

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Ohio forum: 'Workers who are blind are fighters, not victims'
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 13 APRIL 4, 2022

'Militant' takes fight to defend Ukraine out to working people

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Explaining the stakes for working people in opposing Moscow's war against Ukraine is at the center of discussions that members of the Socialist Workers Party are having with working people on their doorsteps, at factory gates, truck stops, on picket lines and at protests in solidarity with Ukraine.

As part of the international campaign to win 1,600 readers to the *Militant*, sell 1,600 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries (see ad on page 6) and to raise \$165,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund by May 17, they are distributing thousands of copies of the March 3 statement by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, headlined: Defend Ukraine's independence! For defeat of Moscow's invasion! US troops, nuclear arms out of Europe, all of Europe!

The *Militant* is the only newspaper where you can gain an understanding of the class forces involved in the war and
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Farmers fight to defend their land in face of soaring prices

BY SUSAN LAMONT

PAVO, Ga. — "The war in Ukraine and rising prices are the No. 1 topics of discussion among farmers in this area, Black and white," said Willie Head, a longtime farmer in South Georgia. He was speaking with Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Georgia governor, and this *Militant* worker-correspondent during a March 14 visit to his farm. He was reading through the Socialist Workers Party statement, "Defend Ukraine's independence! For defeat of Moscow's invasion! U.S. troops, nuclear arms out of Europe, all of Europe!"

"I certainly agree with the demand to defend Ukrainians' right to have their own country," he said. "And I'm for the defeat of Moscow's invasion for sure."

Head was among the farmers who organized meetings, rallies and protests across the South and in Washington, D.C., at the end of the 1990s
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Defeat Moscow's war on Ukraine! Defend Ukraine independence! US troops, nuclear arsenal out of Europe!



Ukrainian South

March 21 protest in Kherson, Ukraine, against Moscow's occupation. Russian troops fired tear gas, stun grenades at them, but rally continued. Sign opposes incorporation into Russia.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Moscow's invasion has largely stalled as it faces determined resistance from Ukrainian troops and civilians, including in towns in the south that Russian forces occupy. The one city on the edge of being taken is Mariupol, surrounded and facing relentless bombardment from air, land and sea.

In response to the biggest land war in Europe since World War II, Washington is reinforcing its military forces there and European imperialist powers are rearming and rebuilding theirs, sounding the drumbeat of more deadly wars to come.

NY conference: End Washington's economic war on Cuba's revolution!

BY JANET POST

NEW YORK — "The U.S. government seeks through all its means to suffocate the Cuban economy," said Pedro Luis Pedroso, Cuba's permanent representative to the United Nations. "But in spite of the U.S. blockade and aggressions, the Cuban people will continue to resist," he said, as they have for six decades in face of Washington's efforts to destroy their socialist revolution.

Pedroso was speaking to participants in the March 19-20 International U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference. The event was sponsored by the National Network on Cuba, the Canadian Network on Cuba, and other groups that
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Despite mounting civilian casualties from Moscow's artillery, bombs and missiles, and over 10 million displaced, the Ukrainian people refuse to give up.

On March 19 Belarusian railway
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Truckers' protest continues in DC, challenges gov't, bosses' attacks

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

HAGERSTOWN, Md. — Now in its second week, the trucker-led People's Convoy continues to press demands for an end to U.S. government COVID-19 mandates and other attacks on their livelihoods. The convoy is an opportunity for truckers to protest boss and government attacks, organize to win support
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Join United Mine Workers April 6 rally to back Warrior Met strikers!



UMWA Journal

Miners picket Warrior Met Coal in Brookwood, Alabama, June 15, 2021. Rally April 6 marks one year on strike in fight to reverse deep concessions imposed on miners in 2015 bankruptcy.

BY SUSAN LAMONT

ATLANTA — "We're getting support from unions all over the country for the April 6 rally" to back United Mine Workers of America members who've been on strike for a year in Brookwood, Alabama, UMWA Director of Communications Erin Bates told the *Militant* by phone March 21.

Some 1,100 miners have been on strike at Warrior Met Coal since April 1, 2021, fighting to win back concessions forced on them in 2016.
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"Our message is, 'We're not backing down!'" Bates said.

The UMWA and other unions are organizing buses to bring members, retirees and other supporters to show solidarity. "This is going to be an all-day event. There will be music, entertainment, activities for kids, and speakers from many different unions, including UMWA President Cecil Roberts," she added. It will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Tannehill
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Steelworkers strike Chevron refinery in California

Minneapolis teachers and support staff continue strike

Ohio forum: 'Workers who are blind are fighters, not victims'

BY NED MEASEL

CINCINNATI — Gloria Robinson, president of the Cincinnati chapter of the National Federation of the Blind; Dave Perry, a machine operator at the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired factory and Teamsters Local 100 shop steward there, as well as a board member of the NFB chapter; and Maggie Trowe, speaking for the Socialist Workers Party, addressed a Militant Labor Forum here March 20 on challenges facing workers who are blind.

Those who are blind face numerous challenges in employment, housing and daily life, Robinson said. Some 70% of blind people of working age are unemployed. Blind parents can even face fights to maintain custody of their children. Robinson, who is African American, has been blind since birth and has been working since she was 14.

"The NFB fights for the independence and rights of the blind and visually impaired," she said. "Our position is that being blind doesn't define a person. But it is a struggle, especially if you don't know your rights."

Robinson explained there are two "nonprofit" factories that employ blind workers in Cincinnati — Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Cloverbrook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

"Without support you can want to give up. We're fighting against division and different rules for blind people," Robinson said. "That's why working with Dave and his union is important."

Perry, a member of the Teamster union negotiating committee, described

their fight for a new contract where he works. "The capitalists try to keep us divided and keep everybody upset with each other. We're proud of standing together to get a better contract," he said. Thirty-eight of the 50 workers voted to reject the bosses' proposal for higher health insurance premiums. The union demands the company provide Teamster insurance at no higher premiums. The workers also demand union business agents be permitted to enter the plant without company permission or escort. "I have other workers call me at night so we can talk without management invading our space," Perry said.

"Last year after a COVID shutdown, the company cut our wages. If they did it then, they'll do it again," he said. The company now charges the contract vote was fraudulent, and demands a recount.

'Fight about dignity and respect'

"The fight is really about dignity and respect," Perry said. "This is where the SWP is so important, explaining that the capitalists do not care about workers. It's a fact. We have to fight for what we need till the day when the working class takes power out of the hands of the ruling class."

"Gloria and Dave are fighters, not victims," Trowe began, "and the Socialist Workers Party is honored to join with them in struggles. Their fight is in the interest of all workers, not just those who are blind. We're for every single human being able to work and be part of society. The SWP campaign emphasizes the worth and dignity of the working class and the fact that only



Militant Labor Forum in Cincinnati March 20 featured Dave Perry, Teamsters Local 100 shop steward and board member of the National Federation of the Blind, speaking; Gloria Robinson, right, president NFB Cincinnati chapter; and Maggie Trowe, far left, Socialist Workers Party.

our class can resolve the crisis of the dog-eat-dog capitalist system."

Trowe pointed to the examples of the 1917 Russian Revolution while Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were in power and of the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro that triumphed in 1959 and has been an example for working people ever since. "These working-class revolutions began with a different morality from that of the capitalist exploiters, one based on human solidarity."

The Russian Revolution led by Lenin championed the rights of oppressed nationalities, led a campaign for literacy and electrification, and sent a culture train across the new Soviet Union to show movies in every town and village, Trowe said. The Cuban revolutionary leadership mobilized the toilers to carry out a sweeping land reform and a mass literacy campaign to lay the basis for everyone to participate in the revolution.

"Revolutionaries value every human life and celebrate the diversity of humanity. We oppose social engineering and eugenics," said Trowe.

Despite over 60 years of economic strangulation by Washington, special efforts are being made in Cuba to provide and repair hearing aids for those who need them, she said. There are theaters that present films with commentary, to help blind and visually impaired people and their sighted friends alike understand the action the dialog alone doesn't explain. Culture is for everyone."

Perry explained that in 2016 as the CABVI Blind Employee of the Year, he went with a National Industries for the Blind delegation to talk with the staff of Ohio Sen. Rob Portman. It became clear to Perry the NIB representatives favored a government subminimum wage for blind workers, claiming bosses will be more likely to hire them if they can pay them less than the minimum wage. "I told them the subminimum wage is an insult," Perry said. "I wasn't sure I would have a job at CABVI afterwards, but I wasn't going to stand by and not speak up."

Trowe pointed out that the administrators of the "nonprofit" organizations that run factories ostensibly to "help" the blind, like all bosses, have class interests that collide with those of the workers. Factories run by these outfits operate and compete in the capitalist economy and exploit blind workers' labor power.

"In the long run, the only solution is to end the dictatorship of capital and form a workers and farmers government," she said.

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and theory, 1934-present
Intercontinental Press
International news magazine
1963-86
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THE MILITANT

Oppose attack on political rights in Florida!

Workers, including many homeless, are being arrested in Palm Beach County, Florida, for "soliciting" or "panhandling" on or near roads. The 'Militant' opposes the new law there restricting political rights and free speech that are crucial for all working people.



Flickr
Worker near road in Palm Beach County, Florida, where officials outlawed "soliciting."

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Defend Ukraine independence

Continued from front page

the road to defend the interests of working people. It explains the need to give unconditional support to the Ukrainian people's right to self-determination. And why working people should oppose Washington's sanctions on Russia that fall hardest on workers and farmers there. They are an obstacle to breaking through Moscow's slanders against Ukraine and winning support for Russian toilers.

Sanctions foster the illusion that the imperialist powers can do some good for humanity when in fact they are jacking up military spending to prepare for future wars and sending troops to the region to defend their own capitalist interests at the expense of rivals and all working people.

At the same time, workers' resistance to rising prices, speedup on the job and more is sparking interest in what is happening in Ukraine and in the program to unite workers in struggle put forward by the SWP.

Arlene Rubinstein, SWP candidate for Washington, D.C., delegate to the House of Representatives, and party member Arrin Hawkins joined discussions at trucker-led protests in Hagerstown, Maryland, March 16. Truckers are protesting COVID mandates and also highlighting the worsening conditions they face under the impact of today's capitalist crisis.

"For everyday citizens, city people, to go out and fight is courage like no other," Aaron Simmons, a trucker from Oskaloosa, Iowa, told them, pointing to the resistance to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. "It's ordinary people making a stand. If I were a Russian soldier that would be intimidating for me."

"Working people in Ukraine are defending their independence and transforming themselves and their fighting

capacity. They are inspiring solidarity around the world, including in Russia," Rubinstein said. That, not a no-fly zone or sanctions, is the road to unite workers in both countries to fight against Moscow's war.

Trucker Wes Short from Jefferson, Ohio, who hauls steel, raised a different point of view. He said, "This is about NATO. Putin's problem is NATO."

"Putin seeks to reconquer Ukraine for domination by Russian capitalism. The Socialist Workers Party demands U.S. troops and nuclear weapons out of Europe," Rubinstein said. Putin's actual "problem" is trying to subjugate Ukraine, and he's leveling cities and massacring working people to try to do that.

Simmons got a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *Teamster Rebellion*, the first of four volumes by Farrell Dobbs that recount the successful strikes and organizing drives that brought tens of thousands of over-the-road drivers into the union in the 1930s. Short picked up two single copies and gave a \$6 contribution.

'Fewer workers doing more work'

"In the last six months I've spent two nights at my house. It's hell, but I have to make a living," Mark Rice, a former coal miner who now drives a big rig, told SWP member Candace Wagner at the Bentleyville, Pennsylvania, truck stop March 16.

"This is one of the big issues we face on the railroad as well," said Wagner, a freight rail conductor. "Bosses at every workplace want fewer workers doing more work. Having time with our families is irrelevant to them."

"If we all could get together and stop working for three days, or even one day," said Rice, "we'd have them in the palm of our hands."

"United action of the working class is powerful," said Wagner. "We also have to deal with the fact the bosses have two political parties and a government that works in their interests. Their whole system guarantees making maximum profits off our work."

Wagner said working people need to form our own political party, a labor party based on the unions "to mobilize the kind of solidarity you're speaking of. If humanity is going to have a future, the working class, together with small farmers, needs to take power."

"That's what we need!" said Rice. He subscribed to the *Militant*, bought *Teamster Rebellion* and donated \$5 for the Militant Fighting Fund. "Anything I can do to help you guys, let me know," he said.

The socialist news-weekly relies entirely on fund contributions from its readers and fellow working people. Every contribution large or small helps get the paper around.

"It's easy for me to identify with the struggle to defend Ukraine independence," nurse Magdalena



Militant/Arrin Hawkins

Arlene Rubinstein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Washington, D.C., Delegate to the House, speaks with Wes Short, left, at trucker-led protest in Hagerstown, Maryland, March 16.

Maj told Communist League campaigners Catharina Tirsén and Antonis Paratas when they knocked on her door in London's Bethnal Green March 19. "I'm from Poland and I'm concerned about what Russian President Vladimir Putin has in store for the country of my birth."

Tirsén pointed to the rich struggles by working people in Ukraine and Poland, noting that she'd brought solidarity to the Maidan, the popular uprising that overthrew the pro-Moscow government of Viktor Yanukovich in Ukraine in 2014, and visited shipyard workers in Gdansk, Poland, after their strike in 1980.

"It will be working people who can be counted upon to defend sovereignty," she said. Maj bought a subscription to

the *Militant*, a copy of *The Jewish Question* and made a \$10 contribution to the Militant Fighting Fund.

"Putin is like Marcos was when I lived in the Philippines," Tessie Villafior told CL member Hugh Robertson when he showed her the *Militant* at her doorstep. "These wars and attacks on our rights allow the rich to get richer at the expense of working people." She subscribed to the *Militant*.

Help expand the reach of the *Militant*. Contact the SWP nearest you, listed on page 8. To contribute to the Militant Fighting Fund, make out checks to the *Militant* and send to 306 W. 37th St. 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, or donate online at www.themilitant.com.

Canadian Pacific rail workers fight over safety and 'human schedules'

BY FÉLIX VINCENT ARDEA

MONTREAL — A major cross-country lockout and strike battle broke out March 20 involving 3,000 Canadian Pacific Railway engineers, conductors and yard workers, members of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference union. Two days later the parties agreed to submit their contract to binding arbitration. The workers are fighting over wages, benefits, pensions and safe "human" work schedules.

Canadian Pacific is the second-largest railroad in Canada, next to Canadian National. With a market capitalization of \$74.34 billion, it moves grain; fertilizer and potash; lumber; oil, coal, ethanol and other energy-producing resources; cars and other products, key parts of the Canadian capitalist rulers' economy.

The workers are determined to make overdue gains on pensions and work schedules. The union is asking that the cap on workers' pensions be raised by 5%, still less than what has been stolen from retired workers by rising prices since the last cap increase 10 years ago. And for the same pension plan for recent hires as for union members hired before 2013. These issues were behind the workers' 96.7% vote to strike.

In their unceasing drive to boost profits for CP shareholders, the bosses have turned their backs on the question of worker fatigue. What's at issue is no less than the safety of workers and all those who live by Canadian Pacific tracks.

Now the company wants to force workers to take their federally mandated

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

March 12-May 17 (week one)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	90	9	90	25	\$8,500	\$0
Atlanta	90	17	90	18	\$11,500	\$425
Chicago	125	44	125	13	\$14,000	\$0
Cincinnati	90	24	90	18	\$5,500	\$1,505
Dallas-Ft. Worth	65	21	65	18	\$4,500	\$100
Lincoln	15	4	15	6	\$400	\$0
Los Angeles	100	25	120	11	\$14,500	\$0
Miami	35	4	35	13	\$5,000	\$350
Minneapolis	70	13	70	19	\$5,500	\$686
N. New Jersey	90	30	90	28	\$7,250	\$1,201
New York	125	33	125	43	\$17,500	\$1,650
Oakland	100	37	100	21	\$14,000	\$1,215
Philadelphia	40	2	40	9	\$4,250	\$990
Pittsburgh	50	6	50	6	\$5,000	\$550
Seattle	70	8	70	13	\$13,000	\$0
Washington	65	13	65		\$5,000	\$40
Other						\$0
Total U.S.	1220	290	1240	261	\$135,400	\$8,712
Prisoners	45	13				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	50	22	50	22	\$4,000	\$400
Manchester	45	17	45	9	\$2,000	
Total U.K.	95	39	95	31	\$6,000	\$400
Canada	110	24	110	21	\$17,500	\$1,476
New Zealand	35	9	35	4	\$4,000	\$1,140
Australia	35	8	35	5	\$2,500	
Total	1,540	383	1,515	322	\$165,400	\$11,728
SHOULD BE	1,600	176	1,600	176	\$165,000	\$18,150

Socialist Workers Party 2022 candidates

California
Eleanor García, US Senate
Joel Britton, Governor

Florida
Rachele Fruit, Governor

Georgia
Lisa Potash, US Senate
Sam Manuel, Governor

Illinois
John Hawkins, US Senate
Naomi Craine, Governor

Minnesota
Gabrielle Prosser, Governor
Kevin Dwire, Lt. Governor
David Rosenfeld, US Congress

Nebraska
Joe Swanson, US Congress

New Jersey
Joanne Kuniansky, US Congress
Lea Sherman, US Congress

New York
Sara Lobman, US Senate
Ved Dookhun, Governor

Ohio
Samir Hazboun, US Senate

Texas
Alyson Kennedy, Governor
Gerardo Sánchez, US Congress

Washington, DC
James Harris, Mayor
Arlene Rubinstein, Delegate to House

Washington state
Henry Dennison, US Senate

Farmers fight for their land

Continued from front page

and into the 2000s to fight decades-long discriminatory practices against Black farmers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“The farmer knows what’s coming when oil prices go up,” he explained when we asked about the impact of Moscow’s war against Ukraine and rising inflation. “That means the prices of fuel, fertilizer, seed and everything else will go up. I just had to pay \$435 for a hundred gallons of fuel. Last year it would have cost me half that. The fertilizer I use is \$900 a ton this year — twice what it was in 2021. That’s what all of us are facing.”

Some types of fertilizer are up even higher. Anhydrous ammonia fertilizer is up more than 200% over last year. “American farmers are paying significantly higher prices for their weed-killing chemicals, crop seeds, fertilizer, equipment repairs and seasonal labor,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported Feb. 15.

Head farms corn, soybeans, greens and other vegetables on his 140-acre farm in Brooks County here. He also has a small herd of cows and a few hogs.

“SWP members are discussing the party’s statement at demonstrations called by Ukrainians and others to protest the war,” said Manuel. “We’re talking with drivers at truck stops, workers on strike picket lines and on workers’ doorsteps, and with co-workers on the job. We also want to reach out to working farmers and discuss the statement with them.”

Head said he did have questions about the party’s third demand. “I do think the U.S. should do more to help the Ukrainian government, to close their air space to the Russian planes,” he said. “You can see that Putin doesn’t have the support of the Russian people in this war, that their military is starting to sputter.”

For a workers, farmers foreign policy

“Despite what the U.S. government says, their only interest in Ukraine is to strengthen their power and position as the main ‘European’ power, which they became coming out of World War II,” Manuel said. “They have already extended their military reach close to Russia’s borders. Workers here and worldwide need our own foreign policy, independent of the capitalists, to defend Ukraine’s sovereignty and the toilers’ interests worldwide. It’s a trap for us to support the U.S. capitalist rulers.”

“Farmers here are waiting now to see if the banks will approve our requests for loans this spring,” Head said. In January and February farm-

ers talked to local banks and officers of the Farm Service Agency about loans. The FSA, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, administers USDA loans and other programs on a local level.

Crisis facing farmers

“Because of these higher costs,” he said, “there will be some farmers who are denied loans and won’t be able to plant this year. And those who do plant aren’t sure if they’ll get enough for their crops at the end of the season to cover their costs and pay back their loans.”

“Farmers hope the government will provide some kind of subsidy to make up the difference, or at least help, because of the war and sharp rise in inflation,” Head said. “But there’s no guarantee that will happen. The suppliers who sell the farmer fertilizer, fuel and seeds know what they’ll get for their products, but the farmer never knows.”

“Higher prices for everything farmers use also mean that working people will be paying more for food,” Head added. “That’s already happening, and they’ll blame the farmers for that, just like they will blame the truckers, who have to pay much more for fuel now, for the higher costs of everything that’s shipped by truck.”

“I have a cousin in Charlotte, North Carolina, who drives a light-rail train there. He comes from down here. I was talking to him the other day and he asked me, ‘How are we going to feed ourselves if things keep going like this? What are we going to do in the cities?’”

Farmers all over the country are facing similar conditions to those in South Georgia. For example, net income for farmers in Kansas is estimated to fall 65% from a year ago, a Kansas State University study reports.

“That’s why I and the other SWP candidates around the country explain that workers and our unions need to forge an independent working-class movement to back small farmers in fighting for immediate government aid to fully cover farmers’ costs of

Teachers fight attack on pensions in Puerto Rico



Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Buoyed by winning a big pay increase, thousands of teachers marched to the governor’s mansion in this capital of the U.S. colony March 15 to protest pension cuts. The new minimum wage for teachers will be \$2,750 a month — a \$1,000 increase.

“This should be an example for us to keep on insisting and persisting, shoulder to shoulder. We are stronger together,” Mercedes Martínez, president of the Federation of Teachers of Puerto Rico, told demonstrators, vowing they “won’t rest” until they win back their pensions.

The attack on pensions is at the center of an “adjustment plan” imposed by the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico. This bipartisan board was appointed by the Barack Obama administration in Washington in 2016 to take over the island’s budget after the colonial government said it was bankrupt and stopped paying bondholders. At the time, the debt stood at some \$70 billion in “public” bonds: \$55 billion owed to public workers’ pension funds and another \$15 billion owed by the public electric utility and highway department.

The board claims its plan cuts the debt by 80%, but this is a slight of hand. A \$33 billion block of the debt was cut to \$7 billion plus \$8.3 billion paid immediately to bondholders.

How is this “miracle” achieved? On the back of teachers and other public workers. Their retirement age has been raised to 63, from 55. And instead of the \$55 billion owed, their retirement fund will get a measly \$1.4 billion this year.

Future retirees will no longer get a guaranteed “defined benefits” pension. Instead, they will be eligible for what Martínez calls a “hybrid” — a combination of a 401(k)-type account and Social Security.

— MINDY BRUDNO

production, including living expenses for themselves and their families,” Manuel said.

“We’re demanding no foreclosures and that the land needs to be nationalized to guarantee its use by those who live on it and farm,” he said. “The Cu-

ban Revolution is a living example of what an alliance between workers and farmers means, that we defend each other and support each other.”

“I’ve been to Cuba and I was impressed with what they have done,” Head said.

Union protests challenge sacking of 800 UK ferry workers

BY JULIE CRAWFORD

DOVER, England — Hundreds of seafarers and workers from other unions joined protests here and in other ports across the country denouncing the summary dismissal of 800 workers by P&O Ferries shipping company.

In a planned union-busting assault, P&O vessels were ordered back to U.K. docks, where crews were called to a three-minute Zoom meeting March 17. Workers were told their employment was terminated on the spot, and they were being replaced. CEO Peter Hebblethwaite told the press the company will pay new crews 50% less.

Workers in several ports occupied P&O vessels, where they were set upon by company-hired goons who forced them off the ferries.

Protests called by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union (RMT) took place here, in Liverpool and Hull, and in Larne, Northern Ireland. Nautilus International, a Trades Union Congress

affiliate that organizes maritime professionals and officers, took part.

Four Unite union members at CHEP Pallets in Manchester, who’ve been on strike for several months, joined the Liverpool protest. CHEP striker Garry Walker said he was there “because we’ve had a lot of support. You have to share it.”

“They were sacked and treated like animals,” said Conor Price, a train conductor and one of seven RMT members who joined the Liverpool protest from Manchester Piccadilly station.

Seven striking scaffolders at the British Steel plant in Scunthorpe joined the demonstration in Hull. “We wanted to tell the P&O workers they’re not alone — just as we’ve not been!” scaffolder Kyle Jones told the *Militant* by phone.

P&O bosses say they’ve started to train new crews contracted from International Ferry Management.

Rather than take steps to try to organize them into the union, RMT of-

officials have urged the government to prevent P&O ships from sailing.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps condemned the sackings and said the government will “review” its contracts with the company. He denounced P&O for sailing vessels “without having British workers.” The RMT echoes this chauvinist line, issuing calls to “Save British ferries,” and attacked P&O’s parent company, DP World, because it is Dubai-based.

“This is a repeat of the union’s stance in 2005 when officials blamed Latvian and Lithuanian workers when Irish Ferries dragged workers off the vessels operating between North Wales and Dublin,” said Communist League member Pete Clifford, who was among the Manchester rail workers to join the Liverpool protest. “We shouldn’t be looking to the government but to working people and fellow trade unionists, including fellow workers born abroad. What P&O has done is an attack on all workers and trade unionists.”

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Solidarity
Caravans**

Sun., March. 27

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Steelworkers strike Chevron refinery in California

RICHMOND, Calif. — More than 500 workers, members of United Steelworkers Local 5, went on strike March 21 at the Chevron refinery here in a fight over work schedules, safety and wages.

Workers on the picket line that day told this *Militant* worker-correspondent they are fed up with being pushed to work long hours of overtime, including being on call to come in on some days off. They want more time with their families and for Chevron to hire additional workers.

“If we had more people and could get a better pay rate, maybe our members wouldn’t feel obligated to come in and work as many as 70 hours a week to make ends meet,” union representative B.K. White told the press. “We don’t believe that is safe.”

The USW reached a national pattern agreement with the oil industry Feb. 25 that included wage increases of from 2.5% to 3.5% a year. Workers at the Richmond refinery are among the 200 bargaining units that are now negotiating over local issues. Given the high cost of living in the Bay Area, the rising cost of workers’ medical plans and ravaging inflation, they’re asking for a larger wage increase.

“What we are demanding is far below today’s inflation,” said striker Michael Perry, a rigger who operates cranes at the refinery. He said the cost of his commute to work is now \$130 a week, double what he paid a year ago.

The company refused to budge on its “last, best and final” offer and wouldn’t come back to the bargaining table after workers voted it down. In a further insulting move, they bused workers out of the plant hours before the strike was to begin, stationing a fleet of cop cars to meet them near the employee parking lot.

The last strike at the refinery, which produces 13% to 14% of the state’s refining capacity, was in 1980.

Joel Britton, a former process operator at Chevron’s El Segundo refinery and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of California, joined

the picket line. “We need to build the broadest solidarity with this strike,” Britton told workers. “Strengthening our unions is what’s needed. Organizing independently, not relying on Democratic or Republican politicians.”

Britton said that as more workers join fights for safe working conditions — including sustainable schedules — and wages that keep up with rising prices, “our class consciousness will grow and a basis will be laid for building our own party, a labor party.”

— *Betsy Stone*

Minneapolis teachers and support staff continue strike

MINNEAPOLIS — Striking teachers and educational support staff have been picketing schools every morning and holding rallies several times a week since walking out March 8. Some 4,500 members of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59 are fighting for an increase in starting pay for support workers, wage hikes for teachers, for hiring more mental health workers and more teachers to reduce class sizes.

Hundreds rallied at City Hall in downtown Minneapolis March 16 and outside the governor’s mansion in St. Paul March 18. “A big issue for me is the need for smaller class sizes,”



Militant/Betsy Stone

Striking members of United Steelworkers Local 5 picket the Chevron refinery in Richmond, California, March 21. They are in a fight over forced overtime, wages and safety conditions.

Steve Gehrenbeck-Miller, a Spanish teacher at Southern High School, told the *Militant* in St. Paul. “My classes average 40 students.”

“Teachers and staff shouldn’t have to work two jobs to make a living,” said his daughter, Julia, a recent high school graduate.

Katie Pearson teaches 4th and 5th grade at Sullivan STEAM School in Minneapolis. “The big thing for me is mental health,” she told Gabrielle

Prosser, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Minnesota governor, at the City Hall action. “There is one mental health worker in a school of a thousand.”

“The strike resonates with thousands of workers throughout the state,” Prosser said. “It is an inspiration to all of us as bosses’ attacks on the job conditions continue. Despite the real hardship the strike has on working families, the overwhelming majority support your fight.”

— *Edwin Fruit*

Join UMW April 6 rally to back Warrior Met miners!

Continued from front page

State Park in McCalla, Alabama.

This hard-fought union battle is the first UMW strike in Brookwood in decades and is now one of the longest strikes in Alabama history. Contributions to the union’s strike fund from many unions and individuals have totaled hundreds of thousands of dollars and made it possible to pay benefits to the miners. A well-organized auxiliary started by miners’ wives continues to get contributions and provide food, diapers, cleaning supplies and other necessities to their families.

Warrior Met is a top U.S. producer of metallurgical coal used in steel production worldwide. It was created

following the 2015 bankruptcy of Jim Walter Resources and its parent company, Walter Energy.

With the aid of a bankruptcy court, BlackRock and other billionaire creditors set up Warrior Met Coal and took over mine operations. Union miners had to accept major concessions, the company said, or it would close down. Coal bosses went after wages and working conditions that UMW members had fought for and won over decades, with the company promising to reverse these cuts when it returned to profitability.

Under the five-year contract in 2016, the company forced greater use of outside contractors, wage cuts

of more than 20%, loss of sick days and holidays, higher costs for health care, replacement of the defined-benefit pension plan with a 401(k) plan, no overtime pay until after 40 hours work, widening wage gaps between job classifications, loss of paid lunches, forced Sunday work, attempts to shortcut safety to speed up production and other attacks.

Since then, Warrior Met has become extremely profitable. The company is paying shareholders \$852 million in dividends, a special cash dividend of \$190 million and paying CEO Walter Scheller over \$17 million.

The union was forced to stop picketing Oct. 27, after the company got a restraining order from Tuscaloosa County Circuit Court Judge James Roberts banning all picketing and union activity within 300 yards of the mine entrances. After extending the order several times, the union was able to resume picket lines in February, limited, however, to just a few pickets.

“The strikers need this show of support to get through this strike,” said Shirley Hyche, who retired from the No. 7 mine in 2008, after working underground for 27 years.

Spread the word about the miners’ fight! Join the rally! Send donations to UMW 2021 Strike Fund at P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026. Send messages of support to UMW District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216 (Miners’ Memorial Parkway), McCalla, AL 35111. Phone (205) 477-7500.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 7, 1997

President William Clinton reaffirmed Washington’s plans to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into eastern and central Europe at his March 20-21 conference with Russian president Boris Yeltsin in Helsinki, Finland.

“I have reaffirmed that NATO enlargement and the Madrid summit will proceed,” Clinton declared at a news conference. He said the meeting addressed the challenge of helping Russia “complete its remarkable transformation to a market economy.”

The NATO conference in Madrid is scheduled for July 7-9, where a formal announcement for new candidates for membership is expected to include the governments of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Plans will be discussed to accept them into the imperialist military alliance by 1999 — the organization’s 50th anniversary. Other nations could join by the end of the decade.



April 7, 1972

March 25 — Despite an almost total press blackout, nearly 50,000 people converged on Washington, D. C., today for the Children’s March for Survival. The march was called to protest escalating government attacks on the nation’s poor, particularly their effects on children. The overwhelming majority of the demonstrators were Black, making this the largest outpouring of Black people in the nation’s capital since the Poor People’s Campaign in 1968.

Among the key demands was the defeat of HR 1, [President] Nixon’s Family Assistance Plan, now pending in the Senate. Recently adopted by the House, the bill would lower the already less than subsistence level of payments for nine out of 10 welfare recipients, providing only a minimum income of \$2,400 a year for a family of four. Marchers demanded community-controlled child care for all children.



April 5, 1947

APRIL 1 — The nation’s soft coal mines shut down today as 400,000 members of the United Mine Workers began six days of mourning for 111 comrades murdered in the Centralia mine explosion. The memorial for the 111 and the protest against the criminal negligence of government officials was called by UMW President John L. Lewis.

“We who are privileged to speak for our dead, and for the future safety of our people, challenge this criminal attitude,” said Lewis. “This killing must stop. This debauched administration of mine safety must stop.”

Centralia is sick with sorrow for men needlessly murdered. Murdered by greedy operators. Murdered by corrupt state officials. Murdered by federal authorities, so blinded by their hate of organized labor that they could not find the time nor the interest to enforce the most elementary safety laws.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the ‘Militant’ and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com

End US economic war on Cuba

Continued from front page

campaign for the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Cuba. Some 150 took part in the conference, held here at the People's Forum.

The high point of the gathering was the participation of a delegation from the Federation of Cuban Women (FCM) as well as from Cuba's Mission to the United Nations. The FCM delegation was headed by its general secretary, Teresa Amarelle Boué, who is also a member of Cuba's Council of State. Earlier in the week they addressed the 66th annual session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The FCM was forged out of the Cuban Revolution, in which millions of working people, led by Fidel Castro and the Rebel Army, overturned a U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959 and began to transform society and themselves. Wielding state power, they have confronted and broken down obstacles to women's participation in all aspects of social and political life.

Amarelle, who was joined by three other FCM leaders, was the featured speaker at a panel on "Cuban Women on the Frontline: Advancing Women's Human Rights and Cuba's Families Code." She described discussions the FCM is helping lead to take on the challenges the Cuban people, including women, face today.

One of the most popular steps being launched today, Amarelle told conference participants, is the extension of child care centers into workplaces.

The FCM leader also described the nationwide discussion currently underway on a proposed "Families Code." The original Family Code, adopted in 1975, affirmed women's rights in the workplace and replaced prerevolutionary laws on marriage, divorce, adoption and alimony. The new proposal seeks to take into account the social advances since then and the challenges in Cuban society today.

Over a three-month period concluding April 30, some 78,000 neighborhood meetings are being organized throughout the island where people are discussing the draft Families Code and

submitting proposals for changes. After approval by Cuba's legislature, the National Assembly of People's Power, the new code will be submitted to a popular referendum. "What we're bringing into the law," Amarelle said, aims to address "what exists today in everyday life."

She said the range of questions being debated includes the expansion of maternity and paternity rights, responsibility for the care of children and older adults, including increased protection for "those most vulnerable in society." The Family Code "respects all the rights for all people," Amarelle said, including the wide spectrum of households that exist in Cuba today, from married couples to single parents, children being raised by grandparents, and same-sex couples.

Joining Amarelle at the conference were FCM leaders Osmayda Hernández Beleño, Gretel Marante Rosset and Yamila González Ferrer.

Fight to end Washington's embargo

Safeguarding the environment and the health and well-being of working people in Cuba today was discussed at the panel "Gender Equality: Key to Tackling Climate Change for Cuba."

In advance of hurricanes and other natural disasters, the revolutionary leadership trains and mobilizes millions of working people to protect human lives, animals and property. In an online presentation, Helen Yaffe, a professor at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, noted that in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, only 10 people died in Cuba — while more than 3,000 were killed in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico.

The presentations elicited questions and discussion by conference participants on a variety of topics. Apart from the Cuban speakers, however, what was largely absent in the discussion was recognition that what has made the remarkable social gains possible in Cuba — unlike any other country in the world — is the fact that workers and farmers there have made a socialist revolution and for more than 60 years have wielded state power.

At an evening rally, Yuri Gala, Cuban



Above, part of audience at New York Cuba solidarity event March 19. Inset, left, Federation of Cuban Women General Secretary Teresa Amarelle Boué; right, Pedro Luis Pedroso, Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations.

deputy ambassador to the U.N., noted how Cuba's revolutionary government has effectively confronted the COVID pandemic — despite limited resources due to U.S. sanctions — because of its priority on universal access to public health. Cuba has developed several vaccines of its own and sent thousands of health care volunteers to countries around the world.

Carlos Lazo, founder of Puentes de Amor, which has initiated monthly car caravans in cities worldwide to demand the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Cuba, urged participants to join the March 27 caravan.

In the concluding panel, Gail Walker, executive director of IFCO-Pastors for Peace, outlined some of the organized trips to Cuba and other solidarity activities planned for the coming months. While collecting funds for medical aid and organizing other material help for Cuba is much appreciated there, she stressed, the job of those here in the United States is above all a political one — to fight to end Washington's decades-long economic war against Cuba.

The conference closed with an excellent musical trio performance led by Arturo O'Farrill, a Grammy Award-winning Latin jazz artist.

Quebec aircraft engine maintenance workers strike Rolls-Royce

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — Some 530 Rolls-Royce aircraft engine maintenance workers here, members of the Quebec Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), set up strike picket lines March 15.

Several strikers told the *Militant* that the company had locked them out while they were in a union meeting, in the process of voting on a strike mandate. But the callous move failed to intimidate anyone, and, if anything, increased the number voting to strike to 94%.

"Rolls-Royce wants to take away what we've won over the years and push back our benefits and working conditions 20 years," Pascal Ouellet, an inspector who has worked there for 14 years, said. He added that rapidly rising prices mean "we're earning less each month. We have no choice but to fight."

While they haven't had a pension increase in 10 years, he said, Rolls-Royce wants to further weaken their retirement benefits. The bosses want to get rid of the defined benefit plan most workers are in and replace it with a much-inferior contribution scheme. Many workers told the *Militant* this is the most important issue in their strike.

The union is also fighting to end the two-tier defined benefit pension plan they have, which is only available to workers who were hired before 2013. They're demanding all workers be treated equally, regardless of when they got hired.

The company wants to double the cost of benefits for current employees, as well as eliminating all benefits for retirees. Even though their previous contract ended two years ago, the company refuses to give the workers any

retroactive pay. The union is demanding a five-year contract from March 2020 with a 5% annual wage increase.

Adlai Ceasar said that in the 18 years he's worked there the union has given a number of concessions. The company always says that they need workers' "help" to get one or another contract. However, he said, "The truth is that the union has gotten nothing by giving concessions. It's time for us to fight back."

After Rolls-Royce suspended a union representative last November, the union organized a one-day walk-out demanding "an end to union busting at the plant."

Defeat Moscow's invasion of Ukraine! US out of Europe!

Continued from front page

workers set an example of international working-class solidarity by disrupting the Russian supply network. They sabotaged the train line leading into Ukraine that is used by Moscow to transport troops, fuel, food and other reserves.

Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko, who had to rely on Moscow to ride out mass protests in 2020, has so far been unable to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin's pressure to contribute troops, fearing this would deepen opposition to his regime at home.

Weeks of shelling have trapped over 100,000 civilians in Mariupol, a key southern port city. Much of the city has been reduced to rubble. Ukrainian fighters refuse to surrender. A maternity hospital there was flattened, as were a theater and an art school, burying hundreds of people alive. A particular target of Moscow's offensive has been to try and take the city's two huge steel plants.

"We will never return there if Russia takes it, but we are prepared to live in the ruins if it remains Ukrainian," Mariupol resident Natalia Poluiko told the press after fleeing the carnage.

In Kherson, angry Ukrainian civilians forced two Russian military trucks to back out of the town square. The next day protesting residents were attacked by Russian soldiers. Several were injured and others detained, but protesters kept returning carrying Ukrainian flags.

Foreseeing a future of growing in-



A child sits on swing near bombed out buildings in Kyiv, Ukraine, Feb. 25, the day after invasion by Russian forces started. Fought to standstill by Ukraine, Moscow is destroying urban centers.

stability and more wars, Washington is taking steps to prepare to defend its imperialist interests. In the wake of Moscow's invasion, the U.S. government is reversing a decadeslong decline of U.S. troop numbers in Europe. It has boosted its forces there to over 100,000, the highest level since 2005.

They are spread across 19 countries, including former Warsaw Pact states now in the NATO alliance. Some U.S. troops have been sent to Poland, near the Ukrainian border. The Pentagon has also sent F-35 fighter planes and Apache helicopters to Poland and Hungary.

Drumbeat of wars to come

As the U.S. rulers' intervention in Europe increases and calls for Washington to enforce "no-fly" zones continue, it's worth recalling the horrific consequences of previous U.S. wars on the continent. This includes the bombing and dismemberment of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. There, a no-fly zone became a step to a deeper war.

During the second imperialist world war, Washington and London carpet bombed Hamburg and Dresden, industrial German cities, suffocating or incinerating tens of thousands in the ensuing firestorms. Washington built its supremacy in Europe on that carnage.

Over a third of U.S. troops in Europe are based in Germany. In response to the Ukraine war, the rulers in Germany have launched their own sizable rearmament program. This is their first substantial military expansion since the

end of the Cold War. The German rulers are moving to reduce their overwhelming reliance on gas imports from Russia. Berlin has turned to Qatar for liquefied natural gas imports.

All the European imperialist powers, as well as China and Russia, are seeking allies and sources of needed imports as the war deeply shakes the "world order" of the past. And capitalist rulers across the semicolonial world — from India to the Middle East — reassess where their interests can best be protected.

At a March 5 TV conference in Kyiv, Russian troops who had surrendered spoke out against the war, calling on the Russian people to "take to the streets" to demand a halt to Moscow's invasion.

"Here everything is not like they say on Russian television," said Dmitry Gagarin, one of the soldiers. "The Ukrainian people are not afraid of anyone," Mikhail Kulikov said. "They will stand up for their land to the last."

There are numerous online videos and reports of Russian troops refusing to attack civilians. Others have slashed gas lines on their tanks to avoid combat.

The Putin regime has moved to suppress widespread anti-war demonstrations at home. Putin says Russia now needs a "self-purification" in order to distinguish "true patriots from scum and traitors."

The road forward for working people in the fight to defeat Moscow's trampling on Ukrainian independence lies in winning workers and farmers in Russia

and worldwide to join their comrades in Ukraine in shared action against the war. Working people have no common interests with "our" capitalist governments, and must rely on our own strength to defend our interests.

Sanctions by Washington and capitalist powers in Europe are a deadly obstacle to this course. They have pounded the Russian economy, isolating its banking system internationally and blocked many imports. Factories and retail chains have closed, causing heavy job losses. Shortages are rife. Workers there face soaring prices.

Saying Russians will face more hardships, Putin urges them to rely on his thug regime for protection from U.S. sanctions as he tries to rally support for the war. He promised to increase all social payments and the minimum wage, offering "state support" for those who lost their jobs.

There are numerous examples of fraternization and collaboration across borders against Putin's war. A group of world renowned ballet dancers from Russia and Ukraine, Argentina, Cuba, France and Japan came together for a benefit performance for Ukraine at the London Coliseum March 20. In contrast to bans on Russian artists elsewhere, the music included Russian composers like Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff.

Ukrainian dancer and producer Ivan Putrov made a key point: "Russian culture doesn't have anything to do with Putin, and equally Putin has nothing to do with Russian culture."

Cuba's Javier Torres of the Northern Ballet performed "The Death of a Swan." He compared it to Ukrainians resisting Moscow's invasion and to the Cuban people who have successfully resisted decades of a U.S. economic war aimed at overturning their socialist revolution.

CUBA AND CHERNOBYL

2006 Cuban documentary *Cuba and Chernobyl* ("Chernóbil en nosotros") covers the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe in Ukraine and Cuba's exemplary internationalist medical program treating over 25,000 Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian victims at Tarará Pediatric Hospital in Havana.

View online at themilitant.com or order a DVD for \$7 from the *Militant*.

How Fidel Castro answered Obama's call to 'forget the past'

NEW YORK — During the March 19-20 International U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference, Sussen Gazal, who is active in the July 26 Coalition in Boston, posed a question to the Cuban delegation.

When Gazal visited Havana in 2020 she met a Cuban who told her he had named his son Obama, after the former U.S. president, hoping that his administration would lift Washington's sanctions against Cuba. Gazal said she was "heartbroken" to hear that, because she didn't share his high expectations that a change from a Republican to a Democrat in the White House would lead to an end to the U.S. economic war against Cuba.

Pedro Luis Pedroso, Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations, replied that Gazal's remarks reminded him of the response by Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro to a speech by Obama during his 2016 visit to Cuba. The U.S. president lectured the Cuban people, "It is time now to leave the past behind." In an article ironically titled "Brother Obama," Castro pointed to the Cuban people's successful record of defending their socialist revolution against Washington's decadeslong drive to destroy it.

"And Fidel told us this: We cannot forget the past," Pedroso said. "If we were able to engage in a reopening of the relationship with the U.S.," the ambassador said, referring to the reestablishment of diplomatic ties between Havana and Washington in 2015, it was because Cuba's revolutionary government insisted that "we had to respect each other's sovereignty and equality. But fundamentally, we had to be very mindful of where we came from."

"Not because you are attached to the past. Not for the sake of the past. It's because the past is your roots, it's your base. If you don't have a solid base, you cannot face the future. And that is the history" of why the Cuban people continue to defend their revolution today, Pedroso said.

— JANET POST

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1991 Iraq war sounded opening guns of World War III

Below is a selection from New International no. 7, which features the article "Washington's Assault on Iraq: The Opening Guns of World War III," published just after the first Gulf War. Copyright © 1991 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

The war and its immediate consequences did not resolve, but rather exacerbated the economic and political contradictions in the United States and worldwide that increasingly drove Washington to use its military might in the first place. The war accelerated the rivalry between Washington and other imperialist powers and increased the likelihood of sharpening conflicts among them. ...

The employers will try to take more out of the hides of the hundreds of millions of debt slaves in the semicolonial world. They will drive harder at home to lower living standards and step up the pace and intensity of production inside mines, mills, and factories. They will extend their efforts to chip away at rights and democratic liberties and seek to weaken and restrict the space open to the working class and its organizations for independent political action.

Washington's war against Iraq was thus an announcement, a loud and clear one, of the conflicts that lie ahead as the imperialist rulers follow the historic logic of their declining world system of exploitation and oppression — a line of march that, wil-

ly-nilly, moves toward World War III.

For working people the world over, for vanguard working-class fighters, and for that section of the working-class vanguard who are communists, these political assessments are decisive in charting a course to advance the historic line of march of our class. The future of humanity depends on the independent political organization of the world's toilers to resist the devastation the rulers seek to impose on us. It depends on our capacity to fight, to win revolutionary battles, and to take war-making powers out of the hands of the exploiters and oppressors by establishing governments of the workers and farmers. ...

We will have our chance.

'The revolution cannot triumph without emancipation of women'

To mark International Women's Month, the Militant is featuring the French edition of Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle by Thomas Sankara. Sankara led a popular uprising in August 1983 that established a revolutionary government in Burkina Faso, in West Africa. Inspired by the Cuban Revolution, the government there mobilized workers and peasants, including women and youth, to carry out deep-going social measures in one of the poorest countries in the world, as well as extending international solidarity. In October 1987 Sankara was assassinated in a counterrevolutionary coup. The excerpt is from "The Revolution Cannot Triumph Without the Emancipation of Women," given on March 8, 1987. Copyright © 2008 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Militant/Ernest Harsch

Revolutionary leader and President of Burkina Faso Thomas Sankara speaks on International Women's Day, March 8, 1987. He was assassinated that year in counterrevolutionary coup.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

On October 2, 1983, in the Political Orientation Speech, the National Council of the Revolution clearly laid out the main axis of the fight for women's liberation. It made a commitment to work to mobilize, organize, and unify all the active forces of the nation, particularly women.

The Political Orientation Speech had this to say specifically in regard to women: "They will be involved in

all the battles we will have to wage against the various shackles of neocolonial society in order to build a new society. They will be involved — at all levels in conceiving projects, making decisions, and implementing them — in organizing the life of the nation as a whole. The final goal of this great undertaking is to build a free and prosperous society in which women will be equal to men in all spheres."

There can be no clearer way to conceive of and explain the question of women and the liberation struggle ahead of us. "The genuine emancipation of women is one that entrusts responsibilities to women, that involves them in productive activity and in the different fights the people face. The genuine emancipation of women is one that compels men to give their respect and consideration."

What is clearly indicated here, comrade militants, is that the struggle to liberate women is above all your struggle to deepen our democratic and popular revolution, a revolution that grants you from now on the right to speak and act in building a society of justice and equality, in which men and women have the same rights and responsibilities. The democratic and popular revolution has created the conditions for such a fight. It now falls to you to act with the greatest sense of responsibility in breaking through all the chains and shackles that enslave women in

backward societies like ours and to assume your share of the responsibilities in the political fight to build a new society at the service of Africa and at the service of all humanity.

In the very first hours of the democratic and popular revolution we said, "Emancipation, like freedom, is not granted, it is conquered. It is for women themselves to put forward their demands and mobilize to win them." In this way, our revolution has not only laid out the goal to be attained in the struggle for women's liberation but has also indicated the road to follow and the methods to use, as well as the main protagonists of this battle. ...

What work has the democratic and popular revolution accomplished with respect to women's emancipation? What are the strong points, the weak points?

One of the main gains of our revolution in the struggle for women's emancipation has been, without doubt, the establishment of the Women's Union of Burkina [UFB]. The creation of this organization constitutes a major gain because it has given the women of our country a framework and sound tools for waging a successful fight. The creation of the UFB represents a big victory because it makes possible mobilizing all women militants around well-defined and just goals in the fight for liberation, under the leadership of the National Council of the Revolution.

The UFB is the organization of mili-

tant and serious women who are determined to work for change, to fight to win, to fall down repeatedly, but to get back on their feet each time and go forward without retreating. This is the new consciousness that has taken root among the women of Burkina, and we should all be proud of it. Comrade militants, the Women's Union of Burkina is your combat organization. It's up to you to sharpen it further so its blade will cut more deeply, bringing you more and more victories.

The different initiatives for women's emancipation that the government has been able to take over a little more than three years are certainly insufficient. But they have made it possible to take some steps, to the point where our country can today present itself as being in the vanguard of the battle to liberate women. Our women participate more and more in decision making and in the real exercise of popular power. The women of Burkina are present everywhere the country is being built. They are part of the projects — the Sourou [valley irrigation project], reforestation, the vaccination brigades, the "clean town" operations, the Battle for the Railroad, and so on.

Little by little the women of Burkina have stood up and asserted themselves, demolishing in the process all the male-chauvinist, backward conceptions of men. And this will go on until women are present in Burkina's entire social and professional fabric. For three and a half years our revolution has worked continually to eliminate all practices that demean women, such as prostitution and related problems, like vagrancy and female juvenile delinquency, forced marriages, female circumcision, and the particularly difficult living conditions women face.

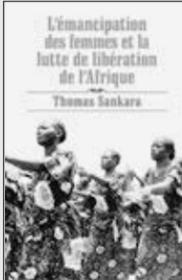
By working to solve the water problem everywhere, by helping to install mills in the villages, popularizing the improved cookstoves, creating popular day-care centers, carrying out regular vaccinations, and encouraging a healthy, abundant, and varied diet, the revolution has no doubt greatly contributed to improving the quality of life of the Burkinabè woman. ...

Though the August revolution has undoubtedly done much for the emancipation of women, this is still far from adequate. Much remains for us to do.

March
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Join fight against imperialism and war

Statement released March 23 by Joanne Kuniarsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey.



Militant/Roy Landersen
Joanne Kuniarsky, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey.

The Socialist Workers Party champions the fight of Ukrainian working people to defeat the bloody invasion of their country by Moscow. We point out that while Washington, Ottawa and other imperialist powers cry crocodile tears over Ukraine, their aim is to strengthen their ability to defend their imperialist interests worldwide as the “world order” wobbles and the beat of war drums grows.

As part of this effort Canadian Pacific bosses and government officials attacked rail workers standing up to bosses’ attacks on pensions, work schedules and safety, claiming the strike would exacerbate grain shortages caused by Moscow’s murderous invasion of Ukraine. Days later *Newsweek* said a strike by workers at Chevron’s Richmond refinery in California against longer hours and to win better pay will worsen surging gas prices caused by “Russia’s attack on Ukraine.”

The capitalist rulers always try to present what is in their predatory interests as the interests of “all Americans” or “our nation.” Both the Democratic and Republican parties and the trade union officials who look to them push the same line. But the interests of workers and farmers are sharply counterposed to those of the ruling propertied families and their servants in the upper middle class.

Our “we” is with working people the world over with whom we share common interests and a common class enemy. This internationalist working-class outlook is why the Socialist Workers Party

campaigns in defense of Ukrainian independence, calls for the defeat of Moscow’s invasion and demands the U.S. rulers get all their troops and nuclear weapons out of Europe.

At times of war the communist movement acts on the fact that the class struggle doesn’t disappear. It doesn’t have a revolutionary policy for peacetime and a peace policy for wartime. The capitalist rulers use war — which is simply a more brutal form of protecting their class interests in the world — to step up exploitation and oppression at home. Our response is to deepen our participation in union battles, building solidarity with struggles like those at Chevron and Canadian Pacific rail, backing struggles by farmers and by workers who are blind, looking everywhere to increase their self-confidence, fighting spirit and class consciousness.

Far from being a diversion from working-class struggles at home, the U.S. rulers’ foreign policies — their troop buildup in Europe, sanctions on Russia and decadeslong record of war and imperialist plunder — are an extension of their profit-driven assaults on working peoples’ jobs, wages, conditions and rights here.

Workers need to act independently on all political questions. We should recognize what Moscow’s war in Ukraine foretells. Capitalism is marching toward bloodier national conflicts, sharper class battles — toward fascism and war. But that future is not inevitable. As the working people of Cuba showed us in 1959, we are capable of leading a revolutionary struggle to take power from the capitalist class and end forever their threat to humanity’s survival. Join us in building a party to make that possible.

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Canadian Pacific fight

Continued from page 3

rest period at outside terminals, rather than their home terminal. This would significantly increase layover times away from home, disrupting ever further their already precarious family life and wreaking havoc with the proper rest necessary to work safely.

Shifts supposedly last for eight hours, but workers can be forced to do overtime up to 10 hours, even if they put in a notice that they need to get rest. “The company is trying to squeeze every bit of work out of us,” locomotive engineer Sylvain Archambault told the *Militant* on the picket line March 20 at the CP intermodal yard in Lachine near Montreal.

“You could easily finish work before 10 hours, but then they tell you, ‘You have half an hour left, you can manage to do a bit more.’ The union puts in grievances, but the company just throws them away,” he said. “Overtime is dangerous. It’s accumulated fatigue and you don’t even notice it.”

Some 45 bosses’ associations across Canada, who saw potential disruption to shipping and profits, called for the federal government in Ottawa to “do what is best for Canada’s economy” and bar any strike action.

They also invoked Russia’s invasion of Ukraine as a reason for Ottawa to crush the strike. “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, a top supplier of grains, has put pressure on Canada’s grain growers to pick up some of the slack and help avoid a global food crisis,” the *National Post* wrote March 17.

CP bosses also tried to whip up farmers to oppose any rail workers’ strike. They ran into resistance. “People do have the right to strike and the right of workers to stand up for a better living wage,” barley farmer Rauri Qually from Dacotah, Manitoba, told CBC News March 21. “And I support that.”

Help get out the truth about what CP rail workers face. Solidarity messages can be sent to Teamster Canada Rail Conference, 130 Albert St., Suite 1510, Ottawa, ON K1P 5G4. Phone (613) 235-1828.

Félix Vincent Ardea is a rail worker on the Canadian National in Quebec and a member of the Teamsters.

Truckers’ protest continues in DC, challenges gov’t, bosses’ attacks

Continued from front page

and join in widespread political discussion.

Many truckers believe — correctly — that the liberal media is working overtime to smear the convoy as rightist and dangerous. The press has featured commentary by self-appointed “extremism researchers” who write about truckers’ “sinister strategies” that can lead to “overt violence.” Meanwhile, the daily loops around the beltway and efforts to present their demands at the U.S. Capitol are organized and orderly.

“I was just interviewed by the *New York Times*, but we’ll see how they spin it,” Wes Short, a steel hauler from Jefferson, Ohio, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent March 16. “I can guarantee that this fact won’t be in the article — everything you need is moved by a trucker.”

Short was correct. *Times* reporter Charles Homans claimed the truckers “are fueled by a far broader set of right-wing grievances.”

“The government and the media are smearing the truckers the same way they do striking workers,” Socialist Workers Party member Arrin Hawkins told Short. “The SWP and the *Militant* are getting out the

truth and organizing solidarity. The working class has a stake in truckers winning some relief.”

The orderly and well-maintained “camp” at the sprawling Hagerstown Speedway, which offers three hot meals a day and even a barber shop, is organized by volunteers. Security teams welcome participants and explain the protest is civil, peaceful and open to different points of view, of which there are many.

“We want a better life for our families,” Adria “Hippie” Louis told us. Louis, a mother of seven whose husband is a trucker, organizes the day-to-day operations at the speedway. She pointed with pride to pallets of donated food, water and other supplies.

“I never thought in my life I would see \$6 for diesel,” independent operator Aaron Simmons, 43, from Oskaloosa, Iowa, told us. “I tell my family and friends get ready, because when diesel goes up, everything goes up.”

Simmons explained that after six years as a company driver, he became an independent operator two years ago. “Because of the ‘freedom.’ I could work for myself. Now I’m not so sure.” Simmons says he’s been out of work for almost three weeks waiting for parts to repair his rig, with a price tag of \$8,000 to \$9,000.

The majority of the owner-operators are workers who decided to sink their life savings, and whatever they could borrow, into buying a truck or two. Others lease their rigs from government-licensed carriers who, along with unscrupulous brokers, set the trucking rates. They pay the drivers a percentage after skimming profits off the top. Out of the portion they’re paid, the truckers must cover all the costs of fuel, repairs, insurance, taxes, loan repayment and more.

Crisis facing truckers today

The crisis the owner-operators face today is the result of the lawful working of the capitalist system, aided and abetted by the pro-boss policies of the government. A turning point came under the administration of Jimmy Carter, when he signed the Motor Carriers Act in 1980 deregulating the trucking industry.

Deregulation wasn’t meant to help truckers. It turned what had been a largely Teamster union-organized industry into a dog-eat-dog scrum of non-union bosses and cutthroat competition. The Teamsters union had fought for and won national union contracts with hourly pay, cost-of-living increases, health care and pension benefits. After deregulation, union membership fell from over 2 million truckers in 1974, to 75,000 in 2018.

For decades truckers in the industry have seen their wages decline as much as 50%, while their workweek grew longer and longer. The 2020 median annual wage for the 1.9 million U.S. truckers is \$45,260, with the newest and worst paid earning less than \$30,600 a year. Paid by the mile, one in five truckers are on the road 75 hours per week. They face hours of unpaid time waiting while their truck is loaded and unloaded or refueling, or while filling out onerous paperwork. Almost 40% have no health care. A whopping 91% of truckers quit their jobs in 2019.

“I feel for my friends just starting out. A CDL license and a couple weeks training is not the same as experience. I had my grandfather and my father who were truckers, and that helped a lot. I had two months training,” David Brooks, 35, an owner-operator from Charlotte, North Carolina, said at a truck stop here.

“The boss is pushing you all the time. ‘Hey, Google says you can make this run in five hours, what’s your problem.’ You’re in a pressure cooker with all the government regulations,” he said. “The owner-operators and the fleet drivers, we are the same, facing the same problems.”

“In the 1930s, truckers gained experience in the class struggle. A quarter of a million over-the-road truckers were organized into the Teamsters union, which reached out to them as fellow workers,” Hawkins said. “The Socialist Workers Party was part of the leadership of that union effort.” Brooks got a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

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