

Join SWP  
to campaign  
against US  
war moves

BY MARY MARTIN

At the end of the second week of the SWP spring campaign to introduce the party, the *Militant* and books from Pathfinder Press to working people, SWP members report they find real interest in discussing the party's opposition to Washington's war moves from Korea and Afghanistan to Syria and Iraq. Workers are keen to discuss and debate what is behind Washington's wars and what workers should think about them.

The goal of the effort is to expand the reach of the party's publications and to increase the number of workers involved in its activities.

The drive runs concurrently with the Militant Fighting Fund, to raise \$112,000 to cover the *Militant's* operating expenses, reporters' trips to flashpoints in the class struggle and to help subsidize subscriptions to prisoners. The fund drive chart is on page 3.

"We urged workers and young people we met to join us in calling for U.S. hands off Korea and for the im-

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Spring Campaign to  
expand the reach of  
'Militant,' books

April 1–May 23 (week two)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	60	32	60	23
Atlanta	65	28	65	11
Chicago	80	37	80	15
Denver	25	12	25	7
Lincoln	20	10	20	7
Los Angeles	110	39	110	23
Miami	35	5	35	14
New York	135	48	135	34
Oakland	80	44	80	35
Philadelphia	50	12	50	10
Seattle	70	42	70	15
Twin Cities	50	14	50	14
Washington	50	21	50	15
Total U.S.	830	344	830	223
Prisoners	15	11		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	50	21	50	25
Manchester	45	19	45	18
Total U.K.	95	40	95	43
CANADA				
Montreal	40	9	40	13
Vancouver	30	9	30	2
Total Canada	70	18	70	15
New Zealand	40	16	40	11
Australia	35	19	35	13
Total	1,085	448	1,070	305
SHOULD BE	1,100	314	1,100	314

Build May Day  
protests: 'Stop  
deportations!  
Amnesty now!'

BY SETH GALINSKY

"I urge working people to join me and turn out in force May 1. March, rally, take off work, protest Washington's moves against undocumented workers," Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Seattle mayor, said April 19.

"And join in demanding amnesty for all immigrant workers here," Martin said. "That's the road to unify the working class, to make us stronger to combat the growing attacks by the bosses and their government on workers and farmers today."

In Seattle representatives from the M.L. King County Labor Council and SEIU Healthcare 1199NW have joined in planning and building the May Day march.

An increase in the arrests of undocumented workers in the first three months of this year, along with threats by Attorney General Jeff Sessions to "aggressively" prosecute immigrants, are fueling May Day protests all across the country, already expected to be the biggest in years.

SEIU 32BJ, which organizes thousands of building porters, maintenance workers and cleaning staff in the Northeast, is promoting May Day actions across the region. Their slogan is "Here to Stay."

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Washington,  
OAS threaten  
Venezuelan  
sovereignty

BY PATRICIA MARSHALL  
AND RÓGER CALERO

Tens of thousands of demonstrators for and against the government of President Nicolás Maduro marched in Caracas and across Venezuela April 19.

These follow almost three weeks of protests involving tens of thousands, organized by the pro-imperialist parties of the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD). Initially called to protest the March 29 decision of the Supreme Court to dissolve the National Assembly, demonstrations continued even when that was reversed following the intervention of Maduro. More protests took place after opposition leader Henrique Capriles, governor of Miranda state, was banned from holding office for 15 years on charges of "administrative irregularities."

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Socialist Workers Party:  
'US hands off Korea!'



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kurtis A. Hatcher

USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier, center, and other U.S. warships March 28 in joint exercise with Japanese Navy. The Vinson Carrier Strike Group is on its way to Korean waters as part of escalation of U.S. threats against Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

US armada heads to Korea,  
Washington threatens to act

BY TERRY EVANS

As a U.S. Navy armada steamed to the Korean Peninsula, Washington continues to threaten to take unilateral military action against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if they conduct a sixth nuclear weapons test.

The armada is led by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, carrying over 60 warplanes and some 7,500 troops, along with destroyers, cruisers and submarines. Upon entering the East China Sea the strike force will be joined by several

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All US troops, warships,  
fighter bombers out now!

The following statement was issued April 15 by Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York.

I call on fellow working people to join the Socialist Workers Party in

SOCIALIST WORKERS  
PARTY STATEMENT

speaking out against Washington's threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Hands off

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US rulers press military escalation  
in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen

BY JIM BRADLEY

Following its deadly April 6 Tomahawk missile attack against the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship's Al Shayrat air force base in Syria, Washington has continued its diplomatic and media campaign targeting the regime's disregard for human life and brutalities against working people there. The U.S. rulers' goal is to give cover to Washington's escalation of its military forces in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen, seeking to defend their economic and political interests in the region.

At an April 12 joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President Donald Trump called Assad a "butcher," saying he bombed Syria because he was so moved by "the vicious slaughter of innocent civilians with chemical weapons, including the barbaric killing of small and helpless children and babies." He was referring to Assad's

April 4 nerve gas attack in opposition-held Idlib province. Trump's war moves have won bipartisan support from Democrats and Republicans

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Support grows for silver  
miners' strike in Idaho

Rail workers in UK strike over  
bosses' moves to cut crew size



# Free Hassan Diab, arrested in Canada, imprisoned in France

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Over 80 people gathered here April 5 for a meeting to support the fight to free Hassan Diab from French prison. The event was sponsored by the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, Critical Muslim Voices, Independent Jewish Voices, the Canadian Association of University Teachers and others.

The University of Ottawa professor was arrested in Canada in November 2008, when French authorities demanded his extradition for alleged involvement in the bombing of a Paris synagogue in 1980 — 28 years earlier. Diab, a Canadian citizen, born in Lebanon, was extradited to France in 2014, having suffered six years of imprisonment and house arrest in Canada.

Donald Bayne, Diab’s lawyer, went over the so-called “evidence” of his guilt, ripping apart every shred put forward by French authorities. In fact no charges have ever been filed against Diab. His extradition was sought and granted, and he is being held in solitary today because he is “under examination” for a possible crime.

Diab was studying for university exams in Beirut at the time of the bombing in Paris. The explosion killed four people and injured scores more.

There is no evidence tying Diab to the attack. At first French officials said they used handwriting analysis to show his handwriting looked like that on a hotel registration form in Paris. It turned out the handwriting they used from Diab was in fact that of his first wife.

Then French authorities said their

secret intelligence agency had received information from an unidentified source that Diab was involved. However, they said, the information could not be turned over to prosecutors, much less to the court or the defense.

So he has never been charged for an explosion he has denounced that took place three decades ago. In fact, Jean-Marc Herbaut, the magistrate in charge of his case, ordered him released on bail last October, saying, “There exists consistent evidence tending to establish that Hassan Diab was in Beirut” at the time of the bombing. But the prosecutor objected and the French Appeals Court overturned the ruling.

The French government said Diab shouldn’t be released because it would cause “public disorder,” said Bayne. “How can this be true, unless Diab is a political prisoner.”

Diab has steadfastly maintained his innocence and explained he thinks the bombing was a horrible crime. His defense campaign is backed by numerous unions and Jewish, Muslim and civil liberties groups in Canada.

The continuing imprisonment of Diab by French authorities is part of their continuing attacks on political rights in the name of fighting terrorism. The French rulers imposed a state of emergency in November 2015 after attacks in Paris by the reactionary Islamic State killed 130 people. The state of emergency, which grants greater powers to cops and prosecutors and curtails workers’ rights, has been extended repeatedly since. It is set to run at least through July 15.

## US, state courts halt Arkansas executions



AP Photo/Kelly P. Kissel

In a series of see-saw legal battles, from the U.S. Supreme Court to state courts, so far Arkansas authorities have been prevented from implementing plans to execute eight prisoners over an 11-day period, the first executions scheduled there in more than a decade. First, federal District Judge Kristine Baker issued a preliminary injunction April 15, saying the proposed method of execution could expose them to “severe pain,” violating the Eighth Amendment protection against “cruel and unusual” punishment.

The day before the judge’s ruling, supporters of the Arkansas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty rallied by the state Capitol in Little Rock, above.

At issue is use of midazolam, a sedative that is supposed to render inmates unconscious while two other drugs paralyze and kill them. Use of midazolam has led to botched executions with prolonged torture in at least four states: Alabama, Arizona, Ohio and Oklahoma.

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson rushed to set all the executions for April because the state’s supply of midazolam expires at the end of the month.

The U.S. Circuit Court in St. Louis overturned Baker’s ruling. Then the U.S. Supreme Court and state Supreme Court put stays on the first two executions, preventing them from taking place April 17. Two other executions were put off earlier by court rulings.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

“Canada knew about the lack of evidence, but Canadian extradition law has a low threshold of proof,” making it virtually certain that extradition requests will be granted, Bayne said. Canadian extradition judges are ordered to presume the evidence presented is credible.

So when the French government asked for his extradition Diab was arrested and imprisoned. In Canada he was only allowed out on bail by agreeing to wear a special GPS-equipped ankle bracelet, but had to pay \$2,000 a month to cover its expense.

Panelist Hasan Alam from Critical Muslim Voices described well-known cases in Canada of Muslim Arab men

who have been jailed, extradited and/or denied due process under special “anti-terrorism” laws. Many of the victims of these attacks have fought for their rights through public campaigns, he said, pushing them back.

The defense campaign is urging people in Canada to press the government there to demand Diab’s return from France. Pointing to the wide legal latitude allowed in anti-terror cases, Bayne said, “it will take ordinary Canadians” to pressure the Canadian government to act in this case.

For more information and to get involved in defense activities, go to [www.justiceforhassandiab.org](http://www.justiceforhassandiab.org).

## THE MILITANT

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*For the first time, participants from the U.S. will join the International May Day Brigade to Cuba this year, an opportunity to learn about the revolution there. The ‘Militant’ covers the Brigade, the fight to end the U.S. embargo of Cuba and get the U.S. out of Guantánamo now.*



Militant/Sam Manuel  
Georgia farmer Willie Head, left, meets Braulio Arbeláez at his farm in Cuba, 2015.

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Join SWP campaigning

Continued from front page  
mediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops and planes from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan,” Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Albany, New York, said when she and other SWP members campaigned across the city April 15-16. “Some people disagreed, others liked what we had to say. But everyone thought this was important for working people to discuss. We explained how Washington’s wars are an extension of the capitalist rulers’ offensive against our class here at home.”

From Chicago Dan Fein writes that SWP campaigners Ilona Gersh and Leroy Watson debated the war question on workers’ doorsteps in the ex-coalfield town of Morganfield, Kentucky. “I think Obama should have taken out Assad years ago when chemical weapons were first used in Syria,” Wesley DeTalente, a retired pipefitter, told them after looking at the SWP statement, “Get US out of Syria, Iraq!” on the front page of the *Militant*.

After more discussion, including about how U.S. bombings make it harder for Syrian toilers to organize to overthrow the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship, not easier, he subscribed to the *Militant*, saying, “I’m going to enjoy this paper.”

Rachele Fruit from Atlanta writes that SWP member John Benson met Henry Fair, a 54-year-old ironworker, when he knocked on his door in East Point. Fair said he liked what Benson said about workers’ ability to organize society for human needs if we take political power, and that we need to build a working-class leadership capable of leading the transformation.

“We say the U.S. should get out of Syria, Iraq and everywhere else Washington has its troops,” Benson said, handing Fair a copy of the SWP statement protesting Washington’s bombing in Syria. “Do they care about the kids

they kill when they do that?” Fair said. “It’s just like when they got bin Laden, they killed family members.”  
“Four members of the Oakland branch of the party went knocking on doors in San Leandro, California, after work,” Eric Simpson writes. “They used the SWP statement, ‘Stop the Raids and Deportations! Amnesty for all immigrants in the US!’ to open discussion on the need to fight to unify the working class and strengthen our unions, and about the upcoming national May Day protests against deportations.

Gerardo Sánchez offered a package of the three books on special with a three-month *Militant* subscription — *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record* both by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the SWP, and *Is a Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by party leader Mary-Alice Waters — for only \$20.

“Two of the workers Sánchez spoke with decided to go for it. An autoworker did the same and purchased a copy of *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom*,” Simpson said. The book is about how Cuba sent 400,000 volunteers to help the Angolan people fight off an invasion by apartheid South Africa in the 1970s and ‘80s.

“Four workers got a total of four subscriptions and 11 books — in both English and in Spanish — on one block in less than one hour,” he said. “And there’s a lesson: Make sure to carry more than one set of books!”

Edwin Fruit reports that party members from Seattle traveled to Idaho to join with United Steelworkers on strike at the Lucky Friday silver mine at a union support rally in Coeur d’Alene April 12. They also campaigned for solidarity with the strike and introduced the party to workers in three small towns near the mine. A total of 14 miners and their supporters signed up for subscriptions to the paper. Another three picked up copies of the special campaign books.

David Rosenfeld, SWP candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, met Kao Xiong while campaigning door to door in East St. Paul, Rose Engstrom reports.  
“You’re running for mayor. So I am curious, what are some changes you want to make?” Xiong asked him.  
“Workers can’t accomplish anything

UK: Communist League speaks to African church



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

MANCHESTER, England — Communist League candidate Peter Clifford, above, speaking to 200 members of the congregation at the start of the Easter service April 16 at the Église En Mission, a predominantly African church in the Ardwick area here. A meat worker, Clifford is the party’s candidate for mayor of Greater Manchester and for the parliamentary seat in the Manchester Gorton constituency in the May 4 by-election. Clifford’s presentation was translated into French for the many participants from Congo.

Fidele Dasi Munsungu, this worker correspondent’s co-worker in an electronics factory, took the initiative to get Clifford invited.  
“Our platform is to strengthen all workers so we can build a movement to replace capitalism, carry out a revolution like Cuban working people did,” Clifford said. “The League campaigns to build solidarity and unity among all workers, including by opposing all restrictions on jobs and rights facing immigrant workers.”  
After the service many participants stopped by a table set up by party members in the lobby to check out the *Militant*, Pathfinder books and learn about the work of the Communist League. Munsungu encouraged people to talk with the League members.  
“That was great, I want to join in,” one participant said. Two signed up for subscriptions and got *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

— CAROLINE BELLAMY

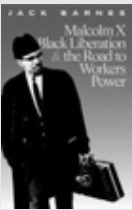
Militant Fighting Fund

April 1- May 23 (week 2)

Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Albany	\$4,100	\$630	15%
Atlanta	\$10,725	\$2,975	28%
Chicago	\$11,850	\$383	3%
Denver	\$750	\$305	41%
Lincoln	\$350	\$106	30%
Los Angeles	\$8,450	\$1,086	13%
Miami	\$3,200	\$400	13%
New York	\$16,600	\$2,620	16%
Oakland	\$13,700	\$4,820	35%
Philadelphia	\$3,600	\$81	2%
Seattle	\$7,300	\$1,762	24%
Twin Cities	\$4,100	\$0	0%
Washington	\$7,350	\$568	8%
Total U.S.	\$92,075	\$15,736	17%
CANADA			
Montreal	\$5,100	\$981	19%
Vancouver	\$3,000	\$75	3%
Total Canada	\$8,100	\$1,056	13%
NEW ZEALAND	\$4,575	\$1,200	26%
AUSTRALIA	\$1,175	\$480	41%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	\$2,450	\$215	9%
Manchester	\$925	\$231	25%
Total UK	\$3,375	\$446	13%
Total	\$109,300	\$18,918	17%
Should be	\$112,000	\$32,000	29%

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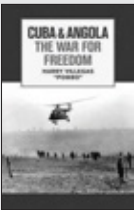
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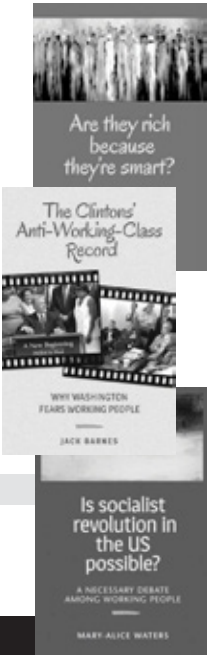
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To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8.





# SWP disclosure exemption hearing is set for April 20

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

After two postponements, the Federal Election Commission will meet April 20 to debate and vote on the Socialist Workers Party's request to renew its exemption from disclosing the names of contributors to its election campaigns.

The Socialist Workers Party first won the exemption in 1974. "This is an important gain in defending workers' right to engage in political activity independent of the bosses and their parties," John Studer, Socialist Workers Party national campaign director, said April 15, by providing protection against government harassment.

"Regardless of what the FEC decides, the SWP won't change what we do politically, including running candidates, and doing so within the law in a way that maximizes protection for our contributors and supporters."

A 15-year-long lawsuit the party won in 1986 brought to light that the FBI had gathered over 8 million documents on the SWP, wiretapped supporters, carried out at least 204 burglaries at party offices, and tried to get members fired from jobs and evicted from apartments.

The commission has before it several "advisory opinions." Drafts "A" and "B" call for ending the exemption. A third opinion, draft "C," backs extending the exemption through the end of 2020.

In an April 17 letter to the FEC, SWP attorneys Michael Krinsky and Lindsey Frank, of the prominent firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky and Lieberman, urge extending the exemption. They explain the extension is merited both on constitutional grounds of the right to privacy and political association and on the long documented history of attacks on the party and its campaigns by government spy outfits, local red squads, employers and rightist thugs.

One of the claims in draft "B" is that the SWP could be used by major-party interests to divert votes from other contenders and skew the elections.

"There is not a scintilla of evidence of any vote diversion, nor has there ever been in the more than 75 years of the SWP's participation in elections," the SWP's attorneys replied. "In addition,

such diversion is entirely contrary to the reason the SWP runs election campaigns, which is to advocate its own, entirely distinct and independent political positions."

Draft "B" also claims that harassment against the Socialist Workers Party hasn't been "serious" enough to merit an exemption. Krinsky and Frank say that criteria would be an unprecedented hurdle that would "further chill the exercise of important First Amendment rights."

One example they gave is the censorship of the *Militant* newspaper in several state and federal prisons. "Draft B improperly dismisses as merely 'actions by corrections officers that were reversed' the nine separate documented incidents in which both state and federal prison officials throughout the U.S. singled out issues of *The Militant*, the newspaper that editorially supports the SWP, and refused to permit inmates to receive these issues," write Krinsky and Frank.

Officials at New York's Attica Correctional Facility have refused to answer challenges by the *Militant* to their confiscation of three issues in November and December, as have authorities at Illinois River Correctional Center in Illinois over the past two months.

"These instances exhibit the continued, deep-seated government hostility toward supporters of the SWP," said the April 17 letter. These actions "violated *The Militant's* and the prisoners' First Amendment rights."

## Sharpening political polarization

The request for extending the SWP's exemption occurs amid a sharp polarization in U.S. politics today. This includes attacks aimed at speakers with controversial views on campuses from Middlebury, Vermont, to Berkeley, California, to Seattle. Among those attacked were conservative Charles Murray, co-author of *The Bell Curve*,

## Nebraska meeting builds May Day Brigade to Cuba



Militant/Reilly Stoddard

LINCOLN, Neb. — About 30 people attended an April 15 send-off here for participants in the 12th May Day International Brigade to Cuba April 23-May 8. The event took place at Meadowlark Coffee and Espresso.

Phillip Brown, right, a student at the University of Nebraska in Omaha, and Lincoln resident Wyatt Nelson, a lawn maintenance and construction worker, spoke to the gathering. Both will be making their first trip to Cuba. They spoke on the social advances of the Cuban Revolution that have provided working people with free health care and schooling. When they return they plan to speak to university students and working people about their experiences, why the 55-year U.S. economic embargo of Cuba must end and why the Cuban territory at Guantánamo held illegally by Washington must be returned to Cuba.

Over 55 people from a half dozen cities are participating — the first ever U.S. delegation in this long-standing international brigade. They will join a couple hundred people from around the world, working in the fields on farms alongside Cubans, visiting historical sites, meeting with youth and workers involved in the country's mass organizations, and marching in the International Workers Day Parade in Havana.

Other fund events to help get the delegation to Cuba have taken place in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

— CHRIS STEFFEN

and Milo Yiannopoulos, a former editor for Breitbart News.

"Attempting through violence to silence those you disagree with from expressing their views is a method that can and will be used against the workers' movement as well," said Studer.

These attacks on free speech and the polarization show there "is a reasonable probability that SWP supporters would also be subject to threats, harassment and reprisals and the reasonableness of potential supporters' fears of supporting the SWP were an exemption from dis-

closure not granted," wrote Krinsky and Frank.

The lawyers submitted an affidavit to the FEC reporting on an individual who for the past four years had regularly contributed to the Socialist Workers Party but recently decided to stop doing so. "He fears attacks on democratic rights whether from the left or right — and backed by forces in the government," the affidavit states, "may escalate in the coming period making it more dangerous for individuals to have open political affiliations."

# May 1 protests: 'Stop deportations! Amnesty now!'

## Continued from front page

"Attacks on workers have been going hand in hand with attacks on immigrants and immigrant workers," 32BJ President Hector Figueroa told the *Militant* April 18. "Immigrants should be treated with dignity and respect."

Teamsters Joint Council 16, which includes 27 union locals in the New York area, has featured on its web page the call to turn out at New York's Foley Square at 5 p.m. May 1.

The New York Immigration Coalition, the immigrant-based community group Make the Road, and numerous area unions have been building the protest.

In Wisconsin, Voces de la Frontera is organizing a march from Madison to Milwaukee to join the May 1 Day Without Latinos, Immigrants and Refugees action there.

According to figures obtained by the *Washington Post*, Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested 21,362 immigrants from January through mid-March, reversing a two-year decline. Over 5,000 of the arrests — almost one-quarter — involved grabbing immigrants whose only offense is not having a valid visa.

The U.S. rulers have no intention of deporting most undocumented workers.

Their policy, carried out by Democratic and Republican administrations alike, is to ensure a large layer of superexploited workers the bosses can use to try and push down the value of workers' labor power, seeking to maximize their profits and to compete more successfully against their capitalist rivals.

Before 1996 workers deported as "voluntary departures" did not face criminal charges if they returned to U.S. soil.

Bill Clinton signed into law the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. This laid the basis for a shift to "forced removals," which steeply increases the penalties for "illegal re-entry" into the United States. Four years later, during his last year in office, Clinton deported 1.8 million immigrants, more than any president in U.S. history.

Under the administrations of George W. Bush and Obama the shift to "forced removals" took off.

In 2006 a bill was submitted to Congress making it a felony for an undocumented worker just to be in the U.S. This was met by an outpouring of millions on May Day that defeated the bill.

In 2011, under Obama, for the first

time the majority of deportations were labeled forced removals. By 2015 it was more than 70 percent.

Even more telling is the number of felony prosecutions on charges of illegal re-entry — on average more than 35,000 every year of the Obama administration.

By the time Obama left office more than 50 percent of all federal criminal convictions involved immigration-related offenses. As a result, one in four people in federal prison today is a previously deported undocumented worker.

Attorney General Sessions told Customs and Border Protection agents in Nogales, Arizona, April 11 the U.S. government will step up felony prosecutions for re-entry and, wherever possible, tack on charges of identity theft on any undocumented workers they pick up. This would add at least two years to their sentence.

"One of the key slogans on May Day will be 'We are workers, not criminals,'" Mary Martin said. "Deportations aren't popular among working people. These are our co-workers, neighbors and co-combatants, when we stand up against the attacks of the employers and their government, cops, courts and prisons. *All out May 1!*"

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**How Protests Against the Lynching of Emmett Till Spurred the Fight that Overthrew Jim Crow: Lessons for Today.** Speaker: Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2018 S. Ashland Ave. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

## —CALENDAR—

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**Communist League Election Campaign Launch: Protest Washington's and Canberra's War Moves from the Korean Peninsula to the Middle East! Protest Government and Employer Attacks on Workers, Unions!** Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Communist League candidate for mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown. Sat., April 29. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. Upstairs, 281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (612) 9718-9698.



# Support grows for silver miners' strike in Idaho

BY EDWIN FRUIT

MULLAN, Idaho — As United Steelworkers enter their fifth week on strike at Hecla Mining Company's Lucky Friday silver mine here, their fight for safety and to defend their livelihood and union is holding strong, gaining support in the labor movement. USW Local 675 in Carson, California, is sending \$1,000 a month to the strikers.

In the towns of Mullan, Wallace, Pinehurst and Kellogg, all along the I-90 interstate in the Idaho panhandle, signs are displayed in gas stations and restaurants showing support for the strikers.

A spirited expanded picket line was held April 12 outside Hecla bosses' headquarters in Coeur d'Alene, 55 miles from here. Striking miners were joined by family members and other unionists, including from Machinists Local 86 from Triumph Composite Systems and Steelworkers Local 338 at Kaiser Aluminum, both in Spokane, Washington.

USW Local 5114 members went on strike March 13 when the bosses said they would begin imposing their "final offer," including increasing miners' medical insurance payments, cutting the silver premium and bonus payments that are a key part of miners' pay, and gutting safety protections. At issue here is a team bidding system based on seniority that lets workers choose their crews, an arrangement that helps protect miners' safety.

"I think it is time to bring working people together," said striker Darren Stein, who has worked at the mine since 1998. "We all have a common ground

against those holding power. It's all about control and the bosses have it and we don't."

Kevin Winans, a Machinist Local 86 member at Triumph Composite, is one of a number of workers there who have joined the miners' picket lines to show support. They were forced out on strike last summer.

"I voted for Trump and we're mad as hell. Neither the Democrats nor Republicans care about working people," he told Socialist Workers Party member Mary Martin. "We need to have labor unite to defend our own interests."

At the rally, workers passed around a copy of the Spokane *Spokesman-Review* with an ad by the Steelworkers International explaining the union's position.

## Defending gains of past strikes

"We had to go on strike. These are very hard jobs. A jackleg [drill] weighs 125 pounds. You hold it and carry it around for hours," Chad Martello, 29, a miner with 10 years at Lucky Friday, told Martin. This is the method used for most of the mining done there. "The reason we have what we have is what was gained in past strikes. Where would we be without these union benefits?"

"This valley exists on silver. Without these jobs many will have to leave the area to get work," continued Martello. "How are the older miners going to be able to compete with younger workers for some construction job someplace? To win we have to stay strong. This is about Hecla's corporate greed."

"The older we get the more cost there

too long on strike. ... They will have to decide if they want to give a good service or get the hell out of my industry."

"There's definitely an element of union busting," said striker Sharples.

Further protests are set April 26 outside Parliament at noon, followed by rally at Central Hall Westminster at 2 p.m.

# Rail workers in UK strike over bosses' moves to cut crew size

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY

WIGAN, England — "Our strike is solid," Rail, Maritime and Transportation union member Neil Sharples told the *Militant* April 8. "Across Northern Rail there are 1,250 guards [conductors]. On March 13, the first day of strike action, only five crossed the picket line. None of the 60 guards here crossed today."

RMT members at Northern Rail, Southern Rail and Merseyrail are fighting the introduction of driver-only-operation on passenger trains. Northern Rail plans to cut guards on 50 percent of services, Merseyrail on all trains.

Members of the drivers union ASLEF — the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen — also oppose driver-only-operation.

"You need the second person for safety," said Wigan train driver David Mulvey. "I had a woman try to kill herself in front of my train. We needed the second safety person to call the right people, tell signals where the train was and deal with the passengers while I saw to the woman."

Moves to impose driver-only-operation are being driven by government cost cutting. A 2011 government-commissioned report said costs on Britain's rail network had to be cut by 30 percent.

"We have got to break them," said Department for Transport government official Peter Wilkinson last year, referring to the train drivers. "They have all borrowed money to buy cars and got credit cards. They can't afford to spend



Militant/Mary Martin

United Steelworkers on strike at Lucky Friday silver mine in Mullan, Idaho, picket the owners, Hecla Mining Company, in Coeur d'Alene April 12 in fight over safety and union rights.

is for our medical care on the company insurance. The company wants to push out us older guys once you are no longer the thoroughbred you once were," said Ron Haynes, a 25-year miner, 11 of them at Lucky Friday. "But we're the ones that have the safety knowledge that has to be passed down to the new guys. We don't want a gap to open up on this know-how. There is no concern for that from the company."

Local 5114 Treasurer Rick Valeria said that the USW International pays for a health insurance policy for striking miners and also has a hardship fund. The local has set up a food bank to help striking families get groceries.

In 2011 there were a number of rock bursts and two miners were killed at Lucky Friday. The Mine Safety and Health Administration forced Hecla to clean up one of the shafts and the mine was shut down for a year.

"It was company greed that killed the men," Valeria said.

"After sitting in courtrooms after Hecla refused to take responsibility for my father's death I can tell you right now they are all about money. They put profit first and their employees are not made their priority," Hayley Marek Sender-son, the daughter of miner Larry Marek, killed in an April 15, 2011, rock burst, wrote on the union Facebook page. "It's time they recognize, support and keep safe the workforce that is the heart of their company. Stay strong and fight for

what they owe you!"

A memorial to honor Marek was held on the picket line on the sixth anniversary of his death.

Knocking on workers' doors in Pinehurst, Martin, who is the SWP candidate for mayor of Seattle, met striker Chris Spiers. "I had been working at Lucky Friday mine for about a month when things got heated real fast with the company and issues came to a head," the 22-year-old miner said. "I listened to both sides but for me what Hecla was trying to do just didn't seem right or fair."

At the union hall here, Phil Epler, Local 5114's president, told us the strike is solid, no one has crossed the picket line.

Just a few miles west of the Lucky Friday mine is a memorial to 91 miners killed in a 1972 explosion at the Sunshine mine. SWP members spoke with workers on their doorsteps in Kellogg and Pinehurst, discussing what workers face there and across the country.

Some had lost family members or friends in the Sunshine mine disaster, including Donna, who said she lost her grandfather. "Those miners deserve every penny and every safety precaution they can get," she said.

Donations and messages of support can be sent to USW 5114, P.O. Box 427, Mullan, ID 83846.

Joe Young in Vancouver, British Columbia, contributed to this article.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 1, 1992

James Warren and Estelle DeBates, the Socialist Workers candidates for U.S. president and vice-president, have just visited North Korea.

"It is important to visit Korea," said Warren, "because it is the target of a campaign by U.S. imperialism, to hang the nuclear weapons frame around the neck of the Korean people and use it to justify war moves."

The main thing the socialist candidates will be taking to the Korean people "is our solidarity with their fight for national sovereignty," Warren said, "and our pledge to maintain our struggle against Washington's plans to prevent the people of Korea from uniting their country." The Korean peninsula was divided by the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II.



May 1, 1967

Che Guevara's article about the war in Vietnam speaks bluntly. The "United States of North America" is the most mortal enemy faced by mankind. There is only one recourse and that is to struggle for socialist revolution.

If two or three or more Vietnams could be created this could make a decisive difference in the conflict. His appeal for action deals with the intolerable way in which "the two big powers in the socialist camp" have permitted the Vietnamese to stand alone.

What about the people of the United States? We can assure revolutionary fighters like Guevara that the American people are growing more impatient with this war. The first signs were the teach-ins that began after Johnson escalated the war in February 1965.



May 2, 1942

Attorney-General Biddle has taken steps to ban Coughlin's *Social Justice* and some other fascist sheets from the mails. The steps taken will no more crush the native fascists than did the similar steps of Hitler's predecessors in Germany, and the "democratic" government that preceded Mussolini.

No capitalist government can be depended upon to destroy the fascists because today's "democratic" capitalists will be ready tomorrow to back the fascists in order to crush the labor movement.

Workers can only depend on themselves. Those lessons must become part of the consciousness of the American working class. Above all, no illusions about the real character of the "anti-fascist" activities of the Department of Justice!



# US armada heads to Korea

Continued from front page

Japanese destroyers.

Washington has 28,000 troops stationed in South Korea, where they have been engaged in a seven-week-long series of military exercises, including special forces units practicing the “decapitation” of the North Korean leadership.

Speaking at the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone — the border created when the U.S.-led Korean War ended in a deadlock in 1953, and now divides North and South Korea — Vice President Michael Pence declared April 17, “All options are on the table.” At the same time, the administration of Donald Trump, with bipartisan support, has stepped up efforts to convince Beijing to keep out of Washington’s way.

Seeking to lower tensions in the area, China has put some pressure on North Korea, reducing imports of its coal. But both Chinese exports and imports with North Korea continue to grow, rising 37 percent in the first quarter of 2017. Above all, Beijing seeks to prevent the overthrow of the government in North Korea, bringing U.S. troops to its border on the Yalu River.

North Korea shows no signs of backing off from defending its national sovereignty, attempting to test-fire a medium range missile that same day.

Beijing expressed its opposition to heightened military tensions in the region blaming Washington, Seoul and Pyongyang.

Reinforcing the threat of Washington’s armada is the U.S. rulers’ use of deadly missiles elsewhere in the world. U.S. war boats fired 59 missiles at a Syrian government air base April 6. And a U.S. warplane dropped the Pentagon’s 21,000 pound “mother of all bombs” — its largest bomb short of nuclear weapons — in Afghanistan April 13. Pointing to Pyongyang, the *Wall Street Journal* editorialized, “Let’s hope the right people noticed this blast.”

Announcing the sending of the armada April 11, Trump said North Korea was a problem that “will be taken care of.” He added, “We have submarines. Very powerful. Far more powerful than the aircraft carrier.” The Pentagon deploys an estimated 1,000 nuclear warheads on submarines patrolling the world’s waterways.

At the same time that the U.S. rulers are threatening to attack the North, Washington is installing a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system in South Korea, in the face of ongoing protests there (see photo box). This “defense system” helps to fortify the U.S. military foothold on the peninsula and intensifies its pressure on the DPRK and China.

For years Democratic and Republican administrations alike have demonized North Korea, imposed sanctions and threatened military action against the 25 million people there.

## Socialist Workers Party protests

The Socialist Workers Party spoke out against Washington’s threats. An April 14 statement demanding U.S. get out of the region by Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor in New York, is being widely circulated across the country and beyond. (See adjacent statement.)

“We pledge our unconditional soli-

arity with the struggle to reunify Korea, which Washington partitioned in 1945, waged a murderous war against from 1950 to 1953, and with which the US government has refused to sign a peace treaty to this day,” Steve Clark wrote on behalf of the SWP National Committee to Kim Jong Un, chairman of the Workers’ Party of Korea, on the occasion of the country’s April 15 holiday.

“As Socialist Workers Party members campaign on workers’ doorsteps; as we join protests demanding “Amnesty Now! Stop the Deportations!” in defense of foreign born workers; as we walk the picket lines with striking silver miners in Idaho and other workers — we explain that assaults on the rights and living and job conditions of working people at home are inflicted by the same wealthy families responsible for Washington’s war moves against our sisters and brothers the world over.

“On this DPRK national holiday, the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists join with others around the world in demanding: End all economic and banking sanctions against the DPRK by Washington and by every government in Asia and the world!” Clark said. “US troops, ships, planes, and THAAD missiles and radar systems out of Korea’s soil, skies, and waters! For a Korean Peninsula and Pacific Ocean free of nuclear weapons. *Korea is one!*”

Continued from front page

Korea! U.S. troops, warplanes and gunboats out of Korea’s waters!

Washington’s deployment of the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier-led “armada,” as President Donald Trump called it, is a threat to both the Korean people and the People’s Republic of China.

This fleet includes a combined crew of some 7,500 troops, more than 60 warplanes, a cruiser armed with Tomahawk missiles, and two destroyers equipped with the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System. At the same time, one of the largest U.S.-South Korean joint war maneuvers ever held is underway. And to send a message, Washington included the notorious imperialist hit squad SEAL Team Six — which assassinated Osama bin Laden — in exercises that include simulations of “decapitation” of the North Korean leadership.

Washington claims it has the right to target North Korea because the government there carried out a handful of missile tests and has been developing nuclear weapons. The White House says they have the right to take preemptive military action against Pyongyang. Like the recent U.S. Tomahawk attack on Syria, the White House’s provocative threats against the Korean people and Korea’s sovereignty are bipartisan, backed by Democratic and Republican politicians alike.

The devastating use of the 21,000 pound “mother of all bombs” — a weapon designed for terror and intimidation — dropped in Afghanistan April 15, adds teeth to U.S. threats of military action against North Korea.

It is U.S. imperialism that has amassed a massive and deadly military force in Asia. Washington has the most

## US THAAD anti-missile battery out of Korea!



Inset, Militant/Seth Galinsky

NEW YORK — “We need your help to stop THAAD,” Sounghye Kim, inset right, with translator Juyeon Rhee, told a meeting of 75 people at New York University April 13. “That’s why I’ve come to the United States, because that’s where it’s from.” Kim was referring to Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, a high-powered radar and anti-missile battery that the U.S. mili-

tary is currently installing in South Korea.

Kim, a Buddhist minister and co-chair of the Seongju Struggle Committee to Stop THAAD, was on a nine-city U.S. speaking tour. She showed videos of demonstrations of residents of Seongju and others protesting construction of the military installation. Above, 5,000 protested in Seongju March 18.

The Pentagon claims the anti-missile battery is needed to protect South Korea from attack from the North. North Korea says — correctly — that history shows the real war threat comes from Washington. Beijing sees THAAD as a spy station that violates China’s sovereignty.

Betsy Yoon, from Nodutdol, one of the sponsors of the meeting, pointed to Washington’s role in forcibly dividing Korea after World War II and waging war from 1950 to 1953. “The United States dropped more bombs on Korea than it dropped in the Pacific Theatre during all of World War II,” she said.

Washington has refused to sign a peace treaty with North Korea. The war’s effects are still felt today in the North and South. Most favor reunification.

— SETH GALINSKY

# Socialist Workers Party: US hands off Korea!

deadly nuclear arsenal in the world. Sixty percent of the U.S. Navy’s 69 submarines are now based in the Pacific, many equipped with nuclear missiles. More than 28,000 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea, and some 50,000 more in Japan are ready to back them up.

The Pentagon, despite objections from Pyongyang, Beijing and tens of thousands in South Korea, has begun installing Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, missile batteries and espionage station in South Korea, a threat to workers and farmers throughout Asia.

The U.S. ruling capitalist class has a long record of brutal assaults on the people of Korea. As part of seizing the fruits of their victory in the second imperialist world war, Washington forcibly intervened against popular mobilizations of the Korean people seeking an end to colonial rule, divided the Korean Peninsula and installed a brutal dictatorship in the south.

More than 4 million people were killed, including at least 2 million civilians, as a result of the 1950-53 Korean War, carried out by Washington, its imperialist allies and its client regime in South Korea — under the banner of the United Nations.

Washington dropped more than 635,000 tons of bombs, 32,557 tons of napalm and leveled the vast majority of homes, hospitals, schools and factories across northern Korea, and in large parts of the South as well. Ultimately, they were fought to a standstill, unable to defeat North Korea.

Today the U.S. government has imposed draconian sanctions on the North, seeking to sabotage its economic development and make working people there

pay for refusing to do Washington’s bidding. They are pressing the Chinese government to tighten the screws on North Korea even more.

The Socialist Workers Party has a proud history fighting against Washington’s intervention in Korea. We campaigned against the U.S. rulers’ forced division of Korea in 1945 when U.S. troops landed and, together with the regime Washington put in place, killed, beat, tortured or jailed those who stood up to the U.S. occupation.

We opposed the U.S.-led Korean War, where Washington sought to reimpose capitalist rule on the entire peninsula. And we continue to back the demand of the Korean people for reunification. Korea is one!

Working people in the U.S. are battered by the deepening capitalist economic crisis today and by the attempts of the bosses and their government to make us pay to boost their declining profit rates. More workers in the U.S. are dying on the job as the bosses enforce speedup and attack our unions. Millions are unable to find work. Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security and other social rights workers have won in struggle face the ax. And our political rights are under attack.

The same wealthy families who are responsible for Washington’s war moves against working people around the world are assaulting our rights and living conditions here at home. And for the same reason.

We say: End Washington’s economic and financial sanctions against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea! U.S. troops, ships, planes and THAAD out of Korea! For a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons!



# SWP in 1950: ‘Stop US Korea War! US troops out now!’

*Below are excerpts from three letters protesting the Korean War by James P. Cannon, then national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, that were featured in the Militant in 1950-51. The letters, written to President Harry Truman and Congress, are from Cannon's Notebook of an Agitator. The 1950-1953 U.S.-organized, imperialist war against the Korean people took the lives of over 4 million people including 2 million civilians. Copyright © 1958 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## LETTERS ON KOREAN WAR

BY JAMES P. CANNON

THE MILITANT, July 31, 1950

*To the President and Members of the Congress:*

Gentlemen:

I disagree with your actions in Korea, and in my capacity as a private citizen I petition you to change your policy fundamentally, as follows:

Withdraw the American troops and let the Korean people alone.

I am setting forth the reasons for this demand in detail in the following paragraphs. But before opening the argument, I beg your permission, gentlemen, to tell you what I think of you. You are a pack of scoundrels. You are traitors to the human race. I hate your rudeness and your brutality. You make me ashamed of my country, which I have always loved, and ashamed of my race, which I used to think was as good as any.

The American intervention in Korea is a brutal imperialist invasion, no different from the French war on Indo-China or the Dutch assault on Indonesia. American boys are being sent 10,000 miles away to kill and be killed, not in order to liberate the Korean people, but to conquer and subjugate them. It is outrageous. It is monstrous.

The whole of the Korean people — save for the few bought-and-paid-for agents of the Rhee puppet regime — are fighting the imperialist invaders. That is why the press dispatches from Korea complain more and more about “infiltration” tactics, increasing activities of “guerrillas,” the “fluid” fighting front, the “sullenness” and “unreliability” of the “natives.”

The Korean people have a mortal hatred of the Wall Street “liberator.” They despise unto death the bestial, corrupt,



Thatched huts burn after B-26 bombers drop napalm bombs near Hanchon in North Korea, May 1951. “The American intervention is a brutal imperialist invasion,” said SWP leader James P. Cannon. “American boys are being sent 10,000 miles away to kill and be killed, not in order to liberate the Korean people, but to conquer and subjugate them.”

U.S.-sponsored Syngman Rhee dictatorship that made South Korea a prison camp of misery, torture and exploitation.

The high morale and fearlessness of the North Koreans and the hostility of the South Koreans toward their U.S. “liberators” alike testify to the unity of the entire Korean people in this unflinching opposition to imperialistic domination.

The explosion in Korea on June 25, as events have proved, expressed the profound desire of the Koreans themselves to unify their country, to rid themselves of foreign domination and to win their complete national independence. It is true that the Kremlin seeks to take advantage of this struggle for its own reactionary ends and would sell it tomorrow if it could get another deal with Washington. But the struggle itself has the overwhelming and wholehearted support of the Korean people. It is part of the mighty uprising of the hundreds of millions of colonial people throughout Asia against western imperialism. This is the real truth, the real issue. The colonial slaves don’t want to be slaves any longer.

This is more than a fight for unification and national liberation. It is a civil war. On the one side are the Korean workers, peasants and student youth. On the other are the Korean landlords, usurers, capitalists and their police and political agents. The impoverished and exploited working masses have risen up to drive out the native parasites as well as their foreign protectors.

Whatever the wishes of the Kremlin, a class war has been unfolding in Korea. The North Korean regime, desiring to mobilize popular support, has decreed land reforms and taken nationalization measures in the territories it has won. The establishment of people’s committees has been reported. These reforms, these promises of a better economic and social order have attracted the peasants and workers. This prospect of a new life is what has imbued a starving subject people with the will to fight to the death. This is the “secret weapon” that has wrested two-thirds of South Korea from U.S. imperialism and its native agents and withstood the troops and bombing fleets of mighty Wall Street.

American imperialism was quite willing to turn northern Korea over to Stalin in return for control over South Korea, which it ruled through the bloody dictatorship of Syngman Rhee. Now Washington is seeking, against the resistance of the Korean people, to reimpose its imperialist puppet rule, to enforce the division of Korea and to maintain it as a colony and military base for future war on the Soviet Union.

There is not an iota of concern for the wishes and rights of the Korean people in this brutal invasion. The attempt to prop up the Syngman Rhee regime by armed force is part of Wall Street’s planned program to dominate and exploit the whole world. Your undeclared war on Korea, Mr. President, is a war of enslavement. That is how the Korean people themselves view it — and no one knows the facts better than they do. They’ve suffered imperialist domination and degradation for half a century and they can recognize its face even when masked with a UN flag. ...

THE MILITANT, December 4, 1950

Once more, as at the start of your Korean intervention, I take this means to tell you what I believe is the heartfelt sentiment of the overwhelming majority of humanity, including the American people, today:

Stop your criminal aggression against the Asian people.

Your reckless military adventure in Korea has brought this country into a clash with the 500 millions of China and threatens an “entirely new war” that

will engulf millions more of our youth and drain our last resources.

You have permitted MacArthur, with his mad ambition to be the conqueror of all Asia, to deliberately provoke a situation that could mean war on a titanic scale. Now he has turned for a “solution” to the “United Nations and chancelleries of the world.”

But that is precisely where this grave crisis of humankind has been forged — in the UN and the chancelleries. Can we then entrust the further fate of the world to pin-striped diplomats?

Your proposed solution, Mr. President, is a threat to repeat the atrocities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by using the atom bomb in Korea.

Take heed, Mr. President, before it is too late! Hear the voice of the people of America and the whole world. They are thundering: Stop the war NOW! Recall your madly ambitious MacArthur! Withdraw the troops from Korea! Let the peoples of Asia alone to settle their own fate!

Who wants this war?

Not the Koreans, whose cities, towns and villages have been reduced by your bombs to charred rubble, and who mourn hundreds of thousands of the slain.

Not the Chinese people, whose dead in the struggle against imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek’s despotism number tens of millions. Not the peoples of Europe, whose fears are reflected today in the warnings to you by their governments. ...

THE MILITANT, May 7, 1951

My purpose in addressing you for the third time since the Korean war began is to present three concrete proposals on foreign policy as an alternative to the policies of the Truman administration on the one hand and MacArthur-Taft on the other.

Your differences are merely tactical. My differences with both sides in your so-called “Great Debate” are fundamental. You are preoccupied with the problem of how to conduct a war the American people do not want and never approved. I propose to end the war at once and let the American people themselves decide the life and death questions of foreign policy.

I submit the following three proposals: (1) Withdraw all American troops from Korea. (2) Recognize the Peking government. (3) Let the people vote by referendum on the issue of war and peace.

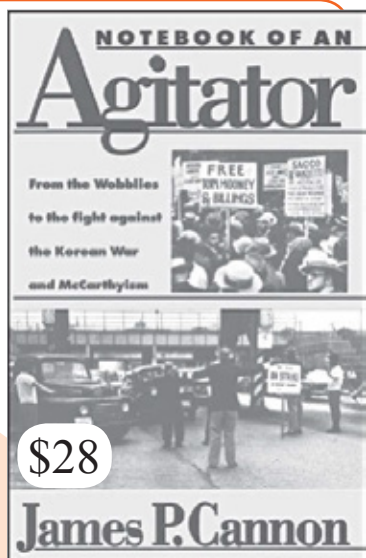
I have opposed your Korean war from the start. Twice before in open letters I urged you to heed the peoples’ will to stop the war and bring the American soldiers home. American troops have no business in Korea. They are being slaughtered by the tens of thousands for no good purpose. Every day they remain swells the casualties list and inflicts more grief upon parents, wives and children. Every day they remain intensifies the hatred of the Asian people for all things American. Again I urge you: Withdraw the U.S. troops from Korea.

The way to peace in Asia is neither to wage a “limited war,” as you are now doing, nor to expand it by bombing Chinese cities and killing the civilian population. The way to peace in Asia is to get out of Asia and let the peoples of Asia run their own affairs.

**“The American intervention in Korea is a brutal imperialist invasion.”**

— James P. Cannon, July 1950

This book by James P. Cannon, leader of the Socialist Workers Party, contains articles spanning four decades of working-class battles — defending frame-up victims like Sacco and Vanzetti; the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters Union battles; the fight against the Korean War; labor’s fight against the McCarthyite witch-hunt; and much more.



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# US rulers press Mideast wars

Continued from front page  
alike.

Trump conveniently ignores the 4,000 civilians killed and the many thousands injured in Iraq over the past months by U.S.-led airstrikes, part of Washington's joint campaign with the Iraqi army to retake the city of Mosul from Islamic State.

In 2014, Islamic State captured large areas of Iraq and Syria in a power vacuum created by repeated bloody U.S. military interventions in Iraq and other countries in the Middle East over the past 30 years. The reactionary outfit was formed by an alliance of former officers in the deposed Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army and a wing of al-Qaeda.

Washington's armed interventions in Iraq date back to 1991, and there is no end in sight.

Syrian toilers in the city of Raqqa, the self-proclaimed capital of Islamic State, face similar death from the skies as the U.S.-led coalition, in alliance with the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), prepares for a military drive to oust IS from the city.

Washington's bombs, special forces and drones are responsible for many more civilian deaths in Afghanistan and Yemen, where they are part of ongoing bloody wars.

In response to Washington's assault on the Syrian government air base, Moscow, a firm supporter of Damascus, has now sent more warships to its naval base in Tartus, Syria. They join six Russian warships and four support vessels already stationed in the eastern Mediterranean, where the U.S. warships that launched the Tomahawk missile attack are stationed.

## The Syria civil war

In 2011 mass popular mobilizations broke out in Syria, calling for political rights and the downfall of the Assad regime. The government responded with brutal repression, killing, arresting and "disappearing" tens of thou-

sands of protesters.

Their assault led to civil war, with opposition forces pushing the unpopular regime back, despite the fact they were shackled with internal divisions and lacked heavy weapons.

The tide in the war changed in September 2015, when Moscow intervened in force, bringing in a hunk of their air power, and Tehran stepped up use of its troops and Lebanon-based Hezbollah militias on the ground to aid Assad's faltering forces.

Since then Assad and his allies have used murderous bombing campaigns combined with siege and starvation tactics against opposition forces, including civilian populations. Assad has regained lost territory — most importantly Syria's largest city Aleppo, captured last December.

Damascus and Moscow are implementing a cynically named "reconciliation" program in which rebel-held towns are bombed and besieged for months, and then offered a "choice" of surrendering or watching the civilian population starve. The "reconciliation agreements" include transporting opposition populations to rebel-controlled Idlib, where they face intensifying attacks by the regime. Khan Sheikhoun, hit by the Assad regime's nerve gas, is in Idlib.

"The open battlefield in the future will be Idlib and the Syrian state will not forgo any patch of Syria in fighting terrorism," said Ali Haidar, Syria's Minister of National Reconciliation Affairs, using their code word for all opponents of the regime.

## Washington, Ankara frictions

One of Washington's problems in advancing its imperialist interests in Syria is sharp disagreement with the Turkish regime of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, which puts its own interests in maintaining the national oppression of its 15 million Kurdish residents first. The 30 million Kurds are divided between Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, the largest national minority worldwide without their own state.

The YPG has proven the most reliable and effective fighting force against Islamic State in Syria, and Washington has made the Kurdish group the central ground force in the effort to take Raqqa. Erdogan bitterly opposes the

## Washington's 'Mother of All Bombs' — tool of terror



Eglin Air Force Base via AP

U.S. Army Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, gloated that the dropping of the never before used Massive Ordnance Air Blast Bomb (MOAB — nicknamed the "Mother of All Bombs") on Afghanistan April 13 "was the right time to use it." The 22,000-pound GPS-guided weapon that cost \$16 million releases a massive pressure blast and fireball, generating energy equivalent to 11 tons of TNT and a mushroom cloud that can be seen for 20 miles.

Up to 90 people, who the U.S. rulers dismiss as nothing more than Islamic State fighters, were killed by the blast. "You'd overpressure people hiding in caves there. You'd never find them," said Edward Priest, a former Air Force special operations combat controller. "It just blows your lungs out of your mouth. It kind of turns you inside out. More than anything, anytime you drop one of these you want to make an audacious statement, in this case to reinforce our resolve to fight in Afghanistan."

In fact, Washington's only purpose in using the MOAB was "shock and awe" — to terrify and intimidate working people.

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai issued a statement condemning the attack, saying the time has come for the U.S. to get out of Afghanistan. On April 16 U.S. National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster met with Afghan officials in Kabul to discuss the next steps in the more than 15-year-long war against the Taliban — the longest in U.S. history — and the continuing role of the more than 8,000 U.S. troops there. The Pentagon is pressing to send more troops.

— JIM BRADLEY

decision, fearing the emergence of an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria that will inspire national resistance to his rule in Turkey. Ankara invaded and occupies part of northwestern Syria, seeking to prevent the YPG from extending the Kurdish enclave it administers the full length of the Syrian-Turkey border.

Having power to deal with the Kurdish question was one factor behind Erdogan's decision to hold a constitutional referendum April 16 seeking to transform the Turkish government into a strong executive state, concentrating power in his hands. He has already formed a more centralized regime, declaring a state of emergency after a failed coup last July, and has arrested

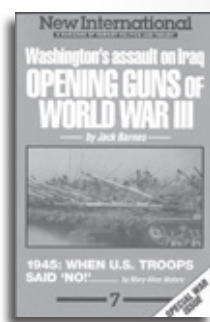
and fired well over 100,000 people. The regime claims Erdogan won a narrow and disputed 51 percent victory, adding new instability in the region.

Ankara's direction is important for Washington. Turkey's Incirlik Air Base has been key for Washington's military operations in Syria and Iraq.

Erdogan admits he lost the vote in Turkey's largest cities — Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir — as well as across the Kurdish region. The Republican People's Party, and the Kurd-supported People's Democratic Party (HDP) are challenging the referendum results. International election monitors claimed "the legal framework remained inadequate for the holding of a genuinely democratic referendum."

## Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes



### In New International no. 7

"The Gulf war sounded the opening guns of sharpening conflicts and class battles that will decide whether the horrors of World War III are inflicted on humanity."

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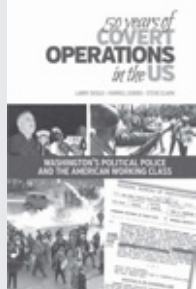
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# US threatens Venezuela

Continued from front page

Six people have been killed at the demonstrations, hundreds injured and many arrested in clashes with government forces. On April 8 scores of protesters attacked a Supreme Court building in the wealthy eastern Caracas municipality of Chacao. A few days later a medical clinic and a food distribution center run by the government were bombed in Miranda state.

The pro-imperialist parties that make up MUD have a long record in defense of the capitalist class in Venezuela. Since the election of late President Hugo Chavez in 1998, they have backed attempts to bring down the governments of Chavez, and now Maduro, including a failed coup in 2002 that was defeated by a massive mobilization of working people. The protests called for April 11-13 coincided with the anniversary of the coup.

Tens of thousands of pro-government militia members held a rally in downtown Caracas April 17 to mark the anniversary of the creation of the Bolivarian Militia, a mainly working-class volunteer force formed by Chávez. The mobilization was a response to opposition appeals to the military high command to move against the Maduro government and restore “constitutional order.” Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez spoke at the rally, confirming the army’s “unconditional loyalty to the president.”

The April 19 countermobilization by supporters of the Maduro government against the opposition’s “mother of all protests” is the first mass response to the latest round of actions by the opposition. Up to now, the opposition has based its actions in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods

where they have a base.

The U.S.-dominated Organization of American States issued a statement by 11 member governments April 17 calling on Venezuela’s government to “guarantee the right to peaceful protest” and to quickly set dates for elections. The signatories were the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

Venezuelan government officials denounced the move as “rude meddling” in their country’s internal affairs.

President Maduro has in fact already called for the date to be set for municipal and regional elections this year. But the opposition and its imperialist backers want to force the government to move up the presidential election that’s set for next year.

The aim of Washington and its capitalist allies is to replace the Maduro government with one more compliant to their interests. They would prefer to let the deepening economic crisis in Venezuela — for which they bear primary responsibility — continue to work to bring down the government.

They are increasing pressure against the Maduro government as the world capitalist economic crisis is having a devastating impact on working people there, eating away at the government’s ability to continue financing social programs at home and to extend assistance to Cuba and other countries abroad.

There is widespread unemployment, sky-high inflation and scarcity of food, medicines and other basic goods. Meanwhile, the bondholders of the U.S. and other imperialist countries who own Venezuela’s foreign debt — the same governments who are calling for foreign

## Socialist Workers Party: ‘US hands off Venezuela!’

NEW YORK — “We demand the U.S. capitalist rulers keep their hands off Venezuela!” Socialist Workers Party leader Róger Calero said at an April 14 Militant Labor Forum here. “Working people across the United States need to stand with our brothers and sisters in Venezuela against the pressure, threats and provocations from Washington and its Organization of American States.

“Far from being a paragon of democratic virtues,” Calero said, “The Washington-led OAS has a long record of backing coups and imperialist-backed invasions to overthrow regimes that stand in its way since its was founded in 1948. It backed the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile in 1973 and the invasion of Grenada in 1983.

“The U.S. government says that ‘we Americans’ have an interest in changing Venezuela. But there is no ‘we,’” Calero said. “The ruling capitalist class is seeking to regain control over the resources of Venezuela, just as they seek to increase the profits they can make off our backs here. Our interests lie with our fellow working people in Venezuela, with the working class of the world.”

— JOHN STUDER



Militant/John Studer

intervention to deal with the “humanitarian crisis” in Venezuela — are lining up to bleed the country dry.

On April 12 the Venezuela government made payment of some \$2.2 billion toward its foreign debt. The central bank reported in March that Venezuela has \$10.5 billion in foreign reserves with some \$3.5 billion in outstanding debt payments due later this year. The total debt is some \$120 billion.

“Let us defend the sovereignty, independence and peace of Venezuela,” Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez said in Havana, reading

from a statement by Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) members meeting there April 10. ALBA is one of a number of anti-imperialist initiatives set up to counter the OAS and other U.S.-dominated blocs. It includes Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and the Caribbean islands of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Grenada.

PetroCaribe, an energy cooperation agreement initiated by the Venezuelan government in 2005, has been a lifeline to Cuba and other countries in the Caribbean and Central America. Supplying oil at preferential prices, it has weakened the stranglehold of the imperialist dominated oil conglomerates and earned the hatred of Washington.

“Venezuela is not alone, we accompany the country in its struggle,” said the message from the Federation of Cuban Women, one of a number from Cuban mass organizations, to the Venezuelan government in the face of the OAS threats. There are over 40,000 Cuban volunteers in Venezuela today, working in health clinics, literacy classes and sports programs.

The Federation of Cuban Workers (CTC) has said that solidarity with Venezuela will be a key demand in this year’s May Day mobilizations: Unconditional support in defense of Venezuela’s sovereignty! No to imperialist intervention!

### Correction

Due to an editing error, the article “Emmett Till Lynching Spurred Fight that Overthrew Jim Crow” in the April 24 *Militant* says the issue of *Jet* magazine with the picture of Till in his open casket was passed around in author Ilona Gersh’s high school. It should have said it was passed around in her neighborhood.

The article “Puerto Rican University Students Rally Against Cuts” in the April 17 issue mistakenly said that the March 31 meeting of the U.S. appointed fiscal board was its first meeting in Puerto Rico. It was its third meeting there.

## LETTERS

### Cuba conference coverage

I would like to correct a factual error in the otherwise objective, informative, and accurate article by Steve Clark (“Views on Ending US Hostile Policy to Cuba Debated at NY Conference”) in the April 17, 2017, *Militant*.

Clark wrote, “Another debate centered on a proposal supported by Ike Nahem, Isaac Saney, and Steve Eckardt of the Chicago Cuba Coalition that a national speakers bureau be established to organize tours by Cubans and others in North America. The motion to encourage speaking tours was agreed to, but the proposal to establish a new national body was withdrawn.”

Neither in the original proposal, nor in its amended and unanimously adopted final wording, was a “national speakers bureau” proposed. Furthermore, at no point was there any proposal to establish any “new national body.” On the contrary, as I said at the first plenary session March 25, “The aim of this conference is to *boost* this work ... in cities across the U.S. and Canada, to reach out and build united action.”

One activist during discussion at the closing plenary did raise that a “steering committee” coming out of the conference would be useful. But this was not supported by any others and was certainly not part of the

original or amended motion, which read, “That we agree to establish and support national speaking tours by leading Cuban figures. And that we collaborate with Cuba in organizing this.”

Since there was never any proposal to establish either a “national speakers bureau” or a “new national body,” such a proposal could not have been “withdrawn.” In response to remarks in the discussion on this proposal, a friendly amendment was adopted that read, “We will work in our efforts to coordinate nationally, and make full use of the National Network on Cuba to do this, and that we will work to share resources via live streaming, Skype, and other platforms.”

I viewed the entire March 26 closing plenary session on YouTube to make sure my memory was correct, and these are the facts.

Ike Nahem  
New York, New York

Steve Clark replies:

I’m glad that Ike Nahem, who was a

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central organizer of the National Cuba Conference, found the *Militant*’s coverage of that gathering “objective, informative, and accurate.”

As to what he considers a “factual error,” I was one of several participants at the closing plenary who spoke about concerns that the motion on speaking tours implied some sort of national structure to organize such tours and other activity. That exchange, as reported in the article, led to a clarification that I think put to rest the prospect of any new committee or ongoing national conference calls.

On that basis, local Cuba coalitions, the National Network on Cuba, and other organizations can work together on speaking tours and other educational efforts to reach out to and involve growing layers of working people and youth in the U.S. and Canada who are open to finding out the truth about Cuba’s socialist revolution and joining activity to demand: End the U.S. economic war against Cuba! U.S. out of Guantánamo! End Washington’s “regime change” operations! *Now!*

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