

Workers win union vote at NY Amazon warehouse

BY SETH GALINSKY
AND WILLIE COTTON

STATEN ISLAND, New York — Showing a growing desire to resist speedup, unsafe conditions, bosses’ disrespect and the need to win higher wages, workers at the massive JFK8 Amazon warehouse here voted 2,654 to 2,131 in favor of the Amazon Labor Union. It’s the first time workers at an Amazon facility in the U.S. have won a union election.

Worried that workers at its other warehouses will follow suit, Amazon bosses said they are considering filing to get the vote overturned, claiming the National Labor Relations Board had used “inappropriate and undue influence” in favor of the union. Amazon, owned by multibillionaire Jeff Bezos, is the second largest private employer in the United States.

“If anyone can claim the process was unfair, it’s us!” Amazon Labor Union President Chis Smalls told the *Militant* at the bus stop by the warehouse April
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Court ruling for the Gibsons is a victory for working people

BY TERRY EVANS

Ohio’s Ninth District Court of Appeals unanimously upheld a 2019 jury verdict and \$31 million award won by the Gibson family, owners of a fifth-generation local bakery and store in Oberlin, against a yearslong race-baiting and defamatory assault by Oberlin College administrators and staff.

The ruling is a victory both for the family and for the rights of all working people.

The March 31 appeals court decision affirmed the decisions of the Lorain County trial court, which heard the lawsuit brought by owners Allyn W. Gibson and son David against the college and Dean of Students Meredith Raimondo.

The Gibsons sued to defend their reputations and business after being smeared as “racists” with a “history of discrimination.”

Oberlin, a town of 8,000, is dominated by the college. It commands an
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Defend independence of Ukraine! For defeat of Moscow’s invasion!



Oleg Berehovy

Residents of Ivankiv, 50 miles northwest of Kyiv, celebrate ouster of Moscow’s occupation troops April 1. Fierce resistance by Ukrainian people forced Russian retreat. Despite brutal repression by Vladimir Putin regime, working people in Russia find ways to protest Ukraine war.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

After over a month of stubborn resistance by Ukrainian forces and volunteers against Moscow’s invasion, two-thirds of Russian ground forces have withdrawn from around the

US troops, nuclear arms out of Europe! End US sanctions!

capital, Kyiv, and from Chernobyl, Chernihiv, Sumy and numerous other smaller towns.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is attempting to consolidate his forces further east, to focus his assault on

Five cops fired in Pittsburgh for 2021 Taser killing of Jim Rogers

BY TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH — Over five months after Jim Rogers died after a city cop repeatedly stunned him with a Taser Oct. 13, Pittsburgh Mayor Edward Gainey and Public Safety Director Lee Schmidt announced March 23 that five officers involved had been fired. Retraining was ordered for three others. The police and city administration continue to conceal the names of the cops.

Rogers, a 54-year-old African American who was homeless, was confronted by the cops after they received a report that he had taken a bicycle he found in a front yard, rode it around, and then returned it. The cops said he was “non-compliant,” and moved to detain him,
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seizing the eastern Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk, parts of which were occupied by Russian-backed separatist forces in 2014.

Putin’s military continues its murderous bombardment of Kharkiv in the northeast and Mariupol in the south.

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Amid scramble for oil, fight for nuclear power is the road to electrification

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Part of the crisis conditions created by capitalism today and deepened by Moscow’s war on Ukraine is the lack of access to electrical power for millions. Days after the invasion, governments worldwide began racing to lock up alternative supplies of oil, gas and
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Militant/Josefina Otero

Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for Texas governor, shows truck driver Richard Swim *Militant* and book *Teamster Rebellion* at truck stop March 29. “Workers need fighting unions,” she said.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

“I was thinking about leasing a truck, but now I won’t because of the costs of fuel and other things,” trucker Richard Swim, 24, told Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, while she was campaigning at a truck stop in Weatherford, Texas, March 29.

He told Kennedy he filled up his rig in Oklahoma recently and it cost \$645. “I owned a truck, but had to get rid of it

when COVID hit and the price of freight went down,” he said.

Kennedy pointed to the convoy of truckers in Washington, D.C., protesting attacks on their livelihoods and the year-long strike by the United Mine Workers at Warrior Met in Alabama to reverse pay cuts and other concessions forced on them in 2016. “These examples of working people standing up to bosses and the government are so important,” she said.
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Islamist groups launch terror attacks against Jews in Israel

BY SETH GALINSKY

Eleven people were killed in three terrorist attacks inside Israel March 22-29, as reactionary Islamist forces sought to inspire a wave of anti-Jewish violence, widening divisions between Jews and Arabs and undermining increased diplomatic and economic ties between Israel and Arab and Muslim governments in the region.

Of the 11 killed, seven were Jewish, two were Ukrainian immigrants, one was a Christian-Arab policeman and one was a Druze border guard. Jews were the target, but the terrorists didn't really care who else they murdered.

Most Arab citizens of Israel are opposed to the attacks, as are many Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But the Israeli government's policy of carrying out collective pun-

ishment — often tearing down the homes of perpetrators' families, regardless of whether or not the families condemn the attacks — fuels resentment that is fostered and utilized by Islamist terror outfits.

The first attack was carried out in Beersheba by Mohammad Ghaleb Abu Al Qi'an, a Bedouin and Israeli citizen from the nearby town of Hura. He ran over and killed a bicycle rider and stabbed to death three others in eight minutes. He had pledged allegiance to Islamic State.

The second attack by two brothers, Arab citizens of Israel from Umm al-Fahm, was also claimed by Islamic State. That March 27 assault left two border police dead in Hadera.

The third attack in Bnei Brak, was carried out by Diaa Hamarsheh, a resident of the West Bank city of Ya'bad. He killed five people with an M-16 rifle, including two non-Jewish Ukrainian construction workers and an Arab-Christian police officer, Amir Khouri, who was engaged to a Jewish woman.

In response to the killings, the Israel Defense Forces and police carried out a wave of arrests in the West Bank and Israel and the IDF reinforced its combat battalions in the West Bank.

Hamas, the reactionary Islamist party that rules Gaza, praised all three sets of killings. "We are proud of the Palestinian people and the free people of the nation in the face of the heroic attacks that struck all of Israel," said Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh.

Another Hamas leader, Saleh Al-Arouri, called the attacks a response



AP/Tsafrir Abayov

Funeral of Menachem Yehezkel March 23 in Beersheba, Israel. He was one of 11 people killed in terrorist attacks in Israel last month carried out by reactionary Islamist forces.

to the March 28 summit of top government officials from Israel, the U.S, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates, held in the Negev desert, the first such meeting on Israeli soil.

It was a direct outgrowth of agreements made in 2020 between the Israeli government and four Arab governments that ended decades of treating Israel as a pariah state.

Advanced by the Donald Trump administration, the pacts were tied to building a common front against the expanding military influence of the regime in Iran, which opposes Sunni Arab governments and calls for the destruction of Israel. The pacts led to greater trade and other relations. They also opened the door to more travel and contact between Israeli and Arab workers, which can advance their unity and solidarity in defending working-class interests against attacks by bosses and their governments.

Days after the Negev summit, the first ever visit took place by an Israeli president to a Jordanian monarch. President Isaac Herzog met King Abdullah II in Amman, Jordan, March 30.

Many Arabs in Israel spoke out against the attacks. "We strongly condemn this spe-

cific attack [in Beersheba] and all others," Habes Al-Atawneh, chair of the municipal council in the Bedouin town of Hura, told i24NEWS. "We're meant to live and work together."

Terror attacks widely condemned

"There's fear that the attack will harm coexistence in general," Umm al-Fahm resident Mohammed Abu Hussein told Haaretz. "This is an act that doesn't reflect the Arab community."

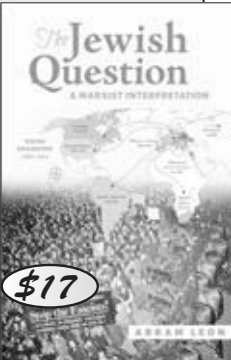
Mansour Abbas, leader of the United Arab List, which is part of the coalition of governing capitalist parties, called the killings "a despicable, vile terror crime."

"We are determined to walk a peaceful path, despite all the extremists," he said.

In a relatively rare statement, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the terror attacks, saying, "The killing of Israeli and Palestinian civilians will only lead to a deterioration of the situation ahead of Ramadan." But if Abbas wanted to help put an end to these deadly assaults he could end the so-called Palestinian Authority Martyrs Fund, which makes monthly payments totaling millions of dollars to the families of residents of the West Bank who die in the course of carrying out exactly such killings.

Further reading. . .

Why is Jew-hatred still raising its ugly head? What are its class roots? Why is there no solution to the Jewish question without revolutionary struggles that transform



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Militant/Rachele Fruit

Rally, caravan in Miami March 27 demand end to U.S. government's embargo of Cuba.

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Managing Editor: Terry Evans

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

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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Campaign against Putin’s war

Continued from front page

“What we need is our own party, a labor party to help organize working people to fight and to back struggles of workers and farmers in other countries — including Ukrainians fighting to defeat Moscow’s invasion of their country and for national sovereignty.”

Kennedy showed him photographs in *Teamster Rebellion*, a book by SWP leader Farrell Dobbs, which show “the battles of coal haulers in the 1930s to win a union and a contract that led to organizing over-the-road drivers in 11 states into the Teamsters union.” Swim bought the book, a *Militant* subscription, and contributed \$5 to the Militant Fighting Fund.

In visits to several truck stops, SWP members in Dallas-Ft. Worth have sold 13 subscriptions, 55 copies of the paper, 13 books by Dobbs and other SWP leaders and revolutionaries from around the world, and received \$51 in contributions to the Militant Fighting Fund.

Discussions with workers that party members meet going door to door and at strike picket lines and other actions to defend working-class interests are at the heart of the international propaganda campaign by the SWP and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K. The goal is to win 1,600 new readers to the *Militant* and get out a similar number of books that draw out lessons from past working-class battles crucial to building the party workers need today.

The drive includes raising \$165,000 in the working class for the Militant Fighting Fund. Party members are getting a strong response. Hundreds of dollars have been contributed by workers who agree it’s important for the *Militant* to get as wide a circulation as possible.

Knocking on doors in Patterson,

a city in California’s Central Valley, Joel Britton, SWP candidate for governor of California, met Maria Chapa April 2. She works in the tomato fields and as a home health care worker who is a member of the Service Employees International Union. She welcomed the party’s call for working people to organize independently of the Republican and Democratic parties and wanted to discuss the situation facing immigrant workers.

At a nearby nut processing plant “the company takes advantage of immigrants,” Chapa said. “They treat them terribly. They divide the workers and keep the union out.”

Reaching out to farmworkers

“The unions need to fight for amnesty for all immigrant workers here without papers,” Britton said. “This is in the interests of all workers, to unite us.”

“When I go to Mexico, workers are facing the same problems,” she said. “Don’t you think instead of so many coming to the U.S. they need to fight for unions and a change in Mexico?”

“The answer is for all workers to organize. Workers are an international class with common interests in our fights against exploitation, oppression and wars, like the one in Ukraine,” Britton said.

Chapa signed up for a *Militant* subscription and purchased *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* and *In Defense of the US Working Class*.



Joel Britton, SWP candidate for governor of California, shows Maria Chapa the *Militant* in Patterson, in Central Valley April 2. Chapa got a subscription as well as two books on special.

In the United Kingdom, Hugo Wils, Communist League candidate for Manchester City Council, discussed defending Ukraine’s independence with Peter Arnaouti and Jane Woodward on their doorstep in Moston April 3.

“We should be doing a lot more for them,” Woodward said.

“Yes, the working class needs to support the fight to defeat the invasion,” Wils said, “but we don’t give any support to what the British government does, like the sanctions on Russia.”

Woodward agreed. “These sanctions hurt everyone,” she said. She and Arnaouti own a fish and chip shop. He explained that a lot of fish

sold in British cafes is bought from Russia and sanctions have pushed the price up. “I used to buy a box for 130 pounds” (\$170), he said, “but it has doubled over the past two months.” They subscribed to the *Militant*.

To join the campaign to 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.

Betsey Stone in Oakland, California, contributed to this article.

Workers win union vote at NY Amazon warehouse

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3, two days after the NLRB recognized the union victory. “They had anti-union meetings every day where we were not allowed to present the union side! How was that fair? They printed up ‘Vote No’ T-shirts. They fired an organizer. They spent millions of dollars to defeat us while we spent just \$100,000. And we still won.”

Smalls helped launch the union drive after he was fired from his job as a supervisor at the JFK8 warehouse in March 2020 for raising concerns over working conditions as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded.

As hundreds of workers walked by during the late afternoon shift change, many came up to Smalls and other leaders of the union to give them a hug, shake their hands and celebrate. Union supporters have been at the bus stop every day for a year, winning support for the effort.

While Amazon banned workers from talking about the union during work hours, union supporters won the right to pass out literature in the break rooms — including on their days off — and organized potluck meals there as part of winning support for their fight. They brought together workers who are Black, Caucasian, from Puerto Rico, Haiti, Africa and South Asia.

Smalls says he’s been getting calls from Amazon workers around the country who are inspired to launch organizing drives. Some 1,500 workers at a smaller Amazon facility across the street from the JFK8 warehouse will start voting on the union on April 25.

A similar vote at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, on recognizing the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union is still up in the air. The initial results there showed the union losing by 118 votes, but 416 ballots are contested.

“I was surprised the vote here was so close,” Christopher Medina said as he waited for the bus home. “The work here is intense. And if you are five minutes late, they dock you an hour’s pay. Having a union will be beneficial.”

The standard workday is 10 hours. During the pandemic Amazon increased break time by five minutes but has since taken that back. The work pace is so brutal, that turnover is some 150% every year. Workers work under constant boss surveillance. Most workers get from \$18.25 to \$21.50 an hour, but CEO Andy Jassy took home \$212 million last year, Amazon disclosed the same day as the union victory.

‘We’re not robots’

“We’re not robots, we need a union, that’s why I voted yes,” said Kamil Zurke who works as a “water spider,” scanning items and making sure work stations are fully stocked. “My father is in the Teamsters and gets benefits — we should too.”

Despite the union victory, some workers are still worried about company retaliation and asked their names not be used. “The pay is OK, but it could be better,” said one worker who voted

for the union. “But it’s a fast pace. You rush in the bathroom because you’re always thinking, ‘I better get back so the supervisor doesn’t complain.’”

As part of its anti-union campaign, Amazon told workers they should vote no because the ALU is not affiliated to any established union and has “never negotiated a union contract.”

Smalls points out that ALU has been getting assistance from other unions, including UNITE HERE and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Amazon told workers the new union will charge hundreds of dollars in dues each year but can’t guarantee any improvements.

“A lot of co-workers asked about the dues,” said longtime Amazon worker Angelika Maldonado, who is a member of the union-organizing committee. The ALU plans to charge \$5 a week. “I tell them it’s like food in the freezer. You may not need it now, but you’ll need it later.”

Workers who come from other parts of the city and don’t have a car have to take public transportation to the Staten Island Ferry and then a bus — often standing room only — to the warehouse.

“In 2018 Amazon said they were going to put on their own bus from the ferry,” Maldonado said. “Now four years later there’s still no shuttle.”

Among the demands the union is raising are an immediate 7.5% inflation adjustment raise; reinstating 20 minute breaks; and a full day’s pay for anyone who has to leave work early due to an on-the-job injury.

Winning the union vote is just the first step. Maldonado is reaching out to workers who voted no. “I tell them ‘I don’t care how you voted. We won the union. Now we all have to come together and fight for our demands.’”

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund

March 12-May 17 (week three)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	d
UNITED STATES						
Albany	90	15	90	30	\$8,500	\$1,760
Atlanta	90	34	90	33	\$11,500	\$3,005
Chicago	125	51	125	27	\$14,000	\$4,245
Cincinnati	90	29	90	24	\$5,500	\$2,423
Dallas-Ft. Worth	65	37	65	30	\$4,500	\$1,125
Lincoln	15	7	15	7	\$400	\$126
Los Angeles	100	42	120	27	\$14,500	\$1,373
Miami	35	8	35	19	\$5,000	\$1,850
Minneapolis	70	24	70	39	\$5,500	\$1,923
N. New Jersey	90	46	90	44	\$7,250	\$2,967
New York	125	49	125	61	\$17,500	\$5,883
Oakland	100	54	100	47	\$14,000	\$5,429
Philadelphia	40	12	40	14	\$4,250	\$3,240
Pittsburgh	50	19	50	9	\$5,000	\$1,337
Seattle	70	16	70	17	\$13,000	\$4,706
Washington	65	22	65	27	\$5,000	\$2,113
Other						
Total U.S.	1220	465	1240	455	\$135,400	\$43,505
Prisoners	45	48				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	50	39	50	35	\$4,000	\$564
Manchester	45	25	45	25	\$2,000	\$200
Total U.K.	95	64	95	60	\$6,000	\$764
Canada	110	44	110	40	\$13,670	\$2,498
New Zealand	35	16	35	13	\$4,000	\$2,030
Australia	35	15	35	9	\$2,500	\$270
Total	1,540	652	1,515	577	\$161,570	\$49,067
SHOULD BE	1,600	528	1,600	528	\$165,000	\$54,450

Toilers fight for electrification

Continued from front page
coal from non-Russian sources.

President Joseph Biden announced the largest-ever release of oil from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserves March 31, in an attempt to force down soaring prices.

Berlin is scrambling to ramp up coal production and is hunting for other sources of natural gas after its decision to shut down the country’s nuclear plants left Germany’s ruling families utterly dependent on Russian fuel.

The governments of Japan, South Korea and other Asian countries are now vying with European firms to buy U.S. liquefied natural gas supplies.

Working people in the semicolonial countries are left to fend for themselves. The national power grid in Nigeria collapsed last month plunging major cities into darkness for days.

All this comes on top of the widespread discussion, sometimes lapsing into middle-class hysteria, over the need to find alternatives to generating energy by burning fossil fuels.

The labor movement in the United States and other industrialized countries, as a fundamental act of solidarity, should fight to aid the development of electrification worldwide. There is no technical reason why everyone shouldn’t have the power needed for modern schools and hospitals, homes, transport and sanitation. Electrification is an elementary precondition for modern industry and cultural life.

There is an answer to make electricity widely and cheaply available — expanding nuclear power. It produces the greatest amount of energy with the least use of resources and the smallest output of atmospheric pollution. Despite all the rosy predictions by “climate change” business proponents, 75% of the energy used world-

wide today comes from coal, oil and gas. These fuels take a huge toll on public health, the health of workers in those industries and on the earth.

Fewer than half of those who live in the world’s least-developed countries today have power. In some areas, including Sub-Saharan Africa, that number is growing.

Some 2.6 billion people worldwide lack enough power for modern appliances. They cook or heat their homes using polluting open fires or simple stoves fueled by kerosene, wood or coal. Each year close to 4 million people die prematurely from illnesses attributable to the resulting household air pollution, causing half of deaths from pneumonia for children under 5 years old.

Without electricity millions are forced to carry water by hand each day, a back-breaking task that largely falls on women and girls.

Widespread use of nuclear power can solve these problems. And safety issues posed by nuclear energy and the disposal of radioactive wastes aren’t immutable facts of nature. They are the product of the capitalist rulers’ disdain for safety in their scramble to maximize profits. Capitalists run *all* production on this basis. Working people can fight for workers control of production to assure safe operation.

From the earliest stages of class-divided society, the propertied classes have organized labor to advance their private gain with no concern for the social consequences. Capitalists use labor as an expendable beast of burden, while they simultaneously deplete the soil, destroy forests through slash-and-burn or other destructive farming methods, wipe out animal life through overhunting and overfishing, and poison streams, ponds and other bodies of water.

Like all political questions working people confront today, the road to expanding energy production, cleanly and safely, needs to start with the interests of the working class worldwide. We need to fight for concrete steps that can narrow the gap between workers in imperialist and developing countries, and between the exploited classes in urban and rural areas.

Expanding access to electricity and making it affordable was one of the first tasks taken up by working people in Cuba after they took political power in 1959 and made a socialist revolution. Today 99.8% of the population has access. The recent installation of solar

Alabama rally backs miners strike against Warrior Met



Militant/Maggie Trowe

MCCALLA, Alabama — United Mine Workers of America members who’ve been on strike for a year against Warrior Met Coal were joined in a solidarity rally here April 6 by hundreds of unionists from across the South and Midwest. Over 1,500 workers chanted “UMWA” and “One day longer, one day stronger” at the spirited gathering.

AFL-CIO union federation presidents from Virginia, Kentucky and Alabama joined UMWA President Cecil Roberts in condemning Warrior Met for its union-busting efforts and pledged to build more support. Anthony Shelton, president of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union, told the rally, “The BCTGM had four strikes last year and we got solidarity and won them. The UMWA and other unions helped us and we’re helping you. We’re going to win this one!”

“We hear about Russian oligarchs,” Kentucky AFL-CIO President Bill Londrigan said, “but we have oligarchs in the U.S., like the ones trying to break the union here.”

“I’m on the bus because I hate it when companies try to take advantage of workers,” retired Ford and United Auto Workers Local 862 member Will Minter told this *Militant* worker-correspondent. He and his wife, Debbie, rode on the Kentucky AFL-CIO bus from Louisville with members of the UAW, Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers and BCTGM.

Warrior Met is a major U.S. producer of metallurgical coal that is sold to steel bosses worldwide.

Jim Walter Resources, former owner of the mine, went belly up in 2015. As part of bankruptcy proceedings, top hedge fund creditors led by BlackRock told miners they would only take over and keep the mine operating if workers accepted wage cuts of over 20%, higher costs for health care, forced Sunday work and more concessions.

Even though the mine is now highly profitable, the bosses are demanding further givebacks.

The mine is less than 30 miles from Bessemer, where many Amazon warehouse workers are fighting for a union. Some strikers are working at the warehouse, as the battle with Warrior Met continues.

Braxton Wright, a striker working at Amazon, joined in pushing for a union there. He tells co-workers they should look at what having the United Mine Workers has done for the miners.

Send donations to UMWA 2021 Strike Fund at P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026. Send messages of support to UMWA District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216, McCalla, AL 35111.

— MAGGIE TROWE

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ILLINOIS

Chicago
The Future of Humanity and Culture Is in the Hands of the Working Class. Speaker: Dave Prince, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Fri., April 22. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: Dinner, \$15; program, \$5. *University Church, 5655 University Ave., 1st floor. Tel.: (312) 792-6160.*

NEW JERSEY

Union City
Capitalism’s Worldwide Energy Crisis and the Case for Nuclear Power. Speaker: Vivian Sahnner, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 16, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. *3600 Bergenline Ave., 2nd floor. Tel.: (551) 240-1512.*

TEXAS

Fort Worth
Inflationary Price Increases and the Rising Cost of Having a Family: Capitalist Rulers Use War to Step Up Exploitation of Working Class. Speakers: Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas; Gerardo Sanchez, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress. Sat., April 16, 6 p.m. Donation: \$5. *6815 Manhattan Blvd., Suite 108. Tel.: (469) 513-1051.*

CANADA

Montreal
Only the Working Class Can End Capitalist Exploitation and Wars. Speaker: Philippe Tessier, Communist League candidate in April 11 by-election in Marie-Victorin riding in Quebec. Sat., April 9, 7 p.m. *7107 rue St-Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.*

App-based drivers demand ‘living wage’ as gas prices soar

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — More than 70 drivers for app-based ride-share and food delivery companies caravanned from Brooklyn to Uber headquarters in Manhattan March 29. They are demanding relief from sky-high gas prices that threaten their livelihood, and arbitrary “deactivations” by the app bosses — the equivalent of being suspended or fired.

“We need a union now,” “Unfair deactivation,” “Gas prices are killing us!” were among the handwritten signs taped to their cars. Drivers passing by honked in support.

The caravan was initiated by Justice for App Workers, a coalition of nine organizations of drivers and food delivery workers. Eight of the groups are based in New York City and Long

Island, and the ninth, the Machinists union-backed Independent Drivers Guild, organizes in five states.

Among the coalition’s demands are a living wage, health care benefits and bathroom access for drivers. There are over 60,000 app drivers and some 6,700 yellow cab drivers currently working in this city.

The ride-share companies claim drivers are independent operators, not workers. They have to buy or rent their cars and pay for the gas and government-required licenses and permits. If they own the cars, they also pay for all upkeep and repairs. All the app bosses do is connect the drivers with customers, for which they take out a commission on every fare. Unlike yellow cab drivers, app-based drivers are not al-

lowed to pick up passengers who hail them without going through the app.

“We don’t work in a factory, we work for ourselves, but we still have the same right to organize,” Muneeb Rehman, 38, told the *Militant*. “We want better conditions.”

Rehman was skeptical about the recent announcement that some yellow cab drivers will now be able to plug into the Uber app, a move the company will use to increase competition among workers and drive down rates. All Uber wants to do “is make money on the back of the drivers,” he said.

New York Mayor Eric Adams instructed the Taxi and Limousine Commission to raise the minimum rate for passenger fares by 5.3% in March. But

Continued on page 9

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Bay Area unionists in solidarity action with Chevron strikers

RICHMOND, Calif. — Dozens of unionists, including Teamsters, Machinists, Electrical Workers and others, joined the picket line at the Chevron refinery here March 28 to show solidarity with oil workers on strike. The action was called by the Contra Costa County Labor Council.

Samantha Webster, a grocery worker at Safeway in Hercules, came along with other members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, who are also in a contract fight. “We have to support each other,” Webster told this *Militant* worker-correspondent. “Like the strikers here, we deserve respect and more pay.”

Oscar Jimenez joined the picket line after finishing his shift at the Marathon refinery in Martinez. Workers there, who like Chevron workers are members of United Steelworkers Local 5, recently rejected the company’s contract offer.

The last strike at Chevron, which produces 13% to 14% of the state’s refining capacity, was in 1980. “We had to stand up,” striker Francisco Caldera told the *Militant*. “Not just for wages, but because we need respect. We were out here working throughout the pandemic while the managers worked from home. And they treated us arrogantly when they came back.”

Caldera, who has worked for 20 years as an operator, supports the union’s demand for Chevron to reduce overtime and hire more workers. “I’ve been working a minimum of 50 hours a week, and usually a lot more,” he said. Pointing to his young daughter who was with him at the picket, he said, “We need more family time.”

— Betsey Stone

Sand and gravel truck haulers strike, win 20% rate increase

MILTON, Ontario — Truck drivers in the Greater Toronto Area, who haul the sand and gravel needed to produce ready-mix concrete, won a 20% rate increase from trucking bosses after a two-week strike that closed quarries and shut down much of the construction industry.

Jagroop Singh, president of the On-

tario Aggregate Trucking Association, told the *Militant* that about 1,000 truckers joined in the fight. Rates paid to owner-operators “haven’t gone up for the past two decades while inflation is sky-rocketing,” Singh said. “Diesel fuel costs around \$700 for the average driver,” triple what it was two years ago. “Everything else has gone up as well. It can cost \$550 for one tire. Insurance is crazy!” Strikers carried signs saying, “Fuel price high, wages low.”

Company drivers, who were also part of the fight, won a \$50 a day wage increase. Another group of aggregate truckers is still on strike, along with close to 2,000 dump truck drivers, who are also fighting for a rate increase.

— Steve Penner



Truck News/Leo Barros

Members of Ontario Aggregate Trucking Association picket entrance to quarry in Milton, Ontario, March 21, part of two-week strike which won workers a 20% wage raise.

Social disaster from Australia floods rooted in capitalism

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY — Flooding in southern Queensland and eastern New South Wales in late February and early March, following exceptionally heavy rain, killed at least 22 people and destroyed or damaged more than 25,000 homes and businesses in the two states. The federal and state governments left workers and farmers hit by the catastrophe to cope on their own.

In Lismore, one of the northern New South Wales towns hardest hit by flooding in early March, some residents had to wait on their roofs for days before being evacuated. There were major shortages of government rescue boats and helicopters, and private helicopter operators contracted to be on standby weren’t deployed.

Aboriginal communities hit by the flooding organized their own boats to help evacuate people and have set up their own relief center. “Seeing how everybody has just risen from the bottom up to support one another just goes to show how the systems put in place by our government are not there to serve the people for their health or well-being,” Ella Bancroft, a volunteer from the Bundjalung community, said. “And it actually just falls back on the civilians and community.”

The region was hit again by rain and floods March 30. There was chaos in Lismore as New South Wales State Emergency Service first rescinded, then reissued, an evacuation order. The river flowing through the town broke its levee, but no alert went out because the warning sirens failed. Again, workers and farmers relied on their neighbors and fellow workers for help. Volunteers from across the state have joined in cleanup operations as residents have returned to their homes and piles of flood-damaged waste piled up.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison made clear that he didn’t consider it was the government’s responsibility to respond immediately. “The first response is always going to be the community response,” he argued. Then, under pressure from upcoming federal elections, he sent in units from Australia’s armed forces to assist with the cleanup.

In some flood-affected neighborhoods power wasn’t reconnected for several weeks. Electrician James Brasier told the *Australian* newspaper he was demanding the state government clear “red tape” obstacles to allow houses to get plugged back into the grid. Many families have no choice but to move back into their houses even if they’ve

been deemed uninhabitable.

In New South Wales the majority of families and many small businesses impacted by the floods have no insurance. State governments announced that they will provide grants of up to \$75,000 Australian dollars (\$57,000) to these farmers and AU\$50,000 to businesses. But after a month, less than 5% of requests have been approved and fewer paid out.

A number of young farmers struggling to pay mortgages have had their grant claims turned back. “These are producers that have to work off-farm to make ends meet and simply don’t have the cash flow to pay for extensive property repairs and their mortgage,” Brad Wedlock, project officer of the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, told ABC Rural News.

Severe flooding in Lismore is a regular occurrence, and residents have been calling for changes to the water-catchment infrastructure for years. But working-class housing is often built on lowlands, yielding greater profits to builders. Here in Sydney new subdivisions of working-class housing are still being built on flood plains.

The working-class neighborhood of South Windsor had been hit by floods just a year ago. Residents there told the *Militant* they couldn’t afford the insurance fees that were hiked up after previous flooding. For families that had lost all their furniture and appliances, the government’s one-off handout of AU\$1,000 was nowhere near enough.

Students rallied outside Prime Minister Morrison’s Sydney residence March 25, calling for “greater action against climate change” to control flooding. But the social devastation working people face in the wake of the floods isn’t caused by “climate change.” It is the product of capitalist rule and all the parties that defend it. It is their lack of preparedness and belated government response, coupled with disdain for working people, that turns “natural disasters” into a social crisis.

“This is the opposite of the response of the Cuban government,” Baskaran Appu, Communist League candidate for the federal senate from New South Wales, told the *Militant*. “In the wake of natural disasters, Cuban authorities and mass organizations mobilize to evacuate everyone who is in danger and immediately begin repair of housing and infrastructure. That’s only possible because working people in Cuba took political power out of the hands of the capitalist class and made a socialist revolution.”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 21, 1997

Millions of Russian workers participated in a nationwide strike March 27 to protest sharply declining economic conditions. It was the largest strike against the government since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Nearly 100,000 people gathered in the streets of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and there were protests in more than 1,200 other cities.

Mikhail Shmakov, a trade union official, asserted that 20 million joined the protest for back payment of wages and pensions. Millions of workers have gone unpaid for months. “Our patience has blown up,” declared Ivan Ivanov, a retired shipyard worker who hasn’t received his pension in three months.

Economic conditions continue to deteriorate. This is reflected in the birth rate, which dropped from 17 births per 1,000 residents in 1985 to just nine per 1,000 in 1996.



April 21, 1972

APRIL 12 — Thirty-nine war ships and more than 600 planes are alerted for war duty or are en route to Southeast Asia in addition to the U.S. task force already mobilized in the war zone. This will double the naval and bomber strength President Nixon is bringing to bear against the two-week-old revolutionary offensive in South Vietnam.

It is evident that the administration hopes to lay waste the cities and countryside of Vietnam in retaliation for the revolutionary offensive. This armada will be capable of launching by far the biggest air attack — accompanied by off-shore shelling — in the history of the war.

The eyes of the ruling class will be trained on April 22, the date of the antiwar demonstrations set for New York and Los Angeles. Nixon must be answered with the biggest voice ever: “Stop the Bombing!” “Out Now!”



April 19, 1947

EXETER, Pa., April 11 — An explosion yesterday snuffed out the lives of nine miners and injured nine others. This explosion came 17 days after the Centralia disaster which cost 111 lives. This is the year’s second major disaster for this area — an explosion in nearby Plymouth claimed 15 victims on Jan. 15.

Shortly after the miners had begun work a terrific explosion ripped through the Marcy vein 350 feet below the surface. The blast wrecked doors, brattice work and side walls. All men working in the vein were either killed or injured. Rescue operations were fatally delayed as oxygen masks — needed to penetrate the gas-filled workings — were sent from other mines. There were no masks at the Exeter mine.

This mine had been inspected by Federal Inspector G.M. Mortenson last November. His inspection reported numerous safety violations.

Court ruling for the Gibsons

Continued from front page
annual tuition fee of \$60,243 from its 2,800 students and is ranked 37th on the list of the top 223 National Liberal Arts Colleges. It has an endowment of almost a billion dollars.

Judge Donna Carr, author of the 50-page ruling by the three-judge appeals panel, wrote, “This Court recognizes that this case has garnered significant local and national media attention.”

But, Carr emphasized in dismissing a main argument in Oberlin’s appeal, “the sole focus of this appeal is on the separate conduct of Oberlin and Raimondo that allegedly caused damage to the Gibsons, not on First Amendment rights of individuals to voice opinions or protest.”

Lee Plakas, lead trial lawyer for the Gibsons, said the ruling was “meticulous” in examining and rejecting the college’s appeal.

The ruling gave an overview of the facts in the case based on the trial record.

On Nov. 9, 2016, a student who is Black tried to use a fake ID to buy, and, when that failed, shoplifted wine from the store. When store clerk Allyn D. Gibson, the grandson of the owner, confronted the student, he fled and a physical altercation followed between the male student and two friends waiting outside and Gibson. The police arrested the three students. They eventually entered guilty pleas and were convicted.

The day after the incident and arrests, students organized a protest of several hundred. Carr notes Dean Raimondo and other administrators attended the protest, handed a flyer to a reporter, gave stacks of the flyers to students to distribute, and allowed use of college copiers to produce them. The flyer said Gibson’s Bakery was a “RACIST establishment with

a LONG ACCOUNT OF RACIAL PROFILING and DISCRIMINATION.” The college provided coffee, pizzas, and gloves so protesters would not get cold.

The student senate passed a resolution making the same slanderous charge against the Gibsons. The resolution was emailed to all students, Carr wrote, and posted publicly for a year, “easily seen by students, prospective students and their parents, and other visitors to the student center.”

“The potentially libelous statements in this case include much more than calling the Gibsons ‘racists,’” the judge wrote. Given the public’s lack of knowledge of what happened at the bakery, the flyer and resolution “convey to a reasonable reader that the arrest and alleged assault at the bakery were racially motivated, that the Gibsons had a verifiable history of racially profiling shoplifters on that basis for years, and ... were a reason to boycott the bakery.”

Damage done to the Gibsons

Dean Raimondo later instructed the college’s catering vendor to cancel the Gibsons’ longstanding contract to supply baked goods to the campus, a source of the bakery’s revenue. According to trial testimony, Carr noted, “Oberlin would not direct Bon Appetit to resume business with the bakery unless the Gibsons agreed to drop criminal charges against the student shoplifters” and give first-time student shoplifters a “pass.”

“The Gibsons also presented evidence,” Carr wrote, “that they had been continually taunted and harassed for many months, that their business and property had been vandalized, and that Grandpa [Allyn W.] Gibson had broken his back after an encounter with someone he believed was trying to harass him or break into his apartment.”

People who knew the Gibsons testified “they had never witnessed any incidents of racism or racial profiling” by the bakery owners. In contrast, the college presented nothing but hearsay about what the school’s administrators said they “heard” about the Gibsons’ alleged racism. The appeals court affirmed the trial court’s decision to not admit that testimony.



Four generations of the Gibson family and their legal team celebrate June 13, 2019, after Lorain County jury decided in their favor against Oberlin College officials’ campaign of “racism” smears.

“This case has a lengthy history,” Judge Carr wrote about one of the longest trials in Lorain County’s history, noting the 14,417 hours the Gibson lawyers spent on the case and affirmed that the trial court had not abused its discretion in awarding the Gibsons \$6,271,395 for legal fees.

The Gibsons filed a cross appeal to restore about another \$15 million in damages cut by the trial judge due to state laws capping damages in such cases. The Gibsons argued the cap was unconstitutional and a violation of the jury’s rights. The appeals court rejected this appeal.

Gibsons won wide support

Since the 2019 trial, Allyn W. Gibson and his son David died and other family members stepped in to continue the fight and keep the bakery open.

“Without community support we wouldn’t have won,” Allyn D. Gibson, the grandson, told the *Militant* in 2019.

Working people in the area supported the Gibsons by visiting and spending money at the store after the student protests began and by displaying “Support Gibsons” lawn signs.

The Gibson family’s refusal to buckle under to the college and their determination to defend themselves resonated with many working people nationwide who reject race-baiting and the entitled upper-class attitudes revealed in the actions of a billion-dollar institution and its students.

Plakas told the *Cleveland Jewish News* April 1, “The Gibsons hopefully now have a pathway and window to survive because from their perspective the animosity of the college and the students continues and the business of the Gibsons has been severely compromised since the verdict.”

The college said in a statement it was “reviewing the Court’s opinion,” before deciding whether to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court of Ohio.

Sanctions block working-class unity needed to end Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

At demonstrations against Moscow’s assault on Ukraine, fellow protesters agree with the demands raised by the Socialist Workers Party to defend Ukraine’s independence and for the defeat of Moscow’s invasion. But many question the party’s opposition to Washington imposing far-reaching economic sanctions on Russia, and its demand for U.S. troops, weapons and nuclear arms out of Europe.

The party explains it’s only the working people of Ukraine and Russia, in their class solidarity, who have the power to defeat Moscow’s war. Sanctions get in the way of furthering this course. They hit working people in Russia the hardest and play into the hands of President Vladimir Putin, who claims he’s defending the “homeland” against a foreign assault on its people.

While the SWP supports Ukraine’s right to get arms from wherever it can, the party opposes the arms race underway by capitalist rulers in Washington, Europe and Asia. All these regimes shed crocodile tears over Ukraine’s national sovereignty, but their real concern is to protect the profits and strategic political interests of their capitalist rulers.

Capitalism works by fierce competition over markets and resources, necessary along with human labor for profits. The entire history of the imperialist epoch is the way this system has expanded its exploitative tentacles into every corner of the globe. This was what World Wars I and II were all about, and will, inexorably, lead to World War III unless working people can organize to prevent it.

Today’s capitalist economic crisis, exacerbated by the sanctions, has meant prices for basic goods are skyrocketing in Russia and working people face shortages and steep declines in their living standards. In the city of Kurgan, in a southern region, for example, the price of onions has gone up 160%. Compared with March last year in Russia cabbage is up 209%, sugar 56%, fruits and vegetables more than 20%, meat and poultry close to 20%. One in four Russians say they now have to scrimp to make ends meet.

Since the invasion almost 500 international companies have closed or suspended operations in Russia, resulting in shortages, rising prices and increasing layoffs. “In early March,” wrote the *Wall Street Journal*, “car maker AvtoVAZ halted production of its Lada automobiles, placing thou-

Defend independence of Ukraine! Defeat Moscow’s invasion!

Continued from front page

The heroic battle by Ukrainian soldiers for their national sovereignty continues, including a counteroffensive that helped drive the Russian forces away from Kyiv. And bold protests continue in Ukrainian cities under occupation in and around Kherson.

The Russian soldiers, who were told by Putin and his officer corps that they would be welcomed by Russian-speaking Ukrainians with vodka and open arms, were shocked at the ferocity of the Ukrainians’ fightback. Many refused to fight or crippled their military vehicles. Large columns, especially north of Kyiv, bogged down and stopped for lack of supplies, fuel and food. As they leave Ukraine now, the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War reports these soldiers “are highly unlikely to be effectively deployed elsewhere in Ukraine and are likely a spent force.”

After Russian troops pulled out of Bucha, a suburb of Kyiv, evidence mounted that some of them had engaged in killings and abuse of residents. Special forces from Chechnya were part of this deployment. Photos showed bodies of villagers shot in the head with their hands tied behind their backs with white cloth. Mayor Anatoliy Fedoruk told the press the Chechens had forcibly tied up their victims. These photos were run on the front pages of newspapers across the U.S. and worldwide April 5.

This human carnage was cynically grabbed by the capitalist rulers in Washington and across Europe to ramp up expansion of their militaries, justify further crippling sanctions that hit the working people of Russia the hardest, and to bolster their campaign



Homemade “price sticker” placed in supermarket in Kazan, Russia, reads: “Weekly inflation reached the maximum since 1998 due to military actions in Ukraine. Stop the war.” Anti-war protests include rallies, putting up crosses that say “No war!” and other creative actions.

to blame Russia’s working people for Putin’s slaughter.

In fact, in the face of harsh legal bans on protests against the war imposed by Putin, anti-war actions of all kinds by ordinary people still take place across the country. Police arrested over 200 people during anti-war demonstrations in 17 cities April 2. This is despite some 15,000 protest leaders already being imprisoned.

The average monthly salary last year in Russia was 56,545 rubles (\$670). Since sanctions began, the prices of staple vegetables for traditional borscht have risen by 20%.

Working people are turning to growing their own in face of the soaring prices. Mike Bazhenov, 30, a software developer in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, told

the April 5 *Wall Street Journal* that he is helping relatives plant potatoes on their farm 500 miles away. That way, in case of severe shortages, he can get to their farm for food.

Still, Bazhenov said, his economic worries pale into insignificance compared with what is happening to people in Ukraine.

Protests continue in occupied cities

A protest against the occupation of the southern Ukrainian city of Enerhodar, the site of Europe’s largest nuclear power plant, was fired on by Russian forces April 2, with four injured.

In occupied areas, Russian detachments have abducted mayors, protesters and journalists in their efforts to suppress popular resistance.

Kostiantyn Ryzhenko, a journalist who publicized the daily protests against Russian forces in Kherson, disappeared March 30. In an armed raid on his family’s home his brother was taken hostage.

These demonstrations are “contradicting the Kremlin’s narrative and thwarting the attempts to stage yet another pseudo referendum” to try to set up a fake “Kherson people’s republic,” Halya Coynash of the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group wrote April 2.

Students and staff at a technical college in Vynohradiv that usually trains electricians, plumbers and other skilled

workers, have turned the school into a small factory. They churn out defensive equipment like anti-tank traps and bulletproof vests. At another school volunteers weave camouflage nets.

In occupied Melitopol and elsewhere, Russian military police are trying to impose reeducation programs. They are destroying archives and books on everything from the history of Stalinist-era repression to the popular Maidan uprising that overthrew pro-Moscow President Viktor Yanukovych in 2014. Moscow had earlier suggested part of a “peace” settlement would include Yanukovych returning from exile to replace Volodymyr Zelenskyy as president.

The Kremlin tries to hide the scale of its army’s heavy losses. Moscow has been forced to mobilize 60,000 reservists and is recruiting mercenaries from forces it organized in Syria to back dictator Bashar al-Assad there.

As one Russian elite unit, the 331st Guards Parachute Regiment, advanced towards Kyiv it lost scores of soldiers, including its commanding officer. The BBC listed the names of 40 killed as of March 13 and who are now buried in Kostroma, the regiment’s base, 180 miles northeast of Moscow. The losses exceed those the unit suffered from its involvement in the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and Moscow’s intervention in Chechnya.

It’s traditional in Russia for family members to post memorial messages for soldiers killed in combat. Some family members of those in the 331st are raising questions about Putin’s war. One said, “When will this end? When will people stop dying?” and another exclaimed, “Kostroma has lost so many young men, what a tragedy!”

Another woman wrote: “Why aren’t children of MPs on the frontline? The majority of them live in Europe anyway. Ordinary boys are dying for no good reason.” Another curses Putin, saying that in his decision to “play war” he has “sent thousands of guys to die.”

One Russian defense lawyer, Mikhail Benyash, told the *Financial Times* April 1 about a case he is handling filed by national guardsmen who are challenging their deployment to Ukraine. After Benyash publicly announced he would defend them, his office was inundated with calls from over 1,000 people across the country seeking his services.

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For Cuban working people, revolution was ‘the only way forward’

One of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for April is the Spanish edition of *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58, a Participant’s Account* by Armando Hart. One of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, Hart was a central organizer of the urban underground. In 1959 Cuba’s toilers, led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, carried out what became the first socialist revolution in the Americas. As minister of education, Hart headed the mass literacy campaign in 1961 in which a million Cubans learned to read and write. He was minister of culture from 1976 to 1997 and remained politically active in defense of the revolution until his death in 2017. The excerpt is from “Revolution: The Only Way Out,” the May 15, 1956, editorial in the first edition of *Aldabonazo*, the clandestine newspaper of the July 26 Movement. Copyright © 2004 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

By an imperative, collective necessity, a new generation has arisen to confront the revolutionary frustration that led us to the disaster of March 10, 1952. On that date a gang of common criminals seized power and destroyed the public order of the republic. The July 26 Movement, which spoke the lan-



Bohemia
Banner of revolutionary-minded youth movement of Orthodox Party leads march against coup by U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista in Havana in 1952. From these beginnings, Fidel Castro organized the July 26 Movement, which led working people to take power into their own hands.

guage of facts, is a categorical response to the March coup. The Movement’s origin and aims, which we will present in these pages, reveal to us how Cuban youth have become unwilling to put up with the status quo that made possible the resounding collapse of our hollow political democracy. For this reason our aim is to become the revolutionary instrument of this new generation.

For the July 26 Movement, only those who aim at something more than simply toppling the dictatorship are capable of really eliminating it. That is the only way to draw together the moral forces of the nation. Those who simply strive to “topple the dictator” will not even achieve that, since they lack both serious motives and support from the social forces necessary to stand up to a regime embodying the most negative aspects of Cuban society. The July 26 Movement asserts that the current government is not the cause but the result of the republic’s fundamental crisis. And it is working directly to resolve that crisis. It would hardly be worthwhile to confront the dictatorial, corrupt, and mediocre regime we suffer without aiming for a revolutionary transformation of the moral, political, economic, and social causes that made possible the criminal act committed by the seditious group. That is the reason for our revolutionary independence, and the reason for being of our growing force. ...

The country has been and is being governed by criminals of the worst stripe. Thieves, smugglers, speculators, price gougers, and even vulgar assassins are more and more in control of key posts in government, beginning with what should be the government’s highest court.

In this aspect of the Cuban question, the figure of Eduardo Chibás, with his slogan “Honor against money,” comes to the fore. Chibás gathered around himself a powerful body of opinion and a great political movement that united together the ideals of the Cuban Revolution. It is to put those ideas into effect and for the definitive triumph of these ideas that the July 26 Movement fights. With his fatal pistol shot of August 5, 1951, Chibás showed the way of sacrifice and glory, and entered into history. In tribute to that gesture of supreme indignation and combat, our clandestine newspaper bears the name of his last speech: *Aldabonazo*.

But the deepest cause of our crisis lies in the absence of a clearly defined revolutionary philosophy, and the lack of an organized will that drives us toward realizable goals of improvement, transformation, and progress. It has not been possible to have ideas completely govern individual conduct. The ideas of the Cuban nation, in modern times, are still maintained as a great collective hunger. They are a desire that is

scattered. ... When the democratic and socialist idea is spelled out to its final consequence, all action will be directed along this road. At that point a group of men will emerge whose strength lies in their unbreakable unity, men who are united by the same principles and ideas. ... That group will be “the team of men capable of leading Cuba toward its higher destiny” that Eduardo Chibás spoke of. The July 26 Movement aspires to find, discipline, and organize that team of men. And its organ of public guidance, *Aldabonazo*, has the mission of discovering revolutionary ideas and elaborating them. We are not heading to battle without ideas, because war without ideas is a crime, while war with ideas is revolution.

The heroic deed of the Moncada garrison and Bayamo is the unifying factor of our scattered national will. Eighty revolutionary martyrs offer us, through their example and sacrifice, a point of convergence that illuminates the country’s future. The most beautiful lesson of that gesture was not only the courage and selflessness displayed by those brave men. It was also their conviction of the importance, transcendence, and power of their example — not to mention their discretion and organizational capacity enabling them to reach the stage of combat. Only a total identification with revolution could write into history the rebel date of July 26, 1953. ...

[T]he July 26 Revolutionary Movement for ten months has dedicated itself to publicly proclaiming the need for revolutionary action, and to constructing a powerful underground organization that gathers together and interprets the ideas of the Cuban nation, and the immediate needs of the people.

This strategy has delivered the revolution from small circles of combatants and placed it in the hands of the people. All Cubans have the possibility of participating: not only those who take up arms, but also those prepared to leave work, to contribute financially to buy the rifles, or to extend help to the revolution in a thousand different ways. Large sectors of the population have, for a number of years, felt cut off from the struggle for freedom. The July 26 Movement, with a popular strategy and with insurrectional tactics, is incorporating these sectors into the revolution.

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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: clclemontreal@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

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A working-class road to oppose Putin's war

Mounting condemnation of Moscow's brutality at Bucha fill the pages of the capitalist press following the release of pictures and eyewitness accounts of the massacre carried out there by Russian armed forces. The brutality reflects the disdain of Vladimir Putin and his government for the lives and desire for independence of Ukrainian working people. Our response should be to redouble our efforts to protest Putin's invasion and slaughter.

But the denunciations from the U.S. rulers and other imperialist powers — and threats of more sanctions that hit hardest at Russia's workers and farmers — are crocodile tears. From My Lai in Vietnam to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the carpet-bombing of civilians in Korea, the U.S. capitalist rulers have rained death and agony on workers as an intrinsic feature of their wars. This mirrors the disregard bosses have for workers maimed and killed on the job in coal mines, oil refineries and other worksites here at home, which they view as "collateral damage" in their drive for profits.

Like the U.S., Russia is a class-divided country. The overwhelmingly majority of Russians are workers and farmers, who are not responsible for the killings of Ukrainians.

This is a war unleashed by Putin's regime to crush and conquer Ukraine. "Putin insists Ukraine is not a nation and has no right to exist as one," Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes said in a March 3 statement widely distributed by party members.

As Russia's capitalist rulers seek to crush independent nations like Ukraine and restore the czarist prison house of nations, they also wage war against the wages, conditions, dignity and political rights of working people across Russia, including the workers in uniform who make up the ranks of Russian military forces. Over 15,000 Russians have been locked up, and many beaten or tortured, for protesting Putin's war.

The defeat of the Putin regime's invasion is in the interest of working people worldwide. Blaming workers in uniform for capitalist wars — not the rulers who send them to fight and die — points away from the very class forces crucial to ending this carnage.

This exact question was hotly debated by anti-war forces seeking the defeat of the U.S. rulers' war against

Vietnam. Especially after Washington's massacre at My Lai in 1968, some protesters wanted to brand all GIs as "baby killers" and protest against them. At the time, growing numbers of GIs were stepping forward to demand the U.S. government pull them out of Vietnam. The Socialist Workers Party fought to defend GIs' right to discuss and protest the war, and built campaigns to overturn reprisals by the army brass against those who spoke out.

The SWP led the way in winning the anti-war movement to reach out to the troops with the truth about the imperialist war and to win them to join in fighting against it. SWP presidential candidate Fred Halstead traveled to Saigon that same year and met with GIs there to discuss the fight against the war. This was part of the party's broader working-class strategy — winning the only class that can end imperialist wars, and the unions, to the movement.

There are examples of fraternization between Ukrainian workers and Russian soldiers, but the capitalist regime of Volodymyr Zelensky and his backers in Washington have no interest in this. The last thing they want is to deepen collaboration between workers in Russia and Ukraine.

But without looking toward workers and farmers in Russia, including soldiers, as part of an international class with common interests, there is no road to getting rid of the thug regime in the Kremlin, much less ending capitalist rule there, in the U.S. and elsewhere, and replacing the warmakers with governments that serve the interests of the toiling majority. The capitalist rulers in both Russia and the U.S. seek to tie working people to their foreign policies, knowing they will wage more wars around the world to advance their own predatory class interests.

Workers need our own foreign policy, independent of the bosses, just as we need to fight for what our class needs at home — jobs, better wages and conditions, and to take political power into our own hands.

After all, Russia's workers and farmers have shown in the past they have the capacity for independent struggle, for taking on their own capitalist rulers. In 1917, under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, they brought down the czarist prison house of nations, helped end the first imperialist world war, and made the world's first socialist revolution.

Pittsburgh cops fired

Continued from front page

leading to the Taser shots.

"It's about time. People need to be held accountable, especially when the police are involved," retail worker Roy Penny told the *Militant*. "The cops need to see what's happening in the Black community."

"When you're looking at five out of eight officers being fired," Brandi Fisher, president and CEO of the Alliance for Police Accountability, told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, "I don't think that has ever happened in the history of Pittsburgh."

The terminations come after months of protests calling for the officers to be charged and amid other revelations of misconduct by police. Devon Adwoa, a protest organizer who has spoken on behalf of the Rogers family, told the press that even with the firings, "we need criminal charges filed as soon as possible." She added there's "nothing respectable or just about a process that takes six months to fire officers."

The *Tribune-Review* quoted the Rogers family saying, "From the beginning, we have been pressing for criminal charges for all of these officers. That has always been the demand."

Allegheny County District Attorney Stephen Zappala has refused to act on the case, saying he was waiting for the medical examiner's report. Then, after four months punctuated by protests, he issued a call for a grand jury investigation, which is still taking place. Zappala, who has been the DA for over 20 years, has rarely filed charges in cases where people have died at the hands of the police.

Police surveillance and body camera footage from the confrontation have still not been released. An internal police report released after Rogers' death revealed he had pleaded for help at least 13 times over a 17-minute period after being put in the back of the police car. "I need a hospital, I can't breathe, get a medic, help me," the report quoted him saying.

Maria Montano, spokeswoman for Mayor Gainey, tried to defend the city's inaction in an April 4 statement to the *Post-Gazette*. Saying she wished the administration could be more transparent, "I think this was a learning process for a lot of us, myself included. I didn't fully understand the scope of what the disciplinary process looks like."

"The Socialist Workers Party calls for charges against the officers involved, and for public disclosure of the videos and other evidence of what occurred," Candace Wagner, SWP candidate for governor, told the *Militant*. "There is no excuse for the delay."

App-based drivers protest

Continued from page 4

drivers say that's nowhere near enough. Gas prices have increased at least 70% over the last two years.

"We can't pay our bills. We can't pay our maintenance fees for the car because of the price of the gas," Jahongir Ibadov, a leader of UzBER, drivers originally from Uzbekistan and Russia, told the press. "We're taking home less money. We cannot afford to support our families."

The app companies claim "that they are taking a 20% to 30% commission on each fare," driver Tony Monanta told the *Militant*, "but then you get a \$150 fare and they actually take out \$75. It's not fair."

Justice for App Workers is calling for a cap of 10% on the commissions the ride-share companies take. It also calls for a "surcharge" that would go to the drivers to partially compensate for the gas hikes.

"This job takes a lot out of you," said Israel Acevedo. "When I first started driving years ago I would work 12 hours a day. Now after just eight hours my back, my legs hurt."

"You should be able to work eight hours a day, 40 hours a week and have a sustainable life," he said.

"False/random deactivations from Uber and Lyft is the other big issue," driver Zohaib Baig said in a statement he planned to read outside Uber headquarters. "Even if the driver has a dashcam" of exactly what happened in a dispute with a passenger, the app bosses refuse to look at it. No appeal is allowed.

"You're supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, not the other way around," he said.

Neither Uber nor Lyft replied to requests for comment from the *Militant*.

Cuban Revolution celebrated in Washington, DC

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON — Over 100 participants gathered at St. Stephen Church here March 26 for "An Evening in Solidarity with Cuba," sponsored by the D.C. Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. Kamau Benjamin, one of the leaders of the coalition, chaired the program, which opened with a cultural performance by the Malcolm X Drummers.

"It's crucial to denounce the blockade by the U.S. government that's aimed against the Cuban Revolution and to tell the

truth about Cuba as you are doing here tonight," Alejandro García, deputy chief of Mission from the Cuban Embassy in Washington, told participants. "The efforts by the U.S. government to destroy the Cuban economy is tough on the life of the Cuban people."

"Trump imposed over 200 measures, and Biden has done nothing to remove them. On the contrary, the Biden administration, cynically, has the distinction of using a pandemic to reinforce sanctions," García said. He explained that when Cuba faced a shortage of oxygen last summer due to a breakdown in its main medicinal oxygen facility, the licenses needed to purchase oxygen were denied by the U.S. Departments of Treasury and Commerce.

Dr. Samira Addrey, a 2020 graduate of Cuba's Latin American School for Medicine and the



Militant/Kibwe Diarra

Alejandro García, from Cuban Embassy in D.C.

IFCO Pastors for Peace ELAM Scholarship Project Coordinator, described the work of the school. The students receive free, quality medical training. In the 20 years since its founding, it has graduated nearly 30,000 doctors from 105 countries.

Addrey pointed with pride to what she had learned living and studying in Cuba. "To draw strength and confidence from 63 years of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution and its example of resistance for

the world," she said.

"Go to Cuba, and see it and understand it for yourself," Addrey added. "Cuba is different not because of its ideology, but by what it does. It shares what it has, not what is left over. It has restored to a new level what it means to be a human being. May Day is coming up and is a special opportunity to see that the life of a worker there is valued."

Meeting participants shared information on upcoming trips to learn firsthand about Cuba, including the 15th International May Day Brigade, April 24-May 8, sponsored by the National Network on Cuba, and IFCO's Friendshipment Caravan, July 16-30.

After the talks, participants joined the discussion and enjoyed songs by the Black Workers Center Chorus.