

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Che Guevara on Economics and Politics' on road to socialism

— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 9

MARCH 4, 2024

## Israeli gov't gives Hamas an ultimatum: Free hostages!

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Israeli government gave Hamas leaders a deadline of Ramadan in early March to release all the roughly 100 hostages it still holds captive. Otherwise, it said, the Israel Defense Forces will launch a major offensive on Rafah, on the border with Egypt, to eliminate the Tehran-backed Jew-hating group's

**Defend Israel as a refuge for Jews! Fight Jew-hatred!**

last Gaza stronghold.

The Oct. 7 pogrom carried out by Hamas, along with its junior partners Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — all financed, armed and trained by Tehran — is the largest massacre of Jews since the Nazi Holocaust, killing 1,200 men, women, children and elderly, wounding more than 5,000 and taking over 240 hostages.

Continued on page 6

## Navalny killed in Russian prison, opposition grows to Ukraine war

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Russian government informed Alexei Navalny's family Feb. 16 that he had died in prison. Navalny, a well-known critic of the government in Moscow, had been incarcerated in one of Russia's harsh prison colonies in the Arctic Circle.

The announcement led to protests in over 200 cities and towns across the country and other protests around the world, blaming Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime for his death and demanding to know the circumstances involved. These actions, despite a crackdown by Russian authorities, are an important sign of growing opposition to the Putin regime as it enters its third year of war against the Ukrainian people.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg hundreds of people gathered at monuments dedicated to victims of Joseph Stalin's political repression. From western Russia to Siberia, people laid flowers and photos of Navalny in cit-

Continued on page 2

## Vote Socialist Workers Party! Rachele Fruit • Margaret Trowe for president & vice president Join the fight for workers power!



Militant/Janet Post  
Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for president



Militant/Janet Post  
Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for vice president

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

UNION CITY, N.J. — The Socialist Workers Party announced Feb. 17 that Rachele Fruit of Miami will be the SWP candidate for U.S. president and Margaret Trowe of Oakland, California, will be Fruit's running mate for vice president.

The announcement by Socialist Workers National Campaign Director John Studer was made at a campaign meeting here for Joanne Kuniarsky, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey, and Lea Sherman, the party's candidate for Congress. Fruit and Trowe introduced themselves. The next day they joined campaign teams discussing why workers need to break with the Democrats and Republicans, the twin parties of the

capitalist rulers, and collecting signatures to put the New Jersey candidates on the ballot.

Fruit, a hotel worker and longtime trade unionist, joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1970 in Philadelphia. Her biography, as well as Trowe's, is on page 4.

As the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida, Fruit spoke out last fall against the Tehran-backed Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom in Israel. Her campaign statement in defense of Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jewish people was distributed at a protest at the Miami Holocaust Memorial and was featured on the front page of the *Militant*. It was circulated by party members and supporters across the

Continued on page 4

## 'App' drivers in US hold first nationwide strike for pay, rights



Militant/Illona Gersh

Uber, Lyft and DoorDash workers rally in Chicago Feb. 14. First nationwide strike by app drivers in U.S. was joined by drivers in Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg in Canada.

BY JANET POST

Thousands of Uber, Lyft and DoorDash drivers went on a one-day strike on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, in more than a dozen U.S. cities, and at some airports, including Chicago, Miami, San Francisco and Newark, New Jersey. Workers turned off their apps, refusing all jobs and deliveries. This was the first nationwide protest by the electronic-hailing app workers. Drivers in Canada struck in Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

The strikes were organized by Justice for App Workers, a coalition of 130,000 e-hail drivers on the East Coast and in the Midwest; Rideshare Drivers United in Los Angeles; and California Gig Workers Union and Gig Workers Rising in California.

Uber drivers' average monthly earnings before expenses fell by more than 17% over the last year. "We cannot make the same amount of money

Continued on page 8

## Havana International Book Fair is a conquest of Cuba's socialist revolution

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA — The 32nd Havana International Book Fair is a "demonstration of the value our government places on books and reading, given the difficult world situation and inten-

sification of the criminal U.S. blockade," Juan Rodríguez, president of the Cuban Book Institute, said at its Feb. 15 inaugural event.

Tens of thousands of people have streamed through the fair during its opening days. The annual event is Cuba's largest cultural festival, with literature displays, poetry readings, art exhibits, film showings, children's activities, theater, dance and music. After 10 days in Havana, Cuban publishers who are part of the fair will travel to provinces across the island, concluding

Continued on page 3

## 'Socialist' radicals gain in Democratic Party, push attacks on political rights

BY TERRY EVANS

The Democratic Socialists of America, Communist Party and other Stalinist currents in the U.S. are telling workers Donald Trump is so dangerous they have to back Joseph Biden, the candidate of the Democratic Party, one of the capitalist rulers' two main parties. It exists in tandem with the Republicans to front for the rulers' assaults on workers

Continued on page 9

### Inside

Join the fight for workers power and socialism! 9

10,000 rally in Australia, protest rise in Jew-hatred since Oct. 7 6

—On the picket line, p. 8—

UK Amazon workers strike for higher wages, union recognition



# Navalny killed, protests grow

Continued from front page  
ies like Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Kazan, Kaluga and Tula.

Police cracked down on the protests. In the first two days after the announcement of Navalny's death, over 400 people were detained, the human rights OVD-Info source reported. This included 200 in St. Petersburg alone and arrests in 31 other cities.

In Berlin, a memorial protest for Navalny at the Russian Embassy included the performance art collective Pussy Riot and former Russian state TV employee Marina Ovsyannikova, who was fired for opposing Moscow's invasion of Ukraine on a live broadcast in March 2022. Her sign at the Berlin gathering quoted Navalny, "Don't give up!"

Navalny, who was the main bourgeois political opponent of Putin, ran for president in 2018 but was barred from the ballot. After spending time in Germany recovering from being poisoned in Russia by a military-grade nerve toxin that Navalny said was ordered by Putin, he returned to Russia in 2021. He was arrested right away and stood trial on frame-up charges of "embezzlement." Navalny was ultimately sentenced to more than 20 years in prison, including for "extremism." He was kept at three of Russia's most notorious prisons.

On Feb. 17 Navalny's mother and his lawyer visited the prison where Alexei Navalny died. They were told his body had been sent to a morgue in nearby Salekhard. Reaching there, they were told the body wasn't there. All this to cover up the facts of what led to his death.

Navalny's supporters have collected nearly 55,000 signatures on an online petition demanding his body be turned

over to relatives. Officials now say this won't be done for at least two more weeks of "chemical investigation."

## Opposition to Putin's Ukraine war

A few days earlier, Vladimir Kara-Murza, held in a Siberian gulag-like penal colony in Omsk, spoke out, highlighting what was by far the largest mobilization opposing Moscow's war against the people of Ukraine. He was talking about the 200,000-plus Russians who had turned out to stand in lines and sign petitions to put Boris Nadezhdin — running to oppose that war — on the ballot for president.

Kara-Murza began serving a 25-year prison term in April 2022 for speaking out against Putin's war. He was convicted of treason and other charges. He had been a candidate for parliament and served as deputy leader of the People's Freedom Party.

"If you listen to Vladimir Putin's propaganda, things couldn't be going better for him," Kara-Murza wrote in an article run in the Feb. 14 *Washington Post*. "But actions speak louder than words. The Kremlin's propaganda narrative was shown up last week when the Central Election Commission barred Boris Nadezhdin, the sole antiwar candidate running in Russia's presidential election, from the March ballot."

Russian authorities cited "technical irregularities" in a small percentage of the over 100,000 signatures — as well as home addresses and passport data — submitted on his nominating petitions. But the "real reason," Kara-Murza said, was that "the Putin administration had underestimated how many Russians are actually opposed to the war in Ukraine — and that Nadezhdin



Schön/Daria Globina; inset, Reuters/Annegret Hilse  
Memorial at Russian Embassy in Berlin, Feb. 18. Banner by Pussy Riot members denounces Kremlin murderers. Two days earlier, Russian authorities announced that Alexei Navalny, prominent critic of Putin regime, war in Ukraine, died in Russian gulag prison. Inset, Marina Ovsyannikova, who was fired for protesting March 2022 on live Russian TV against Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, holds sign at Berlin gathering quoting Navalny, "Don't give up."



was polling in the double digits.

"People formed long lines at Nadezhdin's campaign offices to sign the petitions," he wrote. "The wait was often several hours; the majority of those who came were young people. It was about these lines — the largest antiwar demonstration in Russia since Putin's attack on Ukraine — that most people wrote to me through the prison mail in January."

Many people had become demoralized, believing they were alone in their opposition to the war. The long and public lines changed everything. "For many Russians," Kara-Murza wrote, "the sudden takeoff of Nadezhdin's campaign was not just a pleasant surprise, it was a much-needed morale boost."

The turnout, he said, wasn't just in the big cities. In faraway places like Novorossiysk and Gorno-Altaysk there were long lines of people waiting to sign.

"The mood change was as marked as it was sudden. 'It was unbelievable to see that there are so many of us,' one young woman, a single mother, wrote me from Eastern Siberia. 'For the first time in two years I felt at home in my own country.'

"Putin's official vote tally on March

17 will likely be the highest in all his 24 years in power," Kara-Murza noted. "But it will also be the furthest removed from reality. A small upstart campaign by a cautious critic has exposed the lie behind the Kremlin claims of solid public support for Putin and for his war."

And all of this happened, he said, "despite a total blackout of his campaign."

"This doesn't mean that change will happen tomorrow or next month," Kara-Murza concluded. "But a society that feels more empowered and more confident about itself is suddenly a force to be reckoned with. And that is bad news for any dictator."

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

The Watershed in World Politics: How Moscow's Invasion of Ukraine, and Hamas' Oct. 7 Slaughter of Jews Upended the Capitalist "World Order." Speaker: Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 2, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. Tel.:(215) 708-1270.

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## THE MILITANT

### Workers discuss way forward after Ohio rail disaster

A year after Norfolk Southern derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, workers, unions are still fighting to rectify damage from toxic fire set by rail bosses to get trains running again. *'Militant'* says only workers control over rail operations can avert more disasters in name of profits.



AP/Gene J. Puskar  
Toxic chemical burn-off Feb. 6, 2023, after Norfolk Southern derailment in Ohio.

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# Havana book fair is a conquest of Cuba's socialist revolution

Continued from front page

in Santiago de Cuba in late March.

The book fair is a conquest of Cuba's socialist revolution. It is a product of the fact that working people, led by Fidel Castro, took state power in 1959 and began to transform society and themselves. They used that power to mobilize tens of thousands of young volunteers into a campaign that wiped out illiteracy in 1961, and over the decades broadened access to education and culture in city and countryside. Cuba today has a literacy rate that is among the world's highest.

"Every year the book fair is an event everyone in Cuba is talking about. I always make plans weeks in advance to attend and bring my family," Jorge López, a waiter at a Havana restaurant, told the *Militant*.

The inauguration was attended by President Miguel Díaz-Canel, other Cuban government figures and prominent writers, as well as by a delegation from Brazil, this year's country of honor, which included Minister of Culture Margareth Menezes. Publishers from 46 countries are participating, Rodríguez reported. Cuban publishers are offering 3 million books and 2,000 digital titles to fair-goers.

In the face of Washington's more than six-decade-long economic war, resulting in extremely scarce paper and printing supplies, fuel and other necessities, the Cuban government has devoted significant resources to make possible this production of reading material.

## 'A single revolution'

Among the titles being presented are several on Cuba's revolutionary history. One is *Una sola revolución* (A Single Revolution), published by Ediciones Alejandro of the Fidel Castro Center, established in 2021. The book amplifies one theme of the recent speech given by Army Gen. Raúl Castro on the 65th anniversary of the revolution. He said the Jan. 1, 1959, triumph of the Rebel Army was the victory "of the only revolution that ever existed in Cuba," beginning with the 19th century wars for independence from Spanish colonial rule and against slavery, and culminating some 90 years later in the first socialist revolution in the Americas. (See the Feb. 5 *Militant* for Raúl Castro's speech.)

*Una sola revolución* includes manifestos by leaders of Cuba's independence wars, from Carlos Manuel de Céspedes to José Martí. It also features "History Will Absolve Me," the courtroom speech Fidel Castro gave when he and other revolutionaries were convicted for the July 26, 1953,



Cuban working people stream into Havana International Book Fair at La Cabaña Fortress Feb. 20. Annual event is Cuba's largest cultural festival, with literature, poetry and art displays, films, music and politics.

assault on the Batista dictatorship's Moncada barracks. That speech popularized the program the revolutionary movement carried out to the end as working people took power.

"These documents point out the road to victory, and also the road to the future," said René González Barrios, director of the Fidel Castro Center, who presented the new book.

The same event also launched *La batalla de Santa Clara* (The Battle of Santa Clara), by Aremis Hurtado, an e-book by Verde Olivo, the publishing house of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. Through firsthand accounts, it tells the story of the December 1958 battle in the city of Santa Clara, led by Rebel Army commander Ernesto Che Guevara, that sealed the victory of the Rebel Army.

Che's own account of that historic battle is told in *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War (1956-58)*, which is among the more than 200 titles on display at the booth featuring books published by Pathfinder Press. The stand, which has attracted hundreds of visitors in the opening days, is staffed by volunteers, communist workers from the U.S., Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

One 2023 Pathfinder title drawing special interest is *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark. The publisher's newest title is *Che Guevara on Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Cuban writer Carlos Tablada, a new and expanded edition of the well-known book first published in

Cuba in 1987 and an English translation by Pathfinder Press two years later.

## 'Revolution gave me chance to fight'

This year's book fair honors writers Francisco López Sacha and Isabel Monal. López Sacha, a novelist and art professor, told the Cuban press, "I actually began my experience as a teacher in 1961, when at age 11 I joined the literacy campaign in the Sierra Maestra mountains."

Monal, founding editor of the journal *Marx Ahora* (Marx Today), is known in Cuba as a tireless defender of Marxism, who insists readers study the writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels themselves, as opposed to distortions and falsifications found in "manuals" from the former Soviet Union.

As a young woman, Monal was a partisan of the July 26 Movement, which led the struggle that toppled the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista regime. In late December 1958, when she was an exchange student in the United States, she was arrested by U.S. immigration cops and jailed in the small town of Hillsboro in southern Ohio for transporting guns to Cuba's rebel forces. Days later, the tyranny was overthrown, and she was soon freed to return home.

As part of the Havana book fair, a tribute to Isabel Monal's lifelong work was held Feb. 17. Above all, said Monal in her remarks at the end of the program, "The Cuban Revolution gave me the opportunity to fight." The event presented her book, *Ensayos americanos* (American Essays), a collection on Latin American history.

## International conference

Just prior to the book fair, a three-day conference was held in Havana

sponsored by the magazine *Cuba Socialista*, published by the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. The gathering, the Second International Meeting of Theoretical Publications of Parties and Movements of the Left, drew some 150 participants.

The majority of conference delegates were from Communist Parties in Europe and Latin America, with a number also from organizations in the United States, Canada, Australia, Vietnam, Laos, China and Zimbabwe.

As summarized on the website of the Cuban Communist Party, "The Israeli government's genocide against Palestine was the main axis of discussion throughout the event," and conference organizers issued a "Declaration in solidarity with the Palestinian people" on the final day.

Virtually all participants who spoke on Israel and Palestine voiced support for Hamas' course, presented as "resistance" by the entire Palestinian people to Jews who have settled on Arab land.

Steve Clark, from the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, was the only delegate who voiced disagreement. In brief comments, he explained why he could not support the final declaration.

Clark pointed to the stakes for the international working class in the fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms such as the Oct. 7 assault on Jews in Israel led by Hamas. Israel's right to exist and defend its existence, he said, had been settled by the history of the 20th and 21st centuries, including the Holocaust and the refusal of Washington, London, and other imperialist powers in the 1940s to open their doors to its survivors. His remarks were met by angry chants of "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," the only heated moment of the conference.

## Interest in class struggle in U.S.

At the Pathfinder stand at the book fair, titles like *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us* have sparked visitors' interest to learn about unionists in the U.S. and elsewhere who are telling bosses "Enough!" and fighting attacks on their living standards, job conditions and dignity.

Some have also asked what's behind the Democratic Party's efforts to block their rival Donald Trump from running in the presidential election, and are interested in hearing that these are assaults on the constitutional freedoms of working people. Discussions have also taken up the sharpening crises of world capitalism, including the rising threat of imperialist wars. An upcoming article will report further on these exchanges.



Philippe Tessier, center, from Communist League in Canada, shows books, discusses with young people in lively Pathfinder bookstall at Havana International Book Fair Feb. 17.

### Recommended reading



**\$20**



**\$10**



**\$10**

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# Vote Socialist Workers Party!

Continued from front page

country, as well as members of the Communist Leagues in Canada, the U.K. and Australia. The statement was welcomed by working people protesting Hamas' slaughter and the jump in acts of Jew-hatred after Oct. 7.

Trowe has joined in speaking out at city council and school board meetings across the San Francisco Bay Area in defense of Israel's right to defend its existence. She opposed resolutions calling for Israel to stop fighting Hamas, explaining that would only open the door to more pogroms.

Trowe is a production worker in a candy manufacturing plant in San Leandro and a member of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 125. She joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1975 after meeting the party through struggles she was part of — against the Vietnam War, for Black rights, women's emancipation and the Equal Rights Amendment.

The party leaders and cadres Fruit and Trowe got to know and work with came out of the labor battles of the 1930s, with political continuity leading back to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the subsequent fight against Stalinism, and in support for Cuba's socialist revolution.

Fruit and Trowe will campaign across the U.S. and around the world, beginning a West Coast tour in Oakland March 2.

## A watershed moment in history

"The SWP brings a working-class program and voice to an election dominated by the two big-business parties — the Democrats and Republicans — at a watershed moment in history," Fruit told the *Militant*. "Working people live in a world of deepening capitalist disorder and escalating competition over profits, markets and political influence, as well as a deepening war drive gripping all the major rival capitalist powers."

Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the Tehran-backed Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom have sharply intensified the march toward World War III by Washington and its rivals, whose opening guns were signaled by the U.S. rulers' invasion of Iraq in 1991.

"The Socialist Workers candidates urge workers to organize and act to prevent the Democratic Party's assault on freedoms protected by the U.S. Constitution," Trowe said. "The Democrats' witch hunt against Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump — the attempt to throw him off the ballot, ruin his family and send him to prison — is a blow to political rights workers sorely need. Whoever is targeted today, it is working people who will be targeted tomorrow."

"The capitalists' profits come from exploiting wage labor. The wealthy minority holds state power by dividing the working majority," Fruit said. "The SWP joins the fight for unity in the working class, for building and strengthening the trade union movement and labor solidarity, for opposing Washington's wars, for a government-funded public-works program to provide jobs and put an end to divisions between employed and unemployed, and for demanding amnesty for immigrants living and working in the United States."

Union solidarity is a central part of the SWP campaign. The candidates and their supporters back the 100,000 union flight attendants fighting for a contract today.

"The Teamsters who carried out 'practice pickets' to win a contract at UPS and the United Auto Workers who struck the Big Three last year inspired many workers," Trowe said. "I've been building union solidarity for my brother and sister BCTGM workers on strike since last June against International Flavors and Fragrances in Memphis."

## Uptick in labor battles

"There is an uptick in labor battles today. With more hiring, workers feel more confident to fight," Fruit said. "At the same time, continuing attacks by bosses seeking to boost their profits mean we need to step up labor's response."

"The bosses and their government try to weaken or break the unions. One glaring example was the Biden administration and Congress forcing a contract down the throats of 115,000 railroad workers, who were ready to strike over short staffing, deadly unsafe con-



Militant/Mary Martin

Rachele Fruit at Miami rally three days after Hamas pogrom in Israel Oct. 7. "Fight against Jew-hatred is a life-and-death question for working people," SWP presidential candidate says.

ditions and no paid sick time. Many are looking forward to their next contract battle, which starts this fall."

She underlined the importance of defending Israel's right to exist as a refuge for the Jews and against Jew-hatred.

"Working people of the entire region — in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Yemen and Gaza — need the political space to organize and unite in defense of their common working-class interests and a road to fight for

# SWP candidates in NJ speak out against Jew-hatred

BY LEA SHERMAN

WAYNE, N.J. — A debate continued at the Feb. 7 Wayne City Council meeting here over a resolution the council had adopted Dec. 20 defending Israel's war against Hamas, calling for the release of all the hostages held by Hamas and denouncing anti-semitism.

Some dozen opponents of the resolution had attended the last council meeting on Jan. 17 seeking to get it overturned. They called for a new resolution that would call for Israel to abide by a cease-fire, deny Israel's right to defend itself and blame Israel for civilian casualties in Gaza.

Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey, told the Feb. 7 meeting she had learned about the Jan. 17 council meeting in the *Bergen Record* and saw an online petition calling for the resolution to be revisited.

"The petition doesn't mention Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom, the worst since the Holocaust," she said. "It doesn't condemn Jew-hatred."

"Trained, armed and financed by Tehran, Hamas' reactionary Islamist death squads killed 1,200 people, mostly Jewish civilians, wounded more than 5,000 and took 240 hostages, raping women and mutilating many of its victims," she said. "Hamas started this war breaking a cease-fire that had been in place up to Oct. 7."

Dina Gershowitz, a Jewish resident



Militant/Vivian Sahrner

Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey, at Feb. 17 forum.

here, said that the casualties in Gaza were the result of Hamas' pogrom against Jews Oct. 7. "It is Hamas, not Israel, who must be forced to cease fire and surrender," she said. "By overturning the resolution, the council would deny Israel's right to defend itself against future attacks. Hamas would stop at nothing to eradicate Israel. Israel wants nothing more than to live in peace with its neighbors."

Maimon Mustafa, an attorney in Wayne, argued there was too much talk about Hamas. "Hamas, and Hamas, and Hamas and Hamas. How about if we end Israel's occupation, Hamas would probably go away. If you end occupation you have freedom."

Mustafa pointed to those who had been killed in Gaza, calling Israel an "apartheid state" that carries out genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Lea Sherman, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress, joined in defending Israel's fight to defeat Hamas.

Two speakers who said they want to see the Dec. 20 resolution reversed also argued that Kuniansky and Sherman shouldn't have the right to speak, since they don't live in Wayne.

After the meeting, several people thanked the SWP members for speaking out.

The City Council says it is preparing to vote on another resolution at its next meeting Feb. 21.

# Socialist Workers Party launches drive to get on New Jersey ballot

BY CRAIG HONTS

UNION CITY, N. J. — "We are living through a watershed moment in politics, following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and Hamas' Oct. 7 slaughter of Jews in Israel," said Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey, at a meeting here to launch the party's campaign and plans to get on the ballot.

SWP candidates are using their campaign to back Israel's war to defeat Hamas, she said, and joining fights to combat Jew-hatred in the U.S.

"Whether the horrors of World War III will be inflicted on humanity depends on forging a communist leadership to lead tens of millions of workers to take power. The SWP campaign points the road forward to building that leadership," she said.

Kuniansky was joined on the panel by Lea Sherman, the SWP's candidate for U.S. Congress in New Jersey's 8th District.

Sherman described the growing confidence workers have to use their unions to take on attacks by the bosses and make gains in wages and working con-

ditions. She pointed to recent strikes by teachers in Newton, Massachusetts, and nurses in New Brunswick, New Jersey. "The teachers defied a judge's back-to-work order, and escalating fines against their union, while nurses faced a court order restricting their picket lines."

Workers and our unions have a big stake in defending constitutional freedoms, she said. "Democrats lead the attack on these protections. Donald Trump is a special target and they have 91 indictments against him. We say drop the charges."

Excited applause greeted the announcement by John Studer, the SWP national campaign director, that the party was running Rachele Fruit for president and Margaret Trowe for vice president. Fruit and Trowe made brief remarks and joined SWP campaigners the following day to get the effort underway to win ballot status in the state.

Campaign supporters will collect more than double the 800 signatures required to get the presidential ticket on the ballot, the same number for Kuniansky and two-and-half times the 100 needed to get ballot status for Sherman.



Militant/Eric Simpson

Margaret Trowe at April 16, 2023, protest by ferry boat workers in San Francisco demanding contract. Solidarity with union struggles is central to the Socialist Workers Party campaign.

workers power,” Fruit said.

“The fight against Jew-hatred is a life-and-death question for working people, especially here in the U.S., because in times of deep social crisis the ruling capitalist families will back fascist demagogues to organize despairing middle-class layers using Jew-hatred as their calling card.

They do this to divert attention from the true source of the disaster they face — the capitalist rulers. They’ll seek to smash the working class and its organizations, the unions.

“This is why the ‘Jewish question’ is a key question for the working class worldwide,” Fruit said. “And this isn’t an epoch of fascism — it’s



May Day rally, Havana, 2022. Cuba’s socialist revolution shows working people are capable of wresting power from the capitalist class, transforming society. Socialist Workers Party is organizing to build a working-class party in the U.S., part of international movement, to lead workers to power.

an epoch of world revolution.

“The SWP is running to say this is the only meaningful road forward, to build a party capable of leading working people in their tens of millions to take political power,” she said.

Fruit and Trowe will campaign across the U.S. from now through the November election. “We find more people than ever open to a

revolutionary working-class program,” Fruit said. “We invite those who want to learn more about the SWP campaign to get a subscription to the *Militant* to follow it. Endorse the candidates, join campaign teams or invite the candidates to a union, church or house meeting. Contact the nearest SWP branch to get involved.” See list on page 8.

## Meet the Socialist Workers Party 2024 candidates Rachele Fruit for U.S. president & Margaret Trowe for vice president

**RACHELE FRUIT** joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1970 in Philadelphia, where she was active in the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. She participated in civil rights protests, including one in Trenton, New Jersey, after the 1964 murder of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner during Freedom Summer in Mississippi. Still a high school student, she attended the first national march on Washington, D.C., against the war in Vietnam in 1965.

In the course of these struggles, Fruit became convinced that war and injustice were the product of the capitalist profit system, of class society. She learned about the Russian and Cuban revolutions and the need for a revolutionary proletarian party with the perspective of ending capitalist rule and leading workers to power in the U.S.

In the Socialist Workers Party, she met and worked with veteran communist workers who had been part of labor battles in the 1930s through the ’50s and the political battles against the Stalin-led counterrevolution in the Soviet Union that led to the founding of the SWP.

As the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida last fall, Rachele Fruit spoke out against the Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom in Israel and in defense of Israel as a refuge for the Jewish people at a rally at the Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach Oct. 10.

“The Socialist Workers Party is part of the continuity in the fight against Jew-hatred that goes back to V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Socialists should never support any crime against humanity in the name of revolution,” she said. “Those who call themselves ‘socialists’ and who champion Hamas and other terrorist proxies of Iran will

easily find themselves allied with future fascist forces.”

Fruit is a hotel worker and a member of UNITE HERE Local 355. Before that, she has been an active member of the American Postal Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, the International Association of Machinists and the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

She has been involved in building solidarity with flight attendants fighting for a contract, for better wages and working conditions and for livable schedules that make it possible for workers to have families and be active in politics and their unions.

Fruit first ran for office for the SWP in 1973 for common council in Detroit, where the party campaign was active in the fight against the police terror squad Stress, Stop the Robberies — Enjoy Safe Streets.

In 2018 Fruit joined a solidarity brigade to Cuba, to become better able to describe the revolution made by Cuban workers and farmers to working people in the U.S. She builds protests opposing Washington’s economic war against Cuba’s socialist revolution and urges working people here to organize to emulate its example.

She ran for governor of Georgia in 2018 and for governor of Florida in 2022, campaigning for solidarity with labor struggles, against Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine and in defense of Cuba’s socialist revolution.

On June 22, 2023, Fruit testified on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party in favor of independence of Puerto Rico at the U.N. Special Committee hearing on Decolonization. In November, she was one of several international participants at a conference of the Sugarcane Workers Union in the Dominican Republic.

**MARGARET TROWE** joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1975 when she was 27. She had been drawn into the fight for Black rights as a high school student in the 1960s, when she joined efforts to desegregate the Oakland, California, schools. She also took part in protests against Washington’s war in Vietnam.

Trowe supports the fight for women’s emancipation and fought for the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s.

She met the Socialist Workers Party during the struggles she was part of. The party leaders and cadres she came to know and work with came out of the labor struggles of the 1930s and had continuity leading back to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the subsequent fight against Stalinism.

Margaret Trowe is a unionist who has worked in the shipbuilding, garment, chemical and food production industries. Currently a member of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 125, Trowe is on a leave from her job as a production worker at the Ghirardelli chocolate factory in San Leandro, California, to campaign for vice president.

While working in meatpacking in Marshalltown, Iowa, from 1997-99, Trowe helped lead union fights against attacks on immigrant workers by the bosses and the government.

She ran for vice president on the SWP ticket with presidential candidate James Harris in 2000.

Trowe contributes articles to the *Militant* newspaper from the field and was a staff member from 2014-2017.

She joined others building support for the fight of Blackjewel coal miners who blocked railroad tracks in Harlan, Kentucky, in 2019 after their employer shut down the mine they worked in and stole their pay.

Trowe supports the Cuban Revolution and opposes Washington’s economic war against Cuba. She has taken part in solidarity activities there, including trade union and farmers conferences and work brigades.

Responding to the Oct. 7 Tehran-backed Hamas pogrom against Israel, Trowe has protested Jew-hatred and antisemitic attacks and spoken against pro-Hamas resolutions at city council meetings in Berkeley, Oakland, El Cerrito and San Leandro, California.

### Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2024! Campaign for what you are *for*, not who you’re against!

- I want to endorse the Socialist Workers Party ticket of Rachele Fruit for president and Margaret Trowe for vice president.
- I want to join in campaigning or host a house meeting for the candidates. Please contact me.
- Here is my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help spread the word. (Make checks to Socialist Workers National Campaign)
- Send me a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly. (\$5 enclosed, checks payable to the *Militant*.)

Send in along with your name, address, phone # and e-mail address to:  
Socialist Workers Party 2024 Campaign, 306 W. 37<sup>th</sup> St., 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, NY, NY  
10018. Tel: 347-871-0282 & Email: socialistworkers2024@gmail.com



## Israel to Hamas: Free the hostages!

Continued from front page

Israel's success since then in demolishing Hamas' bases and structure in Gaza has opened more space for Palestinians to speak out — even if still modestly. They're protesting against the reactionary group for using civilians as human shields by locating their bases, living quarters, arms caches and prison cells under hospitals, mosques, apartment buildings and schools.

Ihab Hassan, a Palestinian from the West Bank who now lives in Washington, D.C., posted a video Feb. 15 showing a night-time protest in Rafah, demanding that Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' central military commander in Gaza, resign. "The people demand a cease-fire again," they chanted. They were referring to the cease-fire with Israel that was in place until Hamas broke it to launch its Oct. 7 pogrom.

On Feb. 16, relatives of Muhammad al-Araja, a teenager shot dead by Hamas police when he tried to take aid packages from a U.N. truck, burned tires in protest near the Egyptian-Gaza border crossing, *Yedioth Aronoth* reported.

It's no secret that Hamas leaders steal a significant portion of aid intended for civilians to give to its combatants or to sell to enrich themselves.

### Gazans hold Hamas responsible

A statement issued by families and clans of Rafah Governorate said that Muhammad al-Araja was "martyred by the bullets of treachery and betrayal by militias affiliated with Hamas."

The result of Oct. 7 has been "the occupation of land, the killing of people and the absence of justice," the statement says. "We the families and clans of Rafah Governorate, hold Hamas responsible."

Tehran and Hamas apparently picked Oct. 7 for the slaughter — which they had been planning for years — believing Israel was vulnerable after months of acrimonious disputes over a judicial reform proposed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Tehran also hoped the assault would provoke an Israeli response that would lead to reversal of the trend of Arab governments establishing normalized diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.

## Hamas lays out its goals: Kill Jews, destroy Israel

Some individuals and groups who condemn Hamas for its bloody anti-Jewish pogrom and massacre of 1,200 people Oct. 7 are now backing the call by Hamas apologists for a cease-fire, which would allow the Islamist outfit to survive and slaughter Jews again.

Can't Israel and Hamas negotiate an end to the conflict? Wouldn't the war end if Israel would just agree to a Palestinian state side by side with Israel?

After waging a war against supporters of the Palestinian Authority, Hamas ruled Gaza — a de facto Palestinian state — for almost two decades. It busted unions, arrested and tortured political opponents, and denied women equal rights. It ran the state, in its own words, as "cover" to prepare assaults on Israel.

Hamas, which is trained, financed, and aided in planning its assaults by the reactionary regime in Tehran, is not interested in negotiations for two states.

Everything Hamas does is aimed

They also expected the Israeli response would be relatively brief, like after previous Hamas terror attacks. They thought that by taking as many hostages as possible, they would force Israel to release thousands of Hamas prisoners in Israeli jails and then sign another cease-fire. On all scores the Tehran-led "axis of resistance" badly miscalculated.

The Hamas-led rampage included the rape and mutilation of many of its victims, the murder of entire families, and the killing or taking hostage of anyone friendly to Jews, including Arab, Thai, Nepalese, Filipino and African workers. The Israeli government, backed by most Israelis, had no choice but to fight to eliminate Hamas once and for all.

### Hamas keeps hiding in hospitals

Hamas apologists, including liberal bourgeois papers like the *Washington Post*, have raised a hue and a cry about Israeli forces encircling Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, echoing slanders that Israel deliberately targets civilians. The head of the U.N.'s World Health Organization claimed that the hospital is "not functional anymore."

In fact, in a targeted operation Feb. 15, Israeli soldiers in the hospital captured Hamas combatants posing as medical staff, and found weapons, a vehicle used in the Oct. 7 massacre, and a vehicle stolen from Kibbutz Nir Oz, one of the communities assaulted that day.

At the same time, Israel Defense Forces provided the hospital with food, water, oxygen tanks, fuel for electricity and a replacement generator.

The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry claims almost 30,000 people have been killed there since the start of the war. On Feb. 19 Hamas admitted that at least 6,000 of the dead are its combatants. Israeli army officials estimate that the real number is twice that.

Proof continues to come out on the complicity of U.N. staff with Hamas. Israeli authorities released a video Feb. 16 showing a U.N. Relief and Works Agency employee participating in the pogrom at Kibbutz Beeri Oct. 7, helping Hamas thugs load the body of an Israeli man into a car and driving off with it.

Meanwhile, the Joseph Biden ad-

at getting rid of the Jews and destroying Israel.

Read below what Hamas itself says.

### From the Hamas 1988 covenant

"The Day of Judgment will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him."

### From the revised 2017 charter

"The establishment of 'Israel' is entirely illegal and contravenes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people."

"Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea."

### Hamas leader Ghazi Hamad

"Everything we do is justified."



Palestinians take flour from aid truck in Gaza City Feb. 19, a few days after Hamas cops shot and killed youth in Rafah when he took an aid package, sparking protests against thug group.

ministration, while claiming it's a friend of Israel and the Jews, has stepped up demands that Israel wind down the offensive against Hamas, agree to a cease-fire and accept a "two-state" solution. On Feb. 19 the U.S. government proposed a resolution to advance its destabilizing influence in the region.

Egyptian officials have warned Hamas to reach a deal with Israel, and have been strengthening the wall that separates Gaza from Egypt and sending tanks to the border to prevent Hamas combatants from crossing it.

## 10,000 rally in Australia, protest jump in Jew-hatred since Oct. 7

BY MIKE TUCKER

SYDNEY — A rally to condemn rising Jew-hatred drew 10,000 people here Feb. 18. Since Hamas' pogrom Oct. 7, killing 1,200 Jews and others who lived and worked with them, and wounding thousands more, there has been a sharp increase in physical attacks, abuse, threats and vandalism targeting Jews and their homes, schools and businesses across Australia.

The "Never Again is Now" rally was called by Anglican Church Minister Mark Leach and organized by Christian groups and Jewish organizations.

Leach had made headlines Oct. 9 when he confronted pro-Hamas sup-

porters chanting, "Kill the Jews" outside Sydney Town Hall. After unfurling an Israeli flag he was chased by thugs. Mark Spiro, a Jew, was the only person arrested by police that night when he sought to unfurl an Israeli flag as a counter-protest. Police had told Jews to stay away from the area.

Some 1,000 demonstrators had gathered at the Town Hall Oct. 9 to celebrate the Hamas pogrom. They rallied at the Sydney Opera House, which had been lit up in the colors of the Israeli flag as a show of solidarity with the victims of the slaughter. The mob chanted, "Where's the Jews?"

Continued on page 7

Continued on page 6

"This was the chant used by Nazi SS officers" hunting down Jews across Europe during World War II, Warren Mundine, a long-time campaigner for Aboriginal rights, told the Feb. 18 rally. "Anyone who has looked at history for a mere second knows when a society tolerates an angry mob chanting against Jews, it will take that society down an ugly and destructive path."

Other speakers at the rally included church leaders and politicians from the two main ruling capitalist parties. Supporters of the Communist League, selling the *Militant* and carrying a placard saying, "Fighting Jew-hatred is a union issue," got a friendly response.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry reported there were 622 antisemitic incidents in October and November, a whopping 738% increase over the previous year. This includes physical assaults, verbal abuse and threats. Jewish businesses have been boycotted and vandalized. Graffiti painted on a Melbourne apartment block in November said, "Kill Jews. Jew lives here."

"We want to mobilize to push back against the antisemitic hate," Leach said.

The Jewish population of Australia numbers around 120,000, mostly in Sydney and Melbourne.

"There is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism, just as there is no solution to other problems before humanity . . ." — Abram Leon

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Stop the Pogroms  
ABRAM LEON

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## 'Che Guevara on Economics and Politics' on road to socialism

This is the Editor's Note by Mary-Alice Waters to the new Pathfinder Press expanded edition of *Che Guevara on Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Carlos Tablada. Tablada received the Special Prize from the Cuban cultural institution Casa de las Américas for the first edition of the book in Spanish. Waters is president of Pathfinder Press and a National Committee member of the Socialist Workers Party. Copyright © 2024 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

*What I ask for modestly is that Che's economic thought be made known. That it be known here, in Latin America, in the world — in the developed capitalist world, the Third World, the socialist world. The author of this book compiled, studied, and presented the essence of Che's economic ideas, retrieved from many speeches and writings dealing with a subject so decisive to building socialism.*

FIDEL CASTRO  
Havana, October 8, 1987

### BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Carlos Tablada's book, *Che Guevara on Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, draws on a wide array of writings and speeches by Guevara that have become publicly available only in recent years.

Tablada's work was awarded the Special Prize in 1987 by the prominent Cuban cultural institution Casa de las Américas. That same year the first Cuban edition was published under the title *El pensamiento económico de Ernesto Che Guevara* (The economic thought of Ernesto Che Guevara).

Initial editions, including the 1998 Pathfinder edition, quoted extensively from Guevara's published writings and transcripts. Many as yet unpublished

## Rally in Australia

Continued from page 6

"This was the chant used by Nazi SS officers" hunting down Jews across Europe during World War II, Warren Mundine, a long-time campaigner for Aboriginal rights, told the Feb. 18 rally. "Anyone who has looked at history for a mere second knows when a society tolerates an angry mob chanting against Jews, it will take that society down an ugly and destructive path."

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The Jewish population of Australia numbers around 120,000, mostly in Sydney and Melbourne.

"There were compañeros who did



Che Guevara, second from left, at Cuban factory. He discussed importance of discipline, goals of the revolution and, above all, communist consciousness and work as social responsibility.

works by Guevara were also cited by Tablada without the use of quotation marks, a condition for him at that time to be able to include this material in the book. Between 2006 and 2016 all these works were finally published in Cuba, however, and subsequent editions of this book have quoted Che directly, with quotation marks.

This 2024 Pathfinder edition, published in English, Spanish, and soon French, takes an important additional step, one that makes the book an even more useful and reliable presentation of Guevara's views. For the first time, the reader will find here not only Che's own words, but the published source for each quotation, including those from previously unpublished writings. Those sources are the seven-volume edition of Che's writings, released by Editorial José Martí between 2013 and 2016, and *Apuntes críticos a la economía política* (Critical notes on political economy) issued in 2006 by the Che Guevara Studies Center in Havana.

In addition, passages from the Soviet economic manual to which Che often refers — published in *Apuntes críticos* — are for the first time included in footnotes so the reader can more clearly understand what Che is polemicalizing against. Che jokingly called these and other manuals published by Moscow "the Soviet bricks."

Carlos Tablada began work on this book in 1969 and completed the manuscript in 1984. But the road from there to getting the book into print was hardly a smooth one.

As late as the closing months of 1987, concerted efforts to block its publication were being organized by some individuals in leading positions in Cuba who supported the Soviet Union's anti-Marxist economic management policies that Che openly rejected. Tablada described this resistance in July 2019 to Cuban journalist Arleen Rodríguez Derivet in an interview published in the online journal *CubaDebate*.

It took the direct political intervention of Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro — who had read Tablada's unpublished manuscript — not only to ensure that this book of Che's views made it onto the presses, but to promote the book and encourage that it be read and studied in Cuba and around the world.

"There were compañeros who did

not want my book to be presented" at the congress of the Association of Economists of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in November 1987 at Havana's Convention Palace, Tablada told Rodríguez. But at the insistence of Fidel, who addressed the closing session of the event, it was not only presented but also distributed for free to all those attending.

In his October 8, 1987, speech marking the twentieth anniversary of Guevara's death in battle, Castro emphasized that the book's author clearly presented Che's economic ideas, which were still "largely unknown in our country." Ideas that are "truly profound, courageous, bold ideas, different from many paths already taken." Castro's speech appears in full in these pages.

A few weeks later, speaking to an international student conference in Havana, Castro urged that the book be translated — "at least to English," he emphasized, as well as to French, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, and other languages.

As Tablada told Arleen Rodríguez, Fidel in his October 1987 speech "made an appeal to our people and the world's peoples to undertake a study of Che's thought. He criticized the entire process of the implementation of the Soviet system in Cuba and summarily proclaimed, *If Che had been here, he would have said to us: 'I told you so! I warned you!'*" And Fidel, in scathing terms, described the destructive consequences for Cuban working people of that bureaucratic course.

"Che came to recognize, and not only predict but also explain, why the Soviet Union and the socialist camp were moving toward capitalism, and were going to disappear," Tablada said. "That was a great 'heresy.'"

This new edition retains the preface written for Pathfinder's 1998 edition. Together with Castro's 1987 speech, it anchors the economic and political course promoted by Guevara in the revolutionary internationalist, working-class trajectory led by Fidel Castro and the cadres of the Rebel Army and July 26th Movement. Both pieces pay special attention to the political contributions of Che's views to what became known in Cuba, nearly two decades after his death, as the Rectification Process.

Initiated and led by Castro, Recti-

fication powerfully and directly mobilized the activity, confidence, and political consciousness of the working class and rural producers in planning social priorities and organizing production and labor, restoring the politically decisive place of voluntary labor in the transition to socialism. It marked a decisive turn away from growing reliance in Cuba for more than a decade on bureaucratic Soviet methods of planning and management. A turn away from what Castro in his October 1987 speech called the "disgraceful period of building socialism," increasingly dominated by "two-bit capitalists and profiteers who have blind faith in the mechanisms and categories of capitalism."

The renewed confidence working people gained during the few short years of the Rectification Process made possible and was in turn reinforced by the victorious culmination at the end of the 1980s of Cuba's internationalist mission in Angola and southern Africa. That sixteen-year-long volunteer mission not only aided Angola in defending its national sovereignty from South Africa's repeated US-backed invasions, but also hastened the overthrow of the apartheid system and secured the national independence of Namibia.

This revolutionary proletarian vitality strengthened Cubans' ability to surmount the deep economic crisis of the 1990s, called "the Special Period," following the abrupt collapse of trade and financial relations with the anti-working-class, Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe.

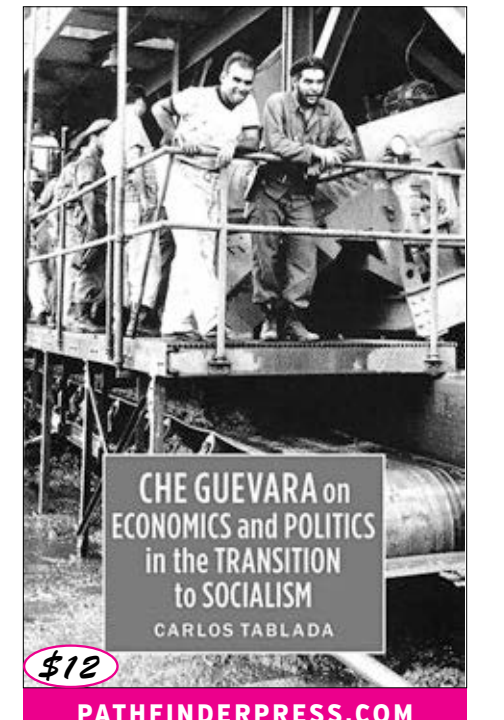
Fidel Castro retained his commitment to Guevara's course for the rest of his days. In the book-length interview he gave to journalist Ignacio Ramonet at the opening of this century, published in English as *My Life*, Fidel was asked where he stood on the debates and alternative courses that are explained by Tablada in these pages.

"I liked Che's ideas about the way to build the economy best," Fidel responded. Because they "were very much like our guerrilla way of life in the mountains. Frankly, I like Che's moral appeal best."

Pathfinder is confident that many readers will agree that "Che's ideas are absolutely relevant today," the conviction expressed by Fidel when this book first came into print.

JANUARY 2024

### New expanded edition





# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## UK Amazon workers strike for higher wages, union recognition

COVENTRY, England — Some 200 warehouse workers and their supporters marched and rallied outside the Amazon plant here Feb. 13. They were part of over 1,000 members of the General Municipal and Boilermakers union who struck for better wages and union recognition at Amazon Feb. 13-15.

“What do we want? 15 pounds! When do we want it? Now!” workers chanted.

“Everything is getting more expensive, like food and electricity,” striker Darren Westwood told the *Militant*. “We really need the 15 pounds [\$18.75]! We’re not begging, we’re telling them we need it.” Several workers reported making 12 pounds an hour.

Henry Dye showed this reporter his electric bill. “It was 348 pounds last month, up from 140 to 150 last year. And I live in a tiny one-bedroom flat.” Dye said more workers are joining the union at the same time that Amazon is hiring.

“Our pay is so low, that’s why we depend on working overtime,” Ceterina Floresca said. “We shouldn’t have to work overtime. We all need to spend that time with our families.” Many workers are forced to work 60 hours each week. “Amazon made 570 billion pounds last

year and they can’t give us three pounds more an hour?” Ferdousara Uddin, a GMB regional organizer, told the rally. Workers at the plant had struck for three days last November.

— Catharina Tirsén

## Two rail workers killed on the job in Alabama, North Carolina

ATLANTA — Two rail workers were killed on the job in the past month in Alabama and North Carolina.

In a Feb. 15 statement, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division-International Brotherhood of Teamsters union said Brother Randall M. Howell, 41, was fatally struck by a ballast regulator machine while his CSX rail crew was making repairs on a railroad crossing in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

Two weeks earlier, Norfolk Southern engineer Christopher M. Wilson suffered fatal injuries after being thrown from his engine during operations in the company’s Decatur yard. The engine was struck by a rolling cut of cars disconnected from an engine.

The 55-year-old engineer had been a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Division 423 and worked at Norfolk Southern for 30 years.



Militant/ Dag Tirsén

Striking workers march in fight for union at Amazon warehouse in Coventry, England, Feb. 13.

“He was a great friend and would do anything for his union brothers and sisters,” BLET Division 423 Local Chairman Todd Sizemore said.

“This tragic loss underscores the safety risks present in railroading, even in the controlled environment of a rail yard,” BLET national President Eddie Hall said. He noted that Wilson’s death took place “one year since Norfolk Southern’s derailment and chemical spill in East Palestine, Ohio.” Rail unions are actively fighting, alongside other workers and area residents, to hold Norfolk Southern accountable for cleaning up the toxic chemical spill. The unions are demanding more control over conditions, schedules and more on the railroads.

From 2014 through November 2023 the Federal Railroad Administration recorded nine deaths of Norfolk Southern rail workers on the job.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating both of the recent deaths. The government board projects filing a final report in one to two years.

— Sam Manuel

## Durham school workers walk out over pay shortages

DURHAM, N.C. — In early February, Durham public school workers and support staff shut down as many as 12 schools in a fight with the Board of Education over pay. They set up picket lines, held rallies and brought their demands to board meetings.

Teachers, who were not affected by the pay dispute, stayed out in solidarity.

Some 1,300 workers, including bus mechanics, cafeteria workers and speech

therapists were told they were overpaid from July to December of 2023 and they may have to give the money back. This hit the lowest paid hardest.

The board’s proposals to “fix the problem” were rejected by the workers’ union, the Durham Association of Educators, which organized the walkouts. Christy Patterson of DAE told *Reckon Daily*, “How can I go into a classroom fully prepared to teach if I cannot even provide for my family?”

The dispute began after the board’s finance officer reported they had over budgeted by \$10 million. Checks were issued even though the new state budget was still pending. The superintendent apologized. As protests mounted, the board voted to take money from a “rainy-day” fund, saying workers could keep the pay they had received through January.

It is still unknown what workers will be paid for the rest of this year.

The Board of Education told parents they would have to drive their own children to school due to a bus driver shortage. Buses could not run without inspections by the mechanics, who were involved in the union action. Some 75% of the students take the bus to and from school.

Since the financial crisis began, the board’s chief financial officer and the school superintendent have resigned.

The board’s actions have had a devastating effect. Based on the pay they were promised, many workers made decisions on housing, cars, second or third jobs and child care that cannot be undone.

— Pat Travis

## ‘App’ drivers protest for pay, rights

Continued from front page

we used to make, even if we work double the hours,” Uber driver Nupur Chowdhury said at the protest in Washington, D.C.

Drivers say the app companies are taking an increasing cut of the fares, and when they complain they face deactivations, where they lose access to jobs. Since they are designated “independent contractors,” not employees, they’re responsible for their own car, gas, tolls, insurance and maintenance.

Socialist Workers Party member Lisa Rottach reported to the *Militant* that 60 rideshare drivers and supporters rallied at O’Hare International Airport in Chicago. “We do all the work and they get rich,” Uber driver Eloy Cerecero told her. “Uber claims they pay 75% of the fare to the driver and then take the remaining 25%. It’s the exact opposite. We only get 25%.”

“I’m a five-star driver,” Lyft worker Tracy Nicholson told Rottach about his rating. “But all it takes is for one passenger to give me a bad review and Lyft can shut me down. There is no human being to talk with at the company to argue my side.” Nicholson said he had come to the airport to work, but when he saw the protest he decided to join the rally.

“Today is a first step, but it definitely needs to get bigger. Solidarity is the way,” he said. “Next time this should happen at rush hour.”

Since the drivers are responsible for their car and all expenses, all the app bosses do is connect the drivers with customers. For this they take out a commission on every fare. Unlike taxicab drivers, app-based drivers are not allowed to pick up passengers who hail them without going through the app.

In 2022 the companies shifted to upfront pricing for customers and drivers. Instead of paying drivers for duration and distance of the rides, the bosses charge a flat rate that isn’t subject to adjustment. Drivers take the hit

if there’s heavy traffic or other delays on the trip.

Uber driver Mohamed Algaheim told the *San Francisco Examiner* that he makes about \$15 an hour. “It’s getting out of hand,” he said.

Uber’s income was up 41% in 2023 and its operating profit rose 50%, to nearly \$5 billion. The company’s stock price has more than doubled over the last year and was up 12% on the day of the strike. “We make the company’s money,” Algaheim said. “Without drivers, there is no stock.”

In the United Kingdom, app-based food delivery couriers for Deliveroo, Uber Eats, Just Eat and Stuart walked out Feb. 14 as well. One food courier and organizer for Delivery Job UK told the *Guardian* that she works from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week. “The only way to make more money is to ride faster, which means taking more risks.”

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# Join the fight for workers power and socialism!

Statement issued by John Studer, Socialist Workers Party national campaign director, Feb. 20.

Socialist Workers Party candidates Rachele Fruit for president and Margaret Trowe for vice president, along with SWP candidates across the country, point the way forward for the working class.

They offer a road to break with the parties of the ruling rich and for workers in our millions to chart a course to take political power into our own hands, end capitalist exploitation and join the fight for a socialist world. A world free of the wars, national oppression and social catastrophes that are built into the imperialist epoch. Fruit and Trowe explain we need our own party to make that possible.

The U.S. government defends the interests of the capitalist ruling families, whether a Democrat or a Republican is in the White House. Both of the bosses' parties insist they govern for "us," when everything they do — at home or abroad — is to protect the class interests of the capitalist rulers. In the imperialist epoch, their rule has relied on workers feeling they have no alternative but to hold their nose and choose the "lesser evil" between the bosses' two parties.

Pressure to pick the "least worst" in 2024 is exacerbated by Democrats' hysterical claims that Donald Trump and his working-class supporters are "MAGA fascists" who must be stopped by any means necessary.

The 2024 election comes at a time when workers



Militant  
Flight attendants rally at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Feb. 13. SWP campaign explains how workers transform ourselves in the class struggle.

are turning to our unions to fight to make progress. More workers are walking picket lines, joining union rallies and building solidarity. This leads us to discuss the broadest political and international questions that set the framework for our battles.

The bosses grow wealthy off our labor. Their profits are utterly dependent on promoting competition among workers, through multitier contracts, maintaining women's second-class status, treating immigrants as pariahs and doing everything to destroy working-class solidarity. The rulers and their upper-middle-class hangers-on try to convince us capitalist social relations are part of human nature, that we're incapable of changing them. That cut-throat capitalist rule is the

best we can hope for, and if we keep our heads down we can rise out of our class.

The conquest of power by workers during the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution in 1917, and by working people in Cuba in 1959, led by Fidel Castro, refuted these lies, opening the door to the working class constructing a different world.

So too, do the historic accomplishments of the working class in the U.S. In mighty battles workers forged powerful industrial unions in the 1930s. Millions took to the streets to tear down Jim Crow segregation. Revolutionary leaders of the highest caliber, like Malcolm

X and Farrell Dobbs, were forged in these battles. This points to the possibility — and necessity — of making a socialist revolution in the U.S.

In the course of our struggles, workers acquire discipline, self-confidence and class-consciousness. We learn to turn our backs on all who teach submission to the profit-driven dictates of the wealthy rulers. Above all, through class struggle our views of our own worth are transformed.

Fighters will be won to building a working-class leadership with the integrity and courage to lead millions to conquer political power. This is what the Socialist Workers Party campaign will be recruiting to in the coming months. Join us!

## 'Socialist' radicals gain in Democratic Party, push attack on political rights

Continued from front page

at home and their imperialist policies and wars abroad.

These socialists are looking to exercise greater weight within the Democratic Party and push it to the left. At the same time, they say the choice in 2024 is Biden or what they call fascism, that is Trump and his "deplorable" working-class backers. They're doing all they can to advance Democrats' assaults on constitutional freedoms in the name of preventing him from getting into office.

Congress has "far more strong progressives than have existed in the modern history of this country," socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders boasted at a conference of 80 elected democratic socialist officials in Washington, D.C., last June. "Nothing like it," existed in 1991, he said, when he was first elected. The retreat was attended by congressional representatives, state legislators, mayors and city council officials.

Sanders had mounted a strong primary challenge to Hillary Clinton for the Democrats' 2016 presidential nomination — while playing down his socialist credentials — before his campaign was quashed by the party's upper echelons at its convention.

His campaign helped expand the socialist wing of the party. It's using its new-found weight to pressure Biden and party leaders to adopt its policies.

The group's strongest push is to try and get the party to back organizations who support Hamas' reactionary goal of driving Jews out of the Middle East.

Our Revolution, a group set up by Sanders, urged a vote for "uncommitted" in Michigan's Democratic primary Feb. 27, rather than for Biden. It says it's trying to push Biden to demand that Israel agree to a cease-fire in Gaza, something that would leave Hamas free to carry out new massacres of Jews like Oct. 7.

If Biden doesn't do this, the group insists, Democratic voters will stay home in November, allowing Trump to come out on top in a key swing state.

"I'm really strong for Joe Biden on Nov. 5," said former Congressman Andrew Levin, who supports the "uncommitted" campaign to pressure Biden. "This will hopefully send him a message."

The course presented by the socialist wing of the Democrats traps workers into looking to the capitalist parties for social progress and is also a serious danger to the political rights needed by the working class.

As these forces have advanced inside the Democratic Party, they provide a radical cover for its long record of allegiance to the ruling capitalist class. They don't pretend to offer a road for workers to organize our-

selves to take political power into our own hands. Instead, they present schemes they say will make things better for "all the people." The fact is the U.S. — like all capitalist powers — is sharply class divided, to the advantage of the dog-eat-dog ruling families.

### 'Defeat fascist Trump!'

"The struggle to defeat the fascist right is the main issue before the country today," says a resolution that the Communist Party's National Committee is presenting to its upcoming convention, printed in its online paper Peoples World. By "fascism" it means, the "fascist trajectory of wide swaths of the Republican Party." It says the CP will run some of its own candidates in 2024, but makes clear they'll campaign for support for Democrats, especially for president. It insists, "The Republican Party is arguably the most dangerous political party in history."

Defeating Trump at all costs is the latest version of the popular front course pursued for decades by the CP. It subordinates workers' interests to getting Democrats elected, rather than organizing working people to use the power of our class to fight for the things we need, independent of both the bosses' parties.

The Party for Socialism and Liberation, another Stalinist outfit, says it aims to get its candidate for president, Claudia de la Cruz, on the ballot in at least 30 states. A Jan. 6 article in its online Liberation News says Biden is no different from the Republicans. But, like the CP, the article reserves the balance of its condemnation for Trump.

It points to the "role of racism, sexism, homophobia and all other forms of bigotry in igniting the far right." The article says, "The Democratic Party is correct in its analysis that Trump has played a major role in stoking, fanning and normalizing dangerous bigoted violence."

Democrats, including their left flank, are trying to get judges to jail the former president, Biden's main rival for the White House, ruin his family and businesses and get him barred from the ballot. Every time the capitalist government assaults the rights of anyone, including a capitalist politician like Trump, it sets a precedent for the same and far worse being done to the working class and vanguard

fighters like the Socialist Workers Party.

New York Judge Arthur Engoron hit Trump with a \$355 million fine for business fraud Feb. 16. The Democratic judge had handed down a ruling finding the Republican front-runner guilty before the trial had even begun. Charges were brought by state Attorney General Letitia James, a Democrat who had pledged to "focus on Donald Trump" if elected in her 2018 election campaign, and find a crime to pin on him.

The middle-class socialists in the Democratic Party are among the most vociferous backers of the attacks on political rights. DSA member and Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez called Biden "one of the most successful presidents in modern American history" Feb. 13 on CNN. When she was asked if Biden's age would deter people from voting for him, she shot back, "Donald Trump is around the same age."

Then she pointed to the fruits of Democratic prosecutors' witch hunt against the former president, saying, "And beyond that Donald Trump has 91 indictments." She repeated smears that Trump "tried to overturn the results of the presidential election by force."

This is the basis for a slew of lawsuits aimed at barring Trump from the ballot, preventing tens of millions from having the right to vote for the candidate of their choice. As Democratic leftists have shown in their malice toward anyone who speaks out in defense of Israel as a refuge for Jews, they're happy to crush the rights of those they disagree with. This has included physical attacks, like the assault by a group of masked pro-Hamas thugs on demonstrators defending Israel's right to exist in El Cerrito, California, Jan. 6.

Socialist Workers Party candidates are presenting a sharply different political course. They explain that out of today's union and other working-class struggles, workers can build the party our class needs, a

party that is working class in program and composition with the audacity to organize working people in our millions to take political power.

Crucial to this course is the Constitution's protection of free speech and other political freedoms that are under attack today. These rights are needed whenever workers stand up to the bosses and organize independently of their Democratic and Republican parties.

**Recommended reading**



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