

'Militant' calls target week to step up drive for new readers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Taking advantage of expanded opportunities to reach out with the Socialist Workers Party program, party members are organizing an international target week April 30 - May 8 to boost momentum in the nine-week drive to win 1,600 new readers to the *Militant*, sell 1,600 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries, and raise \$165,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund.

During the target week SWP candidates for office and party members will join fellow workers and unionists at May Day celebrations around the U.S. and step up discussion about the stakes for working people worldwide in defeating Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

"It's disheartening hearing news about the war," Patricia Lynch told Joanne Kuniandy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in New Jersey's 8th District, when she and SWP member Terry Evans knocked on her door in Bayonne April 24.

"I feel the U.S. needs to step in," she said.

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Defend Ukraine independence! All Russian troops out now!

For solidarity of Russian, Ukrainian workers against Putin's war



Ukraine South screen shot from video

Residents of Russian-occupied Kherson, Ukraine, April 27, protest Moscow's sham referendum to create "people's republic." Russian troops fired tear gas, stun grenades against the crowd.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The Russian regime of President Vladimir Putin is redirecting and attempting to step up efforts to crush the Ukrainian people's tenacious resistance to its invasion. As Moscow's forces center assaults on eastern Ukraine, they continue to unleash

shelling, rocket and bomb attacks aimed at Kharkiv, Odesa and other urban centers across the country. Washington and allied powers are responding by accelerating their own preparations for future wars and in-

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

tensifying sanctions on Russia.

As we go to press, Ukrainian forces are still holding out in tunnels under the sprawling Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol, in southeast Ukraine, along with over 1,000 civilians, many family members of workers at the mill, denying Moscow complete control of the port as its forces continue to bom-

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Thousands turn out as Havana Int'l Book Fair opens April 20

BY PATRICK BROWN

HAVANA — Thousands of people have visited the grounds of the colonial Spanish fortress of San Carlos de la Cabaña over the last five days, since the Havana International Book Fair opened at this historic site April 20.

The 10-day fair, held under the theme "To read is to grow," is a yearly cultural event. It's a product of Cuba's socialist revolution, through which, over six decades, working people not only wiped out illiteracy but dramatically broadened access to education and culture in city and country.

Holding the book fair this year also

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No worker has to die! Young bakery worker killed on the job

BY MAGGIE TROWE

CINCINNATI — A young woman's life was cut short when she was killed on the job April 16. Bibiana Arellano Delabra, 22, was crushed to death while operating a large industrial mixing machine at nonunion Automatic Rolls of North Carolina in Clayton, North Carolina. Automatic Rolls is owned by Northeast Foods,

AS I SEE IT

a network of some 10 bread factories and 30 distribution centers across the U.S. Eastern Seaboard.

Seven days a week, 24 hours a day, commercial bakeries like these produce bread for store shelves and hamburger and hot dog buns for the giant fast-food chains such as McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's and others.

Giant batches of dough are mixed in huge metal containers, cut and shaped into rolls, buns and bread,

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Fight for union at Amazon expands with vote at second warehouse in NY



LIUNA Local 79

Amazon Labor Union organizing committee members joined by other unions at April 24 rally on eve of voting on union representation at second Amazon warehouse in Staten Island.

BY SETH GALINSKY AND SARA LOBMAN

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. — "I want people to be able to retire from here" instead of having to quit to find a job they can survive on, Amazon worker Michael Aguilar told a support rally for the Amazon Labor Union outside the company's multi-warehouse complex here April 24. "I want them to earn livable wages instead of slave wages."

More than 300 people from around the New York region joined the rally to back the union-organizing effort, including members and officials from more than a dozen unions, among them the Teamsters; Transport Workers Union; United Food and Commercial Workers; Locals 78 and 79 of the Laborers' International Union; Retail, Wholesale and Department Store

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36th anniversary of Chernobyl nuclear disaster marked amid Moscow's war

BY SETH GALINSKY

Moscow's war against Ukraine, and over the one-month-long occupation of Chernobyl, has brought renewed attention to the 1986 nuclear disaster there and its continuing effects.

Russian troops occupied the site Feb. 24, the first day of the invasion, and a month later took over the nearby town of Slavutych, where most workers at the plant live. They were forced to withdraw by the Ukrainian resis-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Striking Stanford nurses say understaffing is unsustainable

Chevron refinery workers fight for more staffing, wages

Family farmers in California face soaring prices, drought

BY CAROLE LESNICK
FRESNO, Calif. — Farmer Will Scott invited Socialist Workers Party candidates Ellie García and Joel Britton to his farm here April 5 to discuss how small farmers are affected by sharply rising prices, Moscow’s war in Ukraine and what workers and farmers can do to begin changing the conditions we face. Scott is president of the African American Farmers of California. Black families have been farming in the San Joaquin Valley for more than 100 years. García is running for U.S. Senate from California and Britton is the party’s candidate for governor. Britton and this worker-correspondent returned for more discussion April 13.

Scott first met members of the SWP at a conference of Hmong farmers in 2012. He attended the event to further work among immigrant farmers from Laos, who face many of the same challenges as all small farmers. Okra, purple hull beans, black-eyed and crowder peas, tomatoes and various kinds of peppers are among the many crops Scott grows on his 45 acres. Crops planted in recent weeks will be harvested this summer before a second planting.

A yearslong drought has hit small farmers especially hard. “My well went dry,” Scott said. “Big farmers with almond trees dig their wells deep. They used my water by digging so deep that I ran out. “Paul Buxman, a white farmer who raises peaches and is also an artist, organized to raise money so we could dig to 300 feet. It was \$50-a-foot donation and you got one of his lithographs.”

“That was quite an act of solidarity,” García said. “It was a godsend,” Scott replied. “If the farmer has no water, he’s not a farmer, just a person with land. I know farmers who can’t farm. Farmers are gouged by the people who drill wells. For another well earlier, I paid \$14,000 to drill down 300 feet; today that would cost three times as much.”

Scott, now 81, said his family had been sharecroppers in Oklahoma before moving here. “I was a farmworker. I cut grapes. I know what it is to be a worker,” he said. Drafted by the army during the Vietnam War, he enlisted in the navy. For many years he worked as an engineer at a utility company until retiring at 53 years old, when he took up farming full time.

“I still work with Hmong, Latino and Nisei [Japanese American] farmers,” Scott said. “Small farmers need to tell their story.” The price farmers receive for what they produce is an example. “If we organize, we can be compensated more.”

Farmers went to the state Capitol to meet with legislators. “There was discussion in the legislative Black Caucus and they said they would come to the farms to see the current conditions, but they didn’t,” Scott said.

García said Republicans and Democrats both represent the capitalist rulers. “We are for forging an independent movement of workers to build a labor party based on the unions. We need to be able to fight as a class. Eventually we’ll have to take power from the rulers and establish a workers and farmers government like working people did in



Militant/Carole Lesnick
Socialist Workers Party candidates Ellie García and Joel Britton visit Will Scott, right, on his Fresno, California, farm April 5 to discuss challenges facing small farmers from rising prices, Moscow’s war in Ukraine, and need for worker-farmer alliance to defend toilers’ livelihoods.

Cuba,” she said. “I’m a Democrat,” Scott responded. “But I’d say they’re no different than Republicans.” Workers and farmers need to defend themselves and “talk and spread the word.” Workers and farmers need an alliance, García added. She described the powerful impact on her of struggles by farmers to prevent foreclosures in the early 1980s in the Midwest. Black and Caucasian farmers fought side by side to hold on to their land and were joined by trade unionists from across the region. They held joint rallies with striking steelworkers and organized food donations for miners hit by massive layoffs. The SWP joined these struggles.

Working farmers hit by inflation

García pointed to the party’s March 3 statement defending Ukraine’s independence, calling for the defeat of Moscow’s invasion, the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops and nuclear arms from Europe and an end to sanctions on Russia. “U.S. sanctions come down hardest on the working people in Russia,” she said. “The war has been disastrous for us too,” Scott responded. “Fuel costs have almost tripled. I have two tractors that use diesel. It costs me \$100 to fill my truck and go to the Oakland farmers market and back.” Scott said he wasn’t sure sanctions against Russia should be lifted. “If people had to face empty grocery

shelves,” he said, maybe they’d rise up against Putin. “If working people in this and other countries could force an end to the sanctions,” Britton said, that would create better conditions for working people in Russia to organize, defend themselves, reach out to their working-class neighbors and broaden opposition to Putin’s war. Scott didn’t say he agreed, but he liked hearing things he’d never heard. He described his own experience in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. “I went there thinking I was fighting for democracy, when I didn’t even have it here,” he said. Britton pointed to labor struggles taking place today, describing his visit to the picket line of oil refinery workers at Chevron in Richmond, where bosses locked out workers on the eve of their strike. Scott described the challenges facing farmers who are African American. “Ninety percent of the land of Black farmers has been taken,” he said. For decades African American farmers have faced discriminatory practices from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which denied them loans. “They should do some kind of redress and move on. Black and poor white farmers need the same opportunities as rich farmers,” Scott said. Working farmers across the U.S. face big challenges today, with farm income falling 7.9% in

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THE MILITANT

Worldwide protests hit soaring prices

From Albania to Iran, Sri Lanka to Sudan, working people are protesting against rising prices gutting their living conditions. The ‘Militant’ reports on these demonstrations and explains how the capitalist rulers profit as they place the burden of their crisis on workers and farmers.

Tirana Post
Anti-government protesters rally in Tirana, Albania, March 14, over soaring prices.

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‘Militant’ calls target week

Continued from front page

“The SWP is opposed to any U.S. intervention in Ukraine,” Kuniansky said. “We look to resistance to the invasion by the Ukrainian people, to be joined by protests against the Putin regime’s war by working people in Russia.”

“But is that enough to stop this?” Lynch asked.

“It’s the only way to advance unity among working people, who can force the capitalist rulers to end their wars, as happened in Vietnam, and to build the movement we need to take power out of their hands,” Kuniansky replied. “Everywhere Washington intervenes it serves the interests of the bosses.”

“Capitalism breeds wars,” Evans said, pointing to the consequences for working people of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. “Workers and our allies have the power to end capitalist rule.”

“There are no good wars,” Lynch said. “And the Russian people are being lied to about this one.” She described interviews she’d seen with Russian soldiers who were told by Russian authorities that the Ukrainians they were sent to kill were all fascists.

“The slander by Moscow that Ukrainians are all fascists was used in 2014 during the Maidan,” Kuniansky said, referring to the popular uprising that overthrew the pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovich. “Our party sent reporting teams to Ukraine to learn the truth about what the movement to bring down Yanukovich accomplished.” (See article on page 8.)

Lynch signed the petition to put Kuniansky on the ballot, and got a subscription to the *Militant* and the title *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. She kicked in \$10 to the

Militant Fighting Fund.

More than 100 people have now signed petitions to put Kuniansky on the ballot. The same number have done so for Lea Sherman, SWP candidate in New Jersey’s 9th Congressional District. That’s substantial progress toward the party’s goal of collecting 150 signatures in each of the two districts, triple the amount required for ballot status. Party campaigners plan to use the upcoming May Day weekend to complete the drive for ballot status.

‘Stand up for what is right’

When Joel Britton, SWP candidate for governor of California, spoke with Crystal Stroud at her home in Castro Valley April 23, she spoke enthusiastically about the union-organizing victory of Amazon workers in Staten Island, New York. “This victory shows we have power if we get organized,” she said. “I tell people, ‘Don’t be scared. Stand up for what is right.’ I hope Tesla employees, where I used to work, will follow that example.”

Stroud worked for nearly a year at Tesla’s assembly plant in Fremont. She said she believed line bosses who mistreated her and her co-workers would be disciplined or fired if Tesla CEO Elon Musk knew what was happening.

“Don’t count on it,” Britton responded. “Lower-level management carry out company policy. The key is for workers to organize and fight back, get a union that can gain some control of working conditions. And Musk is totally against that.”

Stroud said when she quit Tesla she walked away from “a \$6,000 e-trade fund with Tesla stocks. The company wouldn’t let me take it. You have to stay working for four years to get it.”

“You refused to be bribed,” said Brit-



Militant/Michele Smith

Vincent Auger shows Chantell Woods the *Militant* on her porch in Portland, Oregon, April 23.

ton. “Yes!” Stroud replied. “I have more peace of mind and more time to spend with my kids.”

She renewed her *Militant* subscription for one year, purchased *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* and contributed to the Militant Fighting Fund.

‘Defend Ukraine’s independence’

In Portland, Oregon, SWP member Michele Smith and supporter Vincent Auger met Chantell Woods at her doorstep April 23. She was interested in the SWP National Committee statement, “Defend Ukraine’s independence! For defeat of Moscow’s invasion! U.S. troops, nuclear arms out of Europe, *all* of Europe!”

“We can’t even take care of our own people, let alone people in other countries,” Woods said.

Smith explained that there is no common “we” that includes both bosses and workers. “We live in a class-divided society. The capitalist rulers have no

solution to the crises facing working people,” she said. “The working class needs its own political party, a labor party, that can help lead the fight to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class and form a workers and farmers government.”

“The Democrats say they care about poor people and deceive us with their policies,” Woods said, “while the Republicans do the same but are more upfront about it.” She signed up for a *Militant* subscription and purchased *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

To help expand the reach of the *Militant*, contact the SWP nearest you, listed on page 10. 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 online at themilitant.com.

Carole Lesnick in Oakland, California, contributed to this article.

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

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	90	25	90	41	\$8,500	\$4,926
Atlanta	90	54	90	57	\$11,500	\$5,968
Chicago	125	68	125	72	\$14,000	\$8,874
Cincinnati*	90	46	90	43	\$5,800	\$3,673
Dallas-Ft. Worth*	70	55	70	47	\$4,700	\$2,801
Lincoln	15	12	15	14	\$400	\$205
Los Angeles*	130	110	155	130	\$14,500	\$4,296
Miami	35	18	35	31	\$5,000	\$3,000
Minneapolis	70	48	70	54	\$5,500	\$3,862
N. New Jersey	90	64	90	63	\$7,250	\$4,021
New York	125	78	125	86	\$17,500	\$12,057
Oakland	100	70	100	74	\$14,000	\$11,738
Philadelphia	40	17	40	31	\$4,250	\$3,790
Pittsburgh	50	34	50	24	\$5,000	\$3,037
Seattle	70	38	70	43	\$13,000	\$7,830
Washington	65	42	65	45	\$5,000	\$3,385
Other		20		144		\$0
Total U.S.	1255	799	1280	999	\$135,900	\$83,463
Prisoners	45	60				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London*	55	49	60	51	\$4,000	\$1,650
Manchester*	50	37	50	38	\$2,000	\$1,200
Total U.K.	105	86	110	89	\$6,000	\$2,850
Canada	110	74	110	73	\$13,670	\$8,757
New Zealand	35	26	35	21	\$4,000	\$2,770
Australia	35	23	35	12	\$2,500	\$850
Total	1,585	1,068	1,570	1,194	\$162,070	\$98,690
SHOULD BE	1,600	1,066	1,600	1,066	\$165,000	\$110,050
*Raised goal. Other includes 19 subs, 144 books at LA Festival						

Response at LA book festival boosts national drive

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — The constant stream of workers, students and other youth visiting the Pathfinder booth at the L.A. Times Festival of Books here April 23-24 were seeking an explanation for the deepening capitalist economic crisis and its resulting wars.

The Socialist Workers Party members and supporters staffing the booth discussed and debated questions ranging from the cause of soaring inflation, the Russian government’s invasion of Ukraine, the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution, and most importantly, what is the road forward for workers and our unions to form an independent working-class party, a labor party, to chart a course to take political power into our hands. Many wanted to know more about the SWP and some wanted to know how to join.

Overall, 71 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 234 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries were

sold, twice as many of each as at the last LA Times festival held before the pandemic three years ago.

Many took literature on the Socialist Workers Party campaign of Ellie García for U.S. Senate and Joel Britton for governor, as well as the March 3 SWP National Committee statement, “Defend Ukraine’s independence! For defeat of Moscow’s invasion! US troops, nuclear arms out of Europe, *all* of Europe!”

The top selling books were 20 copies of *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*; 16 copies of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*; 13 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*; 11 copies of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*; and seven copies of *Teamster Rebellion*.

“When I saw pictures of strikers at Kellogg’s on picket lines in the snow, that got me started on getting our union to reach out beyond our own international,” Lisa Walker, a member of the International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees, told García at the booth.

“We frequently work between 72- and 84-hour weeks. We don’t stop for lunch, they just pay us a meal ‘penalty.’ I tell my co-workers we’re running ourselves off the rails. I’ve witnessed some very bad accidents,” Walker said. García responded, “Those kinds of schedules were the same issue in the fights at Kellogg’s and here in Los

Angeles County at Jon Donaire.”

García said our unions need to lead the fight for safety on the job, fighting for workers control over production. Walker agreed, saying, “It’s up to us collectively to make change.”

Walker renewed her *Militant* subscription, which she initially bought from SWP members on the Jon Donaire picket line. She also purchased four of the books.

Zoe Swinton, who is 24 and grew up in rural Iowa, discussed the crisis facing working farmers.

“The Cuban Revolution nationalized the land, taking it out of the hands of the landlords and putting it into the hands of the peasants who tilled it,” García said. “That’s one of the reasons the U.S. capitalist rulers hate the revolution and its example.”

“I think it’s very important to take up what is facing farmers and white rural Americans,” Swinton said. “Our movement has to be multiracial.”

García described the avid response of many young people and others to the SWP’s literature in the booth.

Swinton, who got a subscription to the *Militant*, said she wasn’t surprised. “I think it’s partly due to the pandemic showing all the holes in the system. Young people see things are unfair, that workers organizing show we can fight back. We have the power if we stand together. Young people are ready for change.”

No worker has to die on the job!

Continued from front page

dropped into large pans, sent on a line through ovens and coolers, then bagged, boxed and shipped out by the hundreds of thousands each day. Production is continuous and the line doesn't stop. If there is a problem with the packaging machines, the bread keeps pouring out, rapidly "racked off" onto trays, stacked and set aside to be put back on the line when it's up and running again.

Arellano's death wasn't an "accident." It was the result of how production is run under the profit system, especially when there's no union for workers to protect ourselves. The pace in these bakeries is intense, and overtime and weekend work are common, leading to fatigue that slows reaction time and dulls judgment, a safety hazard itself. I know. I work at a bakery in Cincinnati, where, thankfully, we have a union.

Many of these food-producing companies hire "temporary" workers through employment agencies, for jobs that aren't "temporary" at all. Often the agency workers receive even less safety training than employees hired directly by the company and aren't allowed to join the union if there is one. The bosses encourage "permanent" workers to look down on the "temps."

Many bakeries like these, as well as

cereal and snack plants and grain elevators, are organized by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union. Last year the BCTGM carried out chain-wide strikes for wage increases and better schedules and working conditions against Kellogg's, Nabisco and Frito-Lay, and in southern California against Jon Donaire Desserts, successfully pushing back some of the employers' attacks.

My BCTGM-organized co-workers expressed concern and anger when they learned of Arellano's death. "Safety is so important, and it's up to us workers to insist on it. No product is worth being hurt or killed for," Monica Dunn, chief shop steward, told me April 22.

"Unions play a huge role in safety, but you have to be constantly working at it in different situations," Mark Lee, principal officer of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union Local 57, said in a phone discussion April 24. The local's 800 members in Ohio work at bakeries as well as cereal and snack plants.

Each year more than 5,000 workers are killed on the job in the United States, the AFL-CIO reports. In 2019, there were 5,333 workers (that's 15 a day) killed at work, and some 95,000 more died from diseases resulting from conditions where they work.

The toll taken on workers by capi-



Automatic Rolls bakery, in Clayton, North Carolina, where Bibiana Arellano Delabra, 22, inset, was killed April 16 working on a large mixing machine. Fight for union control of line speeds, crew sizes, schedule, training is needed to counter deadly effects of capitalists' drive for profits.

talist production is marked each year by the labor movement. April 28 is Workers Memorial Day. If an event is planned by unions in your area to highlight the need for unions to fight for safety on the job, get your co-workers to join in participating.

Capitalists operate by exploiting workers' labor power to make profits. The faster the pace of production, the more work is piled on the shoulders of each worker, generating more profits. When unions are strong, workers act together to push back against hazardous working conditions and make sure new

workers are trained to work safely and look out for one another.

All work can be done safely. No worker like Bibiana Arellano Delabra has to die on the job. But to make this a reality, workers need to organize and use our unions to take control over all phases of production, including line speeds, crew sizes, schedules and more.

Fight for Amazon union expands with second vote

Continued from front page
Union; and UNITE HERE.

Along with workers leading the union drive inside the warehouses, the rally featured officials from national and local unions, politicians and elected officials.

Five days of in-person voting by some 1,500 workers began at the LDJ5 warehouse April 25. The Amazon Labor Union won a solid majority of 2,654 to 2,131 at the JFK8 warehouse across the street April 1, the first time workers at any Amazon facility in the U.S. have won a union election.

The fight is heating up. Amazon filed 25 objections with the National Labor Relations Board in its attempt to get the victory at the larger warehouse overturned. On April 14, at Amazon's urging, the NLRB transferred the company's challenge to its Region 28, based in Arizona. The company claimed that New York Region 29 NLRB officials are biased in favor of the union.

Conditions at the warehouses are so rough that the annual turnover is estimated at 150%. Pay starts at just a few dollars above the minimum wage, and workers put in 10-hour shifts.

Amazon Labor Union Treasurer Madeline Wesley, like Aguilar a worker at the LDJ5 warehouse, told the rally that some 80% of the workers there are part time. The schedules are "not based on what workers want or the workers need," she said. "It's based off of what Amazon has figured out to be the most efficient, at the expense of the workers."

"How many times do we apply for a full-time job and get rejected, while other people get hired straight on full time?" LDJ5 worker Mark Saber told the crowd. He has been working at the warehouse for almost a year.

Workers get a 15-minute break but "it takes five minutes just to get to the break room and then all the way back," Saber said.

"I've seen people get fired for just sitting on the stairs when they're on break," he said. "We carry around 50-pound boxes. We need a raise. We need job security. We deserve better. We need a union for our voice to be heard. I'm voting yes."

Bosses attack union drive

Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls said that Amazon has been pulling out all the stops to try to push back the organizing drive and negotiations for a contract. Business Insider reported April 20 that the company has been paying anti-union "consultants" \$400 an hour to persuade workers to vote no.

Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA; American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein; and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten addressed the crowd. At another rally here earlier in the day Sen. Bernie Sanders and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez pledged their support for the union drive.

"We're in the same industry," UPS

driver's helper Keyla Obregon, one of more than a dozen Teamsters at the support rally, told the *Militant*. "Same blood, sweat and tears as our colleagues at Amazon. We're watching their fight closely and we know the CEOs are too."

Amazon has not responded to the *Militant's* requests for information.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement

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Join SWP campaigning at May Day actions

The Socialist Workers Party and its candidates for public office invite you to join us and thousands of other working people and youth at International Workers Day actions May 1.

May Day — which was revived in the U.S. in 2006 when almost 2 million immigrant workers and others took to the streets and went on strike to oppose deportations and anti-immigrant legislation — will be an opportunity for those fighting against attacks by the bosses as well as immigrant workers looking to live and work in the U.S. free from threat of deportation to join together in common action. We are inspired by the fierce resistance put up by the people of Ukraine to Putin's invasion.

We join in solidarity with those standing up and fighting, like members of the United Mine Workers union in Alabama who have been on strike for over a year and workers fighting for a union at Amazon in Staten Island, New York, and others around the world.

Join Socialist Workers Party candidates campaigning at May Day actions, promoting a class-struggle road of uniting workers and farmers, no matter where we were born. We will call for amnesty for the more than 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

We will explain that working people need to break from the Democrats and Republicans — the bosses' twin parties — and forge our own party, a labor party based on a fighting union movement, to fight more effectively today and set out on a course to take political power into our own hands.

We will point to the example and accomplishments of Cuban workers and farmers, who made the first socialist revolution in our hemisphere and have defended it for over 60 years against Washington's assaults.

We will encourage all those we meet to subscribe to the *Militant* newsweekly, to get books by leaders of the party and other revolutionaries that contain the program and lessons of Marxism, and to contribute to the *Militant* Fighting Fund to assure the paper keeps coming out.

Want to campaign with us? See page 10 to contact the party branch nearest you.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA Oakland

Why working people everywhere have a stake in backing the Ukrainian people's fight for independence. Moscow's troops out now! End the sanctions, which hit hardest on Russian workers and farmers! Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., May 7, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Striking Stanford nurses say understaffing is unsustainable

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Thousands of nurses walked off the job April 25 and began picketing outside both Stanford Hospital and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital here, in a strike over understaffing, work stress, wages, retiree health benefits and access to mental-health counseling.

Dressed in blue union T-shirts, strikers waved signs saying, "Stanford Health Care — Can you hear us!" and "If the nurses are outside, something's wrong inside."

"It's a moral issue," cardiology nurse Sarah Morgan told the *Militant*. "Understaffing means we cannot give the care patients need." She said that despite the patient/nurse ratios mandated in California law, Stanford Health Care management always finds ways around the requirements.

One of the ways is overtime. "Nurses are working 10 to 14 days in a row, in 12-hour shifts — and sometimes 16 hours a day. That's not sustainable," cardiac intensive-care nurse Kimberley Reed told the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

About 93% of the members of the union, Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement, voted to strike. Its contracts ran out March 31. The union's last strike at these hospitals was in 2000 and lasted 51 days.

Nurses on the line said few of them can afford to live near the hospitals, which are located in upscale Palo Alto. Lauren Lorber, who has worked in the emergency room for several years, said she drives down from San Francisco. Stanford's current wage offer is far below inflation, she said.

Intensive-care nurse Brittney West wrote in an April 25 *Chronicle* opinion piece that 41% of nurses at the two Stanford hospitals are considering leaving within the next few years. Rather than recruit more nurses and improve working conditions, she said, Stanford is using "travel nurses" to fill gaps. With more than half in her unit being these temporary nurses, she and her colleagues are expected to orient them while simultaneously caring for patients.

Adding insult to injury, starting May 1 Stanford Health Care says it will withhold health benefits for the striking nurses. A petition urging management to reverse this decision has been signed by nearly 30,000 people.

— Betsey Stone



Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement

Nurses struck Stanford Hospital and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in Palo Alto, California, April 25 over wages, retiree benefits and understaffing. "It's a moral issue," said one nurse.

Chevron refinery workers fight for more staffing, wages

BY ANDREA MORELL

RICHMOND, Calif. — On strike since March 21, members of United Steelworkers Local 5, which represents over 500 production and maintenance workers, are picketing 24/7 at the Chevron oil refinery here and winning support. Strikers on the picket line April 24 told the *Militant* that they are determined to make gains in their key demands for more hiring to relieve dangerously long work schedules and for a bigger wage hike. They said negotiations are now taking place.

The bosses have let the maintenance workforce shrink through attrition over the last several years, striker Johnnie Grace told this *Militant* worker-correspondent the next day. The company

brought in contractors to do some maintenance, she said, but "they don't know anything about a refinery." What's happening in maintenance is reflective of the overall worsening conditions all workers there face, she added.

Retiree Ben Fields, a longtime Local 5 member who has worked at Chevron as well as at the Marathon refinery in Martinez, has been building solidarity with the strikers. The most important issue is "adequately staffing the operations and maintenance jobs," he said. "The company is saving a lot of money by not hiring enough people, but that's destroying home life for many workers who get forced to work overtime."

Many operators at the refinery are forced to work 60 to 70 hours a week. "This is a safety issue!" he said. "Overtime can be a killer, especially when you have to commute from some distance. Chevron is taking away workers' ability to be at their best when working these dangerous jobs. They are making it very difficult or impossible to responsibly raise a family and enjoy other interests."

The company has shown disdain for the workers. After the unionists twice voted down inadequate company offers, the bosses brought in replacement

workers and bused the Local 5 members out of the refinery hours before the strike began.

The Steelworkers union negotiated a national pattern agreement with Chevron in February, including wage gains. The strike here is over "local issues," including fighting for an additional 5% "pay bump" at this refinery, due to the extraordinarily high living expenses in the Bay Area.

Chevron's Richmond refinery is one of the biggest in the state, with over 13% of California's refining capacity. The company reported \$15.6 billion in profits in 2021.

The union and the Contra Costa Labor Council have organized expanded picket lines to mobilize solidarity and strengthen the strike, including a rally April 7 that drew members of the Operating Engineers, UNITE HERE, United Food and Commercial Workers, Teamsters and others.

Strikers welcome supporters to join their picket lines.

Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for California governor and a former operator at Chevron's El Segundo refinery, contributed to this article.

Anti-labor outfit smears oil workers' union as they're on strike at Chevron

BY JOEL BRITTON

OAKLAND, Calif. — More than 500 members of United Steelworkers Local 5 at the Chevron refinery near here in Richmond have been on strike since March 21.

They have been receiving solidarity from area workers and need more. But one thing they don't need is the repeated attacks being leveled against their union by an anti-labor outfit claiming to be a "rank-and-file workers" committee promoted by the Socialist Equality Party and its misleadingly named World Socialist Web Site.

This outfit calls on the oil workers "to break out of this straitjacket imposed on them by the USW," falsely claiming that strikers aren't getting financial support from their union.

This anti-labor outfit has a long history of similar attacks on unions precisely when they are involved in a struggle against the bosses. This was the case during strikes at Kellogg's, Volvo Trucks and numerous other labor battles. Whatever difficulties our unions have today, workers need to use them to fight.

Recoiling from the anti-USW attacks, some strikers have assumed any group with "socialist" in its name is guilty of the same anti-union perspective. Members of the Socialist Workers Party, however, have walked the strike picket lines, brought others to the expanded pick-

eting and rallies organized by the Contra Costa Labor Council, written for the *Militant* to get out the story of the strike and broaden support in the labor movement and to workers at their doorsteps across the region.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 12, 1997

DETROIT — As 1,800 members of United Auto Workers Local 51 head into their third week on strike against the third largest U.S. automaker, talks between the union and Chrysler remain deadlocked. So far the strike by the engine plant workers has shut down 19 plants and brought the number of workers idled by the labor dispute to nearly 25,000 in the United States, Canada, and Mexico — about one-third of Chrysler's U.S. workforce.

This is the first walkout at a Chrysler plant in three years and the longest strike in more than three decades. At issue is Chrysler's plan to "outsource" some operations to a nonunion plant.

As in recent strikes against GM, understaffing and workers being denied vacations and rest breaks are key issues. Workers in auto parts plants have been warned that layoffs will start if the strike goes for another two weeks.



May 12, 1972

Mortal panic is sweeping the Saigon army. In the major fronts of the war tens of thousands of troops are fleeing; most of their officers have already fled. The sole objective of the routed troops is to get out of the way of the revolutionary advance.

The roads are also filled with thousands of civilians fleeing from the U.S. bombs. This is the fruit of [President] Nixon's "Vietnamization" scheme. Washington's bombing support of the Saigon army has reached the highest point of the war.

A South Vietnamese official told the *New York Times*, "The Americans tried to help the Vietnamese armed forces. But one thing the Americans cannot bring is leadership. From 1945 to 1954 people didn't have much to eat or good clothes but morally they were happy, because the Communists brought justice to this land for 10 years, not the corruption we have now."



May 10, 1947

Millions of workers throughout the world observed their international working class holiday on May Day.

The coal miners in the Ruhr Valley [Germany] — 300,000 of them — downed tools and went to rallies. The workers of Paris — hundreds of thousands strong — paraded through the streets. In Italy demonstrations were held in all cities. In the rural districts, an attack on one peasant demonstration led to a general strike which rocked the government.

Parades took place in all the major cities of Palestine. In Japan 400,000 workers demonstrated in front of the Imperial Palace. In Shanghai workers were out with banners reading, "Down with Privileged Capital."

May Day was celebrated in Athens as the third anniversary of the execution of 200 political hostages. The proletariat of Greece has honored every year thereafter those shot on that First of May.

Havana Int'l Book Fair opens

Continued from front page
registered the big progress in combatting the COVID pandemic in Cuba. Last year the event was not held due to public health measures. Cuba has produced several effective vaccines of its own, and 88% of the island's population is now fully vaccinated, one of the highest rates in the world.

The Cuban government took special steps to make available scarce resources for the book fair, including importing enough paper and printing supplies to have 900 newly published titles at the event. This was a big effort, given the U.S. government's intensified sanctions aimed at strangling the production and availability of goods in Cuba, compounded by rising import prices and other effects of the world capitalist crisis.

Mexico is the country of honor this year. The Mexican delegation includes dozens of writers and academics, and cultural performances, including by the famed Ballet Folklórico de México. The Mexican government donated a shipload of 25,000 books, a gesture of solidarity and of opposition to the U.S. economic war against Cuba, even if the prices of many titles are too high for most Cubans to pay.

Pathfinder Press is once again taking part in the Havana book fair. Its stand, staffed by communist workers from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, is attracting hundreds of readers, from high school and university students to health care workers and retirees.

Book on Jewish question

Two new Pathfinder titles featured at this year's Havana book fair are drawing particular interest. One is *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History*, with writings by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, George Novack, and Mary-Alice Waters. The other is *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon.

Over the first few days, a top seller among Pathfinder titles has been *The Jewish Question*. Many have bought the book to learn more about the roots of Jew-hatred and the fight against it today.

Looking over his new copy, Daniel Gregorio Pérez, who works at the José Martí National Library, pointed with pride to remarks by Fidel Castro, quoted in the introduction, explaining why anti-semitism is a deadly danger that must be combated. Cuba's revolutionary government has consistently helped "to protect Jewish traditions" among that community here, Pérez said.

Juan de Dios, a doctor in Havana, also bought Leon's book. He told volunteers that his mother had a close school friend whose family had arrived in Cuba from their native Austria, escaping the Holocaust. "My mother," de Dios said, "was

determined that our family would be educated in this history and the importance of opposing antisemitism."

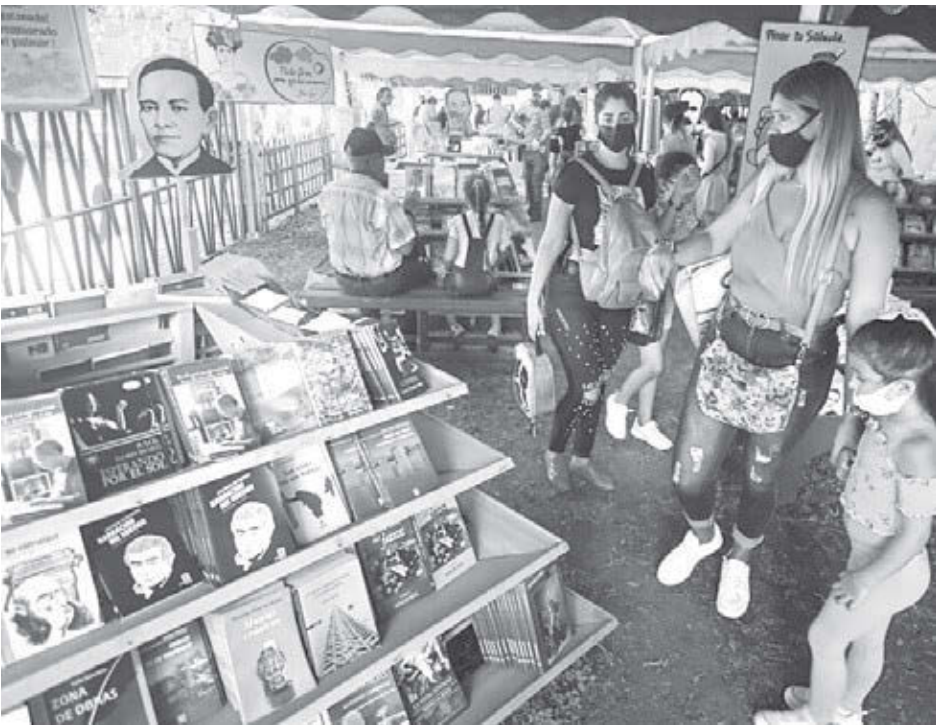
Right to self-determination

Another popular title at the Pathfinder stand has been *Lenin's Final Fight*, featuring writings by the central leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution. Readers learn how Lenin led the fight in the Bolshevik Party to defend national self-determination and a *voluntary* union of nations oppressed by the former czarist empire, and to oppose efforts by a rising counterrevolutionary social layer to reimpose Great Russian domination over Georgia, Ukraine and other republics.

Samir Hazboun, a Young Socialist and Socialist Workers Party member from Cincinnati, explained to a group of young people how valuable a guide *Lenin's Final Fight* is to understanding the importance of opposing Moscow's assault on Ukraine and backing the determined resistance of its working people. Lenin's proletarian internationalism counters the Putin regime's claims that Ukraine has no right to exist.



Interest was high in revolutionary titles available at Pathfinder stand April 25, above, at Havana International Book Fair. In first few days, top seller was *The Jewish Question* by Abram Leon.



OnCuba/Otmario Rodríguez

Participants check out book displays at the 30th annual Havana International Book Fair.

Among people visiting the Pathfinder stand, most are shocked by Moscow's invasion. Few express enthusiastic support for it, although many echo the view, promoted by Putin's government, that its forces are combating a fascist danger and that the war is being prolonged by the weapons provided to Ukraine by imperialist powers trying

to encircle Russia.

The *Militant*, with its front-page coverage of the war, attracts a lot of interest, especially when people learn the *Militant* has sent reporting teams to Ukraine several times in recent years.

"The most important thing is to respect a nation's sovereignty," said Fabián Mena, an 18-year-old student, who bought Spanish-language editions of *The History of American Trotskyism* by James P. Cannon and the issue of *New Internationalist* magazine, "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War."

Karyna Neehepurensko, a Havana resident originally from Ukraine, agreed. Without this information, she said, "many people believe Putin's lie that Ukraine belongs to Russia."

Interest in the work of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues has been shown by the sales of dozens of copies of *The Turn To Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party* by Jack Barnes, *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions* and *In Defense of the US Working Class* by Mary-Alice Waters.

In the opening days, visitors purchased more than 1,000 books at the Pathfinder stand on a wide range of topics, as well as 14 *Militant* subscriptions. Many express appreciation that Pathfinder books are being offered at prices that make them affordable here.

Toronto meeting celebrates life of Reza Baraheni

BY STEVE PENNER

TORONTO — A tribute was held here April 17 to Reza Baraheni, a leader of the fight for political and artistic freedom in Iran and one of its most prominent poets, novelists and literary critics. Baraheni died in March at age 86. *The Crowned Cannibals: Writings on Repression in Iran* is among the best known of his more than 60 books in Farsi and English. (See article in last issue.)

Imprisoned and tortured in 1973 by the U.S.-backed monarchy of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Baraheni won his release as the result of an international campaign by prominent artists, writers and political figures.

Baraheni went into exile in the U.S., returning to Iran during the 1979 revolution. Imprisoned again in 1981 by the counterrevolutionary bourgeois-clerical regime that held power by then, Baraheni was freed by another worldwide defense effort. Forced into exile again and settling in Canada in 1997, he continued his writing, teaching, and advocacy of free expression.

The tribute was chaired by Lili Nabavi, a figure in the Iranian-Canadian community and herself a poet. Speakers included Hassan Zerehi, editor of *Shahrvand*, a North American Farsi weekly; several Iranian artists and writers, including Gholamhossein Babaei Nami and Aydin Aghdashloo; Steve Clark, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and backer of the campaign to win Baraheni's freedom in 1973; the writer's three sons — Oktay (by video), Arsalan and Esfandiar — and his wife, Sanaz Sehhati. His daughter Aleca also attended.

Clark read the following message to Sanaz Sehhati from Mahmoud Sayrafiezadeh, a founder of the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran, which organized meetings across the U.S. Baraheni spoke and read his poetry at many of them.

❖ ❖ ❖

Reza's contribution to Farsi and world literature is well known. His contribution in defense of political prisoners of the shah's regime must be told and re-

told, as nobody else has done so powerfully as Reza himself, both in prose and in verse, in *The Crowned Cannibals*.

Close to half a century ago, when the two of you arrived in the U.S., Reza immediately and tirelessly joined the ongoing defense movement and helped strengthen it. With his involvement and leadership, the truth of the struggle of the Iranian people against that repressive regime, and for freedom of expression and the dignity of those incarcerated, was being told by one who had been in prison himself.

Through the activities of the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI), with Reza as its honorary chair, more and more writers, youth, and workers joined in the effort and stayed the course to its victorious end. In this, our active collaboration with George Novack was decisive.

I also recall many pleasant visits with rich literary and political conversations. For me and my family, that friendship with you and Reza has been unforgettable.

Socialism and Man in Cuba

by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro

Guevara explains why the revolutionary transformation of social relations necessarily involves the transformation of the working people organizing and leading that process.

\$5

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Sri Lanka protests continue as crisis grows, demand gov't resign

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Weeks of protests by tens of thousands of workers, farmers and youth continue across Sri Lanka, demanding President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resign. Soaring inflation, spreading power outages and shortages of food and fuel are devastating millions, as the country's rulers put the burden of their skyrocketing debts on the backs of working people.

Police opened fire on unarmed protesters in Rambukkana April 19, killing one and wounding 14 others. Chaminda Lakshan, a 42-year-old father of two, was killed as he waited in line for gas. The protest was one of many after the country's main gas retailer, state-run Ceylon Petroleum, hiked prices by nearly 65% the previous day.

Doctors at Sri Lanka's main children's hospital protested April 19 over the severe shortage of medicines and equipment. University students marched on the president's home April 24.

For more than two weeks, thousands of protesters have camped outside the president's offices in Colombo, the capital. Demonstrators have set up a camp dubbed "Gota-Go Village" vowing not to leave until the president steps down.

Dilani Niranjala brought her family to the camp April 14, Sri Lanka's New Year's Day. She said her sons "must see the truth," showing them the scale of the protests that have brought together people across ethnic and religious lines.

'They can't divide us anymore'

"Nobody brought us here. We organized ourselves," tea farmer Charith Weliwatta told the press at the camp. "Tamils, Muslims, Burghers, Sinhalese, we are all here. They can't divide us any more." Weliwatta said he cannot get hold of fertilizer he needs for the two acres he farms.

Government lockdowns during the COVID pandemic gutted the country's tourist trade. Today's fuel price hikes, exacerbated by Moscow's war against Ukraine, have added to the crisis. The ruling Rajapaksa family is widely despised for their disdain of the increased hardships foisted on workers and farmers and widening inequality.

In April 2021 the government banned chemical fertilizer imports, saying it favored organic farming, with no discussion with farmers or any plan on how to replace the nutrients. The move dev-



April 23 protests in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital, demand President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resign over soaring inflation, power outages, shortages of food and fuel that are devastating millions.

astated tea and rice harvests. The ban was lifted in November after months of protests by farmers and a surge in food prices. Farmers continue to struggle, squeezed by shortages of fertilizer and the steep increase in diesel costs.

Just as devastating is the impact of \$4.8 billion in high interest loans from Beijing taken on by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, brother of the current president, to lavish funds on his pet projects. The Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport, which opened in 2013, has earned the reputation as the least-used airport in the world. The airport is a daily flight or two away from being completely defunct. Unused terminals

are now used for storing rice, and elephants roam on the tarmac.

In 2015, after the government couldn't repay another loan to Beijing, the country's main seaport and 15,000 acres of land around it were ceded to Chinese control for the next 99 years. The Chinese rulers' Belt and Road Initiative is expanding infrastructure along trading routes to facilitate exports from their rapidly growing industries, tying governments across the region into debtor relations with Beijing.

The Sri Lankan government is on the brink of bankruptcy with nearly \$7 billion of its \$25 billion in foreign debt due for repayment this year.

Debate over death penalty, rights of inmates deepens

BY JANET POST

When Carl Wayne Buntion was executed by lethal injection at the state penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas, April 21, his lawyers said it violated the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution prohibiting "cruel and unusual punishment." The 78-year-old prisoner was confined to a wheelchair and was suffering from hepatitis C, cirrhosis, arthritis and other medical problems.

Buntion was sentenced to death more than 30 years ago. He was the oldest death-row inmate in Texas. He was sentenced in 1991 for shooting and killing Houston police officer James Irby dur-

ing a traffic stop the year before, when he was on parole.

As he lay on the gurney in the death chamber, Buntion's spiritual adviser, Pastor Barry Brown of the Ministry at the Gates program, joined him aloud in prayer while holding his hand on Buntion's ankle. This was the first time that physical contact and free speech by a prisoner's own spiritual adviser was allowed in recent years during an execution in Texas, a victory for the right to worship.

It came after a U.S. Supreme Court 8-1 decision March 24 in favor of another Texas death-row prisoner, John Henry Ramirez, who had sued to allow his own pastor, Dana Moore of the Second Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, the right to pray aloud and touch him when he is executed.

After this, the execution of Ramirez — who did not appeal saying he had committed a horrible crime — was rescheduled to Oct. 5 by the office of the district attorney in Nueces County. But then, unexpectedly, Mark Gonzalez, the county's district attorney, filed a motion April 14 withdrawing the death warrant. He cited his "firm belief that the death penalty is unethical and should not be imposed on Mr. Ramirez or any other person."

"For a while now I've stated that I don't believe

Gotabaya Rajapaksa continues to maneuver to try to stay in office. On April 18 he swore in a new 17-member cabinet, with most posts filled by members of his ruling party, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna. The country's previous cabinet — except for Mahinda Rajapaksa, now prime minister — resigned April 3.

The country's influential Buddhist clerics have joined the growing list of former Rajapaksa allies calling on him to quit. Dozens of lawmakers quit the president's party April 19 and took seats on opposition benches in parliament. None of the opposition parties offer an alternative to the course pursued by the Rajapaksa government, let alone any proposals to protect the living standards and livelihoods of working people.

The government began talks with the International Monetary Fund April 18 to secure up to \$4 billion in new credit. A week earlier the government suspended payments on foreign loans. Trading on the Colombo Stock Exchange was suspended for two weeks.

The IMF insists any deal requires assurances that payment of government debts can be put on a "sustainable path" and that any aid "should be designed to resolve Sri Lanka's acute balance of payments problems." In other words, its top priority is for debt payments to wealthy bondholders to continue. Any deal will require the government to commit to tax hikes and spending cuts that will deepen the crisis for workers and farmers.

The government is also trying to borrow \$1 billion more from Beijing to repay existing Chinese loans due in July.

in the death penalty," he said. "My office is not going to seek the death penalty anymore."

Gonzalez was one of almost 100 elected prosecutors, state attorneys general and other officials who signed a letter early last year to President Joseph Biden urging an end to the death penalty in the U.S., a reflection of growing opposition among working people.

In a Facebook Live video, Gonzalez urges people to reconsider the pros and cons of the death penalty, stressing the "disproportionate impact capital punishment has on people of color, people from low-income backgrounds, and people with intellectual disabilities."

'Choose' electric chair or firing squad

In yet another death-row decision, the South Carolina state supreme court stayed the April 29 execution of 57-year-old Richard Bernard Moore, one of 37 prisoners on the state's death row. This would have been South Carolina's first execution by firing squad after spending \$53,000 over nine months to refurbish the death chamber in Columbia to accommodate the sharpshooters.

Moore was sentenced to death in 2001 for the 1999 killing of convenience-store clerk James Mahoney in Spartanburg. Moore's lawyers are appealing the method of execution and his sentence.

They are arguing that both electrocution and the firing squad — the state's current two "choices" for inmates to make for their execution — are "barbaric." While Moore "chose" a firing squad, he maintains he was forced into that decision. He is also asking a federal judge to consider whether both methods are "cruel and unusual" punishment.

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The Militant May 9, 2022 7

Maidan uprising strengthened the working class in Ukraine

BY TERRY EVANS

Refusing to surrender to Moscow's invasion, Ukrainians are fighting to defend their country's independence and courageously protesting when their villages and towns are occupied, as the regime of Russian President Vladimir Putin attempts to subjugate them and crush their country.

Their determination draws strength from what was accomplished in 2013-14, when millions of workers, farmers and young people took to the streets for months in the face of thugs, cops and armed assaults that killed dozens, and toppled the Moscow-backed regime of President Viktor Yanukovich.

The Socialist Workers Party responded to that popular uprising by sending three *Militant* reporting teams to learn about these battles from the fighters involved and to get out the truth about the Maidan uprising, named after the central square in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. Protesters occupied it, setting up tents and barricades.

Militant editor John Studer and other team members met with coal miners, nuclear workers at Chernobyl and Enerhodar, rail workers and many other defenders of Ukrainian sovereignty, from Sokal in the west to Pavlograd in the east, to iron-ore miners in Kryvyi Rih, and the cities Dnipro to Kharkiv.

As a result, the *Militant* led in getting out the truth and defending the battle for Ukrainian independence, and reporting struggles by the country's working people for their own class interests.

It gave the lie to the Putin regime's claim that the Maidan was a U.S.-manipulated fascist uprising, echoed by much of the middle-class left. It was a working-class upsurge.

"My soul is with the people in the Maidan," coal miner Yura Sheremeta in Chervonograd, western Ukraine, told the *Militant* reporters in April 2014. When Moscow seized the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine, Sheremeta said he was inspired by the resistance to the occupation by Crimean Tatars.

"We are a sovereign nation," he said. "We have spirit and we will continue to fight. If we don't succeed this time, we will have another Maidan. And I think there will be one in Russia too."

Militant reporters interviewed Mustafa Dzhemilev, the central leader of the Crimean Tatars people, who was expelled from Crimea after Moscow occupied it. They interviewed leaders of Jewish organizations about the slaughter of Jews by Nazi forces at Babyn Yar during the second imperialist world war.

Protests began in 2013 after Yanukovich abandoned a planned trade deal with the European Union, under pressure from the Russian government. These largely student protests "were met with truncheons and bullets," Mikhailo Volynets, president of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions, told the *Militant*. "The unions and the workers joined and tens of thousands turned out. Only then did these politicians show up and build careers and power out of it."

Pitched street battles were fought in the Maidan by working people and youth — including both Ukrainian- and Russian-speakers side by side — against the regime's thugs. Yanukovich unleashed the Berkut, the regime's notorious riot cops, who opened fire, killing scores.

During the *Militant* team's first visit, just days after Yanukovich fled, Feb. 22, 2014, tents were still up with thousands of combatants remaining there. They were determined their victory wouldn't be overturned by a new gang of politicians. The team did run into rightists — members of the Right Sector and others — but they were a distinct minority. They visited tents set up by coal miners from Donetsk; union journalists; a number of units who organized the defense of the Maidan, including leaders of a Jewish unit; artists; Crimean Tatars; and many more, eager to talk to the paper and tell their story.

Opposition parties had tried to get working people off the streets to bolster the regime before Yanukovich fled, fearing a social revolution. They cooked up a deal with governments of Russia, Poland, France and Germany where Yanukovich would remain in office, relinquish some powers, and elections would take place many months later. When they took this plan to thousands occupying the Maidan they met a unanimous chorus of boos.

"No Yanukovich is going to be presi-



Above, Militant/John Studer
Militant reporting team visited Independence Square, Kyiv, March 17, 2014. Trade Union House, above, was burned out a month earlier as pro-Moscow regime waged deadly attacks on huge Maidan popular uprising before President Yanukovich fled. Inset, miner at Donetsk tent on Maidan reading the *Militant*. The tent is shown on the right in the main picture above.

dent for a whole year," Volodymyr Parasiuk told the crowd. He captained one of the key defense units that held the square. "Tomorrow by 10 o'clock he has to be gone," he said to a roar of approval.

That night Yanukovich fled under cover of darkness. Asked by reporters when protesters would take down their barricades, Parasiuk said, "We are not going away." Five days later the interim government announced it was disbanding the Berkut.

Workers' confidence grows

"Workers are beginning to see that they are actors in history," Alexei Oleksiyevych, a leader of the Independent Trade Union of Miners, told the *Militant* in Dnepropetrovsk in the mainly Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine in March 2014. He helped organize rallies there in solidarity with the Maidan,

drawing workers from area plants and youth. The *Militant* team toured some of the factories and talked to workers about what they had done. "We brought down the Yanukovich regime and are making gains against bosses in our plants and mines because the power of the Maidan, and Maidans across the country," Oleksiyevych said.

In response to Yanukovich's fall, Russian government troops stationed in Crimea under an earlier agreement with the Ukrainian government seized the peninsula and orchestrated attacks on Ukrainian government forces by pro-Moscow separatists in eastern Ukraine.

"Many of us have relatives in Russia and have long considered Russians as our brothers," Samoilov Yuriy Petrovych, the leader of the Independent Trade Union of Miners in Kryvyi Rih, **Continued on page 11**

Defend Ukraine independence! Russian troops out now! Solidarity of Russian, Ukrainian workers

Continued from front page
bard the area.

Putin's goal is to conquer Ukraine, crush its independence and advance the Russian rulers' efforts to reimpose their domination of neighboring countries, formerly oppressed under the czarist empire's prison house of nations and under Stalin.

"The Socialist Workers Party calls for the defeat of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and withdrawal of every one of its troops," Naomi Craine, SWP candidate for governor of Illinois, said April 25. "We are for Ukraine independence. At the same time, we demand the withdrawal of all U.S. troops and nuclear weapons from Europe and an end to Washington's brutal sanctions on Russia, sanctions that — regardless of their 'target' — hit working people the hardest."

Some 200,000 workers in Moscow alone, mainly in industrial and retail jobs, are about to be thrown out of work.

Top officials from Washington visited Kyiv, the capital, April 24 to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, the first such meeting since the war began. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken promised to supply Zelensky's government, which represents the country's capitalist rulers, with heavier and more long-range armaments and to return U.S. diplomats to Ukraine. In Austin's words, Washington's goal is for the war to leave Russia "weakened."

The German government now says it will send anti-aircraft cannons to Ukraine. Putin's invasion has shaken up capitalist rulers across the globe, touching off new searches for allies and a massive arms race, as each regime seeks a road to defend its economic and military interests.

The Russian rulers' war is just the latest reflection of capitalism's unavoidable march toward ever more deadly conflicts. This largest land war in Europe in decades shows once again that the U.S. rulers' judgment that they won the Cold War when the Soviet Union collapsed was mistaken. Instead of reinforcing their dominance and providing stability to pursue their predatory interests, the end of the Cold War highlighted Washington's declining strength and gave rise to sharper competition and conflicts among capitalist powers.

Acting under the illusion they could impose their will as they saw fit, the U.S. imperialists waged wars in Iraq in 1990, Yugoslavia in the late 1990s, Afghanistan beginning in 2001 and Iraq again in 2002, along with numerous other military interventions from Syria to Libya. Each had devastating consequences for working people at home and abroad, and none resulted in long-standing gains for Washington.

"There is only one social force that can end the threat of new and wider wars and the impact of the social and economic catastrophes being prepared by imperialism," said Craine.

Chernobyl nuclear disaster marked amid Moscow's war

Continued from front page

tance March 31, less than a month before the 36th anniversary of the worst nuclear "accident" ever.

Members of the nuclear workers ATOM union were part of protests in Slavutych during the occupation, demanding the invading troops get out.

Workers at the plant told Reuters that many of the young soldiers they spoke to "had no idea what kind of facility they were at" and "did not have a clue" about the April 26, 1986, explosion that destroyed a nuclear reactor there. The resulting fire raged out of control for 10 days, spewing nuclear radiation into the atmosphere and leaving some 1,000 square miles in what is called the Chernobyl "exclusion zone," virtually off limits to this day.

Ignoring the warnings of the Ukrainian nuclear workers, who took the moral high ground toward the occupation forces, the Russian generals ordered their troops to drive vehicles through the "Red Forest," the highest contaminated area, where the explosion and fire turned the leaves red. The soldiers kicked up dust all over, and were ordered to dig trenches in the still radioactive ground near the site. Soldiers lived in the bunkers for more than a month.

The Russian military brass under the capitalist regime of Vladimir Putin has no more regard for the lives of the workers and farmers in uniform they send to fight in their war of conquest than they do for the lives of the people of Ukraine.

That is no surprise. It was the same disdain for working people shown by the Stalinist regime in power in Mos-



Chernobyl trade union youth organization in Slavutych
April 26 event in Slavutych, Ukraine, on 36th anniversary of Chernobyl nuclear disaster. "Remember past, accept today's challenges, believe in the bright future!" said nuclear union youth organization, while denouncing Moscow's occupation, attacks on other nuclear plants.

cow in 1986 that led to the disaster in the first place, when the region was still part of the Soviet Union.

April 26, 1986

The disaster began with the dangerously flawed design of the four nuclear reactors in operation at Chernobyl.

These reactors were inherently unstable because of the way they used graphite instead of water to cool them. On top of this, the Stalinist regime refused to build any fortified containment structure, unlike most nuclear power plants in the world.

Operators lost control during a maintenance test of a unit. Over the next 10 days the fire released roughly 400 times more radiation than the

atom bombs U.S. imperialism dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in 1945. Among the most dangerous of the over 100 radioactive elements released were iodine, with a half-life of eight days and strontium and caesium with half-lives of some 30 years.

Did the Stalinist authorities move rapidly to evacuate all those in immediate danger, like the 49,000 inhabitants of Pripjat just a couple of miles away, where the nuclear workers and their families lived? Did they sound the alarm throughout the region? Did they make sure that at least young children — who are most susceptible to the ill effects of radioactive iodine — would not drink contaminated milk?

They did none of those things, trying

her compulsory quarterly report to the Russian Justice Ministry to protest Putin's war. On the forms she has to fill out she drew pictures of the destruction of Ukrainian cities and the toll on civilians and on the soldiers of both sides and then posted the images online.

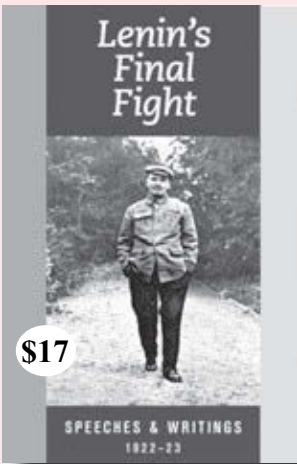
Russian "soldiers could refuse to fight. And many did," she wrote. "Journalists could refuse to write lies. And many did."

"Putin's regime will end one day," she wrote, "but we'll live on — live and rebuild what is being destroyed now."

Lenin's Final Fight Speeches and Writings, 1922-23

"I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism."

V.I. Lenin, 1922



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CUBA AND CHERNOBYL

2006 Cuban documentary *Cuba and Chernobyl* ("Chernobyl en nosotros") covers the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe in Ukraine and Cuba's exemplary internationalist medical program treating over 25,000 Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian victims at Tarará Pediatric Hospital in Havana. View online at themilitant.com or order a DVD for \$7 from the *Militant*.

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Amid Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, it is important to understand what is driving world events in order to chart a working-class way forward. *New International* issues explain what is behind growing trends toward new imperialist wars and class confrontations in today's world.



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Cuban working people defend socialist revolution at Bay of Pigs

Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández is being featured this week to mark the 61st anniversary of this historic event. In under 72 hours, April 17-20, 1961, Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, commanded by Castro and Fernández, defeated a mercenary invasion backed by the U.S. rulers. In successfully defending their socialist revolution, Cuban working people set an example for workers, farmers and youth worldwide that with political consciousness, class solidarity, courage and Marxist leadership it is possible to stand up to seemingly insurmountable odds and win. The excerpt is from Castro's April 16 speech given on the eve of the invasion. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Celebrating defeat of Washington's Bay of Pigs invasion by 1,500 U.S.-organized mercenaries, April 1961, Cuban militiamen pose with wreckage of downed U.S. plane in fake Cuban colors. Fidel Castro said U.S. imperialists couldn't forgive the workers and peasants of Cuba for "making a socialist revolution right under their very nose."

workers? The exploiters or the exploited? The privileged or the working people? [Shouts]

Do the privileged have the weapons? [Shouts of "No!"] Are the privileged a minority? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Are the working people a majority? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Is it democratic to have a revolution in which the working people have the weapons? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Applause and shouts of "Fidel, Fidel!" and various revolutionary slogans.]

Compañero workers and peasants, this is the socialist and democratic revolution of the working people, with the working people, and for the working people. [Applause] And for this revolution of the working people, by the working people, and for the working people we are prepared to give our lives. [Shouts]

Workers and peasants, men and women of our homeland: Do you swear to defend to the last drop of blood this revolution of the working people, by the working people, and for the working people? [Shouts of "Yes!"]

Compañero workers and peasants of the homeland: yesterday's attack was the prelude to the mercenaries' aggression. Yesterday's attack, which cost seven heroic lives, aimed to destroy our planes on the ground. But the mercenaries failed; they did not destroy our planes, and the bulk of the enemy planes were damaged or shot down. [Applause]

Here, in front of the graves of our fallen comrades; beside the remains of the heroic youth, children of workers and children of ordinary working men and women, we reaffirm our determination. Just as they faced the bullets, just as they gave their lives, we state that no matter when the mercenaries come, no matter who we face, that we are all proud of our revolution, proud to defend this revolution of the working people, for the working people, and by the working people. And we will not hesitate to defend it to the last drop of blood. [Applause] ...

Long live the socialist revolution! [Shouts of "Long live!"] Long live free Cuba! [Shouts of "Long live!"]

Patria o muerte! Venceremos! [Applause]

SPECIAL FEATURE

BY FIDEL CASTRO

[The U.S. rulers] organized the attack, prepared the attack, trained the mercenaries, supplied the planes, supplied the bombs, prepared the airports — everyone knows it. The attack occurs and they calmly state before the world that it's not so. This is a world that they know would rise up in indignation

in face of such a monstrous, cowardly act that violates the rights of the peoples and is a violation of peace! [Applause]

And these miserable gringo imperialists, after shrouding seven homes in mourning, after murdering a handful of young people who were not millionaire parasites — because those we've come here to bury were not millionaire parasites, they were not mercenaries who sold themselves for foreign gold, they were not thieves. They are true sons of our people! [Prolonged applause]

They were young workers, children from families of ordinary people who never stole anything from anyone, who never exploited anyone, and who had a right to live more than the millionaires. They had more right to live than the parasites and the gusanos! [Applause] Because they did not live off the labor of others, like the Yankee millionaires. They did not live off foreign gold, like the mercenaries and gusanos who have sold out to imperialism. [Shouts of "Down with them!"] They did not live off vice or theft, and they had a right to have their lives respected. And no miserable imperialist millionaire has the right to send planes, bombs, and missiles to snuff out these young and cherished lives of the homeland! [Applause] ...

What the imperialists cannot forgive is that we are here. What the imperialists cannot forgive is the dignity, the integrity, the courage, the firmness of ideas, the spirit of sacrifice, and the revolutionary spirit of the people of Cuba. [Applause]

That is what they cannot forgive, that we are here under their very nose.

What they cannot forgive is that we have made a socialist revolution right under the very nose of the United States! [Applause and shouts] That we defend this socialist revolution with these guns! [Applause] That we defend this socialist revolution with the same courage shown yesterday when our antiaircraft artillery riddled the aggressor's planes with bullets! [Applause and shouts of "Venceremos!" and other revolutionary slogans.]

This revolution is not defended with mercenaries. This revolution is defended by men and women of the people.

Who has the weapons? Do the mercenaries perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of "No!"] Because mercenaries and millionaires are the same thing. Do the little rich boys perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of "No!"] Do the overseers perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of "No!"] Who has the weapons? [Shouts] In whose hands are these weapons now being raised? [Shouts] Are they the hands of playboys? [Shouts of "No!"] Are they the hands of the rich? [Shouts of "No!"] Are they the hands of the exploiters? [Shouts of "No!"]

Whose hands are now raising these weapons? Aren't they the hands of workers? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Aren't they the hands of peasants? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Aren't they hands hardened by work? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Aren't they hands that create? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Aren't they the hands of the humble, of ordinary men and women? [Shouts of "Yes!"] And who are the majority of the people — the millionaires or the

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End US sanctions! For working-class solidarity

The fight to defend Ukraine’s independence and to get Moscow’s boot off the Ukrainian people’s back is at the heart of advancing working-class interests today.

Under the czarist empire, the Ukrainian people were conquered and oppressed. Putin aims to reimpose Russia’s capitalist rulers’ domination and obliterate Ukraine as a nation, with an untold cost to human life. Unconditional defense of the rights of oppressed nations like Ukraine to self-determination is key to forging the unity workers and farmers need to advance our common interests against the capitalists and their governments.

None of the governments imposing sanctions on Russia today have any interest in defending Ukrainian national rights, nor in defending the class interests of workers and farmers. Led by Washington, they seek at all times to advance the economic and political interests of their own capitalist class for markets and profits. Sanctions imposed by Washington, as war department head Lloyd Austin said, are aimed at leaving Moscow “weakened” and putting the U.S. rulers in a stronger position for the conflicts and wars to come.

As long as capitalism exists there will be no peace.

Working people in Russia, who have to fight and die on behalf of the Russian rulers, can be a powerful source of resistance to their wars. Like the U.S., Russia is class-divided. The interests of workers and farmers, including workers in uniform, do not lie with Putin’s KGB thug regime. The capitalist class there exploits Russian workers and farmers, including the country’s oppressed nationalities, who are dying in the war in disproportionate numbers.

Regardless of who the U.S. government says its sanctions “target,” the impact will always be dumped on the backs of working people. They deprive Russian

workers of jobs and fuel massive price hikes alongside shortages that make it harder to afford vital necessities. Backers of sanctions argue that this will lead to moves to get rid of Putin. But the opposite is the case. Sanctions feed Putin’s propaganda that the problem Russians face is U.S. aggression, not the effects of the brutal war Moscow is inflicting on Ukraine.

Sanctions do not make it easier for working people to mount struggles like the strike by garbage workers at Novosibirsk. They cut across what is essential — recognizing workers’ separate class interests and fostering common bonds between working people in Ukraine who are steadfastly resisting Putin’s invasion and fellow working people in Russia. Both are under assault by the Putin regime. Both have common interests in ending the carnage and in forging greater working-class unity for struggles to come.

Both have a long record fighting against those who exploit and oppress them. The Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution overthrew the czarist regime and capitalist rule, and opened the door to independence for Ukraine and other oppressed peoples. This was overturned by the rise of Stalin and the counterrevolution he led.

Sanctions undercut this powerful potential. The struggle of working people in Russia to defend their class interests and political rights will deepen in coming years. The fight to take on Moscow’s expansionist course and the horrific cost of its wars of conquest will be a key part of this fight.

As working people in the U.S. defend ourselves from bosses’ attacks here, we need to break from their twin parties and build our own labor party. A working-class foreign policy starts from solidarity with working people worldwide and doing everything possible to raise the unity, fighting spirit and class consciousness of the one class that *is* capable of bringing an end to Moscow’s slaughter — the working class.

Garbage workers strike in Novosibirsk, Siberia

BY JOHN STUDER

Trash pickup drivers went on strike in mid-April in Novosibirsk, in south central Russia, after they discovered their bosses — the Eco-Trans-N complex — had lost their fleet of 86 trucks for unpaid debts. Company officials told them they would be given 22 smaller trucks, and were required to work double-time with no increase in pay.

“The trucks they gave us are not equipped with scoops or brush cleaners. We can’t drive them through narrow courtyards or streets,” one striking worker told local news outlet Sib.fm. “We aren’t refusing to work, it’s that we’re not being provided with conditions in which we can work.”

Novosibirsk may be in Siberia, but it’s not a small city, 1.5 million people live there.

As gargage piles up, local residents are demanding the city government do something. But outside of complaining themselves, nothing is being done.

It turns out the company isn’t bankrupt. In fact it’s part of the economic empire of Russian businessman Igor Sungurov, who has an estimated net worth of \$600 million. Local authorities are nervous about taking him on.



Top, Press Service of Novosibirsk Regional Prosecutor’s Office. Novosibirsk, Siberia: Top, garbage workers on strike over working conditions. Bottom, Feb. 27 protest there against Moscow’s war in Ukraine.

The strike and crisis for residents in Novosibirsk takes place as Moscow is conducting a brutal war against Ukraine independence. If that war was truly popular in Russia, workers would be heeding calls by authorities to shut up, get back to work and “sacrifice” to defend the motherland.

LETTERS

Brian Oreggio

Brian Oreggio, a longtime reader of the *Militant* in Manchester, died at age 60, April 12, after a long illness.

Oreggio joined with co-workers who are members of the Communist League at Tulip Meats factory here in union and political activity, including protests against cop brutality and actions to defend Cuba’s socialist revolution. He helped organize a display of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of five

Cuban revolutionaries framed-up and jailed in the U.S., in the neighborhood where he lived. Displays of Guerrero’s artwork

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

were part of the worldwide campaign that helped win the release of the Cuban Five.

Oreggio visited picket lines across the region, extending solidarity to others. He was keen to report his experiences to co-workers and explain why this activity was important.

Participants at the Militant Labour Forum here toasted his contribution with a shot of Cuban rum.

*Pete Clifford,
Manchester, England*

Uprising in Ukraine

Continued from page 8

told the *Militant* at the union’s headquarters. He led Studer and the others on a tour of the biggest iron-ore mine there. “But today the Russian government is threatening an invasion of Ukraine, and the majority of workers here agree that we will do our best to defend our country.”

He explained how the union joined in organizing Maidan protests in the city that were attacked by local cops and thugs that drew on guards from the mine. The unionists organized self-defense units and beat them back.

Militant reporters were invited to visit Chernobyl by the ATOM Trade Union, which organizes nuclear workers in Ukraine and still has hundreds of members working at the now disabled plant there that exploded in 1986. They were invited to join in the annual festival celebrating the founding of Slavutych, the city erected after the Chernobyl disaster shuttered their former homes in the now uninhabitable town of Pripyat.

“The parade and festival are much bigger this year, and more spirited,” Sergey Akamovych, a member of the union’s central committee, told Studer June 8, 2014, at the celebration. “More workers from the Chernobyl nuclear plant, like me, are wearing traditional Ukrainian shirts or carrying Ukrainian flags.”

The reason, he said, was the victory of “the big events in the Maidan. Ukrainians are more conscious, more self-confident.

“They need to be. There are people from 49 nationalities here, from Russia, Donetsk, Lviv, all over Ukraine,” he said. “By challenging our country, Putin has brought us together in defense of Ukraine. Things won’t ever be the same.”

The victory of the Maidan uprising succeeded in getting the Yanukovych regime off the backs of working people. But the Ukrainian working class didn’t yet have a party of its own that could lead it and its allies to replace capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government. Over time, the tents came down on the Maidan.

Class-struggle battles over wages and conditions have erupted periodically in the mines, mills and factories and on the railroads in the years since, as the capitalist rulers have pressed to boost profits and pay off loans to the International Monetary Fund. The determination of working people in Ukraine to defend its independence was deepened, and exploded again in mass resistance to Putin’s invasion this February.

Farmers in California

Continued from page 2

the past year, the USDA reports.

The alliance of workers and farmers forged during Cuba’s socialist revolution provides a powerful example, Britton said. They took political power out of the hands of the capitalist class and established their own government. “Land reforms in 1959 and 1963 were crucial steps on the road to ending capitalist exploitation,” he said. “Landless peasants got land, cooperatives were formed, sugar plantations became state farms.”

By nationalizing the land, the revolutionary government prevented it from being used as a commodity to be sold at a profit, and guaranteed no farmer could be foreclosed on. Nationalization of the land is the foundation for abolishing the rents and mortgages system here too. That’s why it’s part of the program the SWP presents today, Britton said.

“You’re exposing me to other people’s experiences, so it’s not ‘poor me,’ but we need to organize,” Scott noted. He invited the SWP members to return in the summer when crops will be ready for harvest.

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