

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

US rulers probe Venezuela deal as sanctions on Russia cut off oil
— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 14 APRIL 11, 2022

Oil workers in the Bay Area fight over long hours, low pay

BY BETSEY STONE

RICHMOND, Calif. — “Why are workers here angry? It’s the lack of respect, the arrogance of the company,” striker Frank Aguirre told this *Militant* worker-correspondent March 27 as I joined him picketing outside the Chevron oil refinery here. The workers went on strike six days earlier, fighting over onerous work schedules, safety and wages.

Aguirre, who has worked at Chevron for 17 years, said the strike battle has been building up for some time. “We were working out here through the pandemic while managers were working from home,” he said. “The company wasn’t maintaining equipment. Then there’s the medical plan that forced me to pay \$5,000 out of pocket.”

The last straw was the company’s hard-ball tactics, when after workers twice rejected Chevron’s proposals

Continued on page 5

Working people in Ukraine resist invasion by Moscow

Join protests to defend Ukraine independence!



Tribuna.com

March 25 rally in Novotroitskoye in Ukraine’s Kherson region protests occupation by Moscow’s troops. Protests show resolve of Ukrainian toilers to defend their hard-won independence.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine has been stalled in a number of areas by fierce Ukrainian armed opposition, along with spirited protests in occupied cities. After raining destruction on

civilian populations to try to hammer them into submission, Moscow is stepping up efforts to expand and consolidate its hold on territory it has seized in eastern Ukraine.

After fierce fighting, Ukrainian forces pushed back the Russian army in several towns in the north and northeast

**Defend Ukraine independence!
Defeat Moscow’s war! US troops,
nuclear arms out of Europe!**

March 28, blocking the full encirclement of Kyiv and Kharkiv. But missile and artillery fire continues on civilians in Ukraine’s two largest cities.

Russian troops occupying Kherson in the south have lost control of parts of the city. Despite using tear gas and beat-

Continued on page 7

Rolls-Royce engine workers strike over attack on their jobs, pensions in Quebec

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — “More and more corporations are trying to break unions and workers’ rights everywhere are being attacked,” Tom Larin, a striking inspector at Rolls-Royce’s aircraft engine maintenance plant here, told the *Militant*. “You see it globally, including in Canada, the U.K. and the U.S.”

He pointed to the recent illegal firing of 800 unionized workers and their replacement with agency workers paid below the legal minimum wage by P&O Ferries bosses in the U.K. And to how the Canadian government used the anti-labor Emergen-

Continued on page 9

Rifts at NATO gathering as rulers prepare for more wars

BY TERRY EVANS

Moscow’s deadly war against working people in Ukraine was the backdrop for a gathering of imperialist rulers in Brussels March 24. President Joseph Biden and government heads from Germany, Britain, France and 26 other capitalist countries announced decisions to boost NATO deployments across Eastern Europe and impose harsher sanctions against Russia, measures that hit workers and farmers the hardest.

Alongside rearmament programs launched by NATO-member regimes, the troop deployments and other steps herald future wars with even more bloody consequences. The summit, along with a meeting of the G-7 — U.S., France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and the U.K. — in the same military headquarters, was held behind closed doors to try and cover up the sharply divergent national inter-

Continued on page 6

Socialist Workers Party uses ‘Militant’ to campaign against imperialism, war



Militant/Edwin Fruit

Socialist Workers Party candidates Gabrielle Prosser for Minnesota governor, David Rosenfeld for Congress bring solidarity to striking Minneapolis teachers, fighters against war in Ukraine.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A lively debate over the war in Ukraine has been featured in the letters page of the *San Leandro Times*. Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of California, joined the discussion in a letter printed March 17. The SWP calls “for the defense of Ukraine’s independence, for the defeat of Moscow’s invasion, and U.S. troops and nuclear arms out of Europe,” he explained.

One letter charged Putin’s action was justified because of “NATO ag-

gression.” A riposte claimed NATO was “one of the last bulwarks of freedom.”

Britton disagreed with both. “The claim by Putin that he was forced to invade on the grounds of moves by Washington and NATO governments is false,” he wrote. “As is the idea that Putin, a product of Russia’s notoriously Jew-hating secret police, is out to “de-nazify” Ukraine. Ukraine poses no military threat to Russia.”

“Washington claims to be con-

Continued on page 3

Yale law students disrupt meeting, deal blow to right to free speech

BY SETH GALINSKY

In an attack on the right to free speech, which working people need to organize against assaults by the bosses and their government, more than 100 Yale law students disrupted a March 10 campus debate over civil liberties, which was hosted by the Yale Federalist Society.

Students who interrupted the meeting outnumbered those who came to hear the discussion. The panel included Kristen Waggoner of the Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal group, along with Monica Miller of the

Continued on page 9

Inside

Protesters demand: ‘End US economic war on Cuba!’ 2

South Carolina offers ‘choice’ of being killed by firing squad 2

India students protest gov’t ban on wearing hijab in class 3

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Minneapolis teachers end strike, make gains in new contract

UK pallet workers win support in strike for higher pay

S. Carolina offers 'choice' of being killed by firing squad

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The South Carolina Department of Corrections announced March 18 that it will now organize executions by firing squad, which was legalized last year after a decadelong halt in carrying out any death sentences. The law, adopted last May, makes South Carolina's 109-year-old electric chair the state's primary means of execution, while granting inmates the "right" to be killed by firing squad or lethal injection instead. There are 37 prisoners on the state's death row.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated use of the death penalty in 1976, only three people have been executed by firing squad.

During the debate in the legislature,

Democratic state Sen. Richard Harpootlian argued the firing squad was the "least painful" way for people to be killed. This reflected a number of instances of pain and suffering by inmates during botched executions by questionable chemical cocktails and instances of fires breaking out when electric chairs were used.

State authorities spent the next nine months and over \$53,000 to refurbish their death chamber in Columbia to accommodate a firing squad. According to prison officials, the inmate will be strapped into a metal chair with a hood over their head. Three sharpshooters will be stationed 15 feet away, firing their weapons through an opening in a wall. Three other states — Mississippi, Oklahoma and Utah — permit execution by firing squad, but only South Carolina makes inmates choose how they should be killed. The last execution there took place in 2011 and its last remaining batch of lethal injection drugs expired two years later, with drug companies increasingly reluctant to supply them for use in executions.

Last June, the South Carolina Supreme Court halted electrocutions scheduled to put prisoners Brad Sigmon and Freddie Owens to death, ruling that officials had to carry through on preparations for a firing squad so the inmates could have the option to choose between that or the electric chair. Both men had earlier chosen to be put to death by lethal injection.

Sigmon, 64, has spent nearly two decades on death row after a 2002 conviction for killing his ex-girlfriend's parents. Owens, 44, has been on and

Protesters demand: 'End US economic war on Cuba!'



Militant/Rachele Fruit

Some 40 people rallied in Miami, above, and then caravanned in 20 cars through the streets of Little Havana to City Hall March 27, part of an international day of action demanding an end to Washington's over 60-year economic war against Cuba. "We will continue the caravans on the last Sunday of every month until the blockade is lifted," Roberto Yis from Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love), the group that initiated the protests over a year ago, told participants. He reported Puentes de Amor leader Carlos Lazo was in Mexico at a caravan of 500 people.

Thirty cars decorated in Cuban flags and messages of solidarity drove through Minneapolis' busy Lake Street area. Among those invited to address the crowd at a rally before the caravan began was Gabrielle Prosser, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Minnesota. "The Cuban people have resisted Washington's efforts to suffocate them and overthrow their socialist revolution for six decades," she said. "Opposing Washington's embargo is important now more than ever as Cuba faces extreme shortages, from protein to medicine to paper."

Actions also took place in Chicago, Seattle and Phoenix. Protests in Canada occurred in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Actions also took place in a number of other countries, including Finland, Slovakia, Bolivia, Panama, Belize, Bahamas, El Salvador and Brazil.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System"

The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class



pathfinderpress.com

THE MILITANT

Back protests over pensions in Puerto Rico!

The government in Puerto Rico raised the retirement age for teachers and other public workers from 55 to 63 and now wants to cut pensions. Buoyed by winning a pay raise, workers are fighting this latest attack. The *'Militant'* unconditionally supports their struggle.



Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico
Thousands of teachers march in San Juan March 15 to protest attack on their pensions.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$10 for 12 weeks

\$20 for 6 months

\$35 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 W. 37TH ST., 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.
OR SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT:
WWW.THEMILITANT.COM

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £4 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £8 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

off death row since 1999 for killing a convenience-store clerk.

Lawyers for the two inmates have asked the state's high court to delay new execution orders until a lower court can decide whether use of the electric chair or firing squad are constitutional. That hearing is scheduled for April 4.

"The death penalty is a weapon in the hands of the capitalist rulers to intimidate and threaten working people. As the class struggle heats up, the death penalty is the ultimate weapon in capitalism's criminal 'justice' system — its cops, courts and executioners — used to intimidate and silence working people," Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for

U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania, told the *Militant*. "It has been used against militant fighters involved in strike battles and other struggles against boss and government attacks on our rights and living and working conditions. The death penalty is certainly 'cruel and unusual' punishment and should be abolished."

Support among working people for use of the death penalty has been on the decline in recent years, and juries are increasingly unwilling to impose it. Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have abolished executions, the latest being Virginia in 2021. Three others — California, Oregon and Pennsylvania — have moratoriums on its use.

The Militant

Vol. 86/No. 14

Closing news date: March 30, 2022

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galsinsky, Emma Johnson, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in August, one week in September.

Business Manager: Valerie Johnson

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £30 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, 5 Norman Road (first floor), Seven Sisters, London, N15 4ND, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 100 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15.

New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$55 for one year to P.O. Box 13857, Auckland 1643, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194 Australia.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

Against imperialism and war

Continued from front page

cerned about Ukraine's sovereignty, but as we've seen in past wars in Vietnam, Iraq and elsewhere their real concern is protecting capitalist profits and interests." Working people in Ukraine — or anywhere else — can't look to the Pentagon or Washington-led NATO for defense of their independence. The SWP opposes economic sanctions on Russia, Britton said, because "they fall most harshly on working people" who we must win to fight against Moscow's war.

Britton was advancing the SWP's campaign today against imperialism and war. At the heart of this effort is a wide-ranging propaganda campaign to win 1,600 new readers to the *Militant* and get out a similar number of books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries that draw out lessons from past working-class battles, including struggles against imperialist war. The drive includes raising \$165,000 in the working class for the production of the paper.

Rail engineer Sylvain Archambault, a Teamster union member recently on strike against Canadian Pacific Railway, spoke about conditions on the railroad with Communist League members Félix Vincent Ardea, a Canadian National rail conductor, and Katy LeRougetel March 28 over coffee in Quebec. They first met on the picket line the previous week.

"Rail workers are doing their part to stop the Russian troops," said Archambault, who subscribed to the *Militant*. "They're taking the tracks apart." He was referring to actions by rail workers in Belarus to stop Moscow from sending troops and equipment to aid its invasion into Ukraine.

Ardea responded, "That's the point, it's workers here, there and in

Russia that have the potential power to end that war."

At the doorstep of her house in Mount Wellington, New Zealand, Lia Pou, who works at a retirement village, told Communist League members Janet Roth and Patrick Brown March 24 that Ukrainians fighting Moscow's invasion show "they are strong and independent." Moscow's invasion "is all about power and land," she said. Given the strong resistance Russian forces face, "They're not gonna go nowhere fast."

War against working class

Pou was encouraged to hear about a two-week strike at the nearby CHEP plant, where workers won significant wage increases. "The capitalist rulers are waging an intensifying war against the working class at home and abroad," Roth said. "Workers need our own program and our own working-class party."

"I'll help in any way I can," Pou said, as she signed up for a *Militant* subscription and purchased *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

"I'm very pleased to hear about efforts to build a working-class movement and political party," Ameley Sultana told Communist League member Hugh Robertson when he knocked on her door in London's Tower Hamlets March 27. Referring to the fight to defend Ukraine, she said that Bangladesh, where her family's from, "wouldn't exist were it not for a revolutionary struggle by the people there for independence and sovereignty."

Robertson said that "the first country to recognize Bangladesh after their 1971 battle for independence from Paki-



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Student Eoin McCaul, right, discusses why working people should oppose Moscow's brutal invasion of Ukraine with Communist League member Hugo Wils in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

stan was Cuba. Through its revolutionary struggle, Cuba's workers and farmers established their own government, uprooted capitalist social relations and transformed themselves in the process. That's really the only way to prevent the capitalist rulers' march toward devastating economic crisis and war." Sultana got a *Militant* subscription.

Two days earlier in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Eoin McCaul, a student at Queens University, met CL members Hugo Wils and Jonathan Silberman. They discussed the impact that Moscow's invasion of Ukraine is having on the drive by the capitalist rulers in Europe to rearm and the dangers this poses for the working class.

"Capitalism is preparing for a catastrophe that threatens the entire culture of humanity," Silberman said. "This points to the necessity of building a proletarian

party that can lead the working class in a revolutionary struggle for power."

McCaul purchased a *Militant* subscription and five of the books on special — *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power*; *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*; *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party*; *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*; and *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*. He plans to join CL members in reaching out with the *Militant* and books like these.

As party members go door to door, introducing the *Militant* and revolutionary literature to working people, many are open to making donations to the Militant Fighting Fund. Donations can be sent directly to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, or online at www.themilitant.com.

India students protest gov't ban on wearing hijab in class

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Students in the Indian state of Karnataka have mounted protests after the state's high court March 15 upheld a government ban on young women wearing headscarves in schools and colleges.

Muslim students from several parts of the state took to the streets the following day. Shopkeepers in Bhatkal shut their stores in solidarity. Authorities previously imposed a colonial-era law to ban gatherings of more than four people in some parts of the state.

"We won't take off the hijab," Ayesha Imthiaz told Reuters. "We have fifth semester exams next month. We will have to sit that out unless things change."

She is one of a group of students at a high school in Udipi who were banned from wearing hijabs in class in January. They have been attending school every day since, but authorities prevent them from going into the classroom.

They also had to confront supporters of the ban who have mobilized outside the school wearing saffron scarves, a symbol of the country's

largest religion, Hinduism. The Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party state government backed the school ban.

The court claims that wearing headscarves is not "essential" to Islam. The six petitioners against the ban condemned the high court order as unconstitutional. Its ruling will be challenged in the country's supreme court.

The ban has been met with widespread debate across the country, where 200 million people — some 14% of the population — are Muslim. State authorities in Karnataka closed schools for several days in mid-February to try to quell protests.

Last month Chandini Naz quit her

job at a government school in Karnataka after being told to remove her hijab in the classroom for the first time in her three years of teaching there.

The ruling follows other discriminatory moves targeting Muslims by the Hindu-nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In 2020 it passed the sectarian Citizenship Amendment Act, which makes religion a criterion for deciding who will be offered Indian citizenship and openly discriminates against Muslims.

Opposing the school ban, 40 people joined a Feb. 26 protest outside the Indian Consulate here called by Aotearoa Alliance of Progressive Indians.

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

March 12-May 17 (week two)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	90	10	90	25	\$8,500	\$1,010
Atlanta	90	24	90	29	\$11,500	\$1,621
Chicago	125	48	125	19	\$14,000	\$2,410
Cincinnati	90	26	90	23	\$5,500	\$2,023
Dallas-Ft. Worth	65	29	65	23	\$4,500	\$550
Lincoln	15	6	15	7	\$400	\$126
Los Angeles	100	27	120	15	\$14,500	\$0
Miami	35	5	35	15	\$5,000	\$600
Minneapolis	70	16	70	29	\$5,500	\$686
N. New Jersey	90	37	90	32	\$7,250	\$1,930
New York	125	38	125	49	\$17,500	\$4,122
Oakland	100	44	100	31	\$14,000	\$3,445
Philadelphia	40	9	40	12	\$4,250	\$1,690
Pittsburgh	50	9	50	9	\$5,000	\$700
Seattle	70	10	70	15	\$13,000	\$617
Washington	65	16	65	25	\$5,000	\$1,554
Other						
Total U.S.	1220	354	1240	358	\$135,400	\$23,084
Prisoners	45	45				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	50	32	50	32	\$4,000	\$400
Manchester	45	21	45	19	\$2,000	\$0
Total U.K.	95	53	95	51	\$6,000	400
Canada	110	34	110	34	\$13,670	\$1,680
New Zealand	35	11	35	9	\$4,000	\$1,140
Australia	35	12	35	6	\$2,500	\$140
Total	1,540	509	1,515	458	\$161,570	\$26,444
SHOULD BE	1,600	352	1,600	352	\$165,000	\$36,300

Socialist Workers Party 2022 candidates

California
Eleanor Garcia, 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 Sanchez, US Congress

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

Washington state
Henry Dennison, US Senate

US rulers probe Venezuela deal as sanctions on Russia cut off oil

BY RÓGER CALERO

White House and State Department officials traveled to Caracas March 5 to meet with Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to discuss a partial lifting of sanctions that Washington imposed on that country's oil industry in 2017. The visit grows out of shifts in U.S. rulers' efforts to defend their dominance worldwide following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. President Joseph Biden's administration is seeking to secure oil sources following its ban of imports of Russian oil and gas. It also aims to drive a wedge between the regime of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Caracas.

Prior to Washington's ban, 8% of U.S. petroleum imports came from Russia.

Washington's overtures are also an attempt by the administration to find an exit from the current "maximum pressure" policy of the U.S. rulers that has led to a political stalemate between the Maduro government and opposition forces backed by Washington and other imperialist powers that have spent years trying to overthrow him.

After Hugo Chávez won election as president of Venezuela on a program of radical reform in 1998 and formed an alliance with the revolutionary government of Fidel Castro in Cuba, the U.S. targeted his regime and Maduro, who came to power after Chávez's death.

Donald Trump's administration broke relations with Venezuela in 2019, accusing Maduro of rigging presidential elections, and recognized Juan Guaidó, a pro-imperialist opposition politician, as the country's leader. The administrations of both Barack Obama and Trump imposed harsh economic and trade sanctions against Venezuela, and have backed attempts to provoke a coup.

Given today's stalemate, however, growing numbers within the capitalist opposition now favor participating in elections and reject Guaidó's calls for a boycott. They also call for the lifting of sanctions as their rapprochement with the Maduro government moves ahead.

The March 5 visit came under criticism from Democratic and Republican politicians in Washington, who insist on maintaining pressure to maximize political and economic concessions from the Maduro government.

U.S. officials deny the purpose of the visit was to negotiate lifting sanctions in exchange for a boost in oil supplies for its refineries. They claim the delegation was there to pursue the release

of six U.S. oil executives imprisoned in Venezuela on charges of embezzlement and a Cuban American arrested under terrorism charges. "Any sanctions relief" has to be "tied to concrete steps Maduro and the people around him take," said National Security Adviser Jack Sullivan March 13.

Following the visit, Caracas released two of the imprisoned U.S. citizens, and Maduro announced he was restarting talks with the opposition.

This comes as Maduro is also making a rapprochement with weighty sections of Venezuelan capitalists and imperialist interests. His government has privatized a significant number of state-owned enterprises and established new alliances with oil and mining foreign ventures and local capitalist monopolies.

Caracas ready to boost supply

Caracas welcomes an opening to supply oil to U.S. and other markets. Prior to the sanctions, Venezuela was a top supplier to U.S. refineries. Sanctions blocked purchases from Venezuela's state-owned oil company PDVSA, and foreign companies were forced to abandon joint ventures in the country.

If Washington eases sanctions oil giant Chevron says it will take operating control of its joint ventures and boost supplies of crude oil to the U.S., allowing company owners to regain a foothold in Venezuela's lucrative oil industry they covet.

'Truckers strike because we're not making any money'

BY RACHELE FRUIT

BROOKSVILLE, Fla. — "The truckers' convoy in Washington isn't about masks. The truckers are on strike because they're not making any money!" That's what owner-operators Clyde and Everett Sesler told me in a March 20 visit with them. I am running as the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Florida.

Campaign supporters Karl Butts and Glen Swanson and I had come to visit and discuss politics. Clyde and his wife, Frances, along with other members of their family who were farmers, were plaintiffs in the 1998 class-action lawsuit by Black farmers against decades of discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At that time they got to know and worked with the Socialist Workers Party to help win support among working people for their fight.

"The last crop we have is blueberries, but we are not picking and marketing them anymore," Frances Sesler said. "They're just for family and the community now."

"You can't bring a ship or a train to Walmart. You need the trucks to carry the produce," said her son, Everett, referring to the truckers' convoy. "But the brokers don't want to pay. They might get \$6,000 a load, but pay the trucker \$1,800. If the farmers knew how little the driver makes, they'd be up in arms."

Independent operators face this kind of gouging, while they're responsible for the bank note on their truck, soaring fuel costs, maintenance and all other running expenses. "Many private truck owners are parking their rigs and going to work for a trucking company instead," added Clyde Sesler.

"It costs \$1,200 to fill my truck with



Stringer/picture-alliance/dpa/AP Images

Workers in Venezuela line up for gas March 17. Though country has largest oil reserves in the world, harsh economic, trade sanctions by Washington have devastating impact on workers.

Years of sanctions also barred imports of key supplies and equipment needed to repair and update oil drilling and processing facilities. As a consequence, capacity has plummeted from previous production levels.

Above all, sanctions have had a devastating impact on workers and farmers, sharply exacerbating inflation that ran at 340% in the last 12 months. More than 6 million people have left the country since 2015.

These pressures pushed the Maduro government to establish trade and financial ties with Russia, China, and Iran, whose rulers seek to advance their own interests in the region against their rivals. PDVSA's international monetary transactions are handled by accounts in

Russia and are likely to suffer from sanctions imposed on Moscow by Washington and capitalist powers in Europe.

One of Washington's aims is to drive a wedge between Caracas and Moscow, which is Venezuela's main military supplier. Venezuelan officials have said Caracas remains a "committed ally of the Russian government," but welcomes the return of U.S. companies to Venezuela.

"We've been doing oil business with U.S. companies for 100 years," said Venezuelan Foreign Minister Félix Plascencia at a March 12 meeting with Joseph Borrell, EU foreign affairs representative. "We never asked them to leave the country. If they respect my country's sovereignty and legitimacy we can do a lot together in the oil business."

240 gallons of fuel at \$5.30 a gallon today. The truck gets five to seven miles per gallon. It might get you to New York. Then you have insurance and tolls. It costs \$125 to cross the George Washington Bridge. If you blow a tire and need a tow truck, that's \$750 to \$800," Everett Sesler said. "Because of the stressful working conditions, many truckers are separated from their wives and have the additional expense of child support."

The Department of Transportation is always monitoring the truckers and pulling them over for inspection, he said. "If you are missing a cap on a valve stem, they fine you \$50. If they catch you taking a detour to avoid a weigh station, they shut you down for eight to 10 hours. You just can't make a living."

"While the Canadian and U.S. governments have been treating the truckers like criminals, the *Militant* has been reporting the truckers' side of the story, letting them speak for themselves," I said. "That's the importance of having a workers' newspaper."

Moscow's invasion of Ukraine

I also brought news of the lockout and strike by 3,000 rail conductors and engineers, members of the Teamsters union, on the Canadian Pacific. I described how the government and big-business media charge that the rail workers are "selfish" and "greedy," blaming them for disrupting grain transportation in the midst of Moscow's brutal war against the people of Ukraine.

"What's needed now more than ever is an alliance of workers and working farmers, both of whom are under attack by the bosses," I said. "The rail workers are demanding not just wage increases in the midst of soaring prices, but relief

from killer, and dangerous, schedules.

"Working farmers also face a crisis today, as prices of fertilizer, pesticides and other necessities are going through the roof," I added. "They need government-guaranteed costs of production and living expenses for themselves and their families."

I asked what they thought about the war in Ukraine.

"It's just senseless killing," Clyde Sesler said. "But it looks like China might get involved on Russia's side. Then what's the U.S. supposed to do?"

"The SWP calls for the defeat of the invading Russian forces and for defense of the independence of Ukraine," I said. "We also demand that Washington get its troops and nuclear weapons out of all of Europe. They aren't there to defend Ukraine's sovereignty — the U.S. military is there to defend the predatory interests of the ruling capitalist families here. The bosses' government won't defend working people anywhere."

"The ruling powers in China, Russia, the U.S. and Europe," I added, "are locked in dog-eat-dog competition with each other for resources and markets, at the expense of all the toilers. We don't defend their interests. Our class interests are to stand with workers in Ukraine and everywhere against their oppression. With solidarity and protests from working people in Russia, the U.S. and the whole world, the people of Ukraine can defend the sovereignty of their country."

The family signed up for a six-month subscription to the *Militant*, and got copies of *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters and *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

The Labor Movement and Washington's War Drive. Why the Working Class Needs Its Own Foreign Policy. Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of California. Sat., April 9, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Truckers Resist Attacks on Their Livelihoods. Speaker: Marklyn Wilson, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., April 10, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Minneapolis teachers end strike, make gains in new contract

MINNEAPOLIS — Members of Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59 voted to end their nearly three-week strike March 27, having made progress.

The union said that both of its contracts — the one covering 4,500 teachers and the other for staff members called Education Support Professionals — were adopted, by an 80% vote of the ESPs and by 76% of the teachers. The support staff deals with transportation, translation, one-on-one assistance in the classroom and after work programs.

The strike was marked by the teachers, a majority in the bargaining unit, standing up for the lower-paid Education Support Professionals by demanding they get higher salaries and other protections.

The new contract, which runs through the end of the 2022-23 school year, was posted on the union website. It includes a raise in the starting salary for the support staff from \$19.83 an hour to \$23.91, as well as a \$6,000 to \$7,000 bonus. They also won more hours, though that agreement is temporary and not included in the contract.

Teachers won a minimum 2% pay raise and a \$4,000 bonus, as well as a cap on overly large class sizes. They also won an increase in school counselors and in mental health workers, as well as affirmative action layoff protection.

Throughout the strike the union's demands and actions were highly visible, with large rallies backed by community participation at City Hall, school board headquarters and the state Capitol.

At the union headquarters where voting was taking place, several union members told the *Militant* their opinions about the settlement.

"Even with the wage increase we got, I'll still need to work a second job to support my family of six," said Jessica Grunau, an education support professional who works with special education students at the elementary school level. "But I'm ready to get back to school. I miss my students."

"The ESPs made some headway," Brett Hutcheson, another special Ed

support professional, said. "But I feel like the teachers didn't gain much and really didn't get a fair deal. I don't want us ESPs to be pitted against them. We're in this together."

"The school board saw we meant business," a teacher, who didn't want to give her name, said. "No, we didn't make enough progress, but we showed we were united and what we are capable of in the next contract."

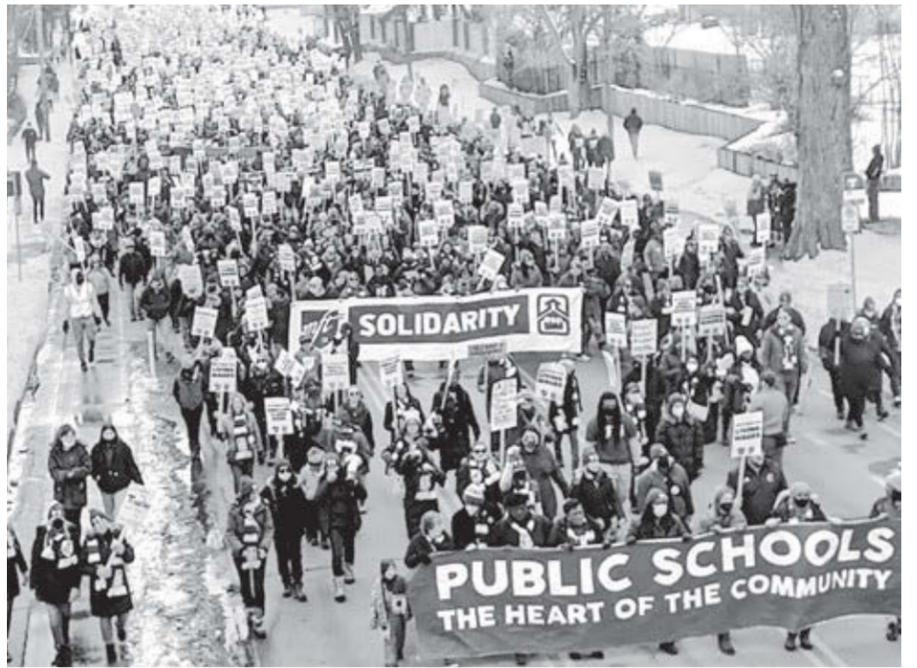
The overall sentiment, which was reflected in the contract vote, was that while union members didn't get everything they wanted, the unity of the membership, and community support they won, registered gains and greater unity for battles to come.

— Edwin Fruit

UK pallet workers win support in strike for higher pay

MANCHESTER, England — "We've already won a lot," Garry Walker, Unite union representative at CHEP, told the *Militant* during a solidarity party for pallet workers who are into their 16th week on strike. They were joined by trade unionists from across the region March 16.

The picket line party was an opportunity for strikers, to mix it up and exchange views about the next steps in their fight. "They offered us a ridiculous deal," said Jason McGavin, the night shift union representative. "We



Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder

Minneapolis teachers and support staff march March 8 on first day of strike. Unionists approved contract March 27 with gains in wages, reduced class sizes, more school counselors.

have to hit targets every day and if you don't they treat it as a disciplinary. It leads to injuries."

In recent talks, bosses offered a 5% pay raise for 2021 plus 250 pounds (\$330) to cover back pay, but only 4% for 2022. "We don't want to be locked into a two-year deal with inflation still going up," Walker said.

The offer "wouldn't cover the rise in the cost of living," McGavin added.

Strikers were picked up by last month's successful strike by CHEP workers in Auckland, New Zealand, that won higher pay. Walker sent a mes-

sage of support to them on behalf of the strikers here. The bosses' refusal "to meet our requirements is frustrating," he wrote, "but it's not dampening our spirits in a battle we are determined to win."

"We heard about your struggle the first day we were on strike," the unionists in New Zealand replied. "It has been a constant source of inspiration for us."

"The company has thrived on us not knowing what's going on elsewhere," Walker told this reporter. But now the strikers are building relations with workers at other CHEP sites.

— Anne Howie

Oil workers in Bay Area fight over long hours, low pay

Continued from front page

the company refused to return to the bargaining table. The bosses brought in "replacements" hours before the strike began and bused the unionists out of the refinery, while placing cop cars near the employee parking lot. "I've been working here for 30 years and I've never seen it so bad," striker Marc Busby said.

The workers, members of Local 5 of the United Steelworkers, are asking for a wage raise that would offset the rising cost of medical bills, as well as give some relief from soaring prices and the high cost of living in the Bay Area. They

want the company to hire more workers, to end operators being forced to work as much as 60 to 70 hours a week.

"Workers are fatigued and we're understaffed. We're falling further behind," Local 5 spokesperson and refinery operator B.K. White told the press. It's a safety question, he said.

The USW reached a national agreement with the oil industry in February that included wage raises of 12% over four years. Since then over 200 union locals have been negotiating over local issues, like at Chevron. They're asking for a one-time bump raise of 5% over the wage

increase in the national contract.

Bosses at the largest oil and gas companies raked in over \$174 billion last year, the union reports. Chevron reports \$15.6 billion in annual profits, while sticking it to refinery workers as well as to drivers at the gas stations. Gas prices in California have risen to well over \$5 a gallon in the wake of the war in Ukraine and charges in the capitalist press that the strike will push prices higher.

"I tell people it's corporate greed that is responsible for what you are paying at the pump," striker Gerardo "Chop" Chavez told the *Militant*. "It's corporate greed that's behind the cost of health care and the lack of safety."

Chavez, a regular on the picket line, became active in the union when his wife, a welder at Chevron, was forced to work with dangerous fumes while pregnant. After getting nowhere when she complained to management, he said, the union won her a safer position.

He said workers from the Teamsters and other unions have joined the picket line, and people have brought food and other donations. Passing cars, especially big-rig trucks, honk in support.

Chevron bosses have agreed to new talks beginning March 28, and the Central Labor Council of Contra Costa County has called for workers throughout the area to "Stand with USW Local 5" at their picket line at refinery gate 14 the same day from 4-6 p.m.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 14, 1997

MIAMI — For the first time in the 38-year history of the Cuban revolution, high-level representatives of the Cuban government spoke before a broad meeting in this city, sponsored by the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba. A crowd of over 200 people, mostly Cuban Americans, attended.

The overwhelming majority enthusiastically applauded Félix Wilson, Second Secretary at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C.

The day before the event, the Miami police attempted to sabotage it. They told the Miami Airport Inn managers that violence was likely and that they would be more than happy to help them end the meeting.

The event went on and organizers secured the meeting room, as well as outside the hotel.



April 14, 1972

The powerful thrust of North and South Vietnamese regiments against the northern military outposts of the Saigon regime is the largest since the Tet offensive in 1968. It once again testifies to the indomitable strength of the revolution in Vietnam.

Washington is nowhere nearer obtaining its main aim in Vietnam than it was seven years ago when President Johnson began escalating the U.S. intervention. As at that time, the capitalist-landlord regime in Saigon remains in power because of massive U.S. military support.

The Saigon armies fled the revolutionary advance. Four years after the Tet offensive, President Nixon is in a worse situation than Johnson was at that time. The combined forces of the revolutionary armies and the international antiwar movement have forced Washington to withdraw most of its main regiments.



April 12, 1947

In the mightiest upsurge in the communications industry, some 350,000 AT&T telephone workers set up picket lines in a virtually complete tie-up of the nation's long-distance and switchboard phone service. This is the first nationwide phone strike, involving tens of thousands of newly unionized workers and a total of 230,000 women, the greatest number ever in a single strike.

The phone trust refused to meet or even arbitrate the union demands, which include a \$12-a-week raise, a union shop and other long-needed improvements.

In the face of state government threats to seize the phone lines in New Jersey, strikers kept their picket lines intact. This was a significant expression of the workers' determination to maintain nationwide solidarity and of their understanding that unified action represents a greater power than government edicts.

Caravan to Warrior Met

11 a.m., Wed. April 6

First anniversary of UMW strike

Tannehill State Park,
12632 Confederate Parkway,
McCalla, Alabama

Contact: Kris Mallory 304 419 1645

Rifts at NATO gathering

Continued from front page

ests among the rival powers under the cloak of unity around Ukraine.

For decades imperialist powers in Europe have been utterly dependent upon Washington's ground, air, naval and nuclear forces to deal blows to uprisings by workers and farmers worldwide. And they depend on them to take on the newly emerging capitalist class in Russia that was born during the "shock therapy" privatization of the Russian economy by the U.S. rulers and former Soviet officials after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, NATO has readied 140,000 troops in Europe. Some 100,000 of these are U.S. troops.

NATO was founded in 1949, as Washington emerged the victor out of the ashes of the second imperialist world war as the victor. Between 70 million and 85 million people, 3.37% of the world's population, were killed in that slaughter. Since its founding, NATO has been presented as a way to keep the peace in Europe and beyond, alongside other multinational institutions like the European Union and its forerunners.

In fact NATO was always a tool to crush rebellions by workers and farmers, police the world and ensure the U.S. rulers' dominant position in Europe. Washington fought its 1950-53 carpet bombing and ground war against the people of Korea.

Today the U.S. rulers are still trying to put together a regional alliance to join in countering China's challenge to Washington's post-World War II dominance in Asia.

Nuclear threats

Following Moscow's announcement that it was placing its nuclear arms on ready alert after invading Ukraine, the Biden administration chose the day of the NATO summit to reiterate the U.S. rulers' longstanding policy that their use of nuclear weapons was not restricted, but could be used in any conflicts they chose. Washington has vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons that threaten humanity's existence, with some deployed in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.

Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, seeking to put it under the thumb of Russia's rulers, is a stark reminder that the capitalist system, driven to expand and smash competition, always contains the threat of new wars.

Sanctions pose threat to resistance in Russia to Putin's war

BY JOHN STUDER

An example of the opposition brewing across Russia to Moscow's war in Ukraine is the statement by Ivan Fedoseyev, who resigned his position as deputy in a village of 200 in the Perm Krai region March 14.

"If I had remained in office, then I would have been involved in what I consider a crime," he said. "I am not against Russia, in no way am I against its people who have been for the most part misled. I am against the regime that has now been established in the country."

It has "unleashed aggression against a sovereign neighboring state, an action which they are forcing us to call a military special operation."

Capitalist powers across Europe are beefing up their militaries. Governments in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Norway and Sweden, as well as Australia, have all announced increases in war spending. Biden said U.S. war spending will rise up to \$813 billion over the next year. This is more than the gross domestic product of the vast majority of countries in the world.

At the end of the summit, Biden claimed NATO has "never, never been more united." But within hours many of the same governments failed to agree on a new package of sanctions targeting Russia. The rulers in Germany get 55% of their natural gas, 50% of their coal and 35% of their oil from Russia. They refuse to back more sanctions that target the source of these supplies, saying they'll end imports of Russian oil down the road, as they scramble to find alternative markets at acceptable prices.

Here, as in all matters, each country's capitalist ruling families are searching for how they can best protect their predatory reach and profit-making potential. Most still see no other way to do so except under Washington's umbrella, but they chafe at being under its thumb. Some increasingly look to deals with Beijing, the rapidly rising economic powerhouse today. The real trend is not toward unity and peace, but greater inter-capitalist friction and conflicts, which have deep-seated roots.

"The underlying contradictions of world capitalism pushing toward depression and war did not begin on September 11, 2001," writes Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun," printed in *New Internationalist* no. 12. "Some were accelerated by those events, but all have their roots in the downward curve of capitalist development a quarter century ago, followed by the inter-related weakening and then collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses in the Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe at the opening of the 1990s. ... One of capitalism's infrequent long winters has begun. With the accompanying acceleration of imperialism's drive toward war, it's going to be a long, hot winter."

The NATO meeting showcased rapidly changing relations between the rulers of Poland and other capitalist powers. For years the Polish government was decied as a "far-right" danger and threatened with all kinds of sanctions by sanctimonious "democratic" regimes in

Fedoseyev said he was raised "on the propaganda of peace" and "on friendship between peoples, and I can't support the current course of the authorities."

His comments show the fraternal bonds that exist between Ukrainian and Russian working people — the main forces that can defeat Moscow's brutal war — and the potential to summon them to united action.

But the punishing economic sanctions targeting Russia by Washington and its imperialist allies are the very opposite — measures that fall hardest on working people. They open the door for Vladimir Putin's regime to portray itself as defending Russia's people



Brendan Smialowski, Pool via AP
From left, U.S. President Joseph Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson at NATO war summit in Brussels, March 24. Behind smiles and handshakes, conflicting interests of all imperialist powers in NATO are sharpening.

Western Europe. Biden condemned the Polish government as a "totalitarian regime" in 2020. Today Poland is lionized by the same governments as a crucial staging post for shipping arms and fuel from the U.S. and Europe to Ukraine.

Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has also been accompanied by continuing friction between Washington and Beijing. The Chinese government supports Putin's justifications for its Ukraine invasion, while carefully guarding its own economic and military interests.

Under cover of war, Kyiv attacks political rights, unions

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Eleven Ukrainian political parties were suspended and barred from campaigning by President Volodymyr Zelensky's government March 20 on trumped-up charges of having "links with Russia." The majority are small left parties, like the social democratic Social Movement, but the ban also includes the Opposition Platform for Life, which placed second in recent elections and currently holds 44 seats in the 450-person Ukrainian parliament.

Like the permanent ban on the Communist Party of Ukraine imposed in 2015, these suspensions are part of a broader campaign by the capitalist rulers against the labor and political rights of working people.

The ban was adopted despite the fact almost every leader of these parties, including Opposition Platform for Life, condemns Russia's invasion and backs the fight to defend Ukraine's independence, raising doubts the suspensions

against foreign economic assault. They cut across building the working-class solidarity and action needed to defeat the invasion by Moscow.

The U.S. rulers use their economic power not in the interests of toilers in Ukraine, but to defend their own imperialist interests. These interests are sharply counterposed to those of workers and farmers here, in Ukraine, in Russia and worldwide. That is why workers need our own independent foreign policy, above all on the question of war.

Strengthen the bonds of solidarity with Ivan Fedoseyev and many thousands like him across Russia. End Moscow's war on the people of Ukraine!

Talks are underway between Beijing and the government of the Solomon Islands, strategically located northeast of Australia in the South Pacific, that could lead to the Chinese rulers establishing a key naval base there. For decades the Solomon Islands' government had been allied with the rulers in Australia. The U.S. and Australian rulers have been more closely integrating their military forces in recent months. And the government in Canberra announced plans this month to rapidly expand its military.

will be lifted once the war is over.

"For Ukraine to win this war, two things will be needed: popular unity and international support. This ill-conceived decree risks jeopardizing both," Vitaliy Dudin, head of the Social Movement, said after the ban. "It's an unreasonable restriction on one of our most fundamental rights."

Invoking his government's declaration of martial law, Zelensky March 23 signed a new labor bill strengthening the powers of the bosses. Workers, including union members, can now be fired without notice or transferred to another job without consent. The maximum workweek was increased to 60 hours from 40 hours. Union contracts that set wages and working conditions can be suspended if bosses deem it necessary.

Zelensky also signed a decree that

Working people in Ukraine resist invasion by Moscow

Continued from front page

ing and arresting demonstrators, Russian forces have been unable to prevent residents from holding protests there against the occupation.

"Ukrainians are fighting courageously, often arms in hand, to defend Ukraine's national sovereignty and independence. The Socialist Workers Party hails their resistance and calls for the defeat of Putin's invading forces," says a statement by the party's national secretary, Jack Barnes.

"Washington and its capitalist allies in London, Paris, Berlin and elsewhere shed crocodile tears over Ukraine's national sovereignty and the plight of its people," he points out. "Their only real concern is to protect their own profits and strategic political interests."

The SWP "demands the complete withdrawal of all U.S. troops and both conventional and nuclear arms and nuclear missile systems from Europe!"

Chanting "Slavutych is Ukraine," 1,000 protested the Russian army's seizure of the town, home to hundreds of workers at the damaged Chernobyl nuclear power plant, March 26 and demanded the release of its captured mayor, Yuriy Fomichev. Occupying forces fired into the air, but demonstrators refused to disperse until Fomichev was freed. Shelling of the town of 25,000



Kharkiv Music Fest
"Concert between explosions" in Kharkiv subway bomb shelter March 26. Combat and protests against Moscow's war have been accompanied by widespread expressions of music, art.

the previous week prevented Chernobyl workers from returning to their homes, disrupting workers' shift rotation and endangering safety at the closed-down facility. The world's worst-ever nuclear disaster, covered up by Stalinist authorities, took place there in 1986.

Moscow's troops freed the mayor, but retain control of Slavutych and have imposed a curfew.

Mariupol continues to be fiercely defended by Ukrainian combatants, but some 160,000 civilians remain trapped and subjected to bombardment, lacking power, water and food. Ukrainian armed forces attacked and sank one of Russia's landing ships and damaged two others in the nearby occupied port of Berdyansk March 24.

The Russian high command is now trying to expand its occupation in Donetsk and Luhansk and encircle Ukrainian forces there. This includes two areas in eastern Ukraine where pro-Moscow separatist forces have fought Ukrainian government troops since 2014. One of Russian President Vladimir Putin's demands leading to the invasion is Moscow's control over the entire eastern provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk. This includes Mariupol.

Troops face resistance, difficulties

The Russian rulers wield a military force four times the size of Kyiv's and will use any cease-fire to consolidate and prepare for their next war moves. From civilian hospitals in Belarus to military hospitals in Moscow, medical staffs are inundated with injured Russian troops. A Kremlin-backed tabloid, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, cited a figure of 10,000 deaths before the news item was suppressed. Moscow is keen to hush up casualty figures and says only 1,351 Russian soldiers have been killed.

The demoralization of some Russian troops has affected the army's performance and threatens deeper problems both on the field and at home. After the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan it took 10 years for losses of 15,000 troops to mount up. With no way to win that war, troop morale disintegrating and the war unpopular at home, Soviet authorities were forced into a humiliating withdrawal of their forces.

With many reported desertions, the Kremlin has dispatched "execution squads" to kill soldiers found trying to flee the front lines. This copies the murderous methods used by Joseph

Stalin during World War II.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky continues to look to and plead with the U.S. government and other imperialist powers to unleash their deadly airpower to win the war for him. First and foremost, his government advances the interests of the Ukrainian capitalist class against its rivals in Russia and against working people.

War rift in Orthodox Church

Shortly after Putin's invasion of Ukraine was launched, Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church and a longtime ally of the Russian president, gave the war his blessing. Both Kirill and Putin promote Great Russian chauvinism to justify Moscow's reconquest of the prison house of nations that existed under both the czarist empire and the Stalinized Soviet Union.

But Ukrainian national rights have not always been trampled upon. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin, millions were led to overturn capitalist rule and establish a work-

ers and farmers government in 1917. It ensured that the rights of nations oppressed under the czars were staunchly defended, including the right to self-determination. Those conquests were reversed after Lenin's death during a counterrevolution led by Stalin.

The unpopular war has sparked a split within the church. Nearly 300 priests and deacons signed an open letter titled "Russian Priests for Peace." It reads, "We respect the God-given freedom of man, and we believe that the people of Ukraine should make their choice on their own, not at gunpoint, without pressure from the West or the East."

After anti-war demonstrations across Russia were broken up, with more than 15,000 arrests, protesters have come up with a new way to get around the cops and censors. In St. Petersburg and other cities, opponents of Putin's war are placing tiny clay figurines holding placards saying "no war" and Ukrainian colors in prominent spots and posting photos of them online.

In Moscow, perpetrators of an antisemitic attack left a severed pig's head and Jew-hating slogan at the door of Alexei Venediktov March 24. He is Jewish and the editor of the liberal radio station Echo of Moscow that was recently shut down by Russian authorities. A sticker placed across the symbol of Ukraine read "Judensau," a 13th century obscene reference in German aimed at Jews, and was tacked on his door.

Antisemitic attacks like this give the lie to the fiction peddled by state-controlled media that the war is a "special military operation" against Ukrainian "neo-Nazis." Putin targets anybody not supporting his war with venom, labeling them as "traitors to the motherland."

"Now Russia is at a crossroads," protester Valetin Belayev told the *Washington Post* in Kazan over 500 miles east of Moscow. "All of us now have a responsibility for what the future of our country and the world will be like."

War opens rifts between Moscow, Central Asian republics

Moscow's war against Ukrainian independence has opened rifts with the former Soviet republics in Central Asia whose governments have traditionally followed the Russian rulers' lead. The capitalist rulers in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — bounded by Russia, China, Afghanistan and the Caspian Sea — are all seeking some distance from the Russian regime today.

Abdulaziz Kamilov, Uzbekistan's foreign minister, called for an end to Moscow's "military actions and violence" in Ukraine. "Uzbekistan recognizes Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity," he told the country's Senate March 17. "We do not recognize the Luhansk and Donetsk republics." Expanded control over these Moscow-occupied Ukrainian territories is a central goal of the Russian invasion.

Kazakhstan's deputy foreign minister, Roman Vassilenko, told the German newspaper *Die Welt* March 28 that in seeking new capitalist investment his government didn't want to find itself on the wrong side of a new "Iron Curtain." This was Washington's term for the militarized dividing line between Eastern and Western Europe during the Cold War.

Kazakhstan, the region's largest country, was shaken by a working-class uprising in January. The regime there invited in Russian troops to help suppress the massive anti-government protests. Moscow expected greater obedience in response, but Russian forces were asked to leave a week later.

Kazakh authorities allowed a demonstration of 3,000 people against Moscow's war in Ukraine to go ahead in Almaty, the country's largest city, in early March, although they barred further actions.

The far-reaching sanctions imposed on Russia by Washington and other imperialist powers not only hit hardest at working people there, but also impact toilers in these Central Asian countries. Over 2.5 million migrants from this region worked in Russia in 2021, sending home remittances that are crucial for their families and the economies of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and, to a lesser extent, Uzbekistan. The blow to Russia's economy from the sanctions, already being felt, will deal blows to working people throughout the region.

— R. L.

BOOKS WORKERS NEED TODAY... ..ABOUT BUILDING THE ONLY KIND OF PARTY WORTHY OF THE NAME "REVOLUTIONARY"

\$35 for ALL FIVE books above WITH A MILITANT SUBSCRIPTION

PLUS 20% OFF all other Pathfinder books

SEE DISTRIBUTORS PAGE 8 OR VISIT PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

Stalin's oppression, Nazi occupation fuel fight for Ukraine independence

As Ukrainian working people, arms in hand, defend their country's sovereignty against Moscow's invasion today, the *Militant* features Samizdat, Voices of the Soviet Opposition, which contains clandestine writings circulated in the Soviet Union that challenged the anti-working-class regime under Joseph Stalin. The excerpt below is from "Vorkuta (1950-53): Oppositional Currents and the Mine Strikes." Author Brigitte Gerland, an East German revolutionary communist, was imprisoned for eight years in Stalin's Gulag. She helps explain the determined thirst for national independence that spurred the fierce Ukrainian resistance to both the German Nazi and Stalinized Soviet occupations. Copyright © 1974 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Grain taken from Ukrainian peasants near Kyiv, 1930, amid Stalinist forced collectivization and national oppression, led to widespread famine and death of almost 4 million Ukrainians.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY BRIGITTE GERLAND

In 1939, at a time when Stalin and Hitler agreed to divide Eastern Europe between them, the Soviet army entered Volhynia, Galicia, Bukovina, and Bessarabia. ... [T]he Soviet Republic of West Ukraine came into being; and the curtain rose on a new act of the Ukrainian drama, the most tragic and bloody in history.

It would go far beyond the scope of a newspaper article to enter into de-

tails about the many wars, uprisings, and desperate conspiracies which comprise West Ukraine's past. Suffice it to recall here that 15 million Ukrainians of Poland, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia were always an exploited minority, without any social and economic rights within these capitalist states. Whenever they fought for the most elementary rights, they invariably suffered every sort of persecution.

This is why the poor Ukrainian peasants, who had never submitted without gritting their teeth to their enemies and oppressors ... greeted the Soviet soldiers as liberators, showering them with garlands of flowers and treating them with food and vodka. But the first flush of enthusiasm was soon dissipated.

Instead of the division of big estates hoped for by the Ukrainians, who owned only tiny landstrips, they were faced with forced collectivization. This collectivization was carried out — without any ideological preparation — by incapable and ignorant bureaucrats, unable to provide the necessary technical and organizational premises for the collective farms then created overnight. The population reacted with unexpected violence to these measures. Buildings were burned down, the torch was set to crops, cattle were slaughtered, and the peasants took to the impassable swampy forests of the old Russo-Polish frontier.

That is how the partisan movement was born in the West Ukraine, which

to this day keeps the Soviet army busy. After a few embarrassed attempts to report the story of "kulak" sabotage, the Stalinist bureaucrats drew a curtain of silence around the fierce resistance of a sister people, disappointed in their liberation.

As the struggle against collectivization, enforced with feverish haste, grew more and more desperate, the bureaucracy resorted to ever harsher methods to extend its power over the newly conquered lands. Finally they resorted to deportations to the Siberian taiga on a big scale. Entire villages were uprooted, insofar, that is, as it was possible to round up the inhabitants. In most cases only the grandparents, the sick, and the newly born could be found; every able-bodied individual had already left to join the partisans.

Into this atmosphere, amid the blood-red glare of burning huts, the Germans launched their invasion, after Hitler had torn up the friendship pact with Stalin like a scrap of paper. The Ukrainian peasants left their forest hideouts to greet the new liberators, omitting this time the flowers, not to mention the food and vodka. But once again, full of hope, they expected, no longer the division of big estates, but the dismemberment of the hastily formed collectives that lacked machines, cattle, and above all workers.

But they awaited with an even greater impatience the formation of an indepen-

dent Ukrainian state, which the Germans had promised in return for economic assistance. To their disappointment this state was never created; on the contrary, the comrades and allies found themselves suddenly branded as "sub-human Orientals," fit only to eke out a miserable slave existence in the factories of the Master Nation conducting a victorious war. An era opened up of arrests, concentration camps, and forced labor on the territories of the German state.

All those who were able once again took to the forests, taking along some of the youth who had no desire to choose between the Ukrainian SS (storm troopers) and the German labor camps.

The struggle continued; all that changed was the face of the enemy. ... Nevertheless the collapse of Germany once more rekindled hopes for an independent West Ukrainian state. The peasants were convinced that the Western powers would keep the promises they made over the radio and through their secret emissaries; and that, at long last, the eternal minority would become a nation.

But nothing came of it. The victorious Soviet army made its second entry. This time no one met them with flowers, and it wasn't just because the tanks and armored cars had destroyed everything. For the West Ukrainians liberated from "the yoke," the war was not over. The partisans had suffered great losses, but meanwhile new generations had grown up and the disintegrating German army left behind large stocks of weapons and munitions. At least the problem of arms seemed solved for a number of years.

Soviet soldiers now swarmed in the West Ukrainian villages, just as previously did the German soldiers. But the peasants continued to live as before in the holes they had dug amid the vast marshes, having forever discarded the plow in exchange for a rifle. For them there was no road back. ...

The right of nations to self-determination was ever a part of the Bolshevik program. The bureaucratic epigones try to get around this by claiming that West Ukraine is merely an appendage to East Ukraine. ...

As late as summer 1953 the Soviet government had still not succeeded in establishing tranquillity and order in the Ukraine, not even the peace of the cemetery.

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: **Oakland:** 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Zip: 94621. Tel: (510) 686-1351. Email: swpoak@sbcglobal.net **Los Angeles:** 2826 S. Vermont. Suite 1. Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 643-4968. Email: swpla@att.net

FLORIDA: **Miami:** 1444 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 215. Zip: 33132. Tel: (305) 929-8966. Email: swpmiami@icloud.com

GEORGIA: **Atlanta:** 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. Email: swpatlanta@fastmail.com

ILLINOIS: **Chicago:** 1858 W. Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Zip: 60608. Tel: (312) 792-6160. Email: SWPChicago@fastmail.fm

MINNESOTA: **Minneapolis:** 2401 1/2 Central Ave. NE, Unit B. Zip: 55418. Tel: (612) 271-1930. Email: swpminneapolis@gmail.com

NEBRASKA: **Lincoln:** P.O. Box 6811. Zip: 68506. Tel: (402) 217-4906. Email: swplincoln@gmail.com

NEW JERSEY: 3600 Bergenline, Suite 205B, Union City. Zip: 07087. Tel: (551) 240-1512. swpnewjersey@gmail.com

NEW YORK: **New York:** 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (646) 434-8117. Email: newyorkswp@gmail.com **Albany:** 285 Washington Ave. #1R. Zip: 12206. Tel: (518) 810-1586. Email: albanyswp@gmail.com

OHIO: **Cincinnati:** 2300 Montana Ave., Suite 230. Zip: 45211. Tel: (513) 837-1038. Email: swpcincinnati@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA: **Philadelphia:** 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. Zip: 19149. Tel: (215) 708-1270. Email: philaswp@verizon.net **Pittsburgh:** 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 313. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 610-2402. Email: swppittsburgh@gmail.com

TEXAS: **Dallas-Fort Worth:** 6815 Manhattan Blvd., Suite 108 Fort Worth. Zip: 76120. Tel: (469) 513-1051. Email: dfswp@gmail.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 7603 Georgia Ave. NW, Suite 300. Zip: 20012. Tel: (202) 536-5080. Email: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: **Seattle:** 650 S. Orcas St., #120 Zip: 98108. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Email: swpseattle@gmail.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: Suite 103, 124-128 Beamish St. Campsie. Postal Address: P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 8677 0108. Email: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: **Montreal:** 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: cllcmontreal@fastmail.com

FRANCE

Paris: BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15. Email: militant.paris@gmail.com

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: 188a Onehunga Mall, Onehunga. Postal address: P.O. Box 13857, Auckland 1643. Tel: (09) 636-3231. Email: clauack@xtra.co.nz

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: **London:** 5 Norman Road (first floor). Seven Sisters. Post code: N15 4ND. Tel: 020-3538 8900. Email: cllondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** 329, Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Post code: M2 7PE. Tel: (0161) 312-8119. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com

Pathfinder Readers Club Specials

30% DISCOUNT



Samizdat

Voices of the Soviet Opposition
EDITED BY
GEORGE SAUNDERS
Clandestine writings in the Soviet Union from 1920s to 1970s opposing

Stalinist bureaucratic rule, repression. \$23. Special price \$16

Mother Jones Speaks

Speeches and Writings of a Working-Class Fighter
\$30. Special price \$21

W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks, 1920-1963

PHILIP S. FONER, W.E.B. DU BOIS
\$20. Special price \$14

The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1928-29)

LEON TROTSKY
\$25. Special price \$17.50

Lenin's Final Fight

V.I. LENIN
\$17. Special price \$12

Aldobonazo

Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58, a participant's account
AMANDO HART
\$20. Special price \$14

Join the Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT
PATHFINDERPRESS.COM
OFFER GOOD UNTIL April 30

Working people need to take political power

Since the Vladimir Putin regime in Moscow began its murderous invasion of Ukraine, seeking to obliterate that country's existence as an independent nation, the Socialist Workers Party has stepped up explaining that the U.S.-dominated imperialist world system is marching toward fascism and war.

"War is the end result of the ceaseless capitalist hunt for profits, markets, colonies, spheres of influence," the SWP National Committee wrote in a 1945 statement issued after the U.S. rulers' atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "No trust whatsoever can be placed in the 'peace-loving' declarations of the statesmen of capitalism.

"Only the utter wiping out of capitalist rule throughout the world can ensure that atomic explosives will never again be used for mass murder."

Today the bloody hands of the dog-eat-dog capitalist system of exploitation and oppression extends its reach into every corner of the world. Rising conflicts between Washington, Moscow and Beijing, and the efforts of capitalist rulers from Germany to Australia to acquire ever larger weapons and military forces, point toward a future of both mounting class battles, struggles for national liberation and imperialist war.

As the stakes in this world for working people rise, a revolutionary working-class party turns more deeply to "the life, struggles, activity and politics of the only class that — when its organizations are mobilized in action in its own interests — can and will affect the course of history, including decisions on war and peace," SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes writes in "The Working-Class Campaign Against Imperialism and War," available in *New Internationalist* no. 7.

Today SWP members fight alongside fellow workers against bosses' assaults on wages, for schedules that allow for a family life, safe working conditions and our dignity on the job. We join the picket lines of striking oil refinery workers at Chevron, build the United Mine Workers April 6 rally for striking miners at Warrior Met in Alabama and discuss with farmers and truckers how we can join together to combat the

ruinous impact of soaring prices.

Everywhere we point to the need for workers to act on the interests we share in common with working people worldwide and place no trust in the capitalists who exploit us at home. Today that means defending Ukraine's independence, calling for the defeat of Moscow's war of conquest and demanding the U.S. imperialist rulers get all their troops and nuclear weapons out of Europe.

The SWP's 1945 statement summoned workers to fight for a better world. "Let the cataclysmic horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki serve as a clarion call to the working class!" it said. "The workers must wrench the power from the hands of the blood-drenched capitalist criminals and take their destiny in their own hands."

Fight to end war falls to the working class

The end of the Second World War did not bring peace as the capitalist rulers in Washington turned their full attention to using all weapons at their command to advance their new position as imperialist top dog. Innumerable bloody conflicts since then — from Washington's wars in Korea and Vietnam, to Iraq and Afghanistan, to Moscow's slaughter in Ukraine today — show their promises to bring peace were lies. The fight to end capitalist exploitation and with it the threat of nuclear destruction remains the task of working people worldwide.

Conscious of our own destiny, workers and our allies will have opportunities to build a leadership we need, one that can carry that struggle through to the end. Our capacities to do so were demonstrated in practice by working people in Cuba, who, led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, carried out the first socialist revolution in our lifetimes. They showed workers are capable of forging a leadership proven in battle, trusted by millions and armed with a program to unite the exploited and oppressed to take political power into our own hands.

Join SWP members campaigning against imperialism and war!

Rolls-Royce workers strike over jobs, pensions

Continued from front page

cies Act to break up February protests by truckers in Ottawa.

The 530 Rolls-Royce workers, members of the Quebec Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), went on strike March 15. "Around 10 years ago the company said workers had a 'toxic culture' and it had to change," Larin explained. "It was like a kick in the teeth. They were looking for every possible way to save money to increase their profits. Eventually they began to go after our wages, our pensions and our benefits."

This is their first strike since the 1970s, Paul d'Amico, who has worked there 33 years, said.

Kyiv gov't attacks rights

Continued from page 7

unity most working people forged through the Maidan. This is the unity they need in battles today to win working-class public opinion in Russia to demand Putin get out of Ukraine.

Unions, particularly the miners' unions, organized to protect workers' wages and working conditions. Last December miners organized by the Independent Trade Union of Miners carried out underground sit-ins and aboveground protests at mines near Kryvyi Rih and Lviv.

At the end of December the union's lawyer, Mykhailo Terosipov, stressed that adoption of labor bills already under consideration at that time would make it significantly more difficult for workers to use their unions to protect their rights, safety and pay. The war is being used by the capitalist government in Ukraine to advance these measures further.

Workers everywhere should stand against these attacks on Ukrainian workers, as well as the Kyiv government's bans on political parties they disagree with.

"During that time the unions have become weaker and weaker."

Union members realized they had to fight back, Larin said, especially when Rolls-Royce showed its unwillingness to negotiate after the contract expired two years ago. "We organized a number of one-hour work stoppages, a one-day walkout, and several noise-making protests in the plant to show them how unhappy we were," he added. "These actions put us in a stronger position to strike."

As workers were meeting to vote on a strike mandate, the company informed them that they were locked out. Angered by the company's show of contempt for the union, the vote was 94% for walking out.

Workers told the *Militant* that pensions are the single biggest issue. Even though they haven't had a pension increase in 10 years, Rolls-Royce wants more cuts to their retirement benefits. The bosses want to get rid of the defined benefit plan that covers most workers and replace it with an inferior and less secure defined contribution scheme.

Their current pension plan is also two tiered, with the defined benefit plan only available to workers who were hired before 2013. The union is fighting to end this, Jawad Kassef, a picket captain said. "It creates divisions. We're fighting for equality for everyone. It's important for the new generation of workers."

The company wants to double the cost of health benefits for current employees and demands the elimination of all benefits for retirees. The union is demanding a five-year contract, with wage levels and benefits retroactive to March 2020 when the old contract ran out. This includes a 5% annual wage increase.

"We've given up a lot of concessions to the company," Kassef said. "Now we're saying enough is enough. This has to stop."

Jim Upton, a retired member of the CSN local, contributed to this article.

Attack on speech at Yale

Continued from front page

liberal American Humanist Association. The disrupters charge the Alliance Defending Freedom with being a "hate group" that should be shut down.

As soon as the program began, students started heckling. When Kate Stith, the law school professor who was chairing, informed them they were violating the Ivy League school's free-speech policy, they yelled back, claiming that disrupting the meeting was exercising their right to free speech.

They continued to heckle. Stith told them to "grow up." She said they were welcome to stay and listen to the program and ask questions in the discussion period, but otherwise they would have to leave.

After shouting some more and chanting, "protect trans kids," all but a few of the disrupters left the room. They gathered in the hallway outside and continued to shout and bang on the walls of the room, trying to drown out the speakers. Despite this, the meeting was able to proceed. At the end, cops escorted Waggoner and Miller from the building for their protection.

The two were speaking on a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of a lawsuit by Chike Unzeugbunam, a student at Georgia Gwinnett College. That school had banned Unzeugbunam from passing out religious material on campus or even speaking in a designated "free speech" zone about his beliefs.

The Federalist Society said it organized the panel discussion to show that a conservative Christian and a liberal atheist could find common ground on free-speech issues. The Alliance Defending Freedom says its goals are "protecting religious freedom, free speech, marriage and family, parental rights, and the sanctity of life." Along with its reactionary opposition to equal rights for gays and to a woman's right to choose whether and when to have children, it also opposes men who "identify" as woman competing in women's sports.

Workers need discussion, debate

These are all serious questions that are being widely discussed and debated by working people.

But the disrupters wanted to bar discussion. They handed out flyers claiming, "through your attendance you are personally complicit" with the conservative Alliance Defending Freedom.

After the attack on the meeting, 417 current law students, a majority of Yale Law School's student body, and 20 student groups signed a letter justifying the disruption and condemning college authorities for allowing the meeting to take place.

By attempting to shut down the meeting, the disrupters allowed opponents of equal rights and women's emancipation to claim the mantle of defenders of free speech. *Washington Post* columnist Marc Thiessen noted that "when you shout someone down, you're not participating in argument — you are trying to prevent the argument."

Yale Law School is not an exception. Ten days earlier, students at the University of California Hastings College of the Law successfully shut down a meeting featuring Ilya Shapiro, a professor from Georgetown Law School. Shapiro opposes nominating someone to the Supreme Court based solely on the criteria promoted by President Joseph Biden, that the person must be a Black woman.

Instead of debating Shapiro's arguments, they pounded on desks, ridiculed his hairline and called him a coward, a racist and more. Some students at Hastings demanded the establishment of a committee of "diverse student representatives" with authority to ban future campus speakers who they disagree with.

As the class struggle heats up, these middle-class meritocratic future lawyers and judges denouncing free speech will be who working people face in court.

Working people need to oppose these moves, which undermine hard-fought conquests codified in the Bill of Rights — rights working people need to advance union and political struggles. It's only through discussion and debate that workers and farmers can forge a road forward as we confront the impact of the bosses' assaults on wages and conditions and the wars the rulers send us to fight and die in.

Now you can subscribe,
contribute online at
www.themilitant.com