31% from 2021, totaling at least \$1,350 in interest payments a year. And credit-card holders get stuck with some \$14 billion a year in late fees.

While we have to count our pennies, these bankers are making out like, well, bandits. JP Morgan reports its take from credit cards rose 14%, to \$6 billion in the second quarter alone.

There are signs that the economy is slowing. Warehouse and other industrial construction is down 43% from last year, its steepest drop since 2008. Bosses at storage and distribution centers have slashed jobs by 171,600 over the past two years.

Manufacturing has also been slowing, with declines in August for appliances, heavy-duty trucks, machinery and oil extraction.

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# Join in expanding the reach of SWP, 'Militant'

Continued from front page

get out books by party leaders and other revolutionaries like Malcolm X, Fidel Castro and V.I. Lenin. Help win contributions to the SWP Party-Building Fund.

Whether Donald Trump or Kamala Harris ends up in the White House, the working-class road forward advanced by the SWP campaign is what workers need, in the face of today's unrelenting capitalist crisis.

The working class cannot allow layers of our class to be driven down toward poverty and despair, nor accept conditions that increase the burdens we face sustaining families and being able to afford housing, health care and other essentials. Workers are joining together today to use unions to fight for protection from the bosses' drive to profit at our expense.

The SWP explains why workers should fight for cost-of-living measures in every contract and all social benefits, so that when prices rise our wages automatically go up. In the face of layoffs, we need a shorter workweek *with no cut in pay* to share the work available around, coupled with a union-led fight for a federally funded public works program to provide jobs at union-scale pay building the housing, schools, child care and hospitals we need and repairing decrepit infrastructure.

The Democrats, Republicans and other capitalist politicians utilize Washington's wars and conflicts abroad to call on working people to fall in line behind "our" national interests and subordinate our demands to them. But that's a fraud.

Everything Washington does is to advance the U.S. imperialists' predatory class interests, not the interests of working people. That's true whether it's their response to the deepening showdown in the Middle East, to Moscow's attempt to conquer Ukraine or other conflicts generated by the crisis-ridden imperialist system.

The SWP candidates tell the truth — the capitalist rulers are marching humanity to-

ward more bloody conflicts and a third world war. The only way to prevent this is advancing the political organization of the working class.

The SWP is the only party in the U.S. that acts on unshakable confidence in the capacities of working people. In the course of the class struggle, workers can be won to building a party to lead tens of millions to topple capitalist rule in the world's final empire, and to replace it with workers power. With a working-class program, discipline and leadership, it is possible to open the road to a world free of exploitation, Jew-hatred, and oppression.

Workers that have endorsed the SWP campaign can join party members now and in the days after the election to win more support for this working-class perspective. This is the way you can to learn more about the party's revolutionary continuity and join in advancing the only road that can bring an end to the disasters that capitalist rule is preparing.



Militant/Mary Martin  
Rachele Fruit, right, SWP candidate for president, talks with Isabel Beteta at BeLoved Asheville aid center Oct. 18. She is one of hundreds of volunteers who came to aid hurricane victims in North Carolina.

# Workers at four Virginia hotels rally for wage raise

BY KAITLIN ESTILL

ARLINGTON, Va. — Hotel workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 25, rallied and marched to the four Hilton hotels here Oct. 17. They beat buckets and waved hand clappers and signs demanding "More in 24!" Their message to management: We need higher wages and better conditions.

These 550 union members are part of an ongoing nationwide fight against moves by hotel chains Marriott, Hyatt, Hilton and others to increase their workloads, cut schedules, combine jobs and raise workers' health care costs. More than 10,000 hotel workers have gone on strike since Sept. 2, with 4,400 still out. Additional strikes have been authorized by union members elsewhere.

Fellow Local 25 members from Washington, D.C., came down on a union bus. They waved placards of support showing the names of the hotel where they work signed by dozens of co-workers. In June union members at 20 D.C. hotels ratified a new contract that will bring wages up to \$33 an hour.

While no strike vote has been taken here, the union is prepared to do so. "We do want to apply pressure," Benji Cannon, director of communications for Local 25, told the *Militant*.

Magdelin Marrero proudly waved a sign saying "Gaylord Hotel," with names of over 50 workers on it — doormen, housekeepers and others from the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Oxion Hill, Maryland. Marrero said she and her co-workers drove an hour to get here. "I'm here today for the union. Without a union, hotels abuse the workers, they speak to the employees like we're slaves," she said. "The union has the power to win respect for the workers."

"During the three years of the pandemic we got no raises. We want raises now!" Patricia Perez, a Hilton housekeeper with 37 years on the job, said. "There was never a strike here before. But with the costs of food, rent, gasoline — everything! — going up, we must have good raises now."

# Democrat, Republican campaigns have no answers for working people

Continued from front page

deplorable. The upper-middle-class meritocratic layers who dominate the Democratic Party view workers as the source of bigotry, racism and reaction.

The CP's Wojcik showed his disdain for working people by writing Oct. 28 that Trump "does not want to offend hundreds or perhaps thousands of voters in swing states that actually do have Nazi sympathies."

Along the same lines, Phillip Bump opined in the *Washington Post* Oct. 25 that "a bunch of the people who think Trump meets the definition of fascist plan to vote for him anyway."

Trump has "empowered the worst among us," bemoans *New York Times* columnist Jamelle Bouie. The truth about Trump's alleged fascism is "now the only story worth telling," Bouie says, and electing Harris is "the only guardrail left" that can stop him.

To drive home the point, MSNBC spliced their coverage of Trump's Oct. 28 overflow rally at Madison Square Garden in New York with clips from a 1939 rally held there by the fascist German-American Bund, as if they were the same thing.

"We've got to lock him up," President Joseph Biden told fellow Democratic Party officials to loud applause Oct. 22.

The Democrats' last-minute focus on "Trump-is-a-fascist" comes on top of the concerted effort by Jack Smith, the Biden Justice Department's special counsel, and others to use the courts to try to bankrupt, preoccupy and imprison Trump while they demonize him and his supporters. Some 91 indictments have

been filed. This legal assault and related efforts to refurbish the FBI in the process is the main threat to constitutional protections today.

Many middle-class radicals, like the liberals, throw the epithet "fascist" around meaning "bad" or "really bad." But for the working class, political clarity is decisive. When the crisis of capitalism deepens and a confident working-class movement grows the capitalist rulers will turn to Nazi-type demagogues and thugs, spewing Jew-hatred, to try and defend their rule. They will turn these forces loose on the unions in an effort to crush them.

## What is fascism, how to fight it

The fight against a real fascist movement is a life-and-death question for the working class. It can't be solved by electing a Democrat or anyone else, but only in a determined effort by the working class to lead millions to take political power.

The capitalist rulers have no need to turn to a fascist movement to maintain capitalist social relations today. Trump held the presidency for four years and did nothing resembling the course advanced by the German government under the Nazis.

He's a mainstream capitalist politician, as is Harris. Each presents themselves in different ways. He poses as building a party for workers while she speaks for the upper-middle-class liberal meritocracy. But they share the same fundamental objectives — serving the capitalist ruling families and their class interests.

When the capitalists feel the need to turn to fascists — and they will, as the crisis of their system deepens — the labor movement, with revolutionary leadership, will need to take on the rightist thugs.

The Stalinist Communist Party and reformist Social Democrats in Germany refused to unite against the Nazis in the 1930s, despite their mil-

lions of members and strength in the unions. The CP slogan was, "After Hitler, us." This deadly course allowed Hitler to take power, crush the unions and made the second imperialist world war and the Holocaust inevitable. The cost was the lives of millions of workers and millions of Jews.

## Socialist Workers Party showed the way

When the depression deepened and the capitalist rulers prepared to enter the imperialist war in the late 1930s, fascist groups began to grow in the U.S. The SWP helped lead unionists to challenge them. In New York, at the German-American Bund's Madison Square Garden rally in 1939, the SWP and its union cadres were key in organizing a mass protest rally of 50,000 against this group.

In Minneapolis, where SWP members were part of the leadership of the Teamsters union, a 600-member citywide union defense guard was organized that prepared to do battle against fascist provocations. The union announced publicly the guard's function was "defense of the union's picket lines, headquarters and members against anti-labor violence."

When they were alerted by Rabbi Gordon that the Nazi-minded Silver Shirts were planning to organize there and mount a rally, the defense guard marched on the meeting.

Arrival of the union forces caused the audience to leave in a hurry, and the group's leader, William Pelley, set to be the main speaker, never showed up.

These rich experiences are described in more detail in an *Education for Socialists Bulletin*, "The Fight Against Fascism in the USA," available from Pathfinder Press.

The best thing workers can do on election day to begin to prepare for the deepening class struggles to come is to vote for the Socialist Workers Party's 2024 presidential ticket, Rachele Fruit and Dennis Richter.

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