

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
‘Canceling’ Russian artists, scientists
is blow to fight against Moscow war
 — PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 12 MARCH 28, 2022

‘Militant’ drive for new readers gets out truth about Ukraine

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The nine-week international drive to sell 1,600 subscriptions to the *Militant*, the same number of books by Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionary leaders, and to raise \$165,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund is off to an excellent start.

As the drive opens, 196 subscriptions and 117 books have been purchased.

At protests against Moscow’s assault against Ukraine, on workers’ doorsteps and strike picket lines, at truck stops, and in discussions with co-workers, SWP members are presenting the party’s statement, “Defend Ukraine’s independence! For the defeat of Moscow’s invasion! U.S. troops, nuclear arms out of Europe, *all* of Europe!” Through these discussions they’re introducing working people to the party.

“My mother’s uncle and best friend are fighting right now in Ukraine. And I think the U.S. should send troops,” college student Arti Zylali told Alyson

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Defeat Moscow’s war on Ukraine’s independence!

US troops, nuclear arms out of Europe!



kherson-news.net

March 12 protest against Russian occupation in Kherson, in southern Ukraine. Moscow’s war is shaking up world capitalist order, posing threat of broader trade conflicts and wars.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Moscow’s brutal invasion of Ukraine is shaking the capitalist world order, increasing the challenges facing the U.S. rulers as they fight to maintain their supremacy. Capitalist

powers across the globe are strengthening their own military forces to defend their national class interests against rivals.

In the third week of Moscow’s invasion, the Russian forces’ deadly assault on cities continues to slow because of tenacious Ukrainian resistance. Protests have also met Moscow’s invading forces in towns in the south that they now occupy.

The depth of support for independence by the Ukrainian working people continues to feed popular mobilizations. Millions across the world are impacted by the war and protests against it are widespread, including inside Russia.

Noting the stakes for the working

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Workers face soaring prices, fight for wage hikes to match

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Rising prices, especially on food, gas, rent and other necessities, are upending the lives of millions of working people. What government officials insisted would be “transitory” is in fact part of a longer-term crisis the capitalist rulers are putting on our backs.

The government’s consumer price index rose to 7.9% for the 12 months ending in February, the highest increase in 40 years. And these “official” government figures undercount what working people really face.

Strikes by workers and their unions — from the teachers in Minneapolis to coal miners in Alabama to Machinists in Davenport, Iowa — are demanding wage raises to cover rising prices.

“These struggles set an example for millions facing similar conditions and need support from other workers and our unions,” Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, told the *Militant*. “To protect workers from the ravages of inflation, our unions need to fight for cost-of-liv-

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‘We’re standing up for all workers,’ say locked-out Ohio UAW members



Militant

Locked-out Collins workers Jeff McDermit and Brian Ponsler discuss fight against bosses with SWP Senate candidate Samir Hazboun, left. Ponsler is reading SWP Ukraine statement.

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

TROY, Ohio — Some 300 members of United Auto Workers Local 128 at Collins Aerospace were locked out

As we go to press ...

Locked-out workers at Collins voted 212 to 67 March 14 to accept the company’s latest offer, return to work.

beginning Feb. 19 after voting down a contract that would have deepened divisions among workers at the plant.

Collins, a subsidiary of Raytheon Technologies, responded to the union vote by barring the workers from their jobs, escorting them out of the plant and locking them out.

“We’re not on strike,” Local 128 President Joe Konicki told the *Militant*. “We were trying to get a good contract. But Collins locked out its workers when they discussed the company’s contract offer, found it unacceptable, and voted it down.”

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Truckers protest gov’t mandates, fuel price hikes, attacks by bosses

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON — The People’s Convoy, organized by over-the-road truckers and others who oppose overreaching government COVID mandates and other attacks on their livelihoods, has been based at the Hagerstown, Maryland, speedway since March 6.

Participants are still arriving to join the protests, which call for ending government COVID-19 mandates that attempt to force people to get vaccinated or face losing their jobs and other restrictions. Others have left to take a job or to take the protest out to workers elsewhere.

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New Missouri law threatens women’s fight for equality, family planning

BY JANET POST

An anti-abortion bill introduced in the Missouri legislature March 8 would allow every person in the state to file suit against anyone who assists a woman from Missouri in getting an abortion anywhere in the country. The measure, authored by state Rep. Mary Elizabeth Coleman, who is running for state senate, would also make it illegal to manufacture or distribute abortion pills. The state legislature — with a majority who oppose legalized abortion — returns from a break

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Minneapolis teachers, support staff strike over wages, hiring

Florida anti-solicitation law is attack on democratic rights

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

In 2015 officials in Palm Beach County, Florida, outlawed so-called panhandling or soliciting on or near any road, claiming it endangered people’s safety. Similar laws that exist across the country are used to turn workers who are homeless into criminals and to give cops and courts another weapon to restrict free speech and political rights that are crucial for all working people.

Since 2020 at least 141 people have been charged there under the statute. Almost all are homeless. A handful were arrested for selling flowers on the roadside.

Clarence Richter owes nearly \$3,000 in court costs and has done jail time. His “crime”? He is homeless and stands by the road with a sign asking for help. He’s been arrested eight times.

While the ordinance ostensibly targets those soliciting charitable contributions, it actually bans people from holding *any* type of sign along public roads. If you hold up a sign promoting a union strike struggle, or one that reads “Defend Ukraine independence!” or hawk the *Militant*, you can be fined \$500 and face a 60-day jail sentence.

Last November Palm Beach County Judge Sherri Collins ruled the law violated free speech and is unconstitutional.

But since Collins’ ruling at least 15 more people have been charged with violating the law. Sabarish Neelakanta, a lawyer for the Florida Justice Institute, says judges often give defendants the choice of pleading guilty and getting out of jail with credit for time served, or challenging the charges and staying in.

The group has filed a lawsuit against the ordinance, seeking a ruling that it violates the First Amendment, and an injunction to stop its enforcement.

In a phone interview with the *Militant*, Neelakanta explained there are more challenges to anti-soliciting laws since a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona. The town fined a church for putting up signs advertising upcoming services. The court found Gilbert’s law unconstitutional, ruling the town had failed to show any compelling reason why the law was needed, and therefore violated the First Amendment.

And yet many towns and cities persist in passing laws like this that can be used to silence workers. They do so because the bosses’ assaults on workers’ wages, conditions and unions meet resistance. The employing class looks to their governments to pass laws that put obstacles in the way of working people fighting together for what we need.

For example, the United Mine Workers of America had to fight to keep picket lines up during the ongoing 11-month strike against Warrior Met Coal in Brookwood, Alabama. Last October the company got a restraining order that banned all union activity within 300 yards of the mine’s entrances. In Janu-



Worker in Palm Beach County, Florida, looking for a job. Officials there have outlawed soliciting or panhandling on or near any road, restricting free speech and attacking political rights.

ary UMWA District 20 Representative James Blankenship announced that striking miners had won the right to resume picket lines near the mine.

Other strikes, like those at Kellogg’s in Omaha, Nebraska, and John Deere were hit with similar injunctions.

Last month Canada’s government invoked the repressive Emergencies Act against truckers protesting COVID vaccine mandates and other attacks on their living standards. The government launched a brutal assault on protesters, using hundreds of police supported by armored tactical vehicles, elite sharpshooters, horse cav-

alry, stun grenades, anti-riot weapons launchers, batons and pepper spray.

Anti-soliciting laws are yet another weapon in the rulers’ arsenal to restrict the right to assembly and free speech.

Only through discussion and debate can working people figure out how to defend ourselves, build unions, campaign against the rulers’ wars, push back cop violence and defend women’s rights.

The fight to overturn laws like the Palm Beach County ordinance, which restricts rights we need as well as providing cops with legal cover to victimize workers, deserves the support of working people.

Judge tosses felony count against Jan. 6 defendants

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a blow to the drive by liberal Democrats and President Joe Biden’s Justice Department to prosecute and imprison

hundreds for their part in the Jan. 6, 2021, “breach” of the Capitol, U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols dismissed a key “Obstruction of an Official Proceeding” felony count on constitutional grounds in one of the cases he is overseeing.

The March 7 ruling helps expose that this government witch hunt — to make participants pay for their “insurrection” — has nothing to do with “defending democracy.” Instead, it is aimed at preventing former President Donald Trump from running again in 2024 and to undermine democratic and political rights, especially of working people who the capitalist rulers view as “deplorables” and dangerous.

While for now the ruling applies

only to the cases Nichols is handling, it opens the door to appeals by at least 280 other defendants who pled guilty, were convicted, or are still facing the same felony charge — punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

Two other judges handling these cases — appointees of former President Barack Obama — had raised similar concerns as Judge Nichols, but ultimately decided to join eight other judges in allowing the questionable charges to stand.

The Justice Department boasts that the “investigation” and prosecution of Jan. 6 is the largest in U.S. history. As of March 6, 775 people have been arrested

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Haitian workers protest for higher wages

Prices are surging worldwide as workers’ real wages plummet and working conditions deteriorate. Garment and other workers in Haiti went on strike last month to fight their “miserable salary.” The *Militant* supports working people as they stand up to the capitalists’ assaults.



Reuters/Ralph Teddy Erol

Thousands of workers demand higher wages in Port-au-Prince, capital of Haiti, Feb. 17.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Get out truth about Ukraine

Continued from front page

Kennedy, SWP candidate for governor of Texas, and Gerardo Sánchez, the party's candidate for Congress, at a protest of 300 against Moscow's invasion held in Southlake, Texas, March 13.

Arti's sister, Dea Zylali, disagreed. "I think the U.S. should get their troops and weapons out of Europe," she said. "The U.S. government has its own agenda and will only benefit from the war."

Sánchez addressed this in his talk at the rally. "We are for the defeat of the Russian troops in Ukraine. The U.S. rulers intervene in Europe to protect their own class interests. They do nothing to protect working people, either in Ukraine or anywhere else," he said.

The same question is posed in discussions elsewhere.

"Why do you oppose the use of the U.S. military to help Ukraine defeat the Russian invasion," Latoya Burwell, a recent law-school graduate, asked SWP member Dan Fein when Fein knocked on her door in Chicago March 13.

"President Joseph Biden and the capitalists he rules on behalf of are not interested in Ukraine's independence," Fein replied. "The presence of the U.S. military in Ukraine would create another problem for working people there, who are resisting the Russian invasion."

"That's something to think about," said Burwell, who signed up for a *Militant* subscription and purchased *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes

This book — along with eight others — are on special offer when pur-

chased with a *Militant* subscription (see ad on page 6). In addition, all other titles published by Pathfinder Press are available at a 20% discount.

At a truck stop in California's Central Valley March 13, SWP member Betsey Stone spoke with trucker Bobbi Bolton, who lives in Phoenix. Bolton said she is inspired by the Ukrainians' resistance to the Russian government's invasion. "They are giving them a run for their money."

She described the devastating impact on truckers of rising prices, with a gallon of diesel now costing \$6.49 at the truck stop. A year ago when she considered buying a truck to become an owner-operator, the cost was under \$100,000. Now the same truck goes for about \$200,000.

When Stone explained the SWP is for organizing working people, building the union movement and a workers' party to challenge the ruling rich, Bolton replied, "Yes, we need to give them a run for their money here too." She subscribed to the *Militant*.

Russians protest Ukraine invasion

A demonstration of 1,000 people in London March 13 drew dozens of Russians living in the U.K. "We're opposed to Putin's invasion and war," student Katya Pchelinsteva told Communist League member Jonathan Silberman.

"Opposition to the war in Russia itself is key," he said, describing protests in cities and towns throughout that country. Silberman said the CL is opposed to sanctions the U.K., U.S. and other capitalist governments inflict on the people of Russia. He explained how sanctions, along with calls to boycott Russian artistic performances, can push some Russians to look more favorably on Putin's lies that Moscow's war is a defensive operation. Pchelinsteva was one of three Russians at the protest who signed up for *Militant* subscriptions.

The day before, CL members Catharina Tirsén and Tony Hunt knocked on the door of Aziz Mustafa in South Ockendon, Essex. "I support Ukraine," Mustafa said. "But I don't think NATO should get involved." Tirsén agreed, pointing out that working people in Ukraine are resisting tenaciously, just as



Militant/Tony DiFelice

"We count on workers and farmers to defend Ukraine's independence," Philippe Tessier, Communist League candidate for National Assembly, told student rally in Toronto March 12.

they did in the 2014 uprising that overthrew the pro-Moscow government of Viktor Yanukovich. She had been part of the *Militant* reporting team to Ukraine after that 2014 Maidan rebellion. "We look to working people in Ukraine, just as we look to working people in the U.K.," she said.

"We count on workers and farmers in Canada, in Russia, and around the world to defend Ukraine's independence," Philippe Tessier, Communist League candidate in the Marie-Victorin by-election in Longueuil near Montreal, told a rally of more than 100 students in front of the Russian Consulate in Toronto March 12.

'Our histories are intricately linked'

Among those thanking Tessier for participating in the rally was Skaidra Puodziunas, whose family comes from Lithuania. "I know how our histories are intricately linked," she said, "the people of Ukraine are fighting for Lithuanians and all of our Baltic neighbors too."

In Cumming, Georgia, Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for governor of Georgia, joined a discussion in solidarity with Ukraine held at the St. Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Church March 13. The event of some 70 people was organized by several religious denominations to honor Ukrainians killed in Moscow's war.

Galyna Tarafanyuk, a member of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America in Georgia, described actions by working people in several Ukrainian cities to defend themselves in the wake of Moscow's invasion.

Manuel called for the defeat of Moscow's invasion. Participants got the party's statement and one sub-

scribed to the *Militant*.

Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for governor of Florida, and party member Steve Warshell participated in a protest of some 30 people at the Border Patrol Station in Dania Beach, Florida, March 12. The action, organized by Family Action Network Movement, demanded an end to the detention and deportation of Haitian refugees seeking shelter in the U.S.

The SWP members talked with those present about the need to also speak out against Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. "Why just go in there and take what's not yours?" nurse Yolnick Cadet said of the Russian invaders. "This war will extend beyond Ukraine and affect the rest of the world."

To join in the drive to expand the reach of the *Militant*, contact the SWP nearest you, listed on page 8.

Steve Penner in Montreal, Josefina Otero in Dallas-Fort Worth, and Lisa Potash in Atlanta contributed to this article.



Militant/Mike Shur

Joanne Kuniarsky, left, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey, at March 5 NYC action supporting Ukraine.

Militant Fighting Fund key to getting paper out

The enthusiastic response of *Militant* readers to its call for the defense of Ukraine's independence, the defeat of Moscow's invasion and for Washington to get all U.S. troops and nuclear weapons out of Europe is marked by contributions beginning to come in to the *Militant* Fighting Fund. Thousands of dollars are already on their way as the nine-week campaign opens to raise \$165,000 to keep the paper coming out.

The annual fund is the foundation of the paper's budget and ensures it can respond to developments in world politics, like Moscow's war, and present the stakes for working people.

We need to begin with a bang, with contributions toward our goal, which is higher than previous efforts. Send as generous a contribution as you can today!

Published since 1928, the *Militant* has only ever had one source of income — readers who value its unique coverage of working-class struggles — from protests by truck drivers and unionists to its defense of Cuba's socialist revolution, an example to working people worldwide.

Mail your checks to the *Militant* at 306 West 37th St., New York, NY 10018, or donate online at www.themilitant.com.

— TERRY EVANS

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Texas

Alyson Kennedy, Governor
Gerardo Sánchez, US Congress

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James Harris, Mayor
Arlene Rubinstein, Delegate to House

Iran deal in flux amid Ukraine war, sanctions on Russian oil

BY TERRY EVANS

Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine and accelerating sanctions imposed by Washington and its imperialist rivals on Russia, are sending supplies of oil and gas spiraling downward. Prices at the pump and for home heating have skyrocketed, deepening the crisis facing working people.

The Ukraine war, and the way it has shaken up the perspectives, military plans and international relations of all major capitalist powers, has caused Washington to take a new look at its alliances and markets, including in relation to oil supplies.

Despite years of stifling U.S. strictures on Venezuelan oil sales, CNN reported March 8 that President Joseph Biden has sent representatives to Venezuela to discuss making it possible for the government of Nicolás Maduro to again sell oil freely on the world market — and to American gas companies. They are also pressing the regime in Saudi Arabia to ratchet up oil production.

The U.S. rulers are stepping up efforts for a new nuclear deal with Tehran that could open the door to new relations — and oil as well.

“Caracas, Riyadh and Tehran would have been unlikely sources of relief for a Biden-led Western alliance before the start of the war in Ukraine,” CNN noted. But in the wake of Biden’s order to ban all imports of Russian oil, gas and energy, and pressure for U.S. allies in Europe to follow suit, suddenly all options are on the table. It’s not guaranteed that any of these U.S. maneuvers will succeed.

Moscow has taken steps to place obstacles in Washington’s way. It intervened in the latest talks over resurrecting the 2015 U.S.-Iran nuclear deal, which were reporting new progress. Moscow demanded its trade with Iran be exempt from the harsh sanctions the Biden administration imposed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. Washington refused. In an unusual swipe at the government of Vladimir Putin, Tehran officials said, “Russia wants to secure its interests in other places” — meaning Ukraine. “This move is not constructive for Vienna nuclear talks.”

Moscow has two goals here. One is to prevent any possibility of Washington opening new relations and trade

with Tehran at its expense. The other is to keep world oil prices sky high. This puts pressure on the U.S. rulers’ oil sanctions while at the same time bringing revenue to Russia’s rulers. The only world power quietly celebrating the wrench Moscow threw into the Tehran talks is Tel Aviv, which, with good reason, sees a new nuclear deal as a green light for Iran’s reactionary clerical rulers to rapidly build nuclear weapons capable of reaching Israel.

In fact, deal or no deal, Tehran is closer than ever to being able to threaten Israel with nuclear weapons.

Because of Moscow’s move, the talks, which involved the governments of China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia, the U.K. and the U.S., are at a standstill.

Moscow was a key player in the 2015 agreement, and in current negotiations, because it has been responsible for storing Tehran’s “excess” stock of enriched uranium and providing it with lower-grade fuel for its nuclear reactors. The Russian government has also helped Tehran skirt U.S.-promoted sanctions. But in the wake of the war on Ukraine, Moscow redoubled its efforts to prevent Tehran and Washington moving toward improved relations.

Tehran expands reactionary rule

Workers and farmers in Iran have borne the brunt not only of U.S. sanctions, but also the deadly costs of the Iranian regime’s unending military adventures across the Middle East.

The bourgeois-clerical government originated in a counterrevolution against the 1979 Iranian Revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah. The revolution opened the door to deepening struggles by workers, farmers, women and oppressed nationalities, including the Kurds. Shoras developed — councils of working people in plants, oil fields and neighborhoods — that pointed in the direction of workers power.

The counterrevolution attacked and stifled these mighty advances. As this regime consolidated its rule, it expanded its reach further into the region. In the 1980s it defeated a U.S.-backed war by the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. Then the Iranian rulers intervened in bloody wars shaking the region, establishing military bases and training militias in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, extending its influence throughout the region.

Iraq protest hits price jump of cooking oil, essentials



Al-Furat News 18

Hundreds protested in Babil, Baghdad, and Nasiriyah (above) in southern Iraq March 9 in the face of sharp price hikes in cooking oil and other basic necessities, dealing blows to working people’s lives.

“The price of some goods has doubled and even tripled in some cases,” Yasser al-Barrak told the press at the protest in Nasiriyah. “The rise in prices is strangling us, whether it is bread or other food products,” said retired teacher Hassan Kazem.

Mohammed, a porter in Nasiriyah, told the United Arab Emirates based *The National* that “today, from morning until now I probably made around 10,000 dinar, [\$6.90] but can you believe that I have to pay 21,000 dinars for a tin of cooking oil?”

Trade ministry spokesman Mohamed Hanoun blamed the hikes on the war in Ukraine. There is “a major global crisis because Ukraine has a large share of the [world market] in cooking oils,” he said. Ukraine is facing a deadly assault by Moscow that is threatening its ability to market crops. It is the largest exporter of sunflower oil in the world, with some 46% of world production, as well as 15% of the production of wheat. In fact, prices on many basic necessities began rising well before the war in Ukraine started.

In 2019 monthslong massive protests rocked the country, triggered by unemployment, corruption, poor living conditions and pressure from the Iranian government seeking more control over Iraq. Demonstrators demanded an end to interference in Iraq by Tehran and Washington and greater political rights. Government-backed thug attacks left 600 dead. Hoping to avoid a repeat, the government said it has increased pensions for the lowest paid retirees and some government workers by about \$70 a month. It also suspended customs duties on imported food and some other goods for two months.

— SETH GALINSKY

Although Tehran often claims its nuclear program is for “peaceful” purposes, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made clear that this is a necessary part of the government’s expansionist goals.

“Regional presence gives us strategic depth and more power,” Khamenei said in a speech to the Assembly of Experts March 10. “Why should we give it up? Scientific progress in the nuclear field is related to our future needs.” As part of their expansionist drive, Iran’s capitalist rulers helped establish and armed Hamas forces in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and militia forces in Syria and in Iraq.

In all these efforts, they advance their counterrevolutionary line. They have constantly threatened to destroy Israel, a refuge and homeland for Jews.

Israel’s capitalist rulers take Iran’s expansion and nuclear threats seriously. Since July 2020 Israeli spy agency Mossad “has reportedly blown up all or part of three or more Iranian nuclear facilities and assassinated lead nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh,” the March 10 *Jerusalem Post* noted. “Yet the ayatollahs still found ways to get enough enriched uranium,” the paper complained.

All of this complicates Washington’s maneuvering room as Moscow’s Ukraine war unfolds.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Defend Ukraine’s Independence! For Defeat of Moscow’s Invasion! U.S. Troops, Nuclear Arms Out of Europe! Speaker: Susan LaMont, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 26, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

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Cincinnati

Truckers Fight for Survival in Canada and the U.S. Speaker: Ellen Brickley, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., March 27. Reception, 12:30 p.m.; program, 1 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2300 Montana Ave., Suite 230. Tel.: (502) 835-0987.

Access to the *Militant’s* unique Ukraine coverage

The *Militant’s* coverage of Ukraine is unique. The paper defends the country’s right to self-determination, a political conquest of the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution in Lenin’s time that remains decisive to forging working-class unity.

Acting on that communist continuity the paper responded to the courageous uprising by working people against the government of Victor Yanukovych in 2014. It sent three reporting teams to Ukraine over the next year to join and learn about the actions that overthrew the hated pro-Moscow regime and provide its readers with eyewitness coverage of the actions of working people to defend their independence and fight for working-class interests. Those articles helped explain how that victory opened space for working people to defend themselves and to begin building the kind of leadership they need today and in the class battles that lie ahead.

To aid readers today in learning more about that uprising, and what underlies the fighting capacity of Ukraine’s working people today, links to some of the articles are available at themilitant.com.

Minneapolis teachers, support staff strike over wages, hiring

BY EDWIN FRUIT

MINNEAPOLIS — Some 4,500 teachers and professional support staff, represented by Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59, went on strike March 8. The school district has hard-balled the workers' needs in negotiations so the union authorized the strike by 97%. Major issues are a living wage for education support professionals, hiring more staff to better represent the multinational student body, more mental health support staff, smaller class sizes and pay for teachers that is competitive with other area districts.

The union represents some 3,265 teachers and 1,500 educational support workers, with over 30,000 students in the district. The support staff deals with transportation, language translation, one-on-one assistance in the classroom and is involved in before and after school programs.

The union wants the starting wage for the educational support staff to start at \$35,000 a year, instead of the \$24,000 being paid today. The union is fighting for a 12% wage increase for teachers in the first year of a new contract, and 5% more the next.

School Superintendent Ed Graff told the press they agree that union members should be paid more, but “unfortunately, the reality is that we’re resource-limited.”

In addition to picketing at schools every morning, the union has organized three rallies, each drawing over 1,000 strikers and their supporters. “People do not realize the importance of the support professionals and the role they play, not only in the classroom but in the school

in general,” Elizabeth Therkildsen, a teacher for over 20 years and now a district program facilitator, told the *Militant* at a rally in north Minneapolis March 8. “They need a living wage.”

At a state Capitol rally the following day, union leaders answered the school administration’s claims that they can’t afford to pay more. “We don’t have a budget crisis in Minneapolis, we have a values and priorities crisis,” said Shaun Laden, the president of the union’s support professionals. “I don’t think they understand how determined our members are.”

“We have 5,000 people on the streets. We are in a righteous fight,” said Greta Callahan, president of the union’s teachers’ chapter. “Our members are not going to back down.”

Ken Nelson, a teacher of computer sciences at North High School, explained what he told his students. “The teachers strike is at the heart a question of the foundation of society — education and culture,” he said. “We know the school board claims it doesn’t have the money to meet our demands, but we also know the state has.”



Militant/Mary Martin

Over 1,000 members of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers rally March 8, first day of city-wide strike. Workers demand pay raise for teachers and support staff, and smaller class sizes.

The state government has a \$9.25 billion budget surplus.

“The teaching assistants need a living wage and we need more mental health support such as psychologists,” Jill Le, who has been teaching as a speech therapist at Sheridan elementary for eight years, told the *Militant*. “Class size is also an issue. I have 35 students in my classes.”

Her co-worker, Amy Swanson, a special education teacher for 17 years, agreed. “I want to make it clear what our demands add up to, we are standing up for the students,” she said.

Teachers in neighboring St. Paul, members of the St. Paul Federation of Educators, had also authorized a strike vote, but their union reached a tentative agreement March 7, averting a strike.

Judge tosses felony charge against Jan. 6 defendants

Continued from page 2

from nearly all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The crusade stems from the aftermath of a Jan. 6 public rally where Donald Trump claimed the election had been “stolen” from him. He encouraged participants to protest at the Capitol, where Congress was counting electoral votes to certify the presidential election.

A number of demonstrators got into physical confrontations with police, who were blocking them from entering the Capitol. Some broke windows and a door. In at least another instance cops stood aside and allowed them to enter the building. Some are charged with the heinous felony of sitting in Vice President Kamala Harris’ chair. The count-

ing of the electoral vote was delayed by a few hours.

The overwhelming majority of the some 2,000 to 2,500 people who entered the Capitol — mostly peaceful protesters who carefully stayed between the velvet ropes, mixed in with handfuls of conspiracy theorists, rightists and wannabe paramilitaries — simply wandered around. A small number carried out vandalism or tried to walk off with “mementos.”

Illegal ‘parading’?

Dozens of those whose only “crime” was going into the Capitol are being pressured to accept plea bargains on misdemeanor charges of illegally “parading, demonstrating, or picketing in

a Capitol Building.” Some 195 people have felt pressured to cop such pleas.

Some face efforts by prosecutors to have them sentenced to “split sentences.” For instance, prosecutors demand Micajah Joel Jackson, who pled guilty to “parading,” be split sentenced to 60 days in jail followed by three years of probation. Why the long probation? He spoke out publicly about his beliefs and wasn’t contrite.

The “Obstruction of Justice” statute the prosecutors are using was passed after a 2002 corruption scandal at Enron. It made it a felony to destroy, mutilate, shred or conceal documents to “impede” an official proceeding. But no one accused for the “breach” of the Capitol touched any official document related to the counting of electoral votes. In his ruling dismissing the charge, Nichols pointed out that the Justice Department’s interpretation of the law was “extraordinarily broad.”

Prosecutors originally hoped to bring charges of sedition or even “enhanced” charges of abetting terrorism against many of the defendants. But with absolutely no evidence that anything like this was involved, they decided it was too risky politically and that their whole crusade could fall apart.

As part of efforts to crucify Trump, the Democrat-run House of Representatives appointed yet another special committee made up of seven Democrats and two anti-Trump Republicans. They are in charge of new forays in the never-ending “investigation” of Jan. 6.

The liberals view the Nichols’ decision as dangerous because they want to use the “obstruction” charge against Trump. The new committee, which includes anti-Trump Republican Rep. Liz Cheney, has said this is exactly what they intend to do.

Working people need to pay attention to these developments. Moves like this always end up as precedents to be used by the government to frame up and imprison working-class militants and other opponents of capitalist rule.

Caravan to Warrior Met

11 a.m., Wed. April 6

First anniversary of UMWA strike

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12632 Confederate Parkway,
McCalla, Alabama

Contact: Kris Mallory 304 419 1645

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 31, 1997

The march in Brussels by tens of thousands of workers from across Europe protesting job cuts shows the broad desire among working people to unite internationally to combat the devastation wrought by the capitalist system in its death agony.

Far from granting reforms, the bourgeoisie in every nation in Europe is trying to find ways to slash workers’ wages, living conditions, and social gains in order to boost their profits. They are driven to do this by the fundamental laws of capitalism.

Only through a decisive struggle against the bosses and their system — regardless of the shifting economic, political, and military alliances among the different nation states — can the working class defend itself and forge the unity needed to overturn the wages system and open the road to organizing society to meet human needs and potentials, not those of big business.



March 31, 1972

LOS ANGELES — President Nixon assumed that the appointment of Romana Acosta Banuelos as Treasurer of the United States would persuade some Chicanos that they had a representative in his administration. He might even have thought that this would include the workers at her food plant in Gardena.

One thing is clear now. Banuelos isn’t likely to win votes for anyone among the workers at her plant. They’re on strike against sweatshop wages and working conditions. More than 200 workers at Ramona’s Mexican Food Products went on strike March 8, three months after their last contract expired. A major demand is the 40-hour week. The union is also demanding a wage increase, longer vacations, and dues checkoff.

Work is being speeded up considerably on the production line. The workers, mostly Chicanos, are determined to win substantial gains.



March 29, 1947

[President] Truman’s war of “democracy against totalitarianism” finds the first blow being struck against the American people themselves. Truman has launched a sweeping “anti-red” witchhunt to terrorize all persons and groups opposed to Wall Street.

The first stage of a vast assault on civil rights is outlined in Truman’s order for an unprecedented “disloyalty” purge among 2,200,000 federal administrative employees. This order sets the precedent for persecution and victimization that will extend into every walk of life and into the plants and workshops.

Among the investigating agencies is the notorious House Committee on Un-American Activities whose charges of “communism” and “subversion” have been hurled indiscriminately at anyone who is sympathetic to labor, supports democratic rights and opposes Negro-baiting and anti-Semitism.

Workers face soaring prices

Continued from front page
ing adjustments in every contract and all benefits that raise our wages to match every price increase we face.

As every worker buying groceries knows, prices for many items are actually much higher than official figures. Prices for groceries rose at an annual rate of 8.6%, but meat, poultry, fish and eggs, key sources for protein, are up by 13%. Prices for fruit and vegetables jumped, while the cost of dairy products was the largest in nearly 11 years.

The *New York Times* interviewed working people across the country and described what they said: “Bacon is as expensive as filet mignon used to be”; “I am eating expired groceries”; and “I go several days in a month skipping meals or just not eating.”

Energy prices increased 26% from a year ago and the cost of gasoline is going through the roof, rising to over \$4 per gallon. In some areas, like San Francisco, the average price is \$5.75.

Among those especially hard hit by these price hikes are Uber and Lyft drivers and owner operator truckers. Their bosses force them to pay for their own gas, wreaking havoc with their take home pay.

Some owner-operators have had to take their trucks off the road, because they can no longer make a living as diesel prices have reached all-time highs.

Fleet driver James McCurdy told WCNC his boss called him and other drivers instructing them to stop idling their trucks to save fuel. “In the wintertime, we can’t shut it down because we’ll freeze to death,” he said.

Average wages rose by 5.1% over the past year, but with rising prices workers’ real wages dropped — by a 2.6% annual rate in February. Households with low income bear the brunt as they spend a greater part of their income on food and gasoline than those in the middle and ruling classes.

Two years after the COVID-19 pandemic began, there are 2.3 million less workers in the labor force. As prices are climbing, bosses are trying to maximize profits by pursuing a broader offensive against us through speedup, longer shifts, mandatory overtime and weakening safety on the job. Farm-

ers too, are facing significantly higher prices for weed-killing chemicals, crop seeds, fertilizer and equipment repairs, sinking income below their costs of production. “I just don’t see how I’m going to get paid this year,” Brooks Barnes, a second-generation farmer in Wilson County, North Carolina, told the *Wall Street Journal* Feb. 15.

His farm grows tobacco, corn, soybeans, wheat and sweet potatoes. In February he paid \$60 a gallon for Bayer AG’s Roundup weed killer, up from \$16 a gallon the previous year. Fertilizers jumped to \$500 a ton, from \$175 last spring.

“To protect farmers from ruin, the government must guarantee their costs of production,” Kennedy said. “To build the fighting movement of working people we need, we must forge an alliance with working farmers, who are exploited by the same capitalists as we are.”

Wage raises don’t cause inflation

The bosses and their media falsely claim that rising wages lead to high prices. This is false.

Inflation is a phenomenon that arises when the purchasing power of a capitalist nation declines. The government and banks crank up their



Inflation reached 40-year high last month, wreaking havoc on workers’ living standards, posing need for fight for higher wages and cost-of-living adjustments in every union contract.

printing presses and crank out money and other financial paper to make up the difference, quickly outstripping the output of commodities that could be purchased with that bloated monetary supply. Under these conditions, capitalists competing for profits boost prices up and up, all of which lowers workers’ living standards. So wage increases do not drive inflation, it only means we get to keep more of the

wealth we produce and the bosses take less in profits.

“We need to break from the Democratic and Republican parties and form our own party, a labor party based on our unions,” Kennedy said.

“Such a party can organize workers by the millions and attract allies to common struggles to defend our families and livelihoods against the profit-driven assaults of the employing class.”

‘Canceling’ Russians is blow to fight against Moscow’s war

BY JOHN STUDER

“I am opposed to this senseless war of aggression, and I am calling on Russia to end this war right now to save all of us. We need peace right now,” renowned Russian opera singer Anna Netrebko said after Moscow invaded and began bombing civilian areas in Ukraine. This was a courageous act, a reflection of the widespread opposition in Russia to the war, and an encouragement to Russian workers and farmers to protest.

But Netrebko was “canceled” and fired by the Metropolitan Opera in New York because she wouldn’t issue further statements denouncing Russian President Vladimir Putin. Peter Gelb, the Met’s general manager, said the opera house will refuse to work with any artists who support Putin.

Many singers, artists, actors, writers and other cultural workers from Russia face being “canceled.” The

Bolshoi Ballet was canceled by three venues in the United Kingdom; all Russian singers were banned from the Eurovision song competition, regardless of their position on the war; performances of Swan Lake by the Royal Moscow Ballet were canceled by the Helix theater in Dublin; the Munich Philharmonic canned its conductor, Valery Gergiev, as did the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Carnegie Hall.

Victoria and Albert Museum directors in Britain are discussing shuttering an exhibit of Peter Carl Fabergé’s famous eggs. Fabergé died in 1920, and the eggs have yet to take a position on Moscow’s invasion.

“Cancel culture” moves like these actually weaken, not strengthen the fight to defeat Putin’s invasion. They are part of efforts to paint the Russian people, their culture and art, as the problem. They deal a blow to political discussion and action needed by working people worldwide.

These campaigns are promoted by the imperialist regimes in Washington and across the EU. But the capitalist rulers in each of these countries aren’t really interested in defending the Ukrainian toilers, but are looking to defend and extend their own class pillage worldwide.

The widespread protests across Russia by people risking arrest and brutal persecution, alongside the determined resistance in Ukraine, are crucial for winning over working people there. It is only the working classes in Ukraine and in Russia, with backing from

workers across Eastern Europe and worldwide, that have the power and class interests to end the war and bring down the Putin regime in Moscow.

To advance this, the fullest discussion and debate is necessary. Anything that closes down fraternization and dialogue is a deadly danger to progress on this working-class course.

Some have stood up to the “cancel” mongers, while at the same time speaking out against Moscow’s war. One arena of debate over the road forward is among scientists. Over 600 scientists and researchers in Russia issued an open letter opposing Putin’s invasion and war. It points out that the invasion can isolate Russia and turn the country into an international pariah, making it impossible for scientific work in the country that draws on collaboration internationally.

Some in the U.S. and elsewhere have called for barring Russian contributions and research from being printed in scientific journals. *Nature* magazine has taken a stand against this boycott, writing it “will continue to consider manuscripts from researchers anywhere in the world.”

A boycott “would divide the global research community and restrict the exchange of scholarly knowledge,” the magazine says, “both of which have the potential to damage the health and well-being of humanity and the planet.”

They insist on the importance of “the research community to uphold scientific collaborations with Russian scholars amid the invasion.” This allows for dialogue and debate.

At the same time, the journal’s editors make their opinion on the war clear. “*Nature* condemns this horrific invasion in the strongest terms — and calls on Russia to immediately end its attack. We support and stand in solidarity with Ukraine’s people, including its research community.”

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Defeat Moscow's war on Ukraine independence! US out of Europe!

Continued from front page

class, a March 3 statement by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes points to the need for working people to act against Moscow's war and to orient toward taking political power into our own hands or we "face a future of social devastation, reaction, world war and even nuclear catastrophe." The statement is available on the *Militant* website.

For decades the U.S. rulers acted on the illusion they had won the Cold War after the Soviet Union imploded. They waged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, expanded membership of their NATO alliance into countries that were formerly part of the Soviet bloc, and waged a devastating war on the people of Yugoslavia, dismembering that state. Doing so, they believed, would extend their role as the dominant power in Europe and ensure their world supremacy.

But the massive industrialization of China has led to the rise of Beijing as an increasingly powerful rival to the U.S. rulers for markets and political influence. The Chinese rulers are expanding their military. Alongside this, the Vladimir Putin regime is asserting itself, intervening in Georgia in 2008, Crimea in 2014 and Ukraine today. The old principal powers in Europe — London and Paris — continue to look for ways to defend their declining place in the world order.

Washington has found no clear course to meet these challenges. Nobody won the Cold War.

The largest land war in Europe since the Second World War is also shattering illusions held by Berlin and other capitalist powers across the continent that they could let their own militaries decline because of the presence of U.S. forces under the NATO flag, and because the European Union would overcome national antagonisms and ensure peace and prosperity.

A top German general, Alfons Mais, bemoaned the fact Feb. 24 that when he woke up to "war in Europe" he realized that the German army "is more or less bare."

The German ruling class, the most powerful in Europe, has abruptly reversed its decadeslong course of trying to balance between Washington and Moscow. It is now launching a rearmament program.

The Polish, Danish and Swedish rulers are also boosting military spending. The government in Denmark has reversed its ban on the presence of



Marina Ovsyannikova, Channel One editor, interrupts Russia's most-watched evening news broadcast March 14 protesting Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Poster says, "Don't believe the propaganda, they are lying to you here." Kremlin claims war is only a "special operation."

foreign forces in the country, inviting U.S. troops to be stationed there. The governments of Lithuania and Latvia are pushing Washington to station U.S. troops there permanently.

Opinion polls in Sweden show a majority favors the government joining the NATO imperialist alliance. For now, the Swedish government remains opposed to doing so.

Any NATO expansion is fiercely opposed by Moscow. While Washington has sent arms to NATO allies since Moscow's war began, the U.S. rulers say they are not looking to expand the alliance.

Shinzo Abe, Japan's former prime minister, proposed March 1 that the government ask Washington to station nuclear arms in Japan, abandoning its decadeslong ban on such weapons. His call comes amid the Chinese naval expansion in the East.

Alarmed at Beijing's growing military might, the Australian imperialist rulers, Washington's main ally in the South Pacific, announced March 10 plans to boost the size of their armed forces by 30%, to nearly 80,000.

Courageous Ukrainian resistance

In the face of Moscow's invasion — which has yet to take any major Ukrainian city after three weeks of fighting — Ukrainian forces began a counteroffensive in the Kyiv region, as well as near Kharkiv and toward the southern port of Mykolayiv. As a result, "a convoy of occupation forces fled Mykolayiv region," said Vitaliy

Kim, head of the regional administration there. These reports are mostly ignored in the U.S. press, which largely paints Ukrainians as helpless victims.

Several thousand people rallied against the Russian occupation in the southern city of Kherson March 13. As Russian troops fired into the air, protesters shouted "Kherson is Ukraine!" They objected to Moscow's plan to declare a "Kherson People's Republic," along the lines of the statelets in Donetsk and Luhansk that it claims are part of Russia. The regional council of Kherson then voted to reject Moscow's plan.

In Melitopol, Russian forces abducted the mayor March 11 and then tried to install a pro-Moscow puppet replacement. The next day over 2,000 people demonstrated demanding his return.

To hide the scale of Russians killed in the war, the Kremlin has resorted to reporting figures only at a local, not a national level. And they have left thousands of bodies of dead combatants in

Ukraine, rather than risk the effects of large numbers of corpses being sent home. There is a disproportionate number of war dead from rural areas of Russia or from non-Russian peoples. Protests have erupted in the Russian Federation in the north Caucasus.

With the exception of Belarus, all other governments in the Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organization — Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan — say they are neutral over Putin's invasion. Even the rulers in Belarus have refused to provide troops to Moscow's war.

Naval personnel are being sent by rail from Russia's Far East to reinforce the invasion. Moscow has also been forced to turn to mercenaries from Serbia, Syria and Chechnya.

Russian opposition to Putin's war

Despite the heavy crackdown on demonstrations in Russia, anti-war protests were held across 37 cities there March 13. More than 850 people were arrested. The total number detained for opposing Putin's war is now nearly 15,000.

A woman shouting "Stop the war, no to war!" interrupted an on-air Russian TV news program on the state-controlled Channel 1 March 14. Marina Ovsyannikova, an editor there, held up a placard reading "Don't believe the propaganda, they are lying to you here." It was signed "Russians against war." On Putin's orders Russian TV news calls the war a "special military operation."

"We were silent in 2014 when this was just beginning," Ovsyannikova said afterwards, referring to Moscow's takeover of Crimea and backing of pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. Fined and released the next day, she may still face a charge over violation of Russia's new "false information" law, which carries a sentence of up to 15 years in prison.

Locked-out Ohio UAW workers

Continued from front page

Workers have been picketing both plant entrances 24 hours a day. The company makes aviation and aerospace products for commercial and military aircraft. The plant is 70 miles north of Cincinnati.

"We get a lot of support from people around here and it helps keep our spirits up," Brian Ponsler, who has worked at the plant for 25 years, told Samir Hazboun, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Ohio, and this worker-correspondent when we visited the picket lines March 11. Dozens of passing cars and trucks honked in solidarity.

"UAW's Local 14 president came from Toledo to bring his local's support. That meant a lot to us," added Jeff McDermit, a machinist with 10 years at the plant. "And, as you can smell, we get a lot of food and other donations," he said, laughing as he flipped meat cooking on the burn barrel. "We have been three weeks now without a paycheck. It hurts. But we have to let them know where we stand. Their contract offer was downright indecent!"

"They want to freeze pensions for those of us with years in the plant

and get rid of them entirely for new hires," said Ponsler. He and McDermit explained they're also opposed to the time it would take for new hires to reach the top pay rate.

"We have issues with their health care proposals too," added McDermit. "And this picket is a lot bigger than just this one contract. We know we're standing up for other workers, too. We're also standing up for the workers out there only making \$13, \$14 an hour. Walmart workers here — they don't have a union — but some of them have stopped by the line and dropped off bags of cookies."

"Solidarity is what we have as workers," Hazboun said. "And it's what working people need. I am sharing your fight with everyone I meet, including at the big protests I have been to against the murderous war that the Putin regime in Russia is carrying out against people in Ukraine."

"We're glad to meet you and to hear that you are telling people about what we face," said Ponsler. "We appreciate your solidarity."

Send messages of support to: <https://region2b.uaw.org/UAW-local-128>, or to UAW Local 128, 1230 S. Market St., P.O. Box 266, Troy, OH 45373.



AP/Serhii Nuzhnenko

Remains of Russian armored vehicles litter Bucha near Kyiv, Ukraine, March 1. Tenacious hit-and-run Ukrainian resistance has inflicted heavy losses on Moscow's columns of invading forces, stalling their advance and deepening loss of morale among Russian soldiers.

Lenin fought for self-determination of oppressed nations, Ukraine

As Ukrainian working people defend their country's sovereignty, arms in hand, against Moscow's invasion, this excerpt from Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings 1922-23 is a special feature explaining why communists support Ukrainian independence. The book describes how V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the world's first socialist revolution, led a political battle within the Bolshevik Party to continue the internationalist proletarian course that brought workers and peasants to power in October 1917. At stake was how former oppressed peoples of the

SPECIAL FEATURE

czarist "prison house of nations" could join the Soviet Union as equals. After Lenin's death, a rising bureaucracy within the state and party led by Joseph Stalin overturned Lenin's program in a bloody political counterrevolution. The excerpts are from material Lenin sent to the Political Bureau and to a party congress defending his communist position. Copyright © 1995 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY VLADIMIR LENIN
October 6, 1922

I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism. ... It must be *absolutely* insisted that the union Central Executive Committee should be *presided over* in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc.
Absolutely!
Yours,
Lenin



Working people in Odesa, Ukraine, greet Red Army after 1919 liberation from counterrevolutionary White Army, which attempted to reimpose rule of the landlord and capitalist classes.

December 30, 1922

It is said that a united apparatus was needed. Where did that assurance come from? Did it not come from that same Russian apparatus which, as I pointed out in one of the preceding sections of my diary, we took over from tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil? ...

[T]he apparatus we call ours is, in fact, still quite alien to us. It is a bourgeois and tsarist hodgepodge. There has been no possibility of getting rid of it in the course of the past five years, given the lack of help of other countries and given that we have been "busy" most of the time with military engagements and the fight against famine.

It is quite natural that in such circumstances the "freedom to secede from the union" by which we justify ourselves will be a mere scrap of paper, unable to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat is. There is no doubt that the infinitesimal percentage of Soviet and sovietized workers will drown in that tide of chauvinistic Great Russian riffraff like a fly in milk. ...

Were we careful enough to take measures to provide the non-Russians with a real safeguard against the truly Russian Derzhimorda? I do not think we took such measures, although we could and should have done so.

I think that Stalin's haste and his

infatuation with pure administration, together with his spite against the notorious "nationalist socialism," played a fatal role here. In politics spite generally plays the basest of roles. ...

Here we have an important question of principle: How is internationalism to be understood?

December 31, 1922

[A]n abstract presentation of the question of nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation.

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. It is sufficient to recall my Volga reminiscences of how non-Russians are treated; how the Poles are not called by any other name than Polyachishka, how the Tatar is nicknamed Prince, how the Ukrainians are always Khokhols and the Georgians and other Caucasian nationals always Kapkasians.

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or "great" nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as Derzhimordas), must consist not only

in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question; he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.

What is important for the proletarian? For the proletarian it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to ensure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the "dominant" nation subjected them in the past. ...

The Georgian [Stalin] who is disdainful of this aspect of the question, or who carelessly flings about accusations of "nationalist socialism" (whereas he himself is a real and true "nationalist socialist" and even a vulgar Great Russian Derzhimorda), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity, for nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice. "Offended" nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards the national minorities. That is why, in this case, the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity and consequently of the proletarian class struggle requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question, but always take into account the specific attitude of the proletarian of the oppressed (or small) nation towards the oppressor (or great) nation.

Lenin

* Derzhimorda, a policeman in the play *The Government Inspector* by Russian writer Nikolay Gogol, personifies the arrogant state functionary under the czar.

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Back Ukraine independence fight, not aims of US imperialist rulers

The Socialist Workers Party and the *Militant* stand for the unconditional defense of self-determination and independence for Ukraine. This is part of our communist continuity back to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. We fielded a series of reporting teams in 2014-15 to cover firsthand the working-class mobilizations in Maidan that brought down the pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovich, and the battles by workers, farmers, Crimean Tatars, Chernobyl victims and others to defend their interests from Moscow and the Ukrainian capitalist rulers alike.

We redouble our commitment to fight for this amid the murderous assaults of the regime of President Vladimir Putin, who is determined to crush Ukraine independence and rebuild a Great-Russian prison house of oppressed nations. The defeat of the Russian rulers' invasion is in the interests of the working class in Ukraine, Russia and worldwide.

But working people in Ukraine cannot look to Washington to protect their freedom. Washington — like its imperialist rivals in Europe and elsewhere — is interested first, foremost and always in how it can protect its domination over markets and profits.

The capitalist rulers here have a long record of military interventions worldwide. U.S. intervention is always carried out under the banner of protecting people from tyranny, to disguise the fangs of a conquering power bent on exploitation, as its unmistakable record shows.

The U.S. capitalist rulers clawed their way to the top of the imperialist pecking order through a series of wars and colonial interventions — from Puerto Rico and the Philippines in 1898 through its longest-war-ever in Afghanistan. This also included invading Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and the Balkans. Their central goal today is to fight to stay on top.

Washington imposed a no-fly zone on Iraq in the 1990s, carried out in the name of protecting Kurds from the brutal Saddam Hussein regime. But in fact, the U.S. rulers stood back and let Saddam massacre an uprising of Kurds after the 1991 Gulf War. They used their no-fly zone to severely weaken Iraqi air defenses, preparing the way for Washington's second Gulf War.

Washington's countless interventions in Latin America have trampled on the rights of nations there to self-determination. Under the pretext of saving lives, U.S. forces invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965 and crushed a monthslong popular upsurge against a coup backed by the U.S. that overthrew a popular government. In 1989 Washington bombarded and invaded Panama, toppling a sovereign government and imposing one more submissive to the U.S. rulers.

Not one cent and not one person for U.S. imperialist intervention anywhere should be the watchword of workers and our allies.

We should look to the determined resistance of fellow working people in Ukraine and the solidarity they are inspiring from people in Russia and worldwide. This is the bedrock of the class forces that can defeat Moscow and throw off its yoke. Their struggle today is an indication of our capacities to unite, win support, and our potential power. It heralds deeper resistance and new Maidans to come.

Nothing can stop the capitalist rulers from going to war. But the decaying capitalist world order and the brutal consequences of its wars prove why working people need to set out on the road charted by workers and farmers in Cuba in 1959. They forged a communist leadership in the course of fighting to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorial regime of Fulgencio Batista, took power into their own hands and made a socialist revolution.

Missouri law threatens women, family planning

Continued from front page

March 21 and will consider the bill.

The bill, if passed, would become the most restrictive reproductive rights law in the country, significantly expanding on the Texas law that went into effect last September. In Texas most abortions are banned after six weeks of pregnancy and anyone in the state can sue anyone they claim helped a woman get an abortion in Texas. It authorizes damages of \$10,000 or more. The only exceptions are in cases of life-threatening medical emergencies, but not rape or incest.

“These moves are an attack on the fight for women's emancipation, aimed at denying women the ability to decide when they will start or expand a family,” Naomi Craine, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Illinois governor, told the *Militant*. “Women and their families are fighting for jobs, protection from soaring prices, universal health care, decent affordable housing, access to family planning, including contraception, the right to adopt, and abortion.”

The U.S. Supreme Court voted 5-4 Dec. 10 not to block the Texas law. On March 11, the Texas Supreme Court voted unanimously to prevent challenges to the law. Twelve additional states are considering similar laws.

Only one clinic that can provide abortions is still open in Missouri, Planned Parenthood in St. Louis, which fought and beat back a state government attempt to shut it down in 2020. The organization has another family planning clinic in Fairview Heights, Illinois, 15 miles across from the Missouri state border. More than 10,000 women from Missouri have received abortion care there, while many more have taken advantage of other family planning services, including birth control, cancer screenings and HIV prevention.

“Our doors are open,” Bonyen Lee-Gillmore, of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri, told the media. “Abortion is

health care, and we will not back down from these intimidation tactics.”

Missouri is one of six states where opponents of women's rights have succeeded in closing family planning centers and leaving only one that offers abortions. The others are Kentucky, Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota and West Virginia. By 2017, there was not a single medical facility providing abortions in nearly 90% of U.S. counties.

The areas of the country where abortion procedures face the most restrictions — and women have less access to Medicaid funding — have higher maternal mortality rates.

In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision decriminalized abortion, creating a “right to privacy” for a woman and her doctor to carry out an abortion up to the point of “fetal viability,” roughly 24 weeks. The court's liberal majority had decided to act on its political views, shortcutting a far-reaching debate raging then over women's rights. They based their ruling on medical criteria of viability, not the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause in the Constitution. These factors opened the door to decades of court fights.

The Roe ruling has, in fact, been a blow to the fight for women's rights and for the working class. Middle-class women's groups, and others, reduced the discussion to the “abortion issue.” Unconnected to the broader questions of workers' ability to build a family and equal rights between women and men, this ensured that a relentless assault would result.

“Women's rights are a key part of the broader fight of the working class against the attacks of the capitalist rulers and their government,” Craine said. “Working people and our unions can lead and win millions to back the need for family planning services, including contraception, child care, fully funded maternity leave, adoption and safe and secure abortion. Reproductive rights are fundamental to winning full social, economic and political equality, to unite and strengthen the working class.”

Truckers protest

Continued from front page

On March 14 and 15 hundreds of truckers, along with their supporters, brought their protest part way into the District of Columbia here to draw attention to their demands. But they were prevented from getting to the center of the city by police barricades. When truckers tried to drive from Interstate 295 to 695 toward downtown, they found their route blocked by a dump truck and police. They were forced back on the interstate and after making a loop around the city on the beltway returned to Hagerstown.

Convoy organizer Brian Brase told the press that the cops' roadblocks are a violation of their First Amendment right to protest, and that their forced redirection of travel had caused traffic jams that inconvenienced regular people. “We're not going anywhere,” he said.

The government mandates, which interfered with many truckers' ability to work, were the last straw in an ongoing series of attacks imposed by Washington and trucking bosses that have threatened their livelihoods.

Since the federal government deregulated the trucking industry in 1980 under the Jimmy Carter administration, nonunion bosses have moved in and wreaked havoc on workers in an industry that had been largely organized by the Teamsters union. Cutthroat competition drove down wages, forcing drivers to greatly increase the time spent on the road trying to eke out a living. They're paid by the mile, so time spent idling at warehouses waiting to be loaded or unloaded yields no income. The changes in the industry led to 91% of truckers quitting their jobs in 2019.

Truckers also face outrageously rigorous surveillance every moment they're in the cab. They're monitored by a bevy of cameras and sensors. Many bosses have installed software programs to detect whether a driver keeps his eyes on the road. You can be fired for glancing at your phone.

“Trucking has been a keg of dynamite waiting to explode for 39 years,” Jerry Fritts, a retired long-haul trucker from Memphis, Tennessee, told the *New York Times*. “I'm surprised it took this long.”

Ignoring these onerous conditions that fueled the protest, the liberal media here, like in the case of the truckers' convoy in Canada last month, has smeared the protesters as reactionary, conspiracy-driven and dangerous people.

‘We'll keep coming back’

Truckers demand relief from low freight rates brokers impose to boost their profits, government regulations and red tape, and soaring diesel prices, which accelerate the debt crisis facing many truckers. “We are being starved to death,” owner-operator Harry Menkhoff, part of a convoy from Salina, Kansas, told the *Militant* by phone. “If fuel stays up and the brokers keep dropping our rates, we will be hauling freight for free.” Menkhoff said it costs him at least \$1,500 to fuel his rig. “At the truck stop I'm at, it's \$5.89 a gallon.”

Diesel prices have increased for 10 weeks in a row, jumping 74.5 cents last week alone. “Going green is hurting working people,” said Menkhoff, referring to U.S. government energy policies. President Joseph Biden says that to address the “existential” threat of climate change his administration is cutting new oil and gas drilling.

“Our convoy has been stopping at truck stops on our way home, setting up information tables, handing out food that was donated to our convoy, talking to everyone who stops to listen,” said Chelly Bartow Menkhoff, a leader of United States Dedicated Drivers. “It's not just truckers. There's a war against working people. The government tries to keep us divided.” She renewed her subscription to the *Militant*, which had run out, saying, “I need to have it back.”

“I liked being part of a movement,” Jason Jackson, a car delivery driver from Evergreen, Colorado, told this worker-correspondent. “A lot of people are on the same sheet of music, and we don't even know it.”

Jackson, out of work for almost two years as a result of the impact of the semiconductor chip shortage in the auto industry, joined the Kansas convoy and was part of the truck stop tabling effort. “Truckers are meeting each other, talking about what we face. We are learning how to defend our rights. We will keep coming back to Washington until we find a solution.”