

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE

'Fight for women's equality is part of battle over which class will rule'

— PAGES 7-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 89/NO. 11 MARCH 24, 2025

Jews and Israel face continuing threats from Hamas, Tehran

BY SETH GALINSKY

Both Hamas and Tehran are using the unstable ceasefire in Gaza to try to recover from the blows Israel has dealt them and to advance their long-term aim of destroying Israel and all the Jews there. Some 17 months after Hamas — backed by Tehran — murdered 1,200 people during its Oct. 7, 2023, anti-Jewish pogrom it still holds some 24 living hostages and the bodies of another 35.

Until Hamas is dismantled, and Tehran's capacity to acquire nuclear weapons eliminated, the threat of a new Holocaust hangs over the people of Israel.

According to reports in the Arab-language press, Hamas has offered to scale back its missile arsenal, but not give them up entirely, in exchange for a five-to-10-year ceasefire. It continues to demand Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. Its proposals are aimed at winning time to rearm and prepare new pogroms.

Meanwhile, Israeli troops remain inside Gaza's border with Egypt — the Philadelphi corridor — in a buffer zone along the Israeli border and along parts

Continued on page 5

High prices keep grinding away at the working class

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Soaring prices for some groceries and persistently high prices for everything at the store continue to squeeze the conditions of life for working people, every time they have to stop by the supermarket to get goods. While monthly price rises have slowed somewhat from what they were a couple years ago, they're still going up — by 31% over the past six years.

And for most items, these prices are not coming down, despite years of lofty promises by capitalist politicians from both parties that they will solve the problem.

"First, shoppers squeezed by inflation began ditching name-brand snacks and drinks in favor of lower-price store brands," a March 4 *Wall Street Journal* article said. "But now, with costs for coffee, eggs and other basic grocery items surging, consumers are cutting out many cheaper items as well." But there is no such thing as "consumers." The world the capitalist ruling families and their middle-class hangers-on live

Continued on page 12

Join the Socialist Workers Party's spring campaign!

Help expand the reach of the 2025 SWP candidates, 'Militant,' books by SWP leaders and 'Militant' fund



Militant/Gabrielle Prosser

"Working people need to run society," Kevin Dwire, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, told Nedifa when he knocked on her door March 8. "I agree," she replied. "It's great you're going around speaking with people face to face about things like this."

There is a revolutionary working-class voice in the 2025 elections.

The Socialist Workers Party is launching a spring campaign to introduce its national slate of 2025 candidates, expand the reach of the *Militant* and books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries, and to raise \$165,000 to

keep the *Militant* coming out.

The SWP and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. are organizing an eight-week effort March 22-May 20 to win 1,300 subscribers to the *Militant* and get 1,300 books recounting the lessons of earlier working-

Continued on page 3

Build solidarity with strike by over 6,000 school workers in Alberta



Militant/Ned Dmytryshyn

School support workers in Alberta, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, on picket line March 4. They are fighting for higher wages after four years without a new contract.

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN AND JOE YOUNG

EDMONTON, Alberta — Over 6,600 school workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, are on strike across Alberta for higher wages. The workers include educational assistants, cafeteria workers, librarians, administrative office workers and custodians.

"Many of us have to work two jobs to make ends meet," Donna Keith, an

education assistant, told the *Militant* on the picket line in Leduc, a suburb here March 3. She's paid 23.97 Canadian dollars (\$16.54) an hour, only CA\$5.13 more than when she started 25 years ago.

"We've had support from union members from the Alberta Union of Public Employees, postal workers, Carpenters Local 135, Teamsters, the Alberta Federation of Labour and Alberta nurses," Keith said.

Continued on page 2

Rulers in Germany go 'from welfare to warfare' as capitalist crisis deepens

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Germany's imperialist rulers are making a sharp shift to boost preparations for war — and to kick-start their floundering economy — with a historic

ACLU joins fight to overturn ban on the 'Militant' in Florida prisons

BY JANET POST

Florida state prison authorities informed the *Militant* that the Florida Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee would hold an initial hearing March 6 to discuss the impoundment of the *Militant's* Jan. 20, 2025, issue at the Santa Rosa Correctional Institution and other prisons across the state. But as the *Militant* goes to press, the paper's attorney, David Goldstein, has not been told what the committee decided.

Two subscribers at the prison informed the *Militant* in February that their copies of this issue, no. 2, had been impounded. The notice they received

Continued on page 5

debt deal. Their goal was captured in a *Financial Times* headline, "From a welfare state to a warfare state."

This move was hastened by sharpening competition and conflicts between capitalist rulers worldwide, including Washington's move to shift its gun sights from Moscow to Beijing. This includes its efforts to broker a rapid "peace" deal between Moscow and Kyiv and to pressure European powers to shoulder the responsibility for Ukraine's security.

The imperialist world order, lorded over by the U.S. rulers since they emerged victorious from World War II, is coming apart.

From his first term, President Donald

Continued on page 12

Inside

UK policy in Mideast: Defend British interests, not the Jews 4

Political crisis, gang violence hang heavy on Haitian toilers 6

—On the picket line, p. 6—

'We need to stand up,' Teamsters picket 10 Roads Express

Teamsters on strike in Georgia fight to keep union

NY dine-in theater workers strike for first union contract

BY WILLIE COTTON

NEW YORK — Loud chants of “Union power, worker strong!” echoed up and down the street in front of the Alamo Drafthouse dine-in theater in Lower Manhattan March 7. Car drivers honked in support and passersby stopped to take a flyer, make a donation and chat with the strikers, members of NYC Alamo United, part of United Auto Workers Local 2179.

“We voted for the union in the fall of 2023,” Xavier Ilyas told the *Militant*. “But we still don’t have a contract.”

“They laid off 70 workers, 30 here and 40 at the Brooklyn location,” Onyx Wright said. “So on Feb. 14 we all walked out.” She’s worked at Alamo in Brooklyn for two-and-a-half years as a server and guest attendant.

“They said this was the slow season,” Wright said. “But it’s very busy all the time. They were just making the rest of us work harder.” Workers

voted 98.2% to authorize the strike.

The theater chain, which was purchased by Sony Pictures in 2024, has 35 locations nationwide. Most are nonunion. The Brooklyn and Manhattan locations are the company’s most profitable outlets.

The workers have filed an unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board. Because the union is in contract negotiations, Ilyas said, “the company is required to negotiate layoffs” But bosses have refused to do that. The union is demanding the laid-off workers be reinstated with back pay.

“We’ve gotten a lot of support,” Wright said. Ticket sales at the theater have dropped substantially.



Militant
Workers at Alamo Drafthouse, members of United Auto Workers Local 2179, walked off the job Feb. 14. They voted in the union in the fall of 2023, but are still fighting for a contract.

Build solidarity with school workers strike in Alberta

Continued from front page

Boilermakers bring coffee every morning and the public employees union organized a barbecue for strikers. The AFL has launched an adopt-a-striker program to boost payments that workers get from their union.

School doors remain open. Some school boards are pressing substitute teachers and interns to do the work of the strikers.

Temperatures on the picket line plummeted to -41 degrees Fahrenheit recently. “They tried to freeze us out, but it didn’t work,” said education assistant Jen Tribiger, “and now they are trying to starve us out.”

“We’ve come too far to turn back now,” several strikers said.

The workers have gone four years without a contract. School boards offered 13.5% over eight years from 2020 to 2028. The union is demanding an immediate increase of CASH.25 an hour and 4.5% each year of a four-year contract.

The workers, the big majority women, are picketing Monday to Friday.

Shelly Michaluk, who has worked as an educational assistant at the Redwater High School in a rural area north of Edmonton, said she last got a raise in 2015. The wages in her district are \$5 an hour behind those in the provincial capital. “Over the last

five years the school board gave themselves a raise of 50%,” she said.

The strike began in November in Fort McMurray, in northern Alberta, extended to Edmonton Jan. 13, and has spread to other regions. Hundreds of strikers rallied at the Alberta legislature in Edmonton Feb. 27. Support for the strikers among working people continues to grow.

“Ten years is too long not to have a wage increase with the rising cost of living,” Susan Rowland, a housewife, told these *Militant* correspondents when we knocked on her door here.

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THE MILITANT

Oppose frame-up of Canadian protest leaders

In a blow to the basic right to free speech and assembly, Pat King, a spokesperson for the “Freedom Convoy” trucker protests in Ottawa in 2022, was convicted and sentenced Feb. 19 to three months of house arrest. The judge admitted his only “crime” was exercising free speech.



Reuters/Blair Gable
Police attack truckers protesting job-threatening mandates, Ottawa, February 2022.

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

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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Expand reach of SWP, 'Militant'

Continued from front page
class struggles into the hands of working people.

SWP candidates start with the world — the deepening crisis of the imperialist system. They point to a class-struggle road forward for the working class everywhere. The rulers' only solution to their sharpening competition and national rivalries today is heightened trade conflicts and more wars. Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and the Tehran-backed Hamas pogrom against Jews in Israel — the worst such slaughter since the Holocaust — mark a significant turn in the world we live in.

New and more dangerous wars are inevitable as the competition between national capitalist powers marches humanity toward war, fascism and the threat of a nuclear conflagration.

There is no alternative in the imperialist epoch. This is captured in the headline on the *Militant* Aug. 18, 1945, after the U.S. rulers callously unleashed nuclear destruction on the peoples of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "There Is No Peace! Only World Socialism Can Save Mankind From Atomic Destruction In Another Imperialist War," the headline read. The subhead: "Workers of America! You Must Take Power Into Your Own Hands!"

This is what the SWP candidates campaign on: Break with the parties of the bosses and bankers and chart a course toward workers taking political power. We say vote SWP! Join in building the SWP campaign. Join the SWP!

No other party explains all political issues today are class questions. No other party says that workers *can*, and have, made history. We point to our continuity with the two great revolutions of our epoch — the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 led by V.I. Lenin and Cuba's socialist revolution in 1959 led by Fidel Castro.

Tribunes of the people

SWP members are workers. They stand alongside fellow workers on union picket lines, join fights for jobs for all, better wages and conditions and join in efforts to build solidarity.

They're tribunes of the people, defending all those exploited and oppressed under capitalism, including working farmers who face bankruptcy and the millions of workers without papers forced into pariah status by the U.S. rulers. They point to the historic place of the fight by African Americans against national oppression and why only the working class can lead the fight for women's emancipation.

Party candidates join actions against Jew-hating violence, in defense of

Israel's right to exist as a refuge for the Jewish people, and in support of Ukrainian sovereignty. They build actions to press Washington to end its brutal economic war against Cuba's socialist revolution. They explain all workers have a stake in defending constitutional protections no matter whose freedoms are under assault.

The SWP has an unparalleled record — running candidates for president in every election in the last 75 years.

The *Militant* gives voice to the SWP campaign, as well as those of the Communist Leagues. The books on special during the eight-week campaign explain the powerful lessons of previous revolutionary struggles.

Week-in, week-out, the *Militant* reports the activities of the party's candidates and how they explain unfolding politics from the point of view of the working class. They point to examples of the deep capacities of workers in struggle. They speak in defense of workers behind bars. Don't hesitate to drop the paper a line about what you're up to.

After party branches adopt quotas for the campaign, the *Militant* will print a scoreboard and article each week measuring the progress being made to bring home the drive.

Contributions to the Militant Fighting Fund can be made now online at themilitant.com. Join in the SWP spring campaign! Contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 11.

John Studer

John Studer
Militant editor

Canada's Communist League campaigns to get on ballot

BY LYNDA LITTLE

MONTREAL — "You're the first people to do this here!" construction worker Danny Lelièvre-Copez said when Communist League candidate Katy LeRougetel knocked on his door in a neighborhood in LaSalle here March 9.

"We need to make Canada independent," Lelièvre-Copez told LeRougetel. He said he thought that tariffs imposed on U.S. imports in response to Washington's protectionist measures on Canadian goods "will make us stronger in the long run. We don't even make our own bricks anymore in Canada. We need to develop industry here."

LeRougetel said she opposed Ottawa's protectionist policies. "Whatever decisions the government makes, it'll be to defend the bosses' profits," she said. "Workers have to start from our own interests as part of an interna-

SWP candidate speaks out on Israel's right to exist



Militant/Terry Evans

TEANECK, N.J. — Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New Jersey, joined a protest of some 25 people defending Israel's right to exist as a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms held outside the Marriott Hotel here March 10.

The action was called to counter some 50 pro-Hamas supporters who had mobilized against a conference being held at the hotel by Nefesh B'Nefesh, a group that assists people looking to emigrate to Israel. Kuniansky told conference staff the SWP backed their right to hold the event. Her sign said, "Join the fight against Jew-hatred! Support Israel's fight to defeat Hamas."

"Jew-hatred is a reality today," Miriam Bildner, a yoga instructor and former student at Teaneck High School, told Kuniansky at the protest. She described how she was attacked outside that school. She had been carrying a placard condemning antisemitism when students walked out Nov. 29, 2023, demanding Israel end its fight to disable Hamas. From that moment on, Bildner said, "I knew I had to stand up and join protests defending Israel."

Kuniansky told her about the 50,000-strong demonstration of trade unionists and others called by the SWP in 1939 in New York to counter a Madison Square Garden rally of the fascist German-American Bund.

"That's what we need today," Bildner said.

"SWP campaigners find widespread abhorrence toward Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom when we campaign among working people," Kuniansky said.

— TERRY EVANS

national class. There are two Canadas, one of the ruling rich and then there are the workers and small farmers who produce all the wealth."

"So your approach is kind of unity so everyone can be happy?" Lelièvre-Copez asked.

"The Communist League says unions need to fight for a government-funded public works program to create jobs at union-scale wages to build the housing, day care centers, roads that we need," LeRougetel said. "The CL advances a program to mobilize working people to take political power into our own hands."

"That sounds good. But I think we need to build an independent Canada, too," Lelièvre-Copez said, as he signed to put LeRougetel on the ballot. "Good luck with the campaign!"

LeRougetel is running in the riding of Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle. CL campaigners are in the home stretch of a campaign to get 150 signatures for each of the party's two candidates,

LeRougetel and Philippe Tessier, well over the 100 required to get on the ballot for the election that's expected to be called in the coming days.

LeRougetel also spoke to service station worker Joanne Bolduc March 8.

"The ruling rich are at each others' throats," LeRougetel said. "They're fighting over who gets to pillage which part of the world and we cannot get sucked into their wars — trade wars or military wars. The Communist League says workers need to organize in our own name."

"Tariffs won't help us," Bolduc said.

LeRougetel pointed to union strike struggles, where workers "gain confidence in our own capacities as a class. But we need more," she added. "We need a class break with the rulers and their parties, we need a party of our own to organize the fight to take political power."

"Anything's possible," Bolduc said as she signed to put LeRougetel on the ballot.

Socialist Workers Party Campaign Join in building the working-class alternative

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UK policy in Mideast: Defend British interests, not the Jews

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Labour Party Prime Minister Keir Starmer has welcomed Israel's ceasefire as "desperately needed to end the suffering in Gaza." For months Starmer has pressured the Israeli government to end the war before Hamas was destroyed and before Israel had ended Tehran's moves to develop nuclear weapons. All this threatens the existence of Israel and the Jewish people.

Starmer imposed an arms embargo on Israel, supported the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and resumed funding for the Hamas-ridden United Nations Relief and Works Agency. His course is consistent with U.K. foreign policy over more than a century.

Many on both the left and right of capitalist politics argue that U.K. foreign policy has been pro-Jewish and pro-Israel ever since the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which pledged U.K. support for "a national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine. Nothing could be further from the truth — then or since.

Two years before Balfour's pledge, London promised the emir of Mecca, Hussein ibn Ali, the very opposite — a greater Arab nation, including Palestine, in return for support for the Allies in World War I.

Both pledges were buried as the 1916 "Sykes-Picot" carve-up of the Middle East was implemented after the war. Paris got control over Syria and Lebanon, as well as most of the region populated by the Kurds. London got control over Iraq, Transjordan and Kuwait and reinforced its domination over Egypt and Iran.

The League of Nations awarded the U.K. government a "mandate" over Palestine, under which London appointed Amin al-Husseini, one of the most powerful landowners in the region, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Al-Husseini, a vile antisemite, led pogroms against Jews in Palestine

in 1920, 1921, 1924, 1929 and 1936, often encouraged by British Mandate officials. He did so again in Iraq in 1941 — after which he decamped to Berlin to collaborate with Hitler in World War II to advance the Holocaust.

Al-Husseini went on to lead the Arab Higher Executive Committee of Palestine, dedicated to blocking the establishment of the state of Israel, and helped lead the invasion of the new state by the reactionary governments of Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria.

London and Russian Revolution

While Balfour's declaration was part of London's divide-and-rule strategy to maximize its domination in the Middle East, its immediate aim was to strengthen efforts to win Jews away from the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution in 1917. In a Jew-hating article in 1920, "Zionism versus Bolshevism," Winston Churchill, then secretary of state for war, claimed the majority of the Bolshevik leaders "are Jews."

"This movement among the Jews is not new," he said. From the days of "Karl Marx, and down to Trotsky (Russia), Bela Kun (Hungary), Rosa Luxemburg (Germany) and Emma Goldman (United States), this worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization ... has been steadily growing."

Churchill was the chief advocate for the British 1918 military intervention in Russia on the side of the counterrevolutionary White armies trying to overthrow the Bolshevik government. The Whites were responsible for the greatest massacre of Jews in history — surpassed only by the Holocaust itself.

British rulers' policy: Keep Jews out

Nor did Balfour hold any sympathy for Jews. As prime minister, he enacted the Aliens Act of 1905 — to curb immigration by Jews fleeing po-



British commander of Transjordan's Arab Legion, John Bagot Glubb, right, in July 1948. For decades London opposed establishment of Israel. As Israel declared statehood in 1948, London backed war launched by reactionary regimes of Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria.

groms in the czarist empire.

By the time Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, the government in the U.K. had blocked entry by Jews almost entirely. A similar bar was imposed on London-controlled Palestine.

A 1939 U.K. government "White Paper" overturned Balfour's "national home" promise. It further restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine, imposed restrictions on land ownership by Jews and called for an Arab state there within 10 years.

"Let us offend the Jews rather than the Arabs," Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain said.

The Churchill-led wartime coalition rejected calls to bomb the railway lines going to the Holocaust death camps, which could have saved thousands of lives.

After the war Prime Minister Clement Atlee increased British troop deployment in Palestine to 100,000 and imposed a naval blockade to prevent survivors of the Holocaust from getting there.

Some 50,000 so-called illegal Jews were interned in prison camps in Cyprus and 1,500 in Mauritius. Others were forcibly returned to wretched barbed-wire-surrounded displaced persons camps in Germany, Austria and Italy. Of the more than 60 ships

carrying survivors that set sail for Palestine just a handful got through.

War against Israel

London opposed the establishment of Israel. In 1948 the five invading Arab regimes joined al-Husseini to declare war on the fledgling Jewish state. The U.K. rulers provided British army commanders and troops to Transjordan's Arab Legion, along with weapons, ammunition, military vehicles and intelligence to the invaders while London imposed an arms embargo on Israel.

The new state was only recognized by London in April 1950, nine months after the war and nearly a year after Israel was admitted to the United Nations. The British rulers saw their national interests tied to a bloc with the rulers in Egypt, Iraq and Iran, and later Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia — to defend their control over the Suez Canal in Egypt and to keep oil flowing from the Middle East to the U.K.

As the imperialist rulers in the U.K. fought a losing effort against Washington's growing influence in the Middle East, they continued to look to blocs with reactionary Arab regimes.

They imposed arms embargoes on Israel under prime ministers Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher, Anthony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron and now Starmer. Today, London's trade, investment and military relations with Israel are minimal, dwarfed by its ties with other capitalist regimes in the Arab world.

Like all imperialist powers, the ruling class in the U.K. has based its politics on how best to assert its own predatory interests.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

March 20, 2000

PITTSBURGH — The first Steelworkers union International Women's Conference here was marked by women who are part of the struggles of working people across North America. Total participation was nearly 800.

"USWA Women in Action — Solidarity and Leadership" was the official theme. When locked-out workers from Kaiser Aluminum, AK Steel and Scottsboro Aluminum were introduced, they received an ovation.

These women brought a fighting spirit and a real air of enthusiasm to the conference. Many workers involved in struggles against company lockouts spoke up.

"The lock-out woke me up," Jody Wiesocki, from Kaiser in Spokane, told the meeting. "It has been the best education of a lifetime. I'm having the best time of my whole life."

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

March 21, 1975

Year after year, administration after administration, lie after lie, the U.S. government has pursued its savage onslaught against the people of Indochina. And if President Gerald Ford has anything to say about it, the killing will go on. Four million casualties and 10 million refugees may not be too much for Kissinger and Ford, but the American people have had enough.

While capitalist politicians talked about saving the Indochinese from "terror and repression," U.S. troops carried out massacres and the Saigon dictatorship imprisoned and tortured hundreds of thousands.

The revulsion of the American people at the ruthless slaughter on behalf of the most corrupt and dictatorial regimes eventually forced Nixon to withdraw the U.S. combat forces. The continued power of the antiwar sentiment in the U.S. has put the imperialists in a bind.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

March 20, 1950

BERKELEY, Cal., March 8 — A storm of opposition has broken out on the campus here against the ultimatum issued by the Regents of the University of California to 11,000 employees to sign a special "non-communist" oath of "loyalty" or face dismissal.

Yesterday 900 professors met here and voted unanimously to refuse to sign the oath even if it cost them their jobs. A group of non-tenure faculty members voted 300 to 1 to strike if any member of the group is fired for refusal to take the oath. Their lack of tenure means they can be fired any time.

Anti-oath sentiment had been seething for months but the explosion did not take place until the regents voted that any employee who does not take the oath "will be deemed to have severed his connection with the university." They took this action after 1,400 had failed to sign the oath affidavit.

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

Stakes for the international working class

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Threats from Hamas, Tehran

Continued from front page

of the Netzarim corridor in northern and central Gaza. Thousands of Israeli soldiers are also deployed around Gaza in advance of a possible return to combat.

U.S. envoy meets with Hamas

President Donald Trump's administration sent hostage envoy Adam Boehler to Doha, Qatar, to negotiate directly with Hamas, angering the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which wasn't part of the talks. Boehler discussed the number of Palestinian prisoners Israel would have to release in exchange for the remaining hostages.

"We're the United States," Boehler told CNN after he was criticized for the direct talks. "We're not an agent of Israel. We have specific interests at play."

"As of now," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said March 10, Boehler's negotiation "hasn't borne fruit." But that "doesn't mean he was wrong to try."

Trump sent Israel weapons that had been held up by former President Joseph Biden. The U.S. imperialist rulers aim to promote stability to pursue their own economic and political interests in the region, not what is best for Jews or Israel.

The biggest immediate danger is Tehran's drive to build nuclear weapons and delivery systems capable of hitting Israel. While Israel's defense systems have blocked most air attacks by Tehran, nothing is 100% effective. Even one crude nuclear weapon strike could kill thousands in Israel.

Washington and Tehran

The Trump administration has been combining tough language with offers to negotiate with Tehran. "I'd rather see a peace deal than the other," Trump told

reporters March 7, after he sent a letter to Iran Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, "but the other will solve the problem." This is an implicit threat of a U.S. or Israeli military attack.

Tehran's threats against Israel and its military interventions across the Middle East through Hamas, Hezbollah and other allied militia forces are widely unpopular among working people and oppressed nationalities in Iran. There are dozens of protests across Iran every week by retired workers demanding adequate pensions, nurses and oil workers demanding a living wage, and actions calling for freedom for union and political prisoners. "Enough warmongering, our table is empty," is a popular call.

Any strike of inhabited areas in Iran by U.S. military forces could devastate working people there.

Israel needs to destroy Iran nukes

But a pinpoint strike by the Israeli military on Tehran's nuclear sites would be different. Taking out these sites would not be easy, despite Israel's destruction of most of Iran's antiaircraft batteries over the last year.

The Iranian rulers have put one of their nuclear sites so deep underneath a mountain that it's believed that it would take at least two of the largest U.S. "bunker buster" bombs — the more than 13-ton GBU-57 — to destroy it.

Time is running out for the Israeli government as Tehran moves to replace its antiaircraft systems.

While Netanyahu, a capitalist politician, looks to U.S. imperialism to help defend Israel, he knows that if Tehran's nuclear program is not stopped, Israel has to be ready to act on its own or there could be a world without Israel.

The Israel Defense Forces has captured Hamas documents that prove



NurPhoto via Zuma Press/Majdi Fathi

Jabalia, Gaza, Feb. 21. Hamas' placement of its tunnels, command centers and weapons caches underneath residences, schools, mosques and hospitals is responsible for destruction in Gaza. "We've had enough of what Hamas put us through," one Gaza resident said.

that Tehran, with the help of Hezbollah, encouraged and financed Hamas for years in planning the Oct. 7 pogrom — including providing more than \$150 million in military equipment. Tehran helped form Hamas' elite death squads and brought some of the thugs to Tehran for training.

Hamas' declining support in Gaza is increasingly apparent. The area is in ruins with most buildings destroyed and with little running water or electricity. Many Gazans blame Hamas' deliberate use of civilians as human shields and its placements of tunnels, command posts and arms storage in residential areas and under hospitals, schools and mosques.

"People here do not want more war," Palestinian journalist Ahmed Abd al-Salam, who lives in Gaza, wrote in Media Line March 11. "They want normal lives, without destruc-

tion, without endless suffering. But they cannot say this out loud."

But many Gazans are losing their fear and finding ways to speak out against Hamas and its attempts to reimpose its brutal dictatorship.

A Palestinian woman in Gaza recently contacted Israeli Corey Gil-Shuster, who conducts street interviews in Israel and the West Bank for his Ask Project, a popular YouTube channel.

She told him that it's important Gazan voices are heard and volunteered to get answers to the question "Who should rule Gaza?" Because women in Gaza are not allowed to approach men they don't know, she got men to ask the questions and film the answers, Gil-Shuster told the *Militant*. Most did not want their faces filmed.

Only one person said they wanted a "unified government," which would let Hamas continue to exert influence. Several said they want the Palestinian Authority — which rules the West Bank — to return to Gaza.

"We've had enough of what Hamas put us through," said one man. "We want neither the Palestinian Authority nor Hamas," said another. "We want international forces." One man said he wants "only Netanyahu!"

"We don't care who rules us, as long as we can live a decent and peaceful life," said another.

Overcoming the consequences of decades of Hamas rule won't happen overnight. Jew-hatred and other reactionary views were promoted in United Nations-funded schools in Gaza. Workers, farmers and fishermen in Gaza need to gain confidence that they can begin to take their destiny into their own hands.

But getting rid of Hamas would remove a key obstacle to this and open the door to working people in Israel, Gaza and the region being able to find ways to come together, to break down divisions and forge a road forward to defend their own class and national interests.

ACLU joins fight against Florida prison ban on 'Militant'

Continued from front page

said the paper had been rejected at "another institution," which it does not identify. When authorities at any prison in Florida ban a publication, the Department of Corrections impounds them for all subscribers statewide. The *Militant* has more than 100 subscribers in Florida prisons today.

Santa Rosa authorities claim the *Militant* issue "presents a threat to the security, order or rehabilitative objectives of the correctional system or the safety of any person."

They say two articles in the issue are "inadmissible" — one on the front page, "Israel fights for right to exist as a refuge from Jew-hatred," and one on page 7, "Jew-hatred, 'racial purity' at heart of Hamas program."

The first article reports on political developments in the Middle East, explaining the importance of Israel's fight to defend its existence as a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms, like the murderous assault carried out against Jews in Israel by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023. This was the deadliest pogrom in the world since the Holocaust.

The second article demonstrated how Hamas' origins came out of reactionary Jew-hating Arab forces that collaborated with Adolf Hitler's drive for a "Final Solution" in World War II.

Articles don't 'threaten security'

"The impoundment notice, however, does not explain why these articles

present a threat to the security, order, or rehabilitative objectives of the correctional system or the safety of any person," Daniel Tilley, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, wrote in an urgent letter to the Literature Review Committee March 5, the day before the hearing.

"And, upon reading these articles, one struggles in vain to imagine how they could threaten security in any way," Tilley wrote.

"The banning of a particular publication represents content-based censorship, and it is unlawful without a showing that the prohibition is 'reasonably related to legitimate penological interests' and that the censored material in fact implicates legitimate security concerns.

"A regulation cannot be sustained where the logical connection between the regulation and the asserted goal is so remote as to render the policy arbitrary or irrational," he added, "or is an 'exaggerated response' to prison concerns in light of available alternatives.

"Here, given the lack of any other reasons provided, it appears that the mere references to Israel and Gaza alone were the basis for the impoundment. Under no version of the constitutional standard is that action lawful."

The ACLU letter follows similar letters opposing the banning of the *Militant* from Samuel Morley, general counsel for the Florida Press Associa-

tion; Justin Mazzola, deputy director of research for Amnesty International USA; and many others.

The *Militant* urges supporters of the rights of prisoners, freedom of speech and the press to write to the Literature Review Committee urging it to reverse the ban on the issue. There are over 10 *Militant* subscribers in Santa Rosa prison. Over the years the *Militant* has fought a number of impoundments at various Florida prisons, winning most of them.

The *Militant* currently has more than 300 subscribers behind bars in 30 states. "Our fight is not just for the *Militant*," John Studer, editor of the *Militant*, said. "We defend the right of prisoners to read the papers and books they want, to follow world politics, labor issues and other questions to be able to discuss and participate in politics.

"Freedom of the press is involved as well," he said. "We have the right to get our views out, whether our subscribers are in or outside prison walls."

If the Literature Review Committee decided to uphold the impoundment March 6, Studer said, the *Militant* has the right to appeal and file a brief explaining why the ban should be overturned.

Send letters to Saritza.Legault@fdc.myflorida.com and Melvin.Herring@fdc.myflorida.com, with a copy to themilitant@mac.com.

For all of the
Militant's unequalled
coverage since Oct.
7, 2023, of the fight
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against Jew-hatred.
themilitant.com

Political crisis, gang violence hang heavy on Haitian toilers

BY RÓGER CALERO

The protracted political crisis and murderous gang violence in Haiti continues to spiral, with devastating consequences for working people. At least 5,600 people were killed by gangs in 2024, and the number of those forced to flee their homes tripled to more than 1 million.

In the meantime, capitalist parties representing competing sections of the country's ruling class and foreign powers that intervene in Haiti are at an impasse in bringing about any semblance of stable bourgeois-democratic rule.

Capitalist rulers in Haiti and the governments in the U.S., Canada and Europe that have historically dominated the country, have no solution to these deadly breakdowns. They are the product of decades of imperialist plunder, exacerbated by today's unfolding worldwide economic crisis, alongside the rule of successive dictatorial regimes that relied on paramilitary gangs to terrorize working people.

Under a plan concocted by the Joseph Biden administration in April 2024, a Transitional Presidential Council was cobbled together and charged with organizing long-delayed presidential elections by the end of 2025. After horse trading between the rival political parties, Fritz Alphonse Jean became the third transitional president March 7.

Washington got the United Nations to approve sending a Kenyan-led foreign military force — the Multinational Security Support Mission — to Haiti tasked with quelling the violence. So far, it has made few inroads into gang-held territory, which has in fact expanded, as the gangs form their own alliances.

Gangs control almost the entire city of Port-au-Prince, the capital. They frequently hijack freight trucks and have blocked oil terminals, creating fuel shortages. Their control over key roads drives up food prices and transportation costs, and has caused the virtual collapse of water and electricity supply, and health services. The coun-

try has become a hub for transnational trafficking of firearms and drugs, underpinned by government corruption.

Doctors Without Borders suspended its operations in Haiti for 22 days last year, following repeated death and rape threats by police and government-backed vigilantes to its staff and patients.

The Cuban government continues to maintain a medical brigade providing services in the southern part of the country. Cuba has kept a mission in Haiti uninterrupted since 1998, when it sent volunteer doctors and other medical personnel to care for victims of Hurricane George, and then again after a massive earthquake in 2010. Over the years these internationalist volunteers have provided care for millions of working people.

Dominican capitalists profit

The Dominican government on the other side of Hispaniola, the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic, is stepping up deportations of Haitians. It deported more than 276,000 people, mostly Haitians, in 2024. As many as 1 million Haitians live in the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican government pledges to deport 10,000 Haitian immigrants per week. Its goal, however,



Reuters/Ralph Tedy Erol

Demonstrators march in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Feb. 17, 2022, demanding a higher minimum wage. Imperialist disdain, massive gang violence have pushed workers' struggles aside today.

is not to remove all undocumented immigrants from the country but to instill fear among them and make them more vulnerable to exploitation. Bosses in agriculture, construction and other industries depend on the lower wages and conditions they impose on Haitian workers to maintain their profit levels, and they have no intention of changing that.

In 2024, Dominican capitalists exported nearly \$900 million of goods to Haiti, \$23 million more than in 2023.

Dominican textile businesses

profit from importing duty-free cotton products from the United States and then selling products, including fabrics, to bosses in textile free-trade zones in Haiti.

The gang violence is having a dampening effect on workers' struggles, with tens of thousands laid off from textile and apparel factories. In 2022, Haitian garment workers scored a victory, as a coalition of unions negotiated an agreement with the government to provide transportation and food stipends.

ON THE PICKET LINE

'We need to stand up,' Teamsters picket 10 Roads Express

ROMEONVILLE, Ill. — "10 Roads is making a lot of money and not sharing it. They should call it '10 Cash Registers.' That's why we're camped out here," Bert Mitchell, a member of Teamsters Local 727, told the *Militant* on the strike picket line here March 10.

"We work six days a week with no sick days," he added. "When I was hired they said if you miss four days in a year you're terminated."

Tommy Wilcox, business agent for Local 727, said one of the issues in the strike is the company's refusal to honor the Paid Leave for All Workers Act. This state law requires employers to give full-time workers at least five days of paid time off per year.

Another issue is wages. For the kind of work drivers do at 10 Roads Express, "the area standard is north of \$40 per hour," Wilcox said. "They're at about \$30 now. We want to close the gap."

Local 727 has represented drivers at some of the 10 Roads locations in Illinois since 2019. The union is handing out flyers to drivers at nonunion company terminals inviting them to join the union and the strike.

Mitchell said many of the strikers don't have a lot of experience with unions. He does. He was one of thousands of drivers who lost their jobs at Yellow Corp. in July 2023 when it closed down after workers refused to take concessions that would have gutted the union. "I've been driving for four decades. I try to stay in union jobs," he said. "We need to stand up."

The picket line here at 645 Forestwood Drive is up 24/7, with the majority of workers picketing in the

mornings during their normal work shift. Help get the word out about their strike and pay them a visit!

— Naomi Craine

Teamsters on strike in Georgia fight to keep union

PALMETTO, Ga. — A determined group of six Teamsters, members of Local 728, have been staffing the picket line at the 10 Roads Express satellite yard here every day since Feb. 27 when they joined 500 others in eight states who had walked out Feb. 18. The strike has expanded since then, as drivers in Alabama, Florida and Georgia have joined the fight to win an improved contract. The company is one of the largest postal contractors in the country.

Three of the strikers described their fight to Susan LaMont, SWP candidate for mayor of Atlanta, and campaign supporter Val Edwards on a March 7 visit to the picket line. Concerned about company retaliation, they said their union representative told strikers to not give out their names to anyone.

The strikers are fighting for a \$3-an-hour wage increase and the ability to opt out of the company health insurance they are forced to use, several strikers told us. Workers at 10 Roads Express haven't had a raise in four years, while prices for virtually everything working families need continue to rise.

The health insurance situation is a real sore point, they said. The U.S. Postal Service provides a "health and welfare" payment to the company to cover health insurance costs for workers, close to \$6 an hour. But the company forces workers to sign up for its own health insurance plan, whose

premiums often exceed the subsidy. The difference comes out of workers' pay. And the deductible is as high as \$6,000 a year.

Drivers get no premium pay for overtime and have no sick days or personal time off, only accrued vacation days, which the company subtracts if they're out sick. They no longer have a defined company pension, only a 401(k) setup, tied to the ups and downs of the stock market.

The number of drivers here has fallen precipitously as the Postal Service has found other ways to move the mail. There are now only 11 drivers left at 10 Roads Express here. "What makes the union powerful is the number of people in it," one striker explained. "They're trying to undermine the union at this and other yards. That's why our strike is so important."

The strikers welcome the solidarity of visitors to their picket line and told us that Teamsters from UPS, DHL, Amazon and other companies have stopped by to strengthen the picket line. Pickets are up from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week, at 58 Tingle Lane.

— Susan LaMont and Val Edwards

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‘Fight for women’s equality is part of battle on world scale to settle which class will rule’

‘Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women’ presented at Havana book fair

Below are remarks given by Mary-Alice Waters on Feb. 18 during the 2025 Havana International Book Fair to present *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, and Waters (see news article below). Waters is a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and president of Pathfinder Press. She is the book’s editor and author of its preface and opening chapter. Copyright © 2024 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Feb. 18 panel at 2025 Havana International Book Fair presents *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by Socialist Workers Party leaders Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed and Mary-Alice Waters. From left, Esther Pérez, translator of Spanish edition, Waters and Pathfinder Press staff editor Martín Koppel.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Thank you Martín [Koppel]. And a thank you to everyone here with us today.

I would like to add one thing to what Martín has said in introducing Esther [Pérez], who will be speaking as part of the program this morning. Not only did she give us this excellent Spanish translation of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women*. After finishing that work, she also posed two thoughtful questions many readers might have, and those questions serve as a framework for the opening chapter of this new edition.

More about that in a moment!

I also want to reiterate what an honor it is for us to have with us both General Teté Puebla and Commander Víctor Dreke, representing the women and men the course of whose lives were changed forever as they fought to bring down the Batista dictatorship and open the road to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

Thinking about our presentation today, I was reminded of a remark that Teté made to us some 20 years ago when we were working together to prepare her book, *Marianas in Combat*, which tells the story of the women’s combat platoon initiated by Fidel in the Sierras during the revolutionary war.

“Before the revolutionary victory,” Teté noted, women were objects — mere bed decorations. After the revolution this changed. Women began to organize massively, working to change the conditions of their lives and to free themselves.”

We’ve come a long way since then. But none of us can forget that for the

majority of women around the world, Teté’s words still capture the reality of their existence.

About capitalism, not cosmetics

The preface to this new edition of *Los cosméticos, las modas y la explotación de la mujer* opens with the words:

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

“It is about capitalism.”

“How capital’s ‘merchants of beauty’ reap profits by exploiting economic, social, and sexual insecurities of women and adolescents.”

— Mary-Alice Waters

It is about the social relations that are created and perpetuated at this stage of history by the property-owning classes that appropriate the raw materials provided by nature. (With total disregard for the human consequences, whatever they may be.) To transform those materials into products they can sell — commodities — capitalist owners buy our labor power at the lowest price they can get away with. (Again, with callous indifference to our health, safety or the needs of our families.)

Then, like the “merchants of beauty” you will read about in the book, they sell

those products of our own labor back to us, reaping the greatest profit possible, claiming they deserve that wealth because they are more intelligent and work harder. And anyway, we’ll all “look better” by spreading or ingesting these commodities onto and into our bodies.

With humor and materialist clarity, Joseph Hansen in 1954 demystified these workings of capitalism in an article entitled “The Fetish of Cosmetics,” which is the cornerstone of this book. Hansen helps us understand how the economic system that continues to dominate the world today turns not only cosmetics but all our economic and social relations into commodities to be bought and sold.

Everything — and everybody — has a price. That is the universal guide to action of capital. And meant literally. Mr. Trump, the current president of the strongest — even if weakening — imperialist power in the world, is not an aberration. He only says openly — and acts on — what his entire

class believes to be its due.

To them we’re all objects in a portfolio of real estate holdings on which they can turn a profit.

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

What distinguishes cosmetics and clothing from other commodities like a refrigerator or a

cellphone, Joseph Hansen explains, is that sexual relations attach to them. And that is used by the “merchants of beauty” to increase their profits, to exploit the economic, social and sexual insecurities of women and adolescents above all. Who doesn’t want a more satisfying sex life if all you have to do is buy the right “things”?

The cosmetics trade — which in the name of “beauty” promotes everything from skin whiteners to grossly disfiguring “body sculpting” and genital mutilation — is today one of the most lucrative “industries” spread far and wide by capitalist commerce across every continent of the world.

Product of class-divided society

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

Continued on page 8

Lively exchange at Havana book launch

BY RACHELE FRUIT AND PHILIPPE TESSIER

HAVANA — “How do capitalism’s cosmetics and fashion ‘industries’ play on the emotional, sexual and economic insecurities of women and adolescents to generate profits?”

That question was at the heart of a lively exchange here among panelists and audience members at a Feb. 18 presentation of the new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women*, published by Pathfinder Press. The new title, available in English, Spanish, and now French, was launched as part of the 10-day Havana International Book Fair, Cuba’s largest cultural festival. It was held at the Dulce María Loynaz Cultural Center.

Among those attending the meeting were longtime readers of books published by Pathfinder as well as people learning about them for the first time. Several expressed surprise and delight when, among the audience, they met two historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

One was Brig. Gen. Delsa “Teté” Puebla, who was second in command of the Mariana Grajales Women’s Pla-

toon in the Rebel Army. Under Fidel Castro the Rebel Army led the popular struggle that in 1959 overthrew a U.S.-backed dictatorship and opened the first socialist revolution in the Americas. The other “histórico” in the audience was Commander Víctor Dreke, a Rebel Army combatant as well as a leader of Cuban internationalist volunteers who fought in the Congo and Guinea-Bissau in the mid-1960s.

In introducing the program, attended by some 30 people, moderator Martín Koppel, a Pathfinder staff editor, noted that “although this is the fourth edition, it’s really a new book.” It includes a new preface and opening chapter by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

The book’s other authors are Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed. Hansen was a central leader of the SWP for four decades. Reed, who took on many party responsibilities over the years, including editorial leadership on the *Militant* staff, wrote numerous works on the origins of women’s oppression and the fight for their emancipation.

Continued on page 10

Now read the book!

New edition in English, Spanish, French



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'The fight for women's equality is part of the coming battles on a world scale to settle which class will rule'

Continued from page 7
brings to its readers.

The oppression of women, the half of humanity that delivers new human life to the world, is not a product of our biology. Its roots are not to be found in the animal kingdom. It's an economic, a social relationship that is the product of *class* society. Women were reduced to the "second sex," subordinate to men, a mere five or ten thousand years ago. That's a blink of the eye in the 6 million years since our first known human ancestors emerged from the primate world.

As Reed points out, this subjugation of women as the "second sex" is inextricable from the rise of class divisions based on private ownership, as opposed to communal ownership, of land and the products of human beings' social labor. In that historical process women, like cattle and other domesticated animals, became valuable private property.

How and why did that social transformation come about? And how can it be ended?

What does any of this have to do with the material and emotional insecurities of women and adolescents *today*?

These are some of the questions explored and answered in this book, along with an unequivocal affirmation by its authors: That the road to ending the oppression and exploitation of women is inseparable from the revolutionary struggles by the working class and its exploited allies the world over to take state power out of the hands of today's dominant capitalist rulers.

It's what Teté explained so clearly and simply in the words cited a few minutes ago. It's what you did here in Cuba more than 65 years ago.

Four decades and counting

For nearly four decades *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* has been one of the most popular titles published by Pathfinder Press. Its cumulative sales top 18,000, including more than 3,000 in Farsi (the majority language in Iran).

It was first published in book format



Above, Militant/Betsy Stone; left, National Air and Space Museum Women's second-class status will never end under capitalism, Waters says, since it's integral to divisions rulers depend on, and try to deepen, in working class to generate superprofits. Above, 350 flight attendants rally at San Francisco airport February 2024, against bosses' attacks. They cheered at hearing fellow workers at Alaska Airlines had voted to authorize strike action. As a result of such resistance, things have come a ways for the better since 1950s United Airlines ad, left, with a checklist of dress and appearance rules for "stewardesses."

by Pathfinder Press in 1986. The introductory chapter, "Norms of Beauty and Fashion Are Inseparable from the Class Struggle," tells the story of how the correspondence and articles collected here came to be written in the 1950s and preserved as a mimeographed discussion bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party. How in those years, young men and women like me discovered it as part of beginning our political lives, drawn to the working-class battle to bring down the Jim Crow edifice of racial segregation in the U.S., and won to the example of the deepening socialist revolution in Cuba. The historical materialist, dialectical, and working-class course we encounter in these pages helped us understand things we had never before been able to explain.

It helped us chart a course for a lifetime.

A Farsi edition of the book appeared in Iran in 2002, published by Golâzin, a Tehran-based publishing house organized by women, and has been reprinted three times since then. A new edition is now being prepared there.

The first Spanish edition came out in 2010, published in Cuba under the imprint of Ciencias Sociales. Pathfinder's first Spanish-language edition followed in 2014, incorporating the lively comments delivered by Isabel Moya, a leader of the Federation of Cuban Women, at the 2011 Havana International Book Fair. Her sparkling words deserved a space in this collection and have been included in each new edition ever since.

And, in a matter of days, *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* will also be available for the first time in French.

The quickening pace and sharpness of the class struggle on a global scale

make publication of this new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* all the more important. Daily news reports the world over shine a spotlight on the brutal reality of women's oppression in all of its hundreds of manifestations — from rape and sexual enslavement as weapons of war and domination, to the more "civilized" (read capitalist) symptoms of a woman's inferior economic and social status, such as the "pay gap" between men and women that exists worldwide.

Whatever the form or degree, the inequality between men and women will never be eradicated under capitalism, however. Because it's not a matter of discrimination that can be eliminated by capitalist education or legislation. It's an integral part of the very foundation of the global system of class relations — *capitalist relations of exploitation* — that produce and reproduce a division in the working class that is a source of astronomical extra profits, year in and year out, for the propertied classes.

In a world of deepening capitalist crisis, "is the use of cosmetics worth the attention of a Marxist?" Hansen asks.

You will find an unambiguous "Yes!" in these pages.

Fetishism of cosmetics

Before finishing I want to return to the two questions mentioned at the beginning.

The first question is: Are the issues addressed in a debate about cosmetics and fashion many decades ago still relevant? Haven't "we" moved beyond that?

Second: Hasn't knowledge of the earliest human societies moved far beyond what was known in the early 1950s? Isn't Evelyn Reed's article on "Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?" outdated for that reason?

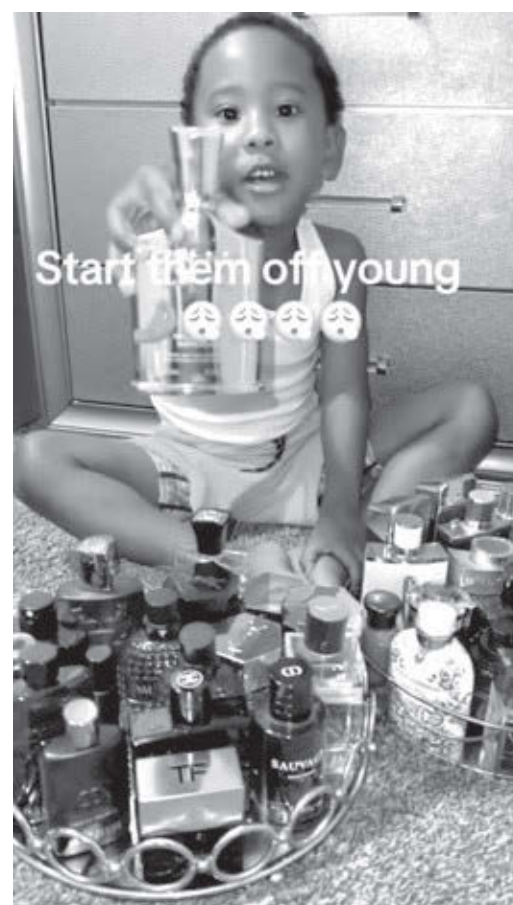
The response to the first question is underscored by Hansen's rhetorical question in "The Fetish of Cosmetics." In the whole history of capitalism, he asks, "has the bourgeoisie ever gone about cultivating the fetish of commodities more cold-bloodedly than American big business?"

More than three centuries after the birth of industrial capitalism, we can say that the resources devoted by capitalist enterprises to advertising and the creation of markets — that is, creating "needs" that don't naturally exist — have expanded astronomically, and continue to expand.

"Things" you must have to be happy are pushed on hapless "consumers" without pause — including younger and younger children!

The pressure to be "fashionable" — that is, to be attractive to a potential mate, as well as "employable" — has penetrated ever more deeply into the working class. Under bourgeois domination, the internet and the misnamed "social media" have become new and more powerful tools by which capitalist ideology, morals, and commodities intrude into our lives every minute of the day.

The impact of the 21st century capitalist advertising "industry" is, if anything, even more insidious as it spreads to areas of the globe previously buffered to some extent from the imperialist



Left, this 5-year-old's mother in New Jersey is a "social media content creator" who regularly spends over \$300 on "designer" colognes for him. She says he is obsessed with smelling good. Right, Silka soap ad in the Philippines promises "the true sign of whitening" your skin in seven days!



Left, Instagram; right, courtesy Shaira Embate

world market. In large areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America, 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. 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 — there have been no new victorious socialist revolutions for more than six decades — the "heavy artillery" of capitalism takes its toll, including among the most politically conscious layers of the toilers.

Class struggle and class politics

The answer to the second question — are Evelyn Reed's articles obsolete? — is also important.

"Marxism and the Woman Question" and "Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?" focus on the sharp polemic that Reed often referred to as the "Hundred-Year War in Anthropology." Here, as in other writings, she defends the historical materialism of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and the work of the most observant and materialist of the founders of the modern field of anthropology on which they drew.

As Reed points out, in this century-plus war over historical materialism one of the major battle lines has been the family and its transformations over time.

On one side are those who assert that something akin to the modern bourgeois "patriarchal system of marriage and family relations goes all the way

back to the animal kingdom." It is eternal — and therefore so is the second-class status of women.

On the other side are those, like Reed, who defend historical materialism and document how what is often referred to as "patriarchy," and the subjugation of women, arose in recent millennia as a cornerstone of class-divided societies.

"Concealed behind the debate," Reed explains, is "a question of class struggle and class ideology."

If class society and the accompanying subordinate status of women is 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 extended evolution of social relations through violent, conflict-driven stages of the pre-history and history of human society — determined by increasing levels of labor productivity and changing property relations — then capitalism and capitalist rule are no more permanent than the 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. And light will continue to be shed on the complexities and contradictions — the uneven and combined varieties — 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" — and continues to advance — "through the ages."

Which class rules

News accounts everyday 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 imperialist epoch's opening guns of World War III have already been heard.

But the unimaginable is not yet the 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 20th century. And the large increase in the percentage of women in the workforce worldwide is one of the reasons for this.

What's missing is growing working-class consciousness, confidence and revolutionary leadership.

Communist leadership that can — and will — develop only in the course of class battles.

The kind of leadership provided by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party he forged in the czarist empire. Leadership of the kind exemplified by Fidel Castro and the cadres of the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army in Cuba, who led the way to Cuba's socialist revolution.

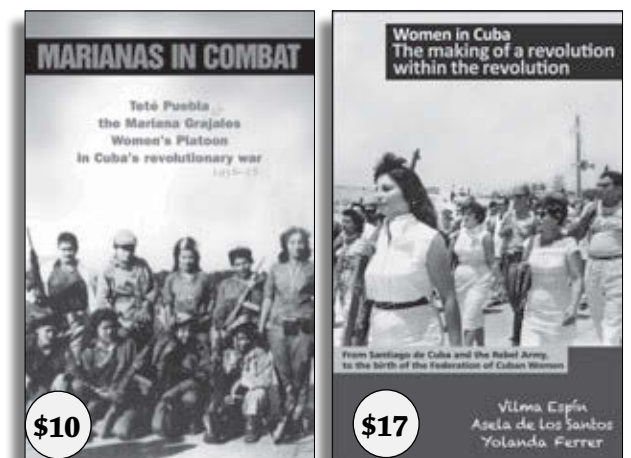
Leadership of the exploited producers of all skin colors and nationalities the world over, like that demonstrated by Malcolm X, a leadership with moral courage and integrity. And, I will add, of the Socialist Workers Party leadership who shared that course.

Those kinds of leadership, too, can only be forged — and will continue to be forged — in the heat of class battles.

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

This is a book to read and enjoy. Even more important, it is a book that helps to arm us for the only battle that can open the door to women's equality — and a future for humanity — the battle to settle on a world scale which class will rule.

Readings on women in Cuba:



pathfinderpress.com

Profitable cosmetic surgeries spread worldwide

Cosmetic surgeries and injections "have been getting cheaper, less invasive and vastly more common in recent years, in middle income countries as well as rich ones," a Jan. 4 article in the *Economist* boasts. "Falling costs and technology have democratized" and "globalized" the cosmetics industry, it says.

In the U.S. and Canada alone, total cosmetic procedures rose from 12 million in 2019, to an estimated 21 million last year, while in China the market is exploding, doubling in size since 2021, reflecting the profit lust that drives the cosmetics industry.

The *Economist* — which is interested in all things profitable — says that social media is "spurring a convergence in ideals of beauty around the world." This means getting a surgeon to "improve" your body like asking for the "fuller eyebrows of South Asia," the "fuller lips of sub-Saharan Africa" and the "upward arching eyes typical of East Asians."

This so-called democratization of the industry also entails trapping working people seeking "beauty" into ever-greater debt. In Brazil, bosses at the enticingly named Plastics for All let patients who can't afford their procedures go ahead anyway and pay their debts off in up to 100 installments (with a little extra interest). In Argentina, one of the largest health insurance companies now offers a plan that covers one plastic surgery a year.

South Korean plastic surgeons say their busiest time of the year is after university entrance exams, when many parents "reward" successful children with a gift of plastic surgery.

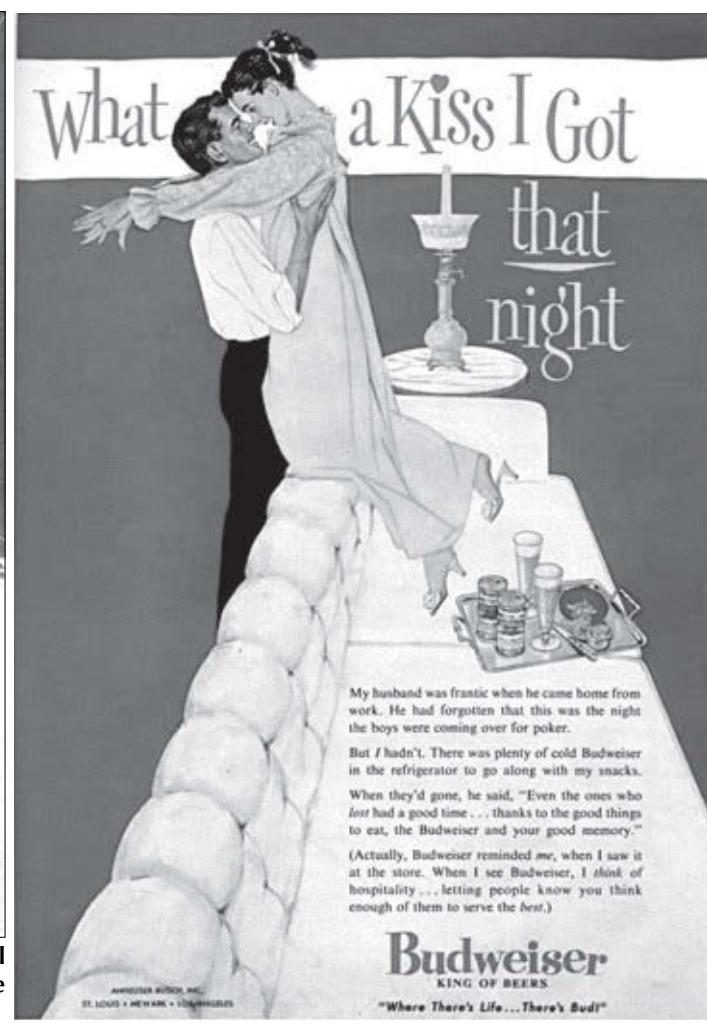
Absent from the article is any explanation of how the cosmetic industry reaps its vast profits by playing on the insecurities of women and adolescents to do what it takes to get ahead and to find a mate.

To understand this, you need to read the recently published new Pathfinder edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by Mary-Alice Waters, Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed.

— TERRY EVANS



Social pressure on women to be attractive to a potential mate, as well as "employable," has long dominated cosmetics and fashion ads, like these from 1950s, when the debate central to the book took place.



Havana book launch

Continued from page 7

The program began with remarks by Esther Pérez, who translated the Spanish-language edition. Pérez is well-known in Cuba as a translator, editor, writer and educator. “Esther is also a compañera with whom Pathfinder and members of the Socialist Workers Party have worked since the early 1960s,” Koppel said in introducing her.

Capital appropriated adornment

Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women “isn’t about whether or not someone chooses to use cosmetics. It’s about what happens when capitalism appropriates it,” said Pérez.

“Since the beginning of humanity, various ways of adorning or deforming body parts were used to mark a person according to a particular ethnic or sex group. Capitalism changed the function of adornment into the cosmetics industry. And women were the first victims of that market,” she said.

“But capitalism is always looking for new markets. They weren’t content to stop with women, or even men. Today they target what they view as a new niche — children, both girls and boys,” she said, to nods in the audience. This is one of the points developed in the first chapter of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women*.

Pérez pointed to how the drug eflornithine was developed in the 1990s to treat sleeping sickness, which has killed tens of thousands of people in Africa. After a few years the giant corporation Aventis stopped manufacturing the drug because its African market was not profitable enough. Instead, capitalists found it more profitable to sell the virtually identical product as Vaniqa, a cream that prevents facial hair in women. Only in 2001 did medical production of eflornithine resume, after thousands more Africans had died of sleeping sickness.

“That’s capitalism — selling women ‘beauty’ before saving lives,” Pérez said.

‘The fetish of cosmetics’

The other panelist was Mary-Alice Waters. The book, she said, describes how capitalism “turns not only cosmetics but all our economic and social relations into commodities to be bought and sold.”

One of the most valuable articles in the book, Waters noted, is “The Fetish of Cosmetics,” by Joseph Hansen. He explains that cosmetics and clothing are distinguished from other commodities by the fact “that sexual relations attach to them. And that is used by the ‘mer-

chants of beauty’ to increase their profits, to exploit the economic, social and sexual insecurities of women and adolescents above all.”

Today, Waters said, “the resources devoted by capitalist enterprises to advertising and the creation of markets — that is, creating ‘needs’ that don’t naturally exist — have expanded astronomically, and continue to expand. ‘Things’ you must have to be happy are pushed on hapless ‘consumers’ without pause — including younger and younger children!”

Under capitalist domination, she noted, “the internet and the misnamed ‘social media’ have become new and more powerful tools by which capitalist ideology, morals and commodities intrude into our lives every minute of the day.”

Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women helps us understand that the oppression of women “is not a product of our biology,” Waters said. “It’s an economic, a social relationship that is the product of class society.”

“We are today living through the opening of what will be years of worldwide economic, financial, and social convulsions, class battles and wars,” Waters said, struggles that will draw in millions of working people in the United States and around the world.

This new book, she said, helps “arm us for the only battle that can open the door to women’s equality — and a future for humanity — the battle to settle on a world scale which class will rule.” (See text of Waters’ remarks on page 7.)

Hands in the air

Hands shot up in the air when the discussion period began. One member of the audience responded to a point made in the book that “in Africa, Asia, and Latin America the siren song of the commodity fetish is an imperialist weapon like none other.”

She noted that, although women and blacks have made enormous advances through Cuba’s socialist revolution, “today we’re feeling more the influence of digital media, which promotes horrible things like skin-whitening products for women — and men — of African descent. And it’s those who have more money who can afford imported cosmetics, so this also reinforces social inequalities.”

“By the way,” she added, “I call it digital media, not ‘social media,’ be-



Audience member joins discussion at presentation of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* at Havana International Book Fair March 18. Foreground, Gen. Teté Puebla and Commander Víctor Dreke.

cause there’s nothing social about it in a positive sense.”

Another participant remarked that the way capitalist cosmetics companies play on the insecurities of women “is not just a racial problem — it has many ramifications. It affects women who are white-complexioned and are told they need these products to erase dark spots on their skin. Or young women who want to look like this or that famous actress. There’s a giant cosmetic surgery industry in Miami, in Colombia and other countries, where they claim they will ‘transform’ you.

“I feel these pressures too, it’s subliminal,” she said. Promoters of so-called beauty products “find ways to insert themselves into your life in order to make more money. For me, what’s important is your spirit, your soul.”

A young woman in the audience said, “Working as a tour guide, I’ve seen women tourists here from the United States who didn’t use cosmetics. Are they more conscious? Is it an act of resistance?”

“That may be true in individual cases,” Waters replied. “But the cosmetics business produces more and more new products all the time, and they even have ‘natural-looking’ cosmetics for women who don’t want to seem to be using makeup. The reality is that, especially in the working class, women — and men — are under pressure to look a certain way, often in order to get and hold a job.

“There is resistance up to a point, but we live under capitalism, and we have to put food on the table for our families.”

All these are class questions, Waters said. And readers will find answers in *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women*.

Closing the program, Tomasa González, director of the Loynaz Center, thanked the panelists and recited a poem by Dulce María Loynaz, one of Cuba’s outstanding poets of the mid-20th century. Members of the audience mingled afterward for some time in the patio, where they continued the discussion informally, met the speakers and picked up copies of the book.

Francisco Nemenzo, Filipino socialist, lifetime supporter of Cuban Revolution

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Francisco “Dodong” Nemenzo died in Manila, Philippines, Dec. 19, at the age of 89. “He was highly respected as a longtime president of the University of the Philippines. Throughout his life he was well-known as a socialist who stuck to his principles,” a Dec. 24 message to his lifetime partner, Ana Maria Nemenzo, known as Princess, said. It was signed by Ron Poulsen, along with Linda Harris and Janet Roth from the Communist League in Australia and Mary-Alice Waters from the Socialist Workers Party, who the Nemenzos called their “friends from Pathfinder.”

Nemenzo was a supporter of Cuba’s socialist revolution and its leader, Fidel Castro. He was a central figure at the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of Solidarity with Cuba, held in Manila in April 2017. The Cuban Revolution, he told the gathering, taught Filipino fighters that “if the Cubans were able to stand up to U.S. imperialism, why couldn’t we?”

Nemenzo joined the Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP) in the 1960s. In 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, using the army to brutally suppress political insurgents, labor strikes and protests. The PKP supported Marcos, leading

Nemenzo and others to split and form the Marxist Leninist Group.

The Stalinist PKP retaliated by setting out to assassinate members of the opponent group. Unlike many of his comrades, Nemenzo was ironically saved from execution by being arrested and thrown in prison by the dictatorship’s forces. He spent two years behind bars.

After his release he returned to the University of the Philippines, eventually becoming president. His view was that the university “should always be an arena for contending schools of thought,” not dominated by any one ideology.

Nemenzo appreciated the lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution led by V.I. Lenin. In 2017, on the 100th anniversary of the revolution, he gave a lecture in Manila on the global significance of the Bolshevik victory.

Francisco and Princess Nemenzo encouraged efforts to bring books by revolutionary leaders to the Philippines. They welcomed Pathfinder Books in Australia’s participation in the Manila International Book Fair in 2018 and 2019, and the extension of their reach more broadly.

A meeting to honor Francisco Nemenzo’s life and legacy was held at the University of the Philippines in Manila Dec. 27.

Rally for US-Cuba Normalization

7 p.m. Saturday, March 15

Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz
Memorial and Education Center

3940 Broadway @ 165th St., New York

Speakers from Cuba:

Ambassador Yuri Gala López,

Deputy Permanent Representative of Cuba to United Nations

Leima Martínez Freire,

Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP)

Musical guest: Arturo O’Farrill and Band

Other speakers, light refreshments, dance music

Suggested donation: \$20

More info: <https://us-cubanormalization.org/CubaConference2025/malcolmx-rally-event.html>

US rulers lost the Cold War, spurring world disorder, new wars

The Spanish edition of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. The book explains the coming apart of the imperialist world order, put in place by the U.S. rulers after their bloody victory in World War II. The excerpt is from the chapter "So Far From God, So Close to Orange County: The Deflationary Drag of Finance Capital." In this 1995 talk Barnes explained why U.S. imperialism lost the Cold War and why capitalist rivalries are pulling the NATO alliance apart. Copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Sebastian Kahnert/picture-alliance/dpa/AP
Joint NATO military exercise crossing Vistula River in Poland March 4, 2024. NATO is "less of an alliance than ever before," Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes explains. Growing imperialist world disorder today breeds sharpening capitalist rivalries and wars.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

Workers in Russia, workers across Eastern Europe, and workers in China are not going to travel along some different line of march from the rest of our class. They are less likely to do so as we enter the twenty-first century than ever before. There is not some separate set of social laws that will determine the outcome. ... What happens there, like everywhere else, will be determined by the dialectic of the crisis and decline of the world imperialist system and the class battles unleashed by its

pressures. The workers will become the decisive actors. But the action — including the growth in the size and social weight of the working class — will be produced and precipitated by the inevitable workings of the capitalist system on a world scale.

From one point of view, this outcome to what has been called the Cold War is a frustrating one for revolutionary-minded workers and youth. We can see all the doors that have been opened. Stalinist calumnies and political prejudice are less effective than at any time since the mid-1920s in closing the minds of fighters and revolutionists to communist ideas. We take full advantage of these open doors. We distribute books, pamphlets, and newspapers presenting a revolutionary perspective in parts of the world where only five or ten years ago it was nearly impossible to do so without being arrested or worse.

Communist workers see the hunger for ideas everywhere we go abroad, whether it is along the Silk Road in Iran or Azerbaijan, or at a conference of the African National Congress in South Africa, or to young people we meet at a gathering somewhere in Asia. We find that same interest among workers and young people we meet in Cuba and fellow revolutionists we collaborate with there.

But there is frustration as well. The fact that world capitalism has been

weakened does not translate into a burst forward of working-class struggles or an advance for independent labor political action and organization. It does not mean that the working class conquered new ground.

Similarly, the collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses does not, on its own, increase the size of the communist movement. It is one thing to celebrate the collapse of these oppressive regimes and to recognize that this tears down the greatest obstacle to drawing workers into world politics and leading the best of them to communist conclusions and organization. But it is another thing to say the working class in these countries has been strengthened politically or organizationally; it hasn't been. In order for communist leadership to be qualitatively expanded, the class struggle must first sharpen and expand.

The most important thing for class-conscious workers to understand, however, is that communists are in a better position today than at any time since the opening years of the Russian revolution to fight for proletarian leadership of revolutionary struggles as they develop. And the worst mistake we can make is to think that the rulers, that the enemies of the working class, are stronger than they are. To the contrary, they are weaker than they appear.

Everything we might think is strong — if we believed the bourgeois pro-

paganda — is actually weaker than it seems. The rulers' moves are moves from weakness, not strength. They are moves marked by the extended, deflation-biased wave of capitalist development since the opening half of the 1970s.

This closing month of 1994 has been a particularly good one for illustrations. ... The U.S. dollar is weaker than it seemed (and at the same time relatively stronger compared not only to the Mexican peso or Canadian dollar but to the currencies of its rivals in Europe and Japan). The Russian army is weaker than it seemed.


What about NATO? NATO is not only weaker than it seems; it is not even an organization, contrary to what the name North Atlantic Treaty Organization implies, and it is less of an alliance than ever before. For most of the political lives of many of us, we thought of NATO as a thing. Even at its strongest, however, NATO was never a thing; it was the registration of a certain international relationship of class forces. It was a name for a collection of imperialist nation-states, each with its own government, its own armed forces, its own currency, and its own class interests. But we used shorthand, as human beings do, and fetishized the NATO alliance. ...

With the collapse of the Soviet bloc and Warsaw Pact, however, the rulers of the various European and North American capitalist powers no longer have any commonly perceived threat greater than their own diverging interests that would impel them to pay the price they once did to huddle under Washington's strategic nuclear umbrella. ...

If we recognize that fact, then we can understand what is behind the current tussle among various imperialist powers about how rapidly to extend NATO membership to certain former Warsaw Pact members in Central Europe, especially Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. The debate over that aggressive move represents a further weakening, not a strengthening, of NATO. It deepens the divergence among NATO members, with the U.S. rulers in their big majority at the head of those pressing for eastward expansion. And, of course, it sharpens tensions between Moscow and Washington and other NATO governments.

March
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Germany: 'welfare to warfare'

Continued from front page

Trump has demanded European powers take a far greater share of the responsibility and expense for their own defense.

The German rulers' military is in decrepit shape. "German land forces are down to a readiness of around 50%," Col. Andre Wuestner of the German Armed Forces Association told Reuters Feb. 13. For instance, they admit they have virtually no drones at all. Conscription was abandoned in 2011.

Army barracks are in a "disgraceful state," Reuters reported, pointing to a "lack of working toilets, clean showers and Wi-Fi."

Rival European powers, with Berlin in the lead, are now fast-tracking plans to bolster their militaries, upgrade their arsenals and reduce their dependency on the U.S. "nuclear umbrella."

Just over a week after Germany's recent elections, Friedrich Merz, the country's chancellor-in-waiting, announced March 4 his conservative Christian Democrats and likely coalition partners, the Social Democrats, had made a deal. Berlin's rearmament was given added urgency, he said, after "recent decisions by the American government."

The plan would end Berlin's long-standing "debt brake" imposed after the 2008 financial crisis, to allow potentially unlimited borrowing for military spending. It would also create a 500 billion euro (\$540 billion) 10-year fund to drive infrastructure investments in roads, rail and other steps to strengthen the capitalist economy.

Up to 1 trillion euros of additional borrowing would become available over the next decade, equivalent to more than a fifth of Germany's entire gross domestic product today. This, Berlin hopes, will resurrect Europe's largest economy after years of stagnation.

To overturn Germany's constitutional limits on debt requires a two-thirds parliamentary majority. To pass the changes, Merz needs to win the Greens to back the deal before the new Bundestag is seated March 25. Otherwise, the parliament's enlarged right and left contingents could block the accord.

Deutsche Bank said the speed and size of the proposed "fiscal expansion is reminiscent of German reunification" in 1990.

"Political developments in Europe and the world are evolving faster than we anticipated just a week ago," Merz said. He also called for reintroducing compulsory military service.

A parallel plan, "ReArm Europe," was launched the same day by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. It allocates 800 bil-

lion euros overall, with 150 billion euros to be loaned to European Union member governments to buy missiles and drones, artillery and ammunition, tanks and trucks, as well as for air defenses and cybersecurity.

"Mobilize Europe's immense resources," von der Leyen urged, "to unleash our industrial and productive power" to uphold our mutual "security." More accurately, this means to strengthen Europe's capitalist rulers' ability to wage war to protect their investments and profits.

For years the German rulers, top dog in the EU, have faced an industrial slump sharpened by high energy costs, competition from cheaper products from China, and now new tariffs threatened by Washington. Removing the debt taboo will allow struggling auto giants like Volkswagen to repurpose idle factory capacity into armaments production. Stock prices for German arms manufacturers like Rheinmetall and Thyssenkrupp soared.

Spread of nuclear arms

Both Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron see using existing French and British nuclear arms to stand as protection for Europe, as Washington is discussing removing their decades-long deployment there. And the German rulers are weighing the possibility of breaking another taboo — the development of nuclear weapons in Germany.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk March 7 raised Warsaw joining in, acquiring "nuclear weapons and modern unconventional weapons."

As national ruling classes are increasingly driven to maneuver for advantage against foes and friends alike, more will seek to acquire nuclear weapons.

Out of 160,000 U.S. troops stationed around the world, the second-largest contingent is in Germany. This was boosted to 50,000 troops after

1,500 San Jose bus drivers strike for first time ever



Militant/Maggie Trowe

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Over 1,500 bus drivers, light-rail operators, mechanics and office workers, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 265, went on strike against the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority here March 10. The system transports 100,000 people a day. Spirited picket lines were up at bus yards and other VTA facilities all across this city.

This is the first strike in the company's 30-year history. Contract negotiations began last August, but the bosses have refused to make a serious offer.

"The big issues in the strike are: one, money," Hector Marin, a maintenance worker with 14 years with the company, told the *Militant*. "The union wants a 19% raise over three years. The company has offered 9%. Two, the right to go to arbitration if we have a grievance. The company says they will decide what grievances, if any, qualify. And three, rejection of the company demand to cut to one year the ability to go on extended leave if you get very sick. Right now it's two years."

Many of the strikers told the *Militant* about the solidarity they're getting from other Amalgamated Transit Union locals in the area. "It's really important the Alameda County Transit bus drivers and BART light-rail workers are honoring our strike by not coming past the Milpitas BART stop," Sam García, a driver with 12 years at the Valley Transportation Authority, said.

The company went to court March 11 seeking a ruling forcing the workers to end their strike. ATU Local 265 President Raj Singh told the San Jose Spotlight the complaint was "absurd," because the VTA claims the strike is a violation of the old contract, but that contract expired March 3.

— JEFF POWERS

Moscow's all-out assault on Ukraine. U.S. nuclear weapons are based at the Buchel Air Base in western Germany. Thousands of U.S. troops are stationed further east, in Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.

The Socialist Workers Party calls for Moscow to get its invasion forces out of all Ukrainian territory. The party also demands Washington get its armed forces and nuclear weapons out of Europe, *all* of Europe.

High prices keep grinding away at the working class

Continued from front page

in is markedly different than what faces working people.

The article focused on TreeHouse Foods, the largest supplier of store-branded items on the shelves of retail giants like Walmart, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and Target. The company employs some 7,500 workers at 26 production facilities across the U.S. and Canada. Today its bosses are pushing to maintain profit levels through more speedup with fewer workers and other cuts to its workforce.

Sales of TreeHouse products, which include pickles, candy, nondairy creamer and in-store bakery goods, slowed from a 4.5% rise in the first three months of 2024 to just 0.6% increase over the last three months of the year.

"Most Americans can't afford life anymore — and they just don't matter to the economy like they once did," headlined an unbelievably cynical and pro-boss article in the March 7 MarketWatch.

It goes on to describe how "most Americans" are class-divided, facing vastly different realities. "A whopping 55% of those in the bottom third on the American income scale say they are doing worse than they were five years ago," while "some 63% of families in the top third of incomes say they are better off."

The fact of the matter is the inflation rate for necessities working people need is about twice as high as overall inflation, MarketWatch said. This is part of the way the capitalist rulers' deepening economic crisis is imposed on working people today.

Grinding on workers in New York

The vast majority of workers in New York say the cost of food has risen faster than their income over the past year, a recent survey reports. It says 53% of residents in the city report their family's debt has risen as food prices continue to rise. Many have no choice but to put these basic expenses on their credit cards, which just increases the debt they owe to big banks that jack up the interest rates on unpaid balances.

Another indication of the squeeze working people face is the record number of early withdrawals they've been forced to make from 401(k) retirement funds, in order to prevent foreclosures or evictions, or to cover outstanding auto loans, medical bills and mounting credit card debt. Anyone making these withdrawals must pay income tax on them, plus a 10% penalty if they're younger than 59 years old.

These 401(k) plans have been imposed on workers by the bosses in order to get rid of defined pension

benefits. But 401(k) schemes are a big gamble. These funds are invested in stocks and other speculative endeavors, as capitalism's crisis leads to more gyration in these markets, posing big questions about what will be left for workers and their families.

These conditions are feeding the recent increase in strike battles in the U.S., and fueling discussion about what can be done. "The Socialist Workers Party says the unions need to fight for a reduction in the work-week with no reduction in pay to keep workers on the jobs," Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for governor of New Jersey, told the *Militant*. "And for cost-of-living clauses in all union contracts and government programs like Social Security to match rising prices. In the long run, the only real solution is for working people to organize in their millions to take political power and reorganize society in our class interests."

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War



The Bolsheviks' policy on national self-determination and voluntary federation began to be reversed from the early 1920s by the emerging bureaucratic caste led by Joseph Stalin. The USSR reemerged as a prison house of nations inherited from the czarist empire.

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