

## Defeat of FBI entrapment case is a victory for political rights

BY TERRY EVANS

In a victory for political rights, prosecutors failed to convict any of four men who were entrapped and framed up by undercover FBI provocateurs, accused of conspiring to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to try and stop her pandemic mask policy and related charges.

Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta were found not guilty by a Grand Rapids jury April 8. Jury members were unable to reach a verdict on charges against Adam Fox and Barry Croft, who remain jailed pending prosecutors' decision on holding a retrial.

Each of the four were affiliated with the Wolverine Watchmen, which government authorities called an "anti-government, anti-law enforcement" militia. They were arrested Oct. 8, 2020, just weeks before the presidential election. Democrats used the charges and trial to further efforts to pillory supporters of former President Donald Trump as "domestic terrorism."

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## Back Ukraine independence! Moscow's troops out now!

Opposition to Putin's war continues inside Russia



Chernobyl union Youth Organization

Volunteers in Slavutych, Ukraine, home to workers at nearby Chernobyl nuclear plant, unload food and other necessities in short supply April 10 after Russian troops were pushed out.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Seven weeks into Moscow's war against independent Ukraine, the determined resistance of that country's armed forces and its population in general — as well as demoralization wracking the Russian troops and ineptness of

their officer corps — brought Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion to a standstill. Putin then declared his initial goals had been realized and pulled his troops out of areas around Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy back into Belarus, leaving

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

behind a trail of death and destruction.

Moscow's artillery continues to pound Kharkiv and Putin has regrouped his forces for a new, murderous offensive in the east. He claims their goal now is to expand and hold the entire Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk,

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## Build support for striking Warrior Met coal miners!

BY SUSAN LAMONT

McCALLA, Ala. — Over 1,500 United Mine Workers of America members, retirees, family members, other unionists, and community supporters rallied in Tannehill State Park here April 6 to back UMW members on strike at Warrior Met Coal in nearby Brookwood.

The rally was marked by the miners' determination to fight as long as needed to emerge victorious. They led chants of "One day stronger, one day longer!"

Some 1,100 UMW members walked out on April 1, 2021. Their fight to win a better contract after living with five years of lowered wages and benefits and attacks on their working conditions and dignity is winning widespread union solidarity.

"This was a good turnout today to support the miners. It means a lot to us," striker Otis Sims told the *Militant*. Sims has worked at the mine for 43 years and was a longwall operator when the walk-out began last year. "My dad, granddad, and great-granddad were all miners," he said. "I could retire any time now, but I'm out here and on the picket line every week. I don't want to retire until we see this through."

The rally drew hundreds of UMW members and retirees from West Virginia, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee and elsewhere in Alabama, along with members of many other unions.

"The strike has taken a long time,"

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## Use 'Militant' to get truth out about miners' fight, oppose Moscow's war

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

"When we see union teachers, steelworkers and miners on strike it sends a message," Dakota Dearth, 29, told Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, at an April 6 rally in McCalla, Alabama. The United Mine Workers of America rally was called to support 1,100 members of the union on strike against Warrior Met Coal nearby.

"We stepped out because we are the lowest-paid union miners," he said. Dearth worked at Warrior Met with his father, James, until the strike began. Both now work at the Shoal Creek Mine. "At Shoal Creek we have better benefits and higher pay," James said. "I get \$5 more as a laborer. Warrior Met is greedy. They are making money."

Dakota subscribed to the *Militant*, along with 18 other miners and other unionists attending the action. Participants in the rally also picked up 12 books on lessons of past working-class struggles by SWP and other revolutionary leaders.

Joshua Brewer from the Midwest Council of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union got a copy of *Teamster Rebellion* by SWP leader



Militant/Valerie Edward

Alyson Kennedy, left, SWP candidate for Texas governor, with miner Dakota Dearth at solidarity rally for Warrior Met strikers in McCalla, Alabama, April 6.

Farrell Dobbs, who had been a leader of the Teamsters union as it organized across the Midwest in the 1930s. Brewer has been involved in the fight to win a union at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama.

A number of Warrior Met miners have been working at the warehouse, pushing

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## Inspired by Ontario truckers' victory, dump truck drivers press their strike

BY STEVE PENNER AND DAVID OLSON

BRAMPTON, Ontario — A successful two-week strike in March by some 1,000 aggregate truck drivers in the Greater Toronto area, who haul the sand and gravel needed to produce ready-mix concrete, shut down quarries and much of the construction industry. They won a 20% rate increase from trucking company bosses.

Inspired by their fight, 1,500 members of the Ontario Dump Truck Association decided to go out on strike March 21. They're fighting for higher rates, greater safety measures, workers' rights and respect from the bosses. The large majority are of South Asian descent.

Recognition of the truckers' right to negotiate an agreement with the bosses has become a key issue in the fight. David Rumble, head of the Associated Earth Movers of Ontario, the main bosses' organization, claims that the Ontario

Dump Truck Association isn't a "recognized association" and doesn't have the right to negotiate.

"We can't sign a contract with you," Rumble said, rejecting a list of demands

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

'Now real fight begins' to win union at Amazon in Staten Island

Australia nurses strike for better nurse-to-patient ratios



# Ottawa uses Ukraine war to grow its military, attack workers' rights

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — The Canadian government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is responding to Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine by beefing up its military forces. The rulers demand working people “sacrifice” for the war as they step up attacks on wages, conditions and rights at home.

Trudeau joined NATO and other meetings with governments officials, held in Europe in late March. They announced a boost to troop deployments from the Washington-led military alliance across Eastern Europe and imposed harsher sanctions against Russia, measures that hit workers and farmers there the hardest.

Canadian Procurement Minister Filomena Tassi announced March 28 that the government is locking down the purchase of Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets to replace its aging fleet. Defense Minister Anita Anand pointed to Moscow’s war as the reason.

The government also announced an 8 billion Canadian dollar increase (\$6.3 billion) in military spending for the next five years in its April 7 budget, including for aircraft and other armaments. This includes upgrading the rulers’ Arctic defense system and putting more resources into the North American Aerospace Defense Command, an arrangement placing the Canadian air force under joint command with Washington.

The Canadian government has 1,300 troops as part of NATO forces in Central and Eastern Europe, Ottawa’s largest current international deployment.

“The Communist League champions

the fight of Ukrainian people to overcome the invasion of their country by Moscow,” said Philippe Tessier, Communist League candidate in the Quebec National Assembly by-election in the Marie-Victorin district in Longueuil, south of here. “While Ottawa and Washington cry crocodile tears over Ukraine, their aim is to strengthen their ability to defend their own predatory interests. Not one cent and not one person for Canadian imperialist intervention anywhere should be the watchword of workers and our allies.”

### Canada’s rulers join U.S. wars

The rulers of Canada, a weaker imperialist power, seek to advance their own national interests by linking their foreign policy to Washington’s. In 1949 they made Canada a founding member of NATO, set up under the domination of U.S. imperialism as it emerged as top dog out of World War II. Since then NATO, like the United Nations, has always served as a tool to crush rebellions by workers and farmers, and police the world in the interest of U.S. imperialism.

The Canadian government sent nearly 30,000 military personnel to fight in the U.S. rulers’ 1950-53 ground war and carpet bombing against the people of Korea. Canadian forces joined the U.S.-led wars against Iraq in 1990-91, and Afghanistan in 2001-2014.

In Yugoslavia in 1999, the U.S. rulers imposed a no-fly zone in a war that resulted in the breakup of that country and advanced Washington’s position as the dominant power in Europe. Canadian CF-18s flew 678 sorties in that campaign — 10% of NATO’s flights in a deadly



Hub Gray

Canadian troops patrol Kapyong in Korea in March 1951. Canadian rulers sent nearly 30,000 troops to join U.S.-led war in effort to crush unfolding workers and peasants revolution there.

bombardment that destroyed airfields, refineries and manufacturing plants.

While in Europe, Trudeau issued a joint statement March 23 with European Union President Ursula von der Leyen. It pledged “to defend our shared values,” and pointed to a food crisis they said is “caused by President Putin’s war.”

The Canadian government has used the Ukrainian war to justify backing bosses’ assaults on workers’ struggles. In March it claimed a strike by rail workers at Canadian Pacific would exacerbate grain shortages caused by Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine — a bla-

tant attempt to foster opposition among farmers to rail workers’ fight over pensions, schedules and safety.

“In times of war, working-class struggle doesn’t disappear,” Tessier said. “The response of the communist movement is to deepen our participation in union battles.” Tessier, a rail worker at Canadian National and a member of the Teamsters union, pointed to the strike of aircraft workers at Rolls-Royce in Montreal against the bosses’ attacks on pensions and wages. Out of such struggles workers “increase their self-confidence, fighting spirit and class consciousness.”

## Socialist Workers Party 2022 candidates

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### Florida

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### Illinois

John Hawkins, US Senate  
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### Minnesota

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

### New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, US Congress  
Lea Sherman, US Congress

### Nebraska

Joe Swanson, US Congress

### New York

Sara Lobman, US Senate  
Ved Dookhun, Governor

### Ohio

Samir Hazboun, US Senate

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Osborne Hart, US Senate  
Candace Wagner, Governor

### Texas

Alyson Kennedy, Governor  
Gerardo Sánchez, US Congress

### Washington, DC

James Harris, Mayor  
Arlene Rubinstein, Delegate to House

### Washington state

Henry Dennison, US Senate

## The Militant

Vol. 86/No. 16

Closing news date: April 13, 2022

Editor: John Studer

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

Business Manager: Valerie Johnson

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Website: [www.themilitant.com](http://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.

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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.

## THE MILITANT

### Ruling for Gibsons is victory for working people

*The courageous court victory won by the Gibson family against a vindictive race-baiting smear job by Oberlin College is a victory for all working people. The ‘Militant’ covered the court case from the start, championing the fight waged by the family and their bakery.*



Bob Perkosi

Gibson family, legal team, celebrate in 2019 court victory just upheld by appeals court.

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Use ‘Militant’ to get truth out

Continued from front page for the union. “When the company organized anti-union meetings, workers would challenge what they would say,” Brewer said.

Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Ohio, and some campaign supporters joined a “caravan bus” of unionists organized from Louisville by the Kentucky AFL-CIO to attend the miners rally. During the six-hour trip, six unionists signed up for subscriptions and the same number of books were purchased.

On April 10 Hazboun knocked on the door of Connie Mowery in Georgetown, Kentucky. She had worked at the Toyota auto plant there. Mowery pointed to the impact of rising prices. “When child care costs \$250 a week and you take home \$300, what’s the point?”

“That’s why we have to fight for what’s in our interest,” Hazboun said, “and ultimately change which class is in power.” Mowery subscribed to the Militant and purchased Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?

Discussions with fellow workers like this 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, sell 1,600 books and raise \$165,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund.

Fight for safety on the job

At a truck stop in Gary, Indiana, April 5, Naomi Craine, SWP candidate for governor of Illinois, and party member Dean Hazlewood spoke with trucker Charlie Baker about what workers face today.

“The companies just care about their profits,” Baker said.

Years ago he worked as a railroad conductor. After a co-worker was killed

on the job, Baker made a suggestion to a boss about improving walking conditions in the yard. “The boss responded, ‘Do you know how much that would cost?’ They’re making billions in profits, and they won’t take simple steps to make it safer,” Baker said. “More people need to vote.”

“Most importantly, workers need to start organizing as a class,” Craine responded. “The bosses have two parties, the Democrats and Republicans. Voting for one or the other of them offers no way forward. We need to build a labor party, based on a fighting union movement, which can mobilize people in our own interests.”

“We’ve needed a labor party for a long time,” Baker agreed. He signed up for a Militant subscription and got copies of Teamster Rebellion and Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions.

Stakes for workers in Moscow’s war

Angela Shufeldt, a truck driver for 30 years, subscribed to the Militant at a March 5 rally in Dallas calling for an end to Moscow’s war on Ukraine. Shufeldt won agreement from her boss to hold off on making deliveries that night so she could attend.

“It’s important to be here to show support,” she told SWP member Josefin Otero. “This could be the start of World War III.”

In Manchester, England, rail worker Hakim Gurey spoke with fellow workers and Communist League members Ólof Andra Proppé and Pete Clifford for a few hours over tea on their day off April 2.

“Putin thought he could just do this but it’s not working out the way he planned,” said Gurey, pointing to Mos-



Campaigning in Georgetown, Kentucky, Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Ohio, told retired auto worker Connie Mowery, “We have to change which class is in power.”

cow’s invasion. He liked what the CL members said about defending the independence of Ukraine and getting Moscow out of Ukraine.

“The U.S. rulers’ record is no better,” Gurey said, pointing to the death and destruction they inflicted during the 2003 Iraq war. Proppé responded, “The capitalist rulers are on a course to bring a third world war on us, but if working people build a movement of millions and a party to lead it, we can take power out of the hands of the war makers.”

Gurey said he wasn’t sure that was possible.

“Working people’s challenge is to see what we are capable of,” Clifford said. “That’s why the Militant and these books are so important.” Gurey bought a subscription to the Militant along with four books, including Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the

Road to Workers Power.

“In the past unions have been driven out” of many workplaces, health care worker Ranginui Baltes said as she signed up for a Militant subscription in Mount Roskill, a suburb of Auckland, New Zealand, April 2. “We need to bring them back to fight for better conditions.”

CL member Mike Tucker pointed to the paper’s coverage of union struggles and to the victory by Amazon workers at a warehouse in Staten Island, New York. “Without the union, we can’t stand together,” Baltes said.

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 a check to the Militant and send it to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, or donate at themilitant.com.

Havana International Book Fair opens April 20

BY JANET POST

Tens of thousands of Cuban workers and youth will attend the 30th Havana International Book Fair April 20-30, looking for literature and discussion on culture and politics, science, literature of the world, children’s books and more. Since Cuba’s workers and farmers made a socialist revolution, the country’s literacy rate has been one of the highest in the world. After the Havana fair ends, some exhibitors will then take their books throughout the country, concluding in Santiago de Cuba in May.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the book fair hasn’t taken place for two years. It is being held under the banner: “To read is to grow.” In addition to its regular venue at the San Carlos de la Cabaña Fortress, this year there will be books available in the Almacenes San Jose Old Warehouse Cultural Center, the Technological Palace of Havana and the Rancho Boyeros Agricultural and Livestock Fair.

So far, participants and publishers from 32 coun-

tries have registered. This year Mexico is the Guest of Honor. In January, the Huasteco Mexican Navy ship sailed to Havana bringing thousands of books.

The end of the fair overlaps with the beginning of the Cuban celebration of May Day, International Workers Day, organized by the Central Organization of Cuban Workers. Three days of activity will include events in workplaces and working-class neighborhoods, an international solidarity conference, and a march of hundreds of thousands through the streets of Havana on May 1.

New York-based Pathfinder Press is organizing panel discussions presenting two books during the fair: The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation by Abram Leon on April 27; and Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History with articles by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and Mary-Alice Waters on April 24. Waters is president of Pathfinder and a leader of

the Socialist Workers Party.

The panel presenting The Jewish Question will include José Altshuler, president of the Cuban Society of History of Science and Technology; Adriana Hernández, professor at San Gerónimo College; Maritza Corrales, historian and author of The Chosen Island: Jews in Cuba; and Martin Koppel, an editor with Pathfinder Press.

Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity presents “the scientific foundations of Marxism and everything we do,” Waters said at a New York meeting Feb. 27. The panel will include Fernando González, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, and one of the Cuban Five, who was framed up and imprisoned in the U.S. for more than 14 years; Zuleica Romain, director of the Afro-American Studies Program at Casa de las Americas; Pedro Pablo Rodríguez, of the José Martí Studies Center and editor of the Critical Edition of the Complete Works of José Martí; and Waters.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund March 12-May 17 (week four)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	90	21	90	41	\$8,500	\$2,439
Atlanta	90	40	90	36	\$11,500	\$3,255
Chicago	125	55	125	46	\$14,000	\$6,895
Cincinnati	90	40	90	34	\$5,500	\$3,223
Dallas-Ft. Worth	65	45	65	35	\$4,500	\$1,525
Lincoln	15	9	15	12	\$400	\$205
Los Angeles	100	49	120	33	\$14,500	\$2,128
Miami	35	11	35	23	\$5,000	\$2,000
Minneapolis	70	32	70	47	\$5,500	\$2,273
N. New Jersey	90	49	90	50	\$7,250	\$3,346
New York	125	58	125	67	\$17,500	\$9,107
Oakland	100	59	100	60	\$14,000	\$7,654
Philadelphia	40	15	40	17	\$4,250	\$3,790
Pittsburgh	50	24	50	14	\$5,000	\$1,337
Seattle	70	22	70	17	\$13,000	\$6,230
Washington	65	26	65	27	\$5,000	\$2,113
Other		1				\$0
Total U.S.	1220	556	1240	559	\$135,400	\$57,520
Prisoners	45	50				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	50	45	50	48	\$4,000	\$564
Manchester	45	30	45	35	\$2,000	\$1,200
Total U.K.	95	75	95	83	\$6,000	\$1,764
Canada	110	56	110	51	\$13,670	\$4,747
New Zealand	35	20	35	15	\$4,000	\$2,245
Australia	35	16	35	10	\$2,500	\$450
Total	1,540	773	1,515	718	\$161,570	\$66,726
SHOULD BE	1,600	704	1,600	704	\$165,000	\$72,600

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Pathfinder offers books and pamphlets at a 50 % discount off the cover price. There is a flat rate of \$2.75 for shipping and handling. Prisoners can mail their prepaid orders to Pathfinder Press PO Box 162767 Atlanta GA 30321-2767 Link at pathfinderpress.com

— CALENDAR —

NEW YORK New York

End the US Economic War on Cuba! Sat., April 23, 2:30 p.m., gather at “La Marqueta,” 115 St. and Park Avenue. March to First Spanish United Methodist Church, 163 E. 111 St. for 3 p.m. film showing of “Cuba in Africa.” Sponsored by NY-NJ Cuba Si Coalition and IFCO/Pastors for Peace. Tel.: (212) 926-5757.



# Build support for miners strike

## Continued from front page

said Charles Foster, who works with Sims. “But when you’re fighting for a better future, for something that’s important and worth fighting for, it’s going to take some time.” Foster had been a contract worker taking care of train derailments before working at Warrior Met. “I thought being a miner would be a more stable schedule,” he said with a laugh. “This rally is progress. It gives us hope to see all the support from other union members.”

Rally speakers included UMWA President Cecil Roberts, who thanked the many unions and thousands of individuals who have donated \$2 million to the union’s strike fund to help strikers and their families make it through the long months on the picket line. “We’re here to stay for a just contract,” Roberts said. “We practice solidarity. Come and walk the picket line with us!” Messages of solidarity from other unions and announcements of new donations to the strike fund were also featured.

Anthony Shelton, president of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union; Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA; AFL-CIO presidents from Virginia, Kentucky and Alabama; and other union officials also spoke, pledging support for the striking miners.

## Unions mobilize support

A spirited contingent of 43 workers and union officials from the UNITE HERE union came to the rally from New Orleans, Atlanta, and Biloxi, Mississippi. “We wanted a big outpouring today for the miners,” UNITE HERE member Shaun Mills, who works at Harrah’s casino in New Orleans, told the *Militant*. “We con-

sider them our brothers and sisters!”

Several busloads of United Auto Workers members and retirees came from Atlanta and Louisville, Kentucky; along with Amalgamated Transit Union members from Chattanooga, Tennessee; Teamsters; members of the BCTGM; United Food and Commercial Workers; United Steelworkers; and others.

Representatives of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, who have been working to win union recognition at the Amazon distribution center in nearby Bessemer, joined in. A few UMWA strikers are currently working at Amazon and participating in the union drive there.

The recent union victory at the Amazon warehouse on Staten Island, New York, along with the successful union battles in 2021 that involved thousands of unionists using the strike weapon to confront assaults by Kellogg’s, Nabisco, Frito-Lay, John Deere and other employers, have also helped strengthen Warrior Met strikers’ resolve.

There have been solidarity rallies nearly every week since the strike started. Contingents of striking Warrior Met workers have also joined protests outside the offices of BlackRock, the company’s largest investor, in New York and other cities, with backing from local union members.



Militant/Susan LaMont

Otis Sims, front, miner for 43 years, with co-worker Charles Foster at April 6 rally in McCalla, Alabama, marking one year of UMWA strike at Warrior Met. Support “means a lot,” said Sims.

The company was formed by BlackRock and other creditors out of the 2015 bankruptcy of the mines’ previous owner, Jim Walter Resources. Threatening to close the mines if the union didn’t accept major concessions, the new bosses slashed wages, benefits and other gains miners had fought for over decades. Promises to restore cuts when the mine began making money were never met, leading to the strike.

The company is mining some coal, using scab labor.

Strikers have also had to weather company efforts to violence-bait the union, which led to a court injunction last October that violated their constitutional rights, prohibiting all picketing for several months. Strikers at the rally said they were glad to be back on the picket line.

Help spread the word about the strike! Build solidarity! Send donations to UMWA 2021 Strike Fund at P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026. Messages of support can be sent to District 20, Email: [umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net](mailto:umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net).

# In religious freedom fight, court backs death row prisoner

## BY JANET POST

In an important ruling for the rights of workers behind bars, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled March 24 that states must accommodate death row inmates who want their pastor to pray aloud or touch them during their execution.

The court ruled 8 to 1 in favor of Texas death row prisoner John Henry Ramirez. He had appealed a decision by a state court upholding prison rules that would require his Baptist pastor to remain silent and away from him as he is put to death. Ramirez argued that this was a violation of his First Amendment freedom to worship.

The state claimed that allowing the pastor to pray out loud or touch Ramirez was a threat to the “safety, security, and solemnity” of the execution. The Supreme Court ruled that there was no “compelling need” for this policy. The court had stayed Ramirez’s execution

three hours before it was to be carried out last September to consider the case.

The court’s new ruling allows states to set some limits on what religious advisers may or may not do. “If the adviser is to touch the prisoner, the state might also specify where and for how long,” wrote Chief Justice John Roberts.

Judge Clarence Thomas dissented, arguing Ramirez was being rewarded for gamesmanship to delay his execution.

The decision “stresses the importance of religious liberty and religious practice for everyone,” Ramirez’s pastor, Dana Moore, told the press. Since Moore be-

Continued on page 9

# SWP plans Minnesota campaigning May 17-31 to win spot on 2022 ballot

The Socialist Workers Party in Minnesota is making plans for two weeks of special campaigning May 17-31 to take candidates Gabrielle Prosser for governor, Kevin Dwire for lieutenant

governor and David Rosenfeld for U.S. Congress from one end of the state to the other. They’ll introduce the party, the *Militant* and sign people up to put Prosser and Dwire on the ballot.

State authorities, in an effort to limit the ballot as much as possible to the Democrats and Republicans, set this short period for independent parties to gather at least 2,000 signatures of eligible voters to qualify.

The SWP looks to campaigning in the Red River Valley, home of a bitter fight by members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union against a lockout by American Crystal Sugar in 2011-12; to the Iron Range near the Canadian border; to Austin near Iowa; and elsewhere.

“We’ll be building support for ending Moscow’s assault on Ukraine’s independence, for the striking coal miners at Warrior Met in Alabama, and other struggles by workers and farmers,” Prosser told the *Militant*. “And we’ll explain that workers need their own political party, a labor party.”

Anyone interested in this effort should contact the Socialist Workers Party Minnesota campaign, 2401 1/2 Central Ave., NE, Unit B, Minneapolis, MN 55418, Tel.: (612) 271-1930, or email: [swpminneapolis@gmail.com](mailto:swpminneapolis@gmail.com). Donations to help with the campaigning are welcome.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### GEORGIA

**Atlanta**  
**Stakes for the Working Class in the Fight Against Jew-Hatred.** Speaker: Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate. Sun., April 24, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

### NEW JERSEY

**Union City**  
**U.S. Politics, Moscow’s War on Ukraine, and the Working Class.** Speakers: Socialist Workers Party candidates in 2022 election. Sat., April 23, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 3600 Bergenline Ave., 2nd floor. Tel.: (551) 240-1512.

### PENNSYLVANIA

**Philadelphia**  
**Working-Class Fight for Women’s Emancipation, Support for Families.** Speaker: Janet Post, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 23, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. Tel.: (215) 708-1270.

## MAY 1: DEMAND AMNESTY FOR IMMIGRANT WORKERS

There are more than 11 million immigrant workers in the U.S. without official work permits. As inflation soars, bosses are imposing speedup on the job and disregard for unsafe work conditions, and cutting benefits, while seeking to widen divisions between U.S. and foreign-born workers to weaken our fighting capacity. The Socialist Workers Party and its candidates encourage you to join them on May 1 at International Workers Day events to demand amnesty for these fellow workers and call for solidarity with labor battles — from the UMWA miners on strike at Warrior Met Coal to workers at Amazon fighting for a union.

Know of other actions? Send information to [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com).

### Los Angeles, California

Assemble 11 a.m. March 12 p.m. from Olympic Blvd. and Broadway to Grand Park  
Sponsor: May Day Coalition.

### Miami, Florida

1 p.m. Downtown Miami  
Sponsors: WeCount! Miami Workers Center; Labor Community Alliance, South Florida AFL-CIO.

### Minneapolis, Minnesota

1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Four Directions parking lot 1527 E. Lake St. Sponsors: Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee and Kalpulli KetzalCoatlucue.

### Salem, Oregon

11 a.m. - 3 p.m. State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE. Email: [lorena@causaoregon.org](mailto:lorena@causaoregon.org)

### Mount Vernon, Washington

Farmworkers March  
Assemble 9 a.m. Edgewater Park, 600 Behrens Millett Road.  
Sponsors: Familias Unidas por la Justicia, Community to Community Development, UFCW 3000, Bayan, Seattle.

### Washington, D.C.

Assemble 11 a.m. Benjamin Banneker Park, 429 L’Enfant Plaza SW.  
Sponsors: Carecen, Congregation Action Network.

### Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Meet 11 a.m. 737 W. Historic Mitchell St.  
Sponsor: Voces de la Frontera. More info call (414) 828-2692.



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## ‘Now real fight begins’ to win union at Amazon in Staten Island

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. — “Now the real fight begins,” Amazon worker Angelika Maldonado, a packer on night shift, told a press conference here April 8. She was referring to Amazon bosses’ moves to overturn the election where a solid majority voted to recognize the Amazon Labor Union at the company’s JFK8 Warehouse here. “We need to unify all the workers — those who voted for the union and those who didn’t — so we can fight for and win the contract of our dreams.”

The union victory — the first at any Amazon warehouse nationwide — has gotten attention from fellow workers.

“We deserve better,” said Michelle Nieves, a packer. “Workers at Amazon are hardworking, unique and diverse, from the youngest to the oldest. We deserve a living wage. We demand job security. We need paid sick leave.”

After workers voted 2,654 to 2,131 in favor of the union, Amazon filed 25 objections with the National Labor Relations Board demanding the election be thrown out. Amazon claims NLRB officials in Region 29 “abandoned the

appearance of neutrality” and favored the union. In fact, Amazon lost despite spending millions of dollars to defeat the union and requiring all workers to attend boss-run anti-union meetings.

At the same time, a union recognition vote is scheduled for the smaller LDJ5 warehouse workers across the street from JFK8 beginning April 25. Madeline Wesley, the union’s treasurer, who works at LDJ5, said that Amazon “is really fighting us. All the union busters are in our little building of 1,500. They’re fighting really dirty. It’s a war in there.”

Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls said union fighters know this is going to be “an uphill battle,” given the resources Amazon, the second largest employer in the country, can marshal.

The union isn’t affiliated with any established union, Smalls said, but they have been meeting with the Teamsters and other unions who have agreed to back them in their fight.

— Sara Lobman and Seth Galinsky

## Australia nurses strike for better nurse-to-patient ratios

SYDNEY — Thousands of nurses and midwives rallied outside New South



Militant/Baskaran Appu

**Demanding lower, fixed nurse-to-patient ratios, thousands of nurses and midwives in New South Wales, Australia, struck for a day and rallied outside Parliament March 31.**

Wales state Parliament here March 31, calling on the government to adopt fixed nurse-to-patient ratios. The statewide 24-hour strike by members of the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives’ Association was the second in six weeks.

“What do we want? Ratios! 1-to-3 in ED [Emergency]; 1-to-4 on the floor!” nurses and midwives chanted, banging bedpans and waving many hand-paint-

ed signs as they marched toward Parliament. Rallies took place in over 20 regional centers across the state, as union members defied an Industrial Relations Commission order banning the strike.

Some city hospitals have a nurse-to-patient ratio of 1-to-4, but in working-class neighborhoods it’s 1-to-5 and worse in rural areas. Paul Hayes, a nurse from Yass District Hospital in a rural part of the state, told the rally, “In the regions staff are burnt out” with more work but no “increase in staff or salary.”

“Ratios are the most important question,” Kelvin, a hospital nurse and union member here who requested his last name not be used, told this reporter. Strikers also demand better pay and conditions. He said that differences in nurse-to-patient ratios depend on where hospitals are located. “All patients deserve the same quality treatment. We should all be on the same platform, regardless of where we live.”

Nicole Jerome, a midwife from Campbelltown Hospital, told the rally that in maternity wards there is one midwife to six women, and the babies are not counted. “But they still need care,” she said, “so effectively it is a 1-to-12 ratio.” A large contingent of young midwives joined the rally, with signs saying “Mums matter, babies count!”

— Linda Harris

# Dump truck drivers in Ontrario press their strike

**Continued from front page**

submitted by the association. The bosses, he said, propose instead to “work with you for the betterment of the industry,” that is, better for the companies.

“We are a recognized, established and respected association with authority to represent our members,” ODTA representative Bob Punia countered, saying, “Our trucks aren’t moving until we have” a collective agreement that includes truckers’ “basic rights.”

“Without a union or an association we have nothing,” Inder Singh, who has been a trucker for 40 years and is an Ontario Dump Truck Association committee member, told the *Militant*. “We need a union to fight for our rights.”

He said that the dump truck drivers are fighting for an increase in rates, as well as a standard rate for all truckers. Rates now vary enormously, Some truckers can be paid as low as 65 Canadian dollars an hour (\$51).

“We’re asking for a \$130 base rate,” that’s what’s needed to cover rapidly rising expenses for fuel, parts, insurance and fees, Singh said. “Everything is inflated except our rates. It’s impossible to make a living.”

In addition, he said, “There are no minimum hours paid. Sometimes they send you home and you get paid nothing!”

Many companies don’t pay on time, said Jasvir Dhaliwal, a 22-year trucker and owner-operator, who’s also a committee member. “We’re demanding to be paid within 45 days. Sometimes they don’t pay us for six months or longer. If a company runs away, we’re done. We don’t get paid anything.”

Overloading of dump trucks by construction companies is another major issue. Truckers can be fined CA\$500 or CA\$1,000 if they’re carrying more than the maximum allowable load. Even though it’s the company that loads the trucks, the drivers are held responsible.

“It’s not safe to drive an overloaded truck,” Dhaliwal said. “Sometimes they don’t make proper ramps on an

excavation site.” Trucks are particularly unstable if they’re overloaded and some have tipped over.

## ‘Truckers need to unite’

“This fight is a turning point,” said owner-operator Inder Singh. “The companies’ strategy is divide and conquer. They press truckers to work harder and faster.” They play truckers off against each other to keep rates low and “give the work to those who work the fastest.”

“We demand respect,” he insisted. “We’re verbally abused, and immigrants are badly treated” and face racist treatment from construction bosses.

At the meeting where dump truck workers decided to strike, Punia explained that the truckers are fighting for higher pay to keep their vehicles road-worthy and safe, as well as over the lack

of access to washrooms and no scheduled breaks either for rest or for meals.

The next week, members of the Ontario Aggregate Trucking Association, Ontario Dump Truck Association and the AZ Canadian Truckers Association, which organizes both short- and long-haul drivers, met together for the first time to discuss the need for united action.

“You could see the power workers have when they unite and shut down an industry,” Mark Grieve, a Toronto construction site ready-mix concrete driver and Teamster union member, told the *Militant*, describing the success of the aggregate workers strike. “My co-workers were all talking about it. Their fight was inspiring. Many of us think we would all be much stronger if they were part of our union.”

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



**April 28, 1997**

WATSONVILLE, California — A crowd of 25,000 farm workers, trade unionists, and youth marched here April 13 in support of the United Farm Workers effort to organize this state’s 20,000 strawberry pickers.

The union is targeting the large growers, such as the Monsanto-controlled Gargiulo Inc., which has 1,000 workers on its 500 acres. Also targeted are the cooler companies, which control virtually all the marketing for the industry.

The United Farm Workers is demanding a living wage, clean drinking water and bathrooms in the fields, job security, health insurance coverage, and an end to sexual harassment of female farm workers.

With the strawberry season getting underway, and building on the momentum generated by the outpouring of support, the UFW is sending organizers into the fields to sign up new members.



**April 28, 1972**

LOS ANGELES — The Reagan administration and its supporters have opened a massive campaign to restore capital punishment in California.

Of the 158 Californians sent to the gas chambers 1943-1963, fully 50 percent were unskilled workers. Their median age was 31. While Blacks make up 7 percent of California’s population, they constituted 23 percent of those executed.

“There are no capitalists behind bars in California, no oil company executives doing time after the oil spills in San Francisco and Santa Barbara. The killers of George Jackson still rule in San Quentin, never having been brought to trial,” said Laura Moorhead, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress from the 37th C.D. “Every opponent of capital punishment, everyone who values human rights over property rights, must unite to turn back this reactionary, racist offensive.”



**April 26, 1947**

A roar of protest is labor’s answer to the cheers with which Wall Street’s representatives in the House shoved through the savagely anti-labor Hartley bill. In mighty demonstrations, the American workers are showing that they are in no mood to stand like cattle while Wall Street knocks them down with a legislative sledge hammer.

The day before passage of the measure, 20,000 Chicago packinghouse workers staged a one-hour work stoppage. In New Jersey, the telephone strikers continued their refusal to bow before the state slave-labor bill. The women operators’ resistance helped inspire the demonstrations throughout the country.

On April 22 an estimated 100,000 workers in Iowa, under joint AFL-CIO auspices, stopped work for one day to protest a pending state bill to outlaw the closed shop. In Detroit, 400,000 auto workers plan a stoppage April 24.



# Tens of thousands protest across Sri Lanka, demand gov't resign

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Tens of thousands of protesters in Sri Lanka, from the mostly Tamil north to the largely Sinhalese south, marched April 9 demanding President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resign. The country of 22 million is facing its worst financial crisis since independence in 1948, with soaring inflation, spreading power outages and shortages of food and fuel.

“Our futures are uncertain,” Rashika Satheja told the press at a demonstration in Colombo, the capital, April 4. “But at least we are fighting.” The protest was marked by participation of people from all faiths in a country where the capitalist rulers have long fostered divisions along religious and national lines to try and divide working people. Rajapaksa helped foment a wave of anti-Islamic sentiment in 2019 following bombings by Islamist terrorists that killed nearly 270 people just prior to his election.

“They don’t care about us because we are poor,” Fatima Hussein told Al-Jazeera. “People are angry and frustrated.” Essentials have become unaffordable for many. Sandamali Purnima told the *New York Times* that meals are

increasingly meager for her family, just lentils, rice and tea without milk. The price of white rice is up 93% since 2019. Many Sri Lankans are switching to firewood and kerosene alternatives as cooking gas is now too expensive to afford.

Doctors warn that the country’s health care system teeters on the edge of collapse amid the crippling power cuts and shortages of life-saving medications.

Government lockdowns during the COVID pandemic gutted the country’s tourist trade, and today’s fuel price hikes, exacerbated by Moscow’s war against Ukraine, have added to the crisis. The government’s attacks on the conditions of working people are worsened by growing pressure for “fiscal responsibility” from the International Monetary Fund.

A 36-hour state of emergency was put in place April 2 after thousands of people protested March 31 in Colombo. Security forces turned tear gas and water cannons on demonstrators.

Rajapaksa and his family are notorious for unleashing violent assaults to silence opponents. Rajapaksa was defense secretary and his brother, Mahinda



Protest April 4, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, demands President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resign. Rest of government quit amid turmoil over deep economic crisis.

da, president, during the final phase of Sri Lanka’s three-decade civil war that ended in 2009 with the crushing of the Tamil Tigers and displacement of the minority Muslim population.

Muslim Tamils, many brought into Sri Lanka by the former British colonial rulers to work on tea plantations, are an oppressed minority in the majority Buddhist country, and have faced attacks on their language and voting rights.

Despite the threat of arrest and assault

by cops, thousands continue to protest, ignoring both the curfew and the state of emergency that Rajapaksa declared on April 1. They vow to keep it up until he quits. The country’s entire cabinet — except for Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is now prime minister — resigned April 3. Under pressure, Rajapaksa dropped the state of emergency and invited opposition party members to join his cabinet, but none took up the offer.

On April 12 the government announced it was suspending interest payments on its debts to the International Monetary Fund. Any type of default comes at a high price. In 2015, after the government couldn’t repay “Belt and Road” loans to Beijing, its largest creditor, the country’s main seaport and 15,000 acres of land around it were handed over to Chinese control for the next 99 years.

# Veterans of Belarus protests join Ukrainian resistance

BY ROY LANDERSEN

For weeks in 2020 hundreds of thousands of working people joined an uprising to bring down the regime of President Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus after he stole the presidential election. With backing from Russian President Vladimir Putin, Lukashenko put down the revolt in blood.

But the impact of his regime’s assaults had a lasting impact on millions across the country, affecting both their response to Moscow’s invasion of neighboring Ukraine and limiting the options for Lukashenko. The Belarusian president has so far been unable to send troops to fight alongside Moscow’s forces in Ukraine, fearing that doing so could undermine the morale and cohesion of his army.

Hundreds of Belarusians have volunteered to join the war to defeat the

Russian rulers’ Ukraine invasion, in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and to strengthen opposition to Lukashenko at home.

“Without an independent Ukraine, there won’t be an independent Belarus,” Pavel Kulazhanka, one of the volunteers now defending Kyiv, told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Another volunteer from Belarus told the *Washington Post* he was originally from Russia and had joined the fight because he wanted to show Ukrainians that there were Russians who supported their right to independence.

Many of the volunteers are in the Kastus Kalinouski Battalion, formed out of Belarusians who joined Ukrainian territorial defense units in Kyiv. So far three have been killed. The battalion is named after the leader of a Belarusian uprising in the 1860s against the imperial rule

of the Russian czars. There is another Belarusian units in Ukraine’s territorial defense forces in Odesa and Lutsk.

In Belarus more than 800 people were arrested Feb. 27 from among the thousands demonstrating against Putin’s invasion launched three days earlier. Over the past year and a half, Belarusian cops have arrested more than 35,000 in the wake of the mass movement against Lukashenko. In 2020 hundreds of Ukrainians joined the protests in Kyiv in solidarity with the struggle to oust Lukashenko and win political rights.

This February Lukashenko approved constitutional changes that allow the government to invite the Putin regime to station troops it currently has in Belarus there permanently, and to invite Moscow to place its nuclear weapons there.

Lukashenko’s regime is stepping up arrests of rail workers it accuses of sabotaging railway lines in the Gomel and Brest regions that were used to move Russian troops and weaponry from Belarus into Ukraine. Three Belarusian men were shot and injured as they were arrested by police March 30, and a fourth April 1, accused of damage to railway equipment. At least eight Belarusian rail workers who were arrested earlier last month face up to 15 years imprisonment.

The Belarusian ministry of the interior says its special forces have begun patrolling the rail corridors.

# Back Ukraine independence! Moscow’s troops out now!

Continued from front page

and more. The continuing bombardment and siege of the key southern port of Mariupol continues, with Ukrainian forces holding out in the giant Azovstal steel mill.

Putin sees only one path for Russia’s capitalist class to compete with its rivals — to seize territory and restore its domination over nearby nations that for centuries had been under the boot of the country’s former czarist rulers, and later under Stalin. Putin says Ukraine has no right to exist.

Working people everywhere have a stake in backing the Ukrainian people’s fight for independence and to force Moscow to get out of their country.

A rocket attack by Moscow’s forces struck the Kramatorsk train station in eastern Ukraine April 8, killing over 50 people and injuring many more. The station was packed with 4,000 people seeking to flee the expected onslaught by Moscow’s forces in the region.

After the attack, about 1,000 drivers with 400 vehicles volunteered to help the flood of refugees get out of the town. These volunteers “are ordinary people, coming from all over Ukraine, who just want to help,” Yuroslav Boyko, who is organizing the evacuation, told the April 10 *New York Times*.

While the imperialist rulers of the U.S., U.K. and other European powers cry crocodile tears over Moscow’s invasion, their real aim is to advance their own economic and political interests. In addition to providing a carefully delimited level of defensive military equipment to Ukraine, their main action has been to target Moscow with crippling sanctions, which hit Russian



Marat Grachev displayed “No War” sign in his Moscow store for weeks without complaint, then got fined \$1,200. Donations poured in, showing opposition to Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.

workers and farmers the hardest.

Washington and its imperialist allies are also competitors and have rival interests to advance in the course of the war. All — from Germany to Canada, Sweden to Australia, Japan to France — are moving to build up their military forces and trying to convince working people that they need to sacrifice for the greater good of the nation.

The U.S. and other imperialist sanctions aggravate the hardships foisted on working people in Russia by the capitalist class there. Prices for sugar, onions and other staples jumped by nearly 50% in March. This privation helps Putin as his regime tries to rally support for itself and its war, pointing to the economic onslaught as an act of “Western aggression.”

While Putin and his tightly controlled media have gained support for the war from a majority of Russians so far, according to recent polls, that is thin.

## Opposition in Russia

Many working people continue finding ways to show their opposition to the war despite repressive laws against protest put in place by the government. And some soldiers are refusing to fight.

Russia has a military draft for all men between the ages of 18 and 27. But those from middle-class backgrounds, especially in the big cities, are able to avoid this by enrolling at universities, paying bribes or exploiting loopholes. As a result, draftees are largely young working-class men from small towns and villages all over Russia.

# Cuban Revolution set moral high ground in treatment of enemy soldiers

BY SETH GALINSKY

As the invading army of Russian President Vladimir Putin commits atrocities against the Ukrainian people, how should working people who are seeking to defend Ukrainian independence approach Russian soldiers? Are they complicit with the Putin regime? Or is it possible to win the ranks of the Russian army — workers and farmers in uniform — to oppose the invasion and hasten the victory of the Ukrainian resistance?

This is not a new question. The attitude toward the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista regime’s soldiers was decisive for Cuban revolutionaries in the 1950s.

When Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement began the guerrilla struggle in Cuba in 1956, they confronted Batista’s well-equipped army, air force and navy. The dictatorial regime had some 20,000 soldiers and large supplies of tanks, bombs, rockets, napalm and other weapons, supplied by Washington. All the guerrillas had were some rifles and a political program aimed at uniting working people across the island. But it wasn’t long before they were dealing defeats to their much larger adversary.

## A question of moral values

In a radio broadcast to the Cuban people on Aug. 19, 1958, Castro explained the key to their advances: “Victory in war depends on having a minimum of weapons and a maximum of moral values,” he said. “The

victories obtained through our weapons without assassinating, torturing, or even interrogating an adversary proves that committing outrages against human dignity can never be justified.

“War is not simply a question of rifles, bullets, cannons and airplanes,” Castro said. “Maybe that belief is one of the reasons of the failure of the tyranny’s forces.”

“Why don’t we kill the soldiers we capture?” Castro asked. “First because only cowards and thugs murder an enemy who has surrendered.” Wounded soldiers were never mistreated. They received the same medical care as wounded rebel fighters.

“Second, because the Rebel Army cannot fall into the same practices of the tyranny it is fighting,” Castro said. He pointed out that the Batista dictatorship tried to convince its soldiers the rebel fighters would kill any of them they captured in attempt to get the soldiers to fight for the dictatorship “until the last drop of blood.”

Castro instructed Radio Rebelde to always “stick to the truth,” never “hide our casualties” and never “exaggerate the enemy’s casualties because the cause of freedom cannot be defended with lies.”

These were not just words. This was the way the Cuban revolutionaries conducted themselves, including in the most difficult moments of the war. It stands in sharp contrast to the conduct of the capitalist rulers worldwide from

Washington to Moscow. The conduct of an army reflects the morals and the goals of the class that commands it. An army mobilized by the dog-eat-dog bosses’ government will advance methods that show utter contempt for the lives and conditions of working people in or out of uniform.

In Cuba the goal of the Rebel Army was never to kill the maximum number of soldiers, but to defeat the dictatorship with the minimum cost in human lives.

In an interview with Ignacio Ramonet, Castro described the importance of this approach. “When an enemy comes to admire and respect its adversary, you have achieved a big psychological victory. He admires you because you have defeated him, because you have dealt strong blows, but also because you have respected him, because you did not beat a single captured soldier, because you did not humiliate him, you did not insult him.”

The revolutionaries reached out to the regime’s soldiers in lulls in the fighting, and whenever possible, to tell them the truth about the program and goals of the revolutionary movement, exposing the lies of the dictatorship. They explained they were not trying to replace one man, but an entire system of exploitation.

## ‘To you, soldier of the tyranny’

The Rebel Army front commanded by Ernesto Che Guevara, even printed a special edition of its newspaper titled, “To you, soldier of the

tyranny” that explained its values.

The July 26 Movement, Castro said in 1957, was the only force that could be trusted to maintain public order after Batista was overthrown, because the new armed forces “must be imbued with a spirit of justice and nobility that the July 26 Movement has instilled in its own soldiers.”

In July 1958 the guerrillas took several hundred Batista soldiers prisoners. On Castro’s instructions, Guevara proposed a truce to the local army commander so they could hand the prisoners over under the supervision of the Red Cross.

That commander, Captain Carlos Durán Batista, wanted his troops to think those being handed over were rebels. Teté Puebla, a guerrilla fighter involved in negotiating the truce, had to spend the night in the army camp on the eve of the transfer. When the captain fell asleep, she went around to the soldiers and told them the truth.

This working-class course paid off. Morale in Batista’s army plummeted while sympathy for the revolutionary movement among soldiers grew. By the end of 1958 the army was in disarray and Batista fled the country. As Castro and the Rebel Army headed from the Sierra Maestra to the capital, Havana, thousands of soldiers put down their weapons and many traveled alongside the rebel combatants.

The war was over and a new day was opening for the workers and farmers of Cuba.

A disproportionate number are from the least developed republics of the Russian federation, with high unemployment rates. They are mostly youth who are nonethnic Russians, from Buryatia near Mongolia and the Muslim-majority republics, such as Dagestan, Bashkortostan, Tatarstan and Ingushetia. Soldiers can earn five times as much as the average wage in the areas they come from.

The disaffection of some soldiers has gotten resonance from family members and others in Russia. Some 60 paratroopers refused to continue fighting after witnessing the slaughter, reported Russian news outlet Pskovskaya Guberniya. They were sent back to their Pskov base in northern Russia in disgrace. Some were dismissed for “cowardice” while others face court-martial and possible jail terms. Nonetheless, their families have supported their stand.

After heavy losses in attempts to storm Mariupol, some Russian special forces units have refused to take part in further attacks there.

Valentina Melnikova, the head of the Soldiers’ Mothers Committee when it protested during Russia’s failed war in Afghanistan, told a Russian YouTube interviewer that as Moscow’s troops massed on the Ukraine border her phone “started ringing off the hook again.”

“Since our army does not collect the bodies of the dead and don’t always pick up the wounded, there can be many discrepancies,” she said, adding she thinks the Ukrainian government’s estimates of Russian troop losses are more accurate than Moscow’s.

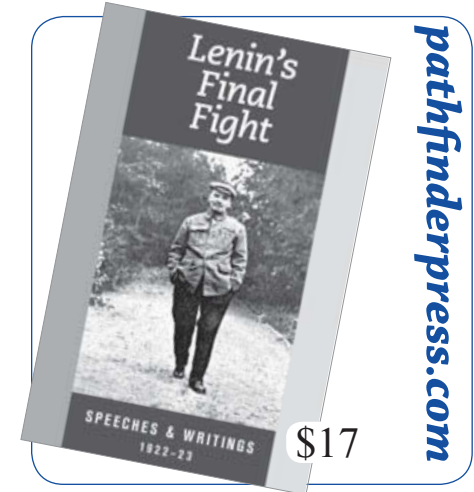
Yevheni Velichko, 32, mayor of Voznesensk, a southern Ukrainian town, asked residents to collect Russian corpses after a two-day battle “so that we can send these guys back to their mothers and wives.”

“Russian or not Russian, we treated the bodies with dignity,” he told the April 8 *Washington Post*. He explained that they were sent to Kyiv.

In a Moscow shopping mall, Marat Grachev, a computer-repair store owner, prominently displayed a “no to war” sign for several weeks after the invasion. He said he was surprised that none of his customers complained or reported him, despite the fact he had to raise his prices because of the sanctions. It was a passerby who reported him and he was detained by police.

Grachev was fined 100,000 rubles (\$1,200). Contributors to an online appeal raised far more money than he needed to pay the fine, and he’s donating the excess to groups that help protesters fight their arrest.

Grachev says he plans a new display in his store: “There was a sign here for which a 100,000 ruble fine was imposed.”



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# Fight for right to self-determination of nations oppressed by czarism

Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings 1922-23, one of the Books of the Month for April, helps explain why the Socialist Workers Party supports Ukrainian independence against Moscow's invasion. Taken from the introduction, the excerpt describes how V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the world's first socialist revolution, waged his last political battle to protect the right of formerly oppressed peoples in the czarist "prison house of nations" to join as equals in a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, part of the proletarian internationalist course that brought workers and peasants to power in October 1917. After his death, a counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin overturned Lenin's legacy. The March 28 issue of the Militant featured an excerpt from Lenin defending his views. Copyright © 2010 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES  
AND STEVE CLARK

Between late September 1922 and early March 1923, the final months of his active life, Vladimir Lenin led a political battle within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At stake was nothing less than whether the party would continue advancing



V.I. Lenin, leader of 1917 Russian Revolution, addresses Third Congress of Communist International, July 5, 1921. Lenin's final fight was against Stalin over the national question.

ing along the political course that had brought the Bolshevik-led workers and peasants of the former tsarist empire to power some five years earlier. That victory had opened the door to the first socialist revolution and ushered in a new historical era with prospects for proletarian-led popular revolution not only in Europe but across Asia and beyond.

There was nothing hypothetical about this battle. Lenin fought to win the party's leadership to implement concrete proposals on matters affecting the lives of tens of millions: control over revenues from the Soviet republic's import and export trade; structural changes to facilitate improving the class composition of state and party bodies; a transformation of the organization of agricultural production and exchange; special steps to guarantee equality of rights and self-determination for nations and nationalities formerly oppressed by the tsarist empire; increased political priority and funding of literacy programs and schools as part of broader efforts to open education and culture to the toilers and to party cadres working in government bodies; civil treatment of party members and coworkers as an unqualified precondition for leadership. ...

It was a political fight over the class trajectory of the Soviet republic and Communist Party. ...

The Bolshevik-led government sought from the outset to establish a union of proletarian Russia and the oppressed

peoples long encased within the old tsarist prison house of nations across Europe and Asia. But that goal could only be achieved by the *voluntary* action of those peoples, whose unconditional right to national self-determination was recognized by the new government.

The Soviet congress in January 1918 established the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) "leaving it to the workers and peasants of each nation to decide independently at their own authoritative congress of soviets whether they wish to participate in the federal government ... and on what terms."

By late 1922, twenty-one autonomous republics and regions had been established within the RSFSR itself, and the revolutionary government was collaborating with soviet republics in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia, Georgia, and Ukraine to form what in December 1922 would become the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Lenin, however, objected to Stalin's initial draft of a Central Committee resolution, which negated the Bolsheviks' long-standing proletarian internationalism by calling for "entry" of these other republics into the *Russian* federation.

"We consider ourselves, the Ukrainian SSR, and others equal," Lenin wrote in a September 1922 letter to the party's Political Bureau, and "enter with them on an equal basis into a new union, a new federation, the Union of the Soviet

Republics of Europe and Asia."

In a note to the Political Bureau the following day, Stalin acquiesced to an amended form of this proposal and several other of "Comrade Lenin's unimportant amendments," as he called them. Stalin's note dismissively referred to Lenin's uncompromising opposition to Great Russian chauvinism as the "national liberalism of Comrade Lenin."

Two months later Lenin was outraged to discover that Central Committee member Grigory Ordzhonikidze, in the presence of another CC member, Aleksey Rykov, had physically struck a Communist from Georgia during a dispute over national rights. In Lenin's late December letter to the upcoming party congress, he wrote that the Bolsheviks' support for the right of national self-determination "will be a mere scrap of paper" if the party is "unable to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great Russian chauvinist, in substance a scoundrel and a tyrant, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat is."

And Lenin concluded: "That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or 'great' nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question; he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view." ...

None of these political challenges could be addressed, Lenin insisted, without substantially increasing the weight of politically tested workers and peasants in leading bodies of the party and state.

During the civil war, Lenin pointed out, "We concentrated our best party forces in the Red Army, we mobilized the best of our workers, we looked for new forces at the deepest roots of our dictatorship." Vast numbers of those selfless cadres had been killed in combat or felled by disease. Now it was time to renew this effort under the current conditions facing the Soviet republic.

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# Back miners, Ukraine independence fight!

The breadth of union support shown for striking Alabama coal miners against Warrior Met bosses at their April 6 rally shows the readiness of workers to throw support behind this fight. Inspired by the miners' determination, more solidarity can be won. The fight to reverse the bosses' attacks on miners' wages, benefits and working conditions can be victorious if our unions expand solidarity.

Help get out the word, build delegations to the United Mine Workers picket lines in Brookwood. Invite strikers to come speak to unions in your area. Win contributions to their strike fund.

A victory in this struggle would show what workers can accomplish when we use our unions. It would advance the confidence of workers elsewhere to stand up to the bosses' efforts to hold down wages while sharp price hikes wreak havoc on our families. It would encourage workers at Amazon, who have just won a victory on the road to gaining union recognition in Staten Island, and who are fighting to do the same in Bessemer, Alabama.

The employers act together to defend their class rule and maximize the profits they derive from exploiting us, both here and around the world. They use their state power, and their two parties — the Democrats and Republicans — to try and corral us. We saw this in the draconian court-ordered ban on all picketing at Warrior Met for months.

Whenever bosses talk about "our company's interests," they mean their profits, not our wages, safety on

the job or schedules that allow for a family life. Whenever their government says "we" need to unite to preserve "America's" place in the world, they mean the interests of the capitalist rulers, not the toiling majority, who they enlist as the cannon fodder in their wars.

Everything their government does abroad — from expanding its massive military and nuclear arms in Europe to imposing sanctions on Russia — is aimed at increasing their ability to profit at the expense of competitors and by exploiting working people worldwide. These dog-eat-dog profiteers aren't our allies.

The working class needs our own foreign policy — rooted in our common interests with fellow workers worldwide. Today we champion the defense of Ukraine's independence, call for Moscow to get out of Ukraine, and at the same time, call for an end to the crippling sanctions that fall on the backs of Russian workers and farmers.

These twin battles — building solidarity with workers abroad and here at home — go hand in hand. Politics today, as ever, is class against class. We need to rebuild our unions into a powerful social movement of millions that can mobilize our strength in action.

We need to break with the bosses' ruling parties and build our own working-class party, a labor party, to help coordinate our labor struggles on the road to taking political power into our own hands.

Solidarity with the fighting miners at Warrior Met! Solidarity with the Ukrainian toilers battling to defend their sovereignty and independence!

# Defeat of FBI entrapment case is rights victory

Continued from front page

ists," an effort that continues through their never-ending probe into the Jan. 6, 2021, incursion into the Capitol Building.

The FBI's effort to entrap the four men in Michigan was the central issue in the trial. The judge told the jury this was an acceptable defense for those indicted. The acquittal of Harris and Caserta pushes back efforts to legitimize future frame-up operations against working-class militants, as the class struggle deepens and deals a blow to the rulers' attacks on political rights.

The trial heard recordings of the four men secretly taped by the FBI, testimony from the FBI informers involved and from two men who pled guilty to involvement in the alleged conspiracy in hopes of avoiding threatened draconian prison sentences. If convicted each of the accused faced life in prison.

Liberal media made much of the testimony of Ty Garbin, one of those who pled guilty and was sentenced to six years in jail. Garbin said he hoped kidnapping Whitmer would lead to a civil war that would stop the election of Joseph Biden.

To try to make the charges stick, prosecutors introduced comments from the Facebook pages of the defendants. They discuss kidnapping and killing Whitmer and other officials who impose mask and vaccine mandates. Prosecutors insisted that because the defendants had discussed going after Whitmer before the FBI got their provocateurs rolling, that meant they were already guilty of "conspiracy," and the FBI's entrapment efforts were irrelevant to the trial.

But they had no plan. "If I don't like the governor and it's rough talk, I can do that in our country," said Michael Hills, a lawyer for Caserta, after the verdict. It's called free speech.

No attack ever took place, no date was set for Whitmer to be abducted and details of various alleged plans differed from one government witness to another.

"Without a plan," said Joshua Blanchard, Croft's at-

torney, "the snitches needed to make it look like" there was one. Defense attorneys showed that FBI provocateurs tried everything they could to push forward the organization of the "kidnapping."

Militia member Dan Chappel agreed to spy on the group for the FBI, becoming the outfit's second-in-command. At one point he told his FBI handlers he was wasting his time as the group had no serious plan. His handlers texted him to start "bugging" Fox into carrying out a reconnaissance mission, the court heard. So Chappel drove Fox to Whitmer's vacation home for "surveillance."

Chappel suggested the group threaten Whitmer by firing a shot through the window of her empty home and mailing her the bullet casing. He admitted on the stand that he made suggestions about how they could get hold of a helicopter. At another point, after they smoked some pot, the group discussed tying Whitmer to a kite and flying her away.

Chappel offered Fox a credit card with \$5,000 on it to spend on anything he wanted, defense attorney Christopher Gibbons told the jury. Fox rejected the offer. Chappel was paid \$54,000 by the FBI for his part in trying to set up the group.

Undeterred by the clear evidence of FBI entrapment, Whitmer's office issued a statement after the unanimous jury verdict was announced condemning its finding. She claimed it would mean "extremists will be emboldened."

Frame-ups like the one revealed in this trial have been standard practice in government disruption operations targeting the working-class movement. FBI informers spied on and carried out disruption operations against fighters for Black rights, anti-war activists, militant unionists and the Socialist Workers Party for decades.

At the height of the imperialist slaughter in World War II, the Democratic Party administration of President Franklin Roosevelt placed nearly 24,000 informers and provocateurs in almost 4,000 workplaces to report on and disrupt union and political activity in 1942 alone. Leaders of the SWP and the fighting Teamsters union in Minneapolis were framed up and imprisoned for their opposition to the imperialist war.

A political campaign and lawsuit launched by the Socialist Workers Party in 1973 exposed decades of FBI spying on the party and others. In 1986 Judge Thomas Griesa ruled the FBI's use of undercover informers against the SWP violated the constitutional rights of the party, its members and supporters.

# Death row prisoner

Continued from page 4

came his pastor in 2016 they have had no physical contact, so the first and last will be in the execution chamber. They speak through telephone handsets on either side of a thick plexiglass window and pray by pressing their palms against the window.

Inmates like Ramirez "are in solitude all the time," Moore told the *New York Times* last fall. "The only time they are touched is when the handcuffs go on and when the handcuffs go off."

Ramirez, 37, has been on death row since 2009 after being convicted of stabbing to death convenience store clerk Pablo Castro in 2004. He was seeking money to buy drugs and took \$1.25 from the clerk's pocket.

"Mr. Ramirez takes responsibility for the crime, which he calls a 'heinous murder,'" reported the *Times*. In prison he has become a voracious reader, writes poetry, draws and writes letters to supporters.

In 2019 in another Texas case, the Supreme Court blocked the execution of Patrick Murphy when prison authorities would not allow his Buddhist priest into the execution room, even though the prison employed Christian and Muslim advisers. Texas responded by barring *all* clergy from the death chamber.

In 2021, as more inmates filed lawsuits, the state changed its policy to allow outside religious advisers in the chamber, but banned them from speaking or touching the inmate.

There is growing opposition to the death penalty among working people and an increasing number of state governments have abolished it.

"The death penalty and solitary confinement are weapons to terrorize and intimidate working people by the capitalist ruling class," Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, told the *Militant*. "The U.S. rulers incarcerate a higher percentage of the population than any other country in the world. The Socialist Workers Party calls for the abolition of both the death penalty and solitary confinement."

# Quebec Sobeys warehouse workers strike for pay raise

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

TERREBONNE, Quebec — "I'm fed up being run by threats," striker Patrick Sirois told the *Militant* on the Sobeys distribution center picket line here April 9. The 190 United Food and Commercial Workers Local 501 members, on strike since Feb. 7, had rejected a tentative agreement the day before. Sobeys is the second-largest grocery store chain in Canada.

Wage hikes in the proposed seven-year contract, after an initial 6% in the first year, were all under 3%.

"We haven't been on strike for 44 years and we just want our fair share and to fight for future generations," striker Alain Madore said. "Little by little they're always cutting back."

In 2016, binding arbitration gave workers raises of only 30-cents-an-hour, an experience that fueled determination to plan for effective future strike action, including a substantial strike fund.

A large hand-painted sign by the main picket line says, "Prices, Profits, Sales UP, employees ask for raises according to the cost of living, respect, dignity."

Sobeys is pulling no punches. "Despite our desire to operate in Quebec, we are currently re-evaluating our entire network of warehouses in the province," the bosses wrote in a letter to store owners and directors. It was leaked and run in the press. Kim Bergeron, UFCW lawyer and negotiator, replied, "Threats are something we are used to."

Union members have been spreading the word about their fight by leafleting IGA grocery stores, the Sobeys' brand in Quebec. Sirois described the reaction they got in Blainville, north of Montreal. "It was extraordinary. The truck drivers were honking. The firemen were in front of the store with their sirens going." And many shoppers were sympathetic.

To find out more, drop by the picket line at 1101 Boulevard de la Pinière O, Terrebonne, or send support to tuac@tuac501.org.



## In Defense of the US Working Class

by Mary-Alice Waters

Did the election of Donald Trump in 2016 indicate an increase in racism, xenophobia and every other form of reaction among working people?

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