

Socialist Workers governor
campaigns aid ‘Militant’ drive



Ellie García (right), Socialist Workers Party candidate for California governor, shows *Militant* newspaper to Ana Sagastome while campaigning door to door in Los Angeles April 15. California and Florida SWP gubernatorial candidates are first in party’s tickets across U.S.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The five-week drive to win 1,800 new readers to the *Militant* takes place in a world where Washington and its imperialist rivals across Europe, as well as the capitalist rulers of Russia, face limits on their ability to close down the political space for working people to discuss, debate and to organize and resist.

In the face of today’s crisis of capitalist production and trade, these ruling classes also face limits on their ability to use military force. The recent mobilizations by working people in Ukraine are a good example of these limits today — on both Washington and Moscow.

One week into the subscription and books campaign, we have 352 new and renewing subscribers.

The heart of the drive is taking the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press books on revolutionary, working-class politics onto workers’ doorsteps in cities and rural areas.

The campaign is getting a boost as the Socialist Workers Party is fielding candidates for governor and other offices in the elections. The SWP in California announced Ellie García for governor there. Miami socialists

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Moscow intervention spurs
protests in Ukraine, Russia



AP/Alexander Zemlianichenko

More than 10,000 people in Moscow protest Russian intervention in Ukraine April 13.

BY JOHN STUDER

Small pro-Moscow paramilitary units have seized government and police buildings in a number of cities across eastern Ukraine, including Donetsk, Horlivka, Kramatorsk and Mariupol. These provocations are part of an operation by the capitalist government in Russia to destabilize Ukraine, create a pretext for possible further intervention and deal blows to the popular movement that drew hundreds of thousands into action — speakers of Ukrainian and Russian alike — and toppled the government of President Viktor Yanukovich.

Similar provocations in Crimea served as a prelude to Moscow’s annexation of the peninsula last month and the mobilization of some 40,000 Russian troops near Ukraine’s eastern border where they remain today.

On April 15, Ukrainian army spe-

cial forces troops finally began to move against forces organized by Moscow, liberating the airport in Kramatorsk.

Meanwhile, workers and others have been organizing local self-defense units in response to ongoing provocations. “What happened in Zaporizhia was instructive,” Euromaidan PR reported April 16. “The ‘pro-Russian’ protesters turned out to be mostly members of a local

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Spring ‘Militant’
subscription campaign
April 5 - May 17 (week 1)

Country	quota	sold	%	1,800
UNITED STATES				
Twin Cities	100	30	30%	
Los Angeles	115	31	27%	
San Francisco	110	28	25%	
Seattle	100	23	23%	
Omaha/Lincoln	120	27	23%	
Philadelphia	80	18	23%	
Chicago	75	14	19%	
Atlanta	90	15	17%	
Houston	50	8	16%	
Miami	65	10	15%	
Des Moines	85	13	15%	
New York	300	40	13%	
Boston	40	4	10%	
Washington	75	7	9%	
Total US	1405	268	19%	
PRISONERS	10	4	40%	
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	100	31	31%	
Manchester	65	19	29%	
Total UK	165	50	30%	
CANADA	65	10	15%	
NEW ZEALAND	50	10	20%	
AUSTRALIA	50	10	20%	
Total	1745	352	20%	
Should be	1800	360	20%	352

Rally outside immigration jail
in Wash. backs hunger strike

BY EDWIN FRUIT

TACOMA, Wash. — Some 400 people demonstrated outside the Northwest Detention Center here April 5 to show support for inmates on a hunger strike against deportations and abusive conditions inside the immigration jail.

The prison is privately owned by GEO Group, Inc., on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security and has beds for approximately 1,500.

A hunger strike that started March 7 and initially involved some 750 inmates resumed March 24. More than 20 hunger strikers were put into solitary confinement that day. About 70 were still on hunger strike as of April 5, Sandy Restrepo, an attorney with the People’s Legal

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Militant/Jeanne FitzMaurice

Protest outside Tacoma, Wash., immigration jail April 5 demands “not one more deportation.”

Cuba has treated
over 25,000 since
1986 Ukraine
nuclear disaster

BY SETH GALINSKY

Twenty-eight years ago, on April 26, 1986, one of four reactors at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant near Pripjat, Ukraine, exploded, spewing clouds of radiation for 10 days and contaminating the surrounding area.

Within a few years, hundreds of children began suffering from thyroid cancer. The most striking fact is not the scope of the disaster, but the selfless response of revolutionary Cuba,

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Protest in Chicago demands hearings for torture victims

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — More than 300 people gathered April 4 at Daley Plaza across from city hall for a noontime rally to protest torture by police. They demanded immediate hearings for the more than 100 still-incarcerated victims of coerced “confessions” here and passage of city legislation for compensation.

Lt. Jon Burge, head of police Area 2 headquarters on the South Side until 1993, was convicted in 2010 on federal perjury and obstruction of justice charges for lying during a civil lawsuit about torturing suspects by him and his subordinates throughout the 1970s and ’80s. He was sentenced to four and a half years in prison.

The demonstration was called by Chicago Torture Justice Memorials and Amnesty International USA. It coincided with Amnesty’s Annual General Meeting. Conference attendees made

up about half the action. Participants held up more than 118 black banners, each inscribed with the name of a victim of Chicago police torture.

“We’re here today because of the importance of the issue of torture internationally,” said Adithe Kumar, a 24-year-old student at Washington College of Law in Washington, D.C.

“It’s important for the city of Chicago to publicly acknowledge that torture was practiced by police here, that this was fundamentally a human rights abuse, and to apologize for it,” said Rachel Hudak, a member of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials and a worker at DePaul University. “We have to look at this as a movement, not a moment.”

Among those speaking at the rally were Flint Taylor and Joey Mogul, two of the three lead attorneys in the class-action petition filed in October 2012 seeking new trials for all still-incarcerated torture victims.

Cook County Criminal Court Chief Judge Paul Biebel March 12 denied the petitioners’ request that all Burge torture victims file suit together as a class. Biebel appointed David Yellen, dean of Loyola University Chicago School of Law, to identify all known Burge torture victims and said he would assign attorneys to work with each to file indi-



Militant/John Hawkins

Carrying banners with names of victims of police torture, participants in April 4 Chicago protest demand hearings for more than 100 inmates convicted after coerced “confessions.”

vidual petitions.

“To see so many people turn out to support the torture victims brought tears to my eyes,” said Jeanette Plummer, mother of one of the petitioners, Johnnie Plummer. “It’s very important that we had this good a turnout. We have to keep fighting to win new hearings for those that have not had them and to win some sort of compensation for those who have been released. Many of them have no family for support.”

“This was a really important demonstration of support for the torture victims,” said Anabel Perez, mother of police torture survivor Jaime Hauad.

Last May the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission found Hauad’s

claim of torture, along with the claims of six others, credible, and referred the cases for judicial review. But in September the decision on Hauad and two others were rescinded and commission Executive Director David Thomas resigned, amid complaints that the commission didn’t properly inform victims of the body’s recommendations or offer them a chance to testify.

Hauad’s case is scheduled to be reconsidered in May.

“My son has spent another year in prison for a crime he did not commit because of a procedural dispute,” Perez said. “We need to show this kind of support at the commission’s meeting in May.”

‘I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived’: New book for fighters to free the Cuban Five

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Airline workers in Australia rally against job cuts

BY LINDA HARRIS

AND MANUELE LASALO

SYDNEY — More than 100 airport workers, members of the Transport Workers Union, and supporters joined

a Sunday morning rally and barbecue March 30 to protest job cuts by Qantas Airlines.

Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce announced in February that 5,000 jobs would be slashed from a workforce of 33,000, following the biggest reported loss by the company since 1995.

Qantas has announced plans to wind back its aircraft maintenance operations and catering. Joyce also announced a wage freeze until the company reports a profit.

“We used to have five cleaners on each plane. Then the company tried to cut the teams to three,” said Aroha Fox, who has worked at Qantas for 18 years as a cleaner. “There were too

many delays so they had to go back up to four.”

“Four is still not enough, especially on school holidays,” said Soulai Meintanis. “We have only 10 minutes to clean a 747 or a 767.” She said the company’s new “Smart Clean” program has meant that only business and first class sections of the planes get cleaned on domestic flights.

Cleaners are forced to work in temperatures of 30°C (86°F). Fox and Meintanis said they started as part-time workers before being made permanent. “Now,” Meintanis said, “workers are kept on part time for years and they are only guaranteed 20 hours a week.”

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Militant/Betsey Stone

Oakland, Calif., March 27 demonstration.

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Subscription campaign

Continued from front page
are running Naomi Craine for Florida governor.

These campaigns urge independent working-class political action and point a road toward the fight for workers power.

The SWP candidates champion the fight by Ukrainian toilers to defend their country's sovereignty and are taking advantage of the increased openings to build the fight to free the Cuban Five and discuss the Cuban Revolution they were imprisoned for defending.

Garcia and Craine advance demands for workers control of production in order to defend life and limb, and society, from speedup, dangerous working conditions and threats to the land and environment. They push for government-funded medical care for all in opposition to Obamacare, a system organized to boost profits for insurance and drug companies and to put the burden for health care on individual workers.

The subscription effort has been strengthened by the *Militant's* on-the-scene reports from Ukraine and two new Pathfinder books on the fight to free the Cuban Five, *I Will Die the Way I've Lived* and *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five*.

Frank Forrestal, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in Minneapolis who recently participated in the *Militant's* reporting trip to Ukraine, spoke at an April 12 Militant Labor Forum in Miami on "Working People from Ukraine to U.S. Defend Them-

selves Against Bosses' Offensive." A bus driver in Palm Beach County originally from Ukraine attended and brought three co-workers.

"He took out a subscription a couple weeks ago and has shown the paper at work," Naomi Craine reported April 15. "They are in the middle of a contract fight. He took sub blanks to sign up co-workers for the paper."

Forrestal was invited to speak at the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Cooper City, Fla., the next day. *Militant* supporters put together packages of the four latest issues of the paper with front-page coverage from Ukraine and sold three subscriptions.

"I think people were struck by the *Militant* having the fight in Ukraine on the front page," Forrestal said April 16. "They were interested in the internationalist solidarity Ukraine got from Cuba, bringing tens of thousands of young people to the island for medical treatment since the 1986 nuclear explosion in Chernobyl and the fact that Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, went to school in Kiev."

Militant supporters went to the New York City borough of Staten Island April 12, reported Dan Fein, signing up five new subscribers.

"I am from the eastern part of Ukraine and I speak Russian," said Oksana York, one of the new subscribers, who is originally from Kharkiv. "The people in the east don't hate the people of the western part and Ukrainian speakers from the west don't hate the Russian people



Militant/Dan Fein

"I am from Kharkiv in east Ukraine and I speak Russian. We don't hate Ukrainian speakers from the western part. That's a lie the media portrays," said Oksana York, right, as she signed up for subscription after Sara Lobman knocked on her door in Staten Island, N.Y., April 12.

from the east. That's a lie the media portrays. We all oppose Russian troops in our country."

"Vladimir Putin heads a government of oligarchs in Russia who ignored the big protest in Moscow March 15 against Russian troops in Crimea," Maxim Nikouline, an IT worker originally from Russia, said as he signed up.

"We sold 21 subscriptions and 38 books at a Pathfinder Press booth at the *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books," reported Bill Arth from Los Angeles April 15. "A number of new readers took advantage of the special offer to buy books with subscriptions. Some bought several titles. Top sellers were *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*

and the *Road to Workers Power* with eight copies and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* with seven." These are two of 11 books offered at a steep discount with a subscription (see ad below).

"We signed up seven new subscribers at a trailer park in Jordan, Minn., on the first day of the drive," Joanne Murphy wrote from Minneapolis April 14. "The first woman we talked to got a subscription and three books about the fight to free the Cuban 5. She got extra subscription blanks to hand out at the temp agency she works through."

"The *Militant* is our voice, the voice of the workers," wrote a prisoner in California in an April 14 letter, requesting to keep getting the paper. "Who else tells us about the struggle of our brothers and sisters who are fighting on the streets for better wages? Who else tells us about the protests and actions of the revolutionaries? I enjoy every issue and I always pass it on."

Nearly 100 inmates in more than 50 prisons across the country subscribe to the *Militant*.

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See distributors
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Venezuela workers distrust pro-imperialist opposition

Capitalist crisis, gov't policies fuel discontent

BY SETH GALINSKY

One year after the death of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, pro-imperialist opposition forces are taking advantage of growing social crises and dissatisfaction with the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela to step up efforts to take the reins of government.

For more than a decade and a half Washington has backed efforts to overturn the Venezuelan government and bring an end to its close trade and diplomatic ties to revolutionary Cuba.

Since mid-February the opposition has organized frequent demonstrations — based foremost among university students, middle-class professionals and business people big and small — barricaded major thoroughfares and attacked government offices and police with Molotov cocktails and rocks.

The response by the government of President Nicolás Maduro — sending in cops using tear gas and rubber bullets, arresting some protest leaders and expelling foreign journalists — has helped to fuel the protests. Some pro-government neighborhood organizations known as *colectivos* (collectives) have attacked opposition demonstrations. At least 25 people have died in clashes over the last month.

The worldwide crisis of capitalism has hit hard in Venezuela. Government policies ostensibly designed to mitigate its effects through state regulations, currency and price controls, construction projects and other measures have largely failed. In some cases they have created problems of their own or been sabotaged by capitalist businesses.

Inflation reached more than 56 percent in 2013. Shortages of basic necessities from toilet paper to chicken and cooking oil are endemic. Violent crime rates, including 16,000 murders in 2012, are among the highest in the world. Tens of thousands live in unfinished buildings, shopping centers and homeless shelters in Caracas alone, where there is an estimated shortage of 400,000 apartments and homes.

Opposition targets Cuba

Opposition parties blame deteriorating economic conditions on government policy and single out for criticism trade agreements and cooperation with revolutionary Cuba. Their “solution” centers on ending ties with Cuba and any fetters to maximizing private profit off the backs of working people. Opposition leader María Corina Machado, a deputy in the National Assembly, has said that she is for “people’s capitalism” and privatizing state-owned factories.

Machado and fellow opposition leader Leopoldo López, who like Machado is from a ruling capitalist family, paint themselves as defenders of free speech and democratic rights. Both were outspoken supporters of the failed U.S.-backed 2002 military coup against Chávez — a coup that was reversed two days later by the spontaneous mobilization of working people.

Chávez was first elected president in 1998 with widespread support, six years after he led a failed coup against the unpopular government of Carlos Andrés Pérez.

The Chávez government used prof-

its from the state oil industry, much of which was nationalized under Pérez, to subsidize housing, food and government programs and finance extended medical care. He hired construction companies to build housing and mass transit in poorer neighborhoods. Some 160,000 peasants were given title to fallow land, while more than 80 percent of agricultural land remained in capitalist hands.

Chávez was openly critical of U.S. imperialist policy in Latin America and around the world, while rejecting the need for socialist revolution. Instead, he advocated a “third road” between capitalism and socialism that could improve the lives of workers and peasants, while defending the Venezuelan nation — patriotic capitalist and worker alike.

For example, in a 2008 interview, Christopher Hitchens asked Chávez what the difference was between him and Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro. “Fidel is a communist. I am not. I am a social democrat,” Chávez replied. “Fidel is a Marxist-Leninist. I am not. Fidel is an atheist. I am not.”

Since Chávez was elected, the number of government employees increased by more than 1 million. Today nearly one of every five workers is employed by the government.

Through cooperative agreements between the Venezuelan and Cuban governments, Havana helped establish social programs known as “missions,” staffed by tens of thousands of Cuban volunteers, from teachers and sports instructors to agronomists. Barrio Adentro, staffed by 20,000 Cuban doctors, today provides free medical care to working people across the country.

Anti-imperialist trade policies

Venezuela gives Cuba 100,000 barrels of oil a day at preferential prices, which has been a lifeline for Cuba, replacing oil it used to receive from the Soviet Union before it collapsed.

Caracas’ ties with Havana and the two governments’ initiation of new trade and diplomatic alliances in Latin America and the Caribbean to counter U.S. imperialist domination of the region have provoked the ire of Washington.

This includes the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), a trade bloc of nine Latin



Reuters/Jorge Silva

Venezuela opposition wants to break ties with revolutionary government of Cuba, whose internationalist solidarity has been linchpin of most successful and popular social programs in Venezuela. Some 20,000 Cuban doctors today provide medical care free of charge for working people across the country. Opposition signs at Feb. 25 Caracas rally near Cuban Embassy say, “No Cuban interference in Venezuela” and “Freedom for Venezuela and Cuba.”

American countries formed in 2004, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), an alternative to the U.S.-dominated Organization of American States. In 2005 the Venezuelan government launched PetroCaribe, which provides Cuba and 13 other Caribbean countries with oil at preferential prices, weakening the stranglehold of imperialist-dominated oil monopolies.

Government subsidies and social programs since 1998 have helped improve living conditions of working people. At the same time they have strengthened workers’ dependence on the capitalist state and promoted the illusion that something other than independent working-class political action can advance their interests. Today, many government programs are in decline, while the government is weaker without the strong Bonapartist leader it had with Chávez.

Oil production in crisis

Maintaining subsidies for fuel, food, housing and an expanding state bureaucracy has become increasingly difficult. Venezuela’s oil production has declined by roughly 25 percent since 1999, a major problem for a country that depends on oil for 95 percent of its export earnings and 45 percent of federal budget revenues.

Venezuela owes more than \$60 billion to foreign creditors and Maduro has made sure that they are paid on time. Domestic capitalists are owed some \$50 billion.

Maduro had floated reducing subsidies for gas prices, which stand at roughly 6 cents a gallon. But he has

shelved the idea since the latest wave of opposition protests began.

The government has implemented a complicated auction of U.S. dollars for Venezuelan businesses at the official exchange rate of 6.3 bolivars to the dollar, one tenth the black market rate.

Some capitalists, especially those with ties to the government, are taking advantage of the gap. They are making fortunes in currency speculation buying dollars at the official rate, ostensibly to import needed goods, and selling them on the black market.

The government has tried to impose price controls and passed a law stating that capitalists will be allowed a 30 percent maximum profit rate, leading to acute shortages of goods at the official prices and a thriving black market at whatever price the market will bear.

While chastising greedy capitalists, Maduro has also criticized workers who demand higher wages. He labeled steelworkers on strike at the Sidor company in September and October as “labor criminals, anarcho-syndicalists.”

In a move to head off opposition in the armed forces, the government announced in September that it was giving members of the military a pay raise and vehicles, furniture and appliances for their homes. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, Maduro has appointed more than 300 active duty or retired military officials to government posts.

Although the crisis is hitting working people the hardest, “the protests shaking the capital this month have been dominated by the city’s middle- and upper-class residents,” the *New York Times* reported Feb. 28. “Yet in the city’s poorer sections, life has mostly gone on as usual.” Even those who oppose the government “do not trust the opposition,” the paper said.

Henrique Capriles, the opposition’s presidential candidate who lost to Maduro last year, has publicly distanced himself from López and Machado’s central slogan, “Maduro, leave now!”

“Most Venezuelans live in poor neighborhoods and that message does not draw in their discontent,” Capriles told *El Nacional*, a pro-imperialist daily. Recognizing the popularity of the Cuban doctor and teacher volunteers among working people in Venezuela, Capriles said during his presidential campaign that he would not dismantle the medical and education programs, although like López and Machado he promised that “not a drop of oil will go toward financing the government of the Castros.”



Reuters/Carlos Garcia Rawlins

Shortages of basic goods are endemic in Venezuela, where government’s attempts to manage capitalism through regulations, including currency and price controls, have created own problems or been met by bosses’ sabotage. Above, supermarket line in city of San Cristobal Feb. 27.

Rally demands prosecution for 1946 Georgia lynchings

BY SAM MANUEL

MONROE, Ga. — Some 85 people rallied at a local church in this rural town northeast of Atlanta and later marched to the site of one of the most horrific lynchings in the South. The April 5 protest was the 11th year the activity has been held as part of an effort to reopen the case, find the killers and prosecute them for the 1946 lynching of two couples at the Moore's Ford Bridge.

Participants in the action also demanded the reopening of the case of a Black youth, Kendrick Johnson, whose suspicious death last year was ruled an accident by a coroner in Valdosta.

"What happened here was a travesty, and it's being continued by the authorities," said Pamela Stevenson, a caregiver. "It's just not believable that no one knows who committed these killings."

"The true history of America needs to be told," said Robert Howard, 72, who began working on the Moore's Ford lynching case in 1961. "When I was growing up, the case wasn't to be talked about. There was a circle of fear around it. Why hasn't somebody been arrested after all these years?"

According to Associated Press reports in 1946, two Black couples, Roger and Dorothy Malcolm and George and Mae Murray Dorsey, were killed by a Ku Klux Klan mob at the Moore's Ford Bridge on July 25 that year.

Some 20 Klansmen ambushed the couples as they were being driven by Loy Harrison, a prominent white farmer, who had bailed Roger Malcolm out of jail an hour earlier. Malcolm was charged with stabbing his employer Barney Hester, another white farmer.

Harrison reported that the vigilante mob, armed with shotguns, forced all five from the car and then separated Harrison from the group. The two couples were bound and taken a short distance into the woods where they were repeatedly shot. Harrison was released after swearing to the mob that he could not recognize any of them.

The head of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation said at the time his agency believed the lynching had been planned from the moment of Malcolm's arrest. The *Militant* noted in its Aug. 3, 1946, issue that Malcolm was not released until three hours after posting bail, giving the lynchers time to prepare.

"It looks like a state case," the FBI said in a 1946 statement explaining why it did not plan to investigate.

It wasn't until last year that the first witness came forward when Wayne Watkins said he heard family members, at least one of whom was a Klansman, boast about the killing. He gave a recorded interview with officials of the NAACP and Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials in which he said

he knows who the killers are, some of whom are still alive.

Watkins has since stopped talking. Ed Dubose, former president of the Georgia NAACP, and Tyrone Brooks, president of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, said they had turned over Watkins' statements to the Justice Department and would soon request the case be looked at by the judiciary committee in Congress.

"We won't stop marching. We won't stop rallying until there is justice for our son," Kenneth Johnson said standing at the Moore's Ford Bridge.

On Jan. 11, 2013, his 17-year-old son, Kendrick Johnson, was found dead inside a rolled up gym mat at Lowndes High School in Valdosta. The medical examiner's report said Johnson had no significant wounds and speculated that he had gotten trapped inside the mat while attempting to retrieve a pair of gym shoes. The report ruled the death



Militant/Sam Manuel

Kenneth Johnson (with bullhorn), during April 5 rally demanding prosecution of those responsible for 1946 lynching of four Blacks in Monroe, Ga. Johnson's son Kendrick died under suspicious circumstances at Lowndes High School in Valdosta last year. "We won't stop marching. We won't stop rallying," Johnson said, calling for reopening investigation of his son's death.

"accidental suffocation."

But a pathologist hired by the Johnson family said he found blood hemorrhaging underneath the skin around the youth's jaw and neck and concluded the

cause of death was a blunt force trauma near the carotid artery.

Susan LaMont contributed to this article.

Protest backs fight in Wash. immigration jail

Continued from front page

Collective who represents detainees at the immigration jail, told the *Militant* at the protest.

The American Civil Liberties Union and Columbia Legal Services filed a lawsuit against the use of solitary confinement against a hunger strike. But the ACLU announced it was withdrawing the suit after a number were released from solitary.

Maru Villalpando of Latino Advocacy told the *Militant* that five still remain in solitary. "Four of them are being charged with inciting a group demonstration and a fifth with inciting a work stoppage," she said. "Those in solitary are in the hole for 23 hours per day, shower three times a week, have no reading material, no phone calls and are not allowed legal representation."

Addressing the rally Villalpando said, "We demand an immediate end to solitary confinement and that President Obama end deportations and enact de-

ferred action for all immigrant workers."

"I spent 16 days in this prison several years ago," Pepe Colmentres, a member of El Comit , told the *Militant*. "The food is bad and inadequate. We had to take leftovers from garbage cans just to get enough to eat." El Comit  is also part of the May 1 Acton Coalition, which is sponsoring a May 1 demonstration in Seattle.

"My husband was deported and tried to come back into the country so he could see his children," said Juliana Gonzalez, who works in a factory in Seattle and was at the rally with her two children. "He is now in a detention center in South Texas and his children haven't seen their father in two and a half years."

At the rally messages were read to the demonstrators. Jos  Moreno, who participated in the first hunger strike and is now out on bond pending an appeal, explained how they organized the action. "Even though people were afraid, we

felt that with all the support outside we could send a message about the conditions we faced."

"Through notes surreptitiously passed in hallways, word of a hunger strike spread among the segregated pods where groups of detainees are kept," wrote the *Seattle Weekly*, citing an interview from Moreno. "On the evening of Friday, March 7, they made their move: 750 meal trays were returned."

Angelica Chazaro, a professor at the University of Washington, told rally participants how the second hunger strike is being organized. "Each day a different pod refuses food so that no one person puts themselves into any medical jeopardy," she said.

The April 5 protest was part of a national day of actions demanding the Obama administration end deportations. In Washington, demonstrations were organized at immigration detention centers in Sumas, Forks and Yakima.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 28, 1989

The U.S.-imposed government of Grenada is continuing to enforce its undemocratic ban on the entry of books that it deems to contain "negative ideas." On April 16 customs officials at Grenada's Port Salines airport seized a package of 20 books from Dennis Thomas, international relations secretary of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM). Thomas was returning from a conference in Cyprus. Among the items seized were books he had picked up there, as well as a number published by the New York-based Pathfinder Press.

MBPM leader Terry Marryshow issued a condemnation of this escalation of the government's attacks on the democratic rights of the Grenadian people.

Protests against the book seizure were featured in the April 7 issue of *Publishers Weekly* under the headline, "Groups Condemn Confiscation of Books By Grenada."



April 27, 1964

Since the great labor struggles in Chicago in 1886, May Day has been the holiday of revolutionary workers and the oppressed throughout the world. On this May Day we, in America, extend fraternal greeting to people everywhere who are fighting for freedom and a better life.

Our greetings go to the people of Cuba and Algeria, who in heroic struggle have won and are maintaining their independence from imperialist exploitation, thus blazing the path for other people still under the yoke of colonialism or neo-colonialism.

We send greetings to the oppressed and impoverished workers and peasants of South Vietnam, whose guerrilla soldiers are successfully fighting the armies of local despots supplied with an enormous arsenal of the most modern weapons and backed by the specialists and troop detachments of the mightiest military power on earth.



April 28, 1939

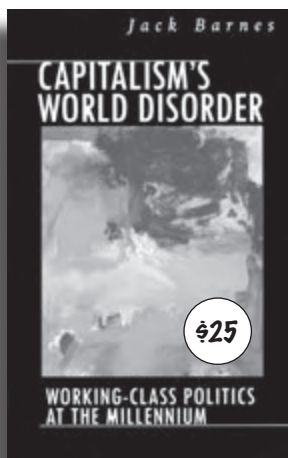
Conscription of the British working class for war was decided upon in London this week.

Simultaneously the British began sounding out the possibility of some kind of modified repetition of the Munich deal which will postpone the outbreak of war to enable them to complete their chain of European alliances.

In this and in this alone was there some chance of a postponement this week of the armed showdown that has been so agonizingly imminent for months.

This did not offer the peoples of the world much of a choice for if the war is postponed, it cannot be for long.

While superficially events seemed to hinge on Hitler's speech this Friday, actually the key to the next act in the tragedy lay in the extremely complicated diplomatic moves made by the opposing camps in the mad scramble for allies.



Pathfinder Press

Cuban response to Chernobyl

Continued from front page which continues to this day. For anyone familiar with Cuba's internationalist foreign policy since the 1959 revolution, this is no surprise.

According to the World Health Organization, by 2005 more than 6,000 children in Ukraine and Belarus were diagnosed with thyroid cancer as a result of Chernobyl. Early treatment has achieved a survival rate of close to 99 percent.

The meltdown itself was completely avoidable, as was the massive release of radiation resulting from the lack of a secure containment vessel.

But perhaps the most egregious example of Moscow's callous indifference was the refusal to rapidly evacuate affected areas and failure to prevent hundreds of thousands of children from drinking milk contaminated with radioactive iodine-131 in the immediate aftermath.

Thirty people — firemen, emergency and power plant workers — died within a few weeks, mostly from acute radiation poisoning.

As cases of thyroid cancer began to grow, the first group of 139 Chernobyl children arrived for treatment in Cuba on March 29, 1990. Since then Cuba has treated more than 25,000 people affected by the disaster, including at least 21,340 children. Cuban doctors have also been working in Ukraine.

The Pioneers, which organizes children between five and 15 years old in Cuba, turned over their recreation, learning and health complex at Tarará beach on the outskirts of Havana to the project. Once patients are on the island, the Cuban government pays for everything — from medicine to food, clothes, paper and pen.

"There were countries like Italy, Spain and Israel which brought small groups of children to their countries for vacation — maybe 40 or 50 children at a time, all together," Dr. Julio Medina, director of the Tarará hospital, told MEDICC review in 2004. "But no other country offered a *program*, a medical assistance program completely free of charge at this kind of massive level."

Cuba provides those in the program with attention for any medical

need, regardless of whether it is related to Chernobyl or not, from dental work and immunizations to treatment of Hepatitis B or other diseases.

Classes conducted in Ukrainian are taught by teachers from Ukraine, whose salaries are paid by Cuba.

The year after the program began, the Soviet Union collapsed and Cuba lost 85 percent of its foreign trade almost overnight, leading to a severe economic crisis marked by shortages of food and other basic necessities that Cubans refer to as the "special period."

"These were difficult days for the Cubans," Oleksandr Savchenko, one of a group of Ukrainians who came to Tarará in mid-1990 told *Granma*. "We were witnesses to how much they sacrificed so that we didn't lack food or medicine."

'Cuba has a great heart'

Even the *New York Times* couldn't ignore Cuba's contribution. "He needs many medicines — antibiotics, hormones — that are very expensive," Larisa Ukrainskaya told the paper in 1995, referring to her 17-year old son who was being treated in Cuba at the time. "Cuba needs everything — bread, milk, coffee, detergent, all kinds of clothes, pencils, paper. They help, and they don't ask for money. This little country has a great heart."

Pledges to Militant Fighting Fund go over \$115,000 goal

BY LEA SHERMAN

So far the Militant Fighting Fund's appeal to raise \$115,000 for the working-class paper has already yielded more than \$117,000 in pledges from its supporters worldwide. The seven-week drive runs from April 5-May 27, starting concurrent with the campaign to sell 1,800 subscriptions to the socialist press.

More than \$6,700 was pledged at an April 11 Militant Labor Forum in New York featuring a talk by John Studer who recently returned from the *Militant's* reporting trip to Ukraine, said Deborah Liatos, director of the



Militant/Rich Stuart
Victim of Chernobyl nuclear disaster is treated at health complex outside Havana, Cuba, July 27, 1990. More than 25,000 people from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia have received Cuban aid.

"It would have been easy to make excuses and say don't send one more child," then Cuban president Fidel Castro said in a Nov. 27, 1992, speech in Havana. "The USSR and the socialist camp disappeared a while ago and we kept taking care of the Chernobyl children, in spite

of the [U.S.] blockade, in spite of the special period we are going through, because it's an ethical and moral question." Cuba treated everyone sent from Ukraine, Castro noted, even if their illness was unrelated to the Chernobyl disaster.

Cuba has maintained the program without pause and without regard to changing governments in Kiev. After the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich earlier this year Ernesto Senti, Cuba's ambassador to Ukraine, made clear that Cuba's aid would continue.

"Many people who are unaware of our ideals still wonder what Cuba might be after," Dr. Medina told *Granma* in 2009. "It's simple: we do not give what we have in excess; we share all that we have."

local fund effort.

Since January of this year, worker-correspondents have covered class struggle developments in Ukraine, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mali, Cuba and Lebanon. These reporting trips along with the daily operating expenses of publishing a weekly paper, shipped to distributors and subscribers all over the world, are funded by contributions from our readers.

Unlike the big-business press funded by commodity advertising and written in the interests of the bosses under the banner of "impartial" reporting, the *Militant* proudly proclaims in its masthead to be a "socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people."

As supporters of the paper sell subscriptions to new readers, they will also be collecting donations for the Militant Prisoners Fund, which helps cover the cost of the paper's growing base of subsidized subscriptions among workers behind bars.

"Thank you for the opportunity to know the hardships of others and to be free of this cell," wrote a prisoner from Florida. "Even if its only a spiritual journey, my heart is compelled to great depths of compassion for those all over he world. Keep up the good fight! ... Please renew my subscription. A prisoner in need of free expression! Truth and the voice that can't be hushed by oppression!"

To contribute to the Fighting Fund, contact distributors listed on page 8 or send a check or money order to "The Militant," 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

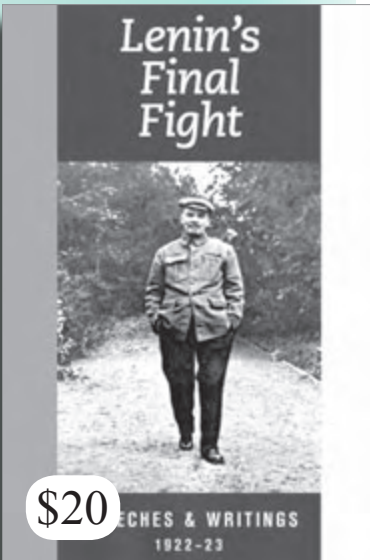
Militant Fighting Fund	
April 5 - May 27 \$115,000	
Country	Quota
UNITED STATES	
Atlanta	\$8,600
Boston	\$3,500
Chicago	\$9,500
Des Moines	\$2,800
Houston	\$3,500
Los Angeles	\$8,000
Miami	\$2,800
New York	\$19,000
Omaha/Lincoln	\$2,700
Philadelphia	\$3,800
San Francisco	\$13,500
Seattle	\$8,400
Twin Cities	\$6,500
Washington	\$7,800
Total U.S.	\$100,400
CANADA	\$7,000
NEW ZEALAND	\$5,000
AUSTRALIA	\$1,500
UNITED KINGDOM	
London	\$2,000
Manchester	\$750
Total UK	\$2,750
Other	\$650
Total	\$117,300

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

"It must be absolutely insisted that the union Central Executive Committee should be presided over in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc. Absolutely!"

— V.I. Lenin, 1922

Programmatic and strategic matters in dispute in the communist workers movement in the early 1920s once again weigh heavily in prospects for the working class worldwide.



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New Zealand art event wins new support for Cuban Five

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — The Cuban Five “have not responded as victims, but as the revolutionaries they are, taking their place in the front line of struggle,” said María del Carmen Herrera, Cuba’s ambassador to New Zealand. She was speaking April 5 at the opening of the first exhibition here of “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived,” a collection of 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Five framed up by the U.S. government, and one of three who remain

Exhibits of paintings by Antonio Guerrero one of the Cuban Five *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*

Lincoln, Neb.

April 22-23 & 25-30

Clyde Malone Community Center, 2032 “U” St. Opens April 22, 10AM. Reception, 7-9PM. April 23, 10AM-6PM. At Meadowlark Café, 1624 South St., April 25-30, 8AM-11PM. Reception, April 25, 7:30PM. Tel: (402) 475-4620.

New York

April 1-29

Bronx Library Center, 4th floor, 310 East Kingsbridge Road. Call (718) 579 4257 for hours and tours. Closing program, Fri., April 25, 5:30PM, Room C21 on the concourse level.

May 3-17

Opening event, Sat., May 3, 12-3 PM. Jackie Robinson Center, 110 E. 129th St. Exhibit hours: Mon.-Fri. 7-9 PM. Sat. 12-5 PM. Closing program, Sat., May 17, 12-3 PM. Tel.: (212) 348-7900.

San Francisco

May 4

Exhibit and reception: 2-4PM. Program at 2:30PM. San Francisco Public Library, Bayview Branch, 5075 Third Street.

Manchester, England

May 17-31

Opening event, Sat. May 17 6PM. Exhibit hours: Mon.-Sat. 9AM-5PM. Moston Miners Community Arts and Music Centre, Teddington Road, Moston. Tel.: 0161-682-6253.

Sydney

May 9-11

Opening event, Fri., May 9, 6:30PM. StirrUp Gallery, Addison Road Community Center, 142 Addison Road, Marrickville. Exhibit hours: Sat., 11AM-3PM; Sun., 9AM-3PM. Tel.: 0413 450 981.

Auckland, New Zealand

April 5-24

Artstation, 1 Ponsonby Road. Tel.: (09) 376-3221; (09) 303-1755. Exhibition schedule: Mon.-Fri., 9AM-5PM; Sat., 9AM-4PM.

in prison after more than 15 years.

Some 80 people turned out for the opening at Artstation, a city council art center that was previously a police barracks and prison cell block. Framed reprints of the paintings were mounted on the walls of three of the former prison cells, with explanatory captions. The exhibition runs for three weeks through April 24.

This is an appropriate venue for this exhibition, said Robert Reid, general secretary of First Union, who chaired the event. “What comes through is the creativity and imagination to resist their captors and stay staunch to the Cuban Revolution.”

“It shows that however harsh, or wherever you are, don’t give up,” Rakhi, one of several students who came from Auckland University of Technology, said after the program where she first learned about the international campaign to free the Five.

“Cuba has a right to defend itself,” Rev. Chris Sullivan told participants, referring to the Five’s mission to monitor rightist paramilitary groups in southern Florida for the Cuban government.

“Today each of us needs to do everything we can to keep widening the circle of people who know about the case,” said Felicity Coggan, citing comments René González, one of the Five, made at the annual international book fair in Havana in February. “These beautiful paintings are a wonderful tool to do just that.” Coggan participated in the book fair as a volunteer at the Pathfinder Press booth.

A message welcoming the exhibition was read, from 29 members of the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union at a mail distribution center.

“Two years ago we opened an exhibition here in Auckland of political cartoons by Gerardo Hernández,” said Herrera. Hernández, one of the Five, was given a sentence of double life plus 15 years. That exhibition has toured



Militant photos by Baskaran Appu

Above, April 5 meeting opens watercolor exhibit by Antonio Guerrero, one of Cuban Five, at Artstation in Auckland, New Zealand. Speaking is Cuban Ambassador María del Carmen Herrera. Beside her is Robert Reid, general secretary of First Union. Below, participants view paintings hung on walls of former police barracks and jail converted into art center.

throughout New Zealand, reaching hundreds of people and winning new support for the Five, she said. “We now hope the same will happen with Antonio’s paintings.”

As people arrived they were greeted by live music of two young musicians, Harry Jones and Ocean.

Following the speeches, musicians Fidel Pimentel and Ricardo Isquierdo performed, followed by pianist Peter Leupolu. Then all the musicians accompanied Raudel Conte, originally from Cuba, as he sang “The Stubborn Fool,” by Silvio Rodríguez. The title of the exhibition “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived”

is from a line in the song’s chorus.

The song was written in 1992 in face of the deep economic and social crisis in Cuba following the collapse of foreign trade after the fall of the Soviet Union. It represented a defiant response by supporters of the Cuban Revolution to those who claimed the revolution was on its last legs. The revolution lives and the Five are examples of the kind of men and women who stand as proof of its strength.

Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five

The dignity and integrity of the Cuban Five has won them the respect of thousands around the world as well as fellow prisoners. Here three who have known them behind bars speak out. Also accounts of prison life and resistance by Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Elizabeth Palmeiro and Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda. Also in Spanish.

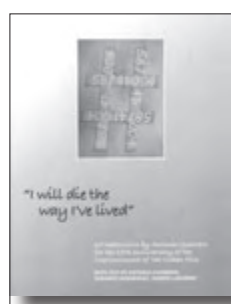
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‘I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived’

Fifteen watercolors by Antonio Guerrero for the 15th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five. With text by Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino. Also in Spanish.

\$7. Special publication offer \$5

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Who are the Cuban Five?



Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013, halfway through his parole. Fernando González was released Feb. 27 and arrived in Cuba the next day.

Trotsky-led Opposition fought Stalinism, Russian chauvinism

Below is an excerpt from The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1926-27) by Leon Trotsky, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. Trotsky documents the struggle by the Opposition to defend V.I. Lenin's revolutionary course in response to the bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian Communist Party and Soviet government under Joseph Stalin. The Opposition fought to advance the proletarian and revolutionary internationalist course of Lenin, including strengthening the worker-peasant alliance and combating national oppression. This section titled "The National Question" is from "Platform of the Opposition: The Party Crisis." Copyright ©1980 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

In the sphere of our national policy, just as in other spheres, it is necessary to return to Leninist positions:

1. To carry out an incomparably more systematic, more consistent, more vigorous, effort to overcome national divisions among workers of different nationalities — especially by an attitude of consideration toward newly recruited "national" workers, training them in skilled trades and improving their living and cultural conditions; to firmly remember that the real lever for bringing



V.I. Lenin, center next to Leon Trotsky, saluting, in 1920 motion picture. After Lenin's death on Jan. 21, 1924, Trotsky organized Left Opposition to fight for Leninist internationalism and proletarian democracy against a growing privileged caste in government bureaucracy led by Joseph Stalin. Platform of Opposition emphasized need to "guarantee rights of every national minority" and "wage a real struggle against 'colonialist' deviations."

the backward national countryside into the work of Soviet construction is the creation and development of proletarian cadres in the local population.

2. To reconsider the five-year economic plan with a view to increasing the rate of industrialization in the backward periphery, and to work out a fifteen-year plan which shall take into consideration the interests of the national republics and regions; to adapt our state purchasing policy to the development of special crops among the poor and middle peasants (cotton in Central Asia, tobacco in the Crimea, Abkhazia, etc.). The cooperative credit policy and also the policy of land improvement (in Central Asia, Transcaucasia, etc.) ought to be carried out strictly on class lines, in keeping with the fundamental tasks of socialist construction; to give greater attention to the development of cattle-raising cooperatives, to carry out industrialization in the processing of agricultural raw materials in a manner adapted to local conditions. To revise our policy of settling new inhabitants in more backward regions to conform to the aim of a correct policy on the national question.

3. To carry out conscientiously the policy of nationalization of the soviet

apparatus, as well as the party, trade union, and cooperative apparatuses, with genuine consideration for the relations between classes and between nationalities; to wage a real struggle against "colonialist" deviations in the activities of government, cooperative, and other agencies; to reduce bureaucratic mediation between the center and the periphery; to study the experience of the Transcaucasian Federation from the standpoint of its promoting or failing to promote the industrial and cultural development of the nationalities concerned.

4. Systematically to remove every obstacle to the fullest possible union and cooperation of the working people of different nationalities in the Soviet Union, on the basis of socialist construction and international revolution; to wage a determined struggle against the mechanical imposition upon the workers and peasants of other nationalities of the predominant national language. In this matter the laboring masses should have full freedom of choice. The real rights of every national minority within the boundaries of every national republic and region must be guaranteed. In all this work special attention must be given

to those exceptional conditions arising between formerly oppressed nationalities and nationalities who were formerly their oppressors.

5. A consistent implementation of inner-party democracy in all the national republics and regions; an absolute repudiation of the attitude of command toward non-Russians, of appointment and transfer from above; a repudiation of the policy of arbitrary division of non-Russian Communists into "rights" and "lefts"; a most attentive promotion and training of local proletarian, semiproletarian, agricultural proletarian and (anti-kulak) peasant activists.

6. A repudiation of the Ustryalov* tendency, and of all kinds of great-power tendencies — especially in the central commissariats and in the state apparatus in general. An educational struggle against local nationalism upon the basis of a clear and consistent class policy on the national question.

7. Transformation of the Soviet of Nationalities into a really functioning institution bound up with the life of the national republics and regions, and really capable of defending their interests.

8. Adequate attention to the national problem in the work of the trade unions and to the task of forming national proletarian cadres. Business in these unions to be transacted in the local language; the interests of all nationalities and national minorities to be protected.

9. No franchise under any circumstances for exploiting elements.

10. A fifth conference on nationality questions to be called on a basis of real representation of the rank and file.

11. Publication in the press of Lenin's letter on the national question, which contains a criticism of Stalin's line on this question.

* N. Ustryalov was a member of the Cadet Party who fought in the White Army, a loose confederation of monarchist and other pro-imperialist forces, in the civil war following the 1917 Russian Revolution. After the victory of the Bolsheviks, he went to work for the Soviet government believing that capitalism could be restored gradually. He supported Stalin as a step toward this goal.

April

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

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Protests in Ukraine and Russia

Continued from front page
criminal gang, paid to stir up trouble. People came out by the thousands to surround them. It's no secret that people are organizing and arming themselves in the East in pro-Ukrainian partisan groups."

"In Sverodonetsk and Lysychansk, law enforcement and miners worked closely together to shut down any outbursts of separatism," *Voices of Ukraine* reported April 15.

The Ukraine government April 15 released recordings of phone calls between four Russian military operatives in eastern Ukraine and their handlers in Russia. A handler applauds the agents' reports of killing Ukrainians and instructs one, code-named "Shooter," to do an interview with Russian TV and "demand federalization, governor's elections" and "emphasize that the Verkhovna Rada [Ukraine parliament] should not be allowed to accept external financial support without support of two-thirds of oblasts [provinces]."

For the most part, police forces in the east — unchanged since the overthrow of Yanukovych — either permitted or helped to organize provocations. A big majority of cops in Donetsk defected to the Moscow-backed forces, taking the regional administration building and appealing for Russian President Vladimir Putin to send troops.

But the provocations have received very little support among working people. Sergei Baryshnikov, a 53-year-old former history professor who was recently proclaimed a "deputy" in the pro-Moscow "Donetsk People's Republic," told the *Wall Street Journal* April 9 that "miners and steelworkers haven't joined the pro-Russia movement."

In Luhansk, 35 miles from the Russian border, more than 1,000 took to the streets to protest the provocations April 13. Sizable rallies also took place in Odessa and Zaporizhia. More than 1,000 rallied in Kharkiv April 12. And hundreds of miners and others rallied in the city square of the eastern mining city of Krivii Rig.

"We've been in contact with miners in Luhansk, Donetsk and other cities," Yuriy Petrovych, president of the city-wide Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine in Krivii Rig, told the *Militant* April 9. "Miners know that if Russia seizes some of our cities, there will be no work in the mines within a month. We know what's at stake and we are determined to fight to keep a united Ukraine. That's what our comrades in all the eastern cities are organizing to do."

"We are organized to prevent Russian forces or their supporters from taking any government buildings here," Petrovych said. "Earlier today we heard there was a possible attack at the city square and we mobilized our self-defense groups to go down. No one showed up. People know we are prepared here."

These actions and preparations reflect the overwhelming sentiment of working people across Ukraine. A recent poll by the Kiev-based Democratic Initiatives Foundation suggests only 8 percent of Ukrainians are in favor of secession. In Donetsk, the

main city in the east, it is 18 percent.

In Moscow, more than 10,000 joined an April 13 "march for truth," to protest Russian intervention in Ukraine and the barrage of lies by government-backed media. Russia's Union of Journalists was among the protest organizers. Similar actions took place in St. Petersburg and other cities in Russia.

Russian government-dominated media claim Ukraine is now dominated by a "junta" of fascists and anti-Semites under Washington's control and posing a threat to Russian-speaking people in the country.

"I was in Kiev. To anyone who hasn't yet been there, I advise you to go," Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, one of the members of Pussy Riot, said April 1. "It's peaceful in Kiev. I didn't get attacked even once 'by bands of neo-Nazis.'"

Tolokonnikova traveled to Kiev with fellow Pussy Riot member Maria Alyokhina. The two spent 21 months in Russian prisons on charges of "hooliganism motivated by religions hatred" for a demonstration inside Moscow's Orthodox Christian cathedral in 2012 against government repression and the growing political power of the church hierarchy.

"I spoke Russian and did not get slapped in the face," said Tolokonnikova. "I got smiles and words of thanks that there are Russians who do not support the aggressor Putin. ... Maidan is a place of unbelievable power."

The Russian government of President Putin is acting from a position of weakness and vulnerability. Russia's economic crisis is likely to get much worse given its dependence on exports of oil and gas, whose prices on the world market are posed to continue falling.

Among working people and others, the government faces widespread anti-war sentiments based on the experiences of recent decades in Afghanistan, Chechnya and Georgia. And the capitalist class, in whose interest the Putin government acts, is in its majority more interested in further stabilizing capitalist social relations and long-term profitability than unpredictable military adventures.

Meanwhile, the Ukraine economy continues to deteriorate. The hryvnia, the country's currency, has lost more than 35 percent of its value against the dollar since the beginning of 2014. The country's debts continue to grow. And Moscow has imposed higher prices for Russian gas imports.

The International Monetary Fund said it will provide \$18 billion in loans on the condition that Kiev takes steps to boost profitability and attract foreign investment. Ukraine's interim government has agreed to slash the subsidy for energy costs to workers and to put a cap on wage raises and pensions.

Unemployment continues to grow as orders for plants and mines connected to Russia are being cut. "Wages at the mine have been lowered," Yuriy Petrovych said from Krivii Rig, where iron-ore miners work for EVRAZ, a Russian group. "Promised big project investments to develop the mine have all come to a stop."

Tokyo lifts post-WWII ban on weapons exports

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Japanese government's April 1 lifting of a nearly four-decade ban on weapons exports is the latest move in a militarization drive that seeks to eliminate post-World War II restrictions imposed on Japanese imperialism by Washington.

The historic shift led by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is aimed foremost at the governments of China and North Korea. Tokyo seeks to strengthen its enduring alliance with Washington, which has some 50,000 troops in Japan, a nuclear powered aircraft carrier nearby and is focusing military attention to the East. At the same time, the Japanese rulers are preparing to become more self-reliant and self-acting in use of military power abroad to advance their interests — independent from its main imperialist ally.

Pointing to the need to take "a more assertive approach," Abe announced that decisions on arms, equipment and military technology sold abroad will be overseen by a new National Security Council.

The shift is not being ignored by Beijing. "Japan's policy on military security concerns the region's stability," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei at a news conference in response to the lifting of the weapons export ban.

Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera issued an order April 3 for destroyers in the Sea of Japan to strike any ballistic missile launched by North Korea. Pyongyang fired two medium-range missiles over the sea March 26, a day before 15,000 U.S. and South Korean troops launched a 12-day amphibious landing drill. The scale of the exercise, "is greater than any others in the past," an unnamed U.S. military spokesman told Agence-France Presse.

In his recent visit to Japan, Defense Secretary Charles Hagel announced April 6 that Washington will send Tokyo two more Aegis destroyers equipped with anti-ballistic missile technology over the next three years, bringing the total to seven.

Last year military spending increased for the first time in 11 years, and is projected to rise about 5 percent over the next five years to a total of \$240 billion.

Japan's military ranks fifth in the world in total spending. But the 1947 constitution — imposed upon the country since its military defeat and occupation by Washington — prohibits the establishment of a standing army and its use abroad. Tokyo's armed forces are officially an extension of its police force and ostensibly for defensive purposes only.

Prime Minister Abe, who took office in December 2012, is the main spokesman for the militarization effort on behalf of the majority of Japan's ruling class. His "life's work," in his own words, is to revise the constitution to remove limits on development and use of military power. But he has thus far sought to achieve the change, wrote Reuters, "through a cabinet decision rather than a politically tougher amendment to the constitution."

The National Security Council has strengthened the role of the prime minister and the Cabinet Office in military matters. Its creation coincided with parliament passing a state secrets law that imposes harsher sentences for leaking of classified information.

Japan's cabinet approved a "national security strategy" in December, which includes purchasing drones, stealth aircraft, anti-missile destroyers, submarines and setting up a Marine-style amphibious brigade, trained to capture territory in sea-launched operations.

The announcement came a few weeks after Beijing declared an air defense identification zone over the East China Sea that includes the uninhabited Diaoyu Islands — called Senkaku by Tokyo — which Japan controls but are claimed by Beijing, whose growing economic and political influence in the region is second only to the pace of its military buildup.

— LETTERS —

Paper 'opened my eyes'

I have seen your paper and it has opened my eyes. Your paper is somewhat a relief that something is being done and is making sure the people see all sides of what is going on. Can you start sending me the *Militant* and keep me further enlightened? I promise to spread your message and paper.

*A prisoner
Florida*

Appreciates 'Militant'

Thank you for continuing my free subscription. I greatly appreciate it. The news in these papers are very important to me and the comrades with whom I share it. I wish I could send something or do something to help but we have no money.

*A prisoner
Florida*

Caste system still exists

In the article "Israel Boycott Weakens Fights of Palestinians, workers" in the Jan. 27 issue, I noticed the word "pariah" was used. I don't think it is appropriate to use this word in the *Militant* because unlike many other words which lose their original meaning, pariah is not one of them.

Pariah derives from the Tamil

language in south India and is still used today by those who uphold the caste system to refer to people they categorize as being in the lowest caste.

Despite it being outlawed in India, the caste system still exists in practice today, including in countries such as Malaysia and Singapore.

*Baskaran Appu
Auckland, New Zealand*

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

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.

Correction

In the article "Obama, USDA Press for Faster Line Speeds in Poultry Plants" in the April 21 issue, the *Militant* incorrectly reported the proposed new inspection system is called "The New Line Speed Inspection System." But it is one of several existing systems proposed to be replaced with the new system.