

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**

**'Fight to end women's oppression is key to workers' struggle for power'**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 11 MARCH 24, 2014

## 'Militant': Voice of working class from Ukraine to United States

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The *Militant* is suspending its six-week effort focused on winning renewals in order to launch an immediate campaign to take the paper's demand for "Russian troops out of Ukraine!" broadly to the working class. Supporters of the *Militant* will be taking the paper to neighborhoods in city and countryside, on the job, at protests against Russian occupation of Crimea, to political events and wherever workers are fighting against attacks from the bosses.

This will also allow readers to talk with the widest working-class audience about defense of the Cuban Revolution and involve workers in activities in support of freedom for the Cuban Five. This includes organizing exhibits for the 15 Antonio Guerrero watercolors that show what the Five, like millions of workers caught up in the so-called criminal justice system,

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## UK 'green' policies lead to floods, ruin of farmers

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — Massive flooding in south England is above all a consequence of government policy under the direction of self-proclaimed environmental activists. Driven by anti-scientific ideology and contempt for working people, these policies have led to devastation of working farmers, farmland and infrastructure — as well as the very wildlife habitats they claim to champion.

The worst flooding since 2007 has left 5,800 homes flooded and 80,000 households without power. Many workers could not get to work and farmers watched field after field of crops go under. A rail line connecting Cornwall and much of Devon with the rest of the country is out of commission for weeks. Homes in Chertsey, residents report, have been covered in untreated sewage, while flood water

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## Russian troops out! Defend Ukraine sovereignty!

Invasion of Crimea raises threat of war



Reuters/Vasily Fedosenko

Demonstration against Russian invasion of Crimea March 10 in Crimean village of Eskisaray outside Simferopol. Signs read, "Ukraine is not Russia" and "Crimea is Ukraine."

BY JOHN STUDER

Russian soldiers, including special forces, are being deployed across Crimea to solidify Moscow's brutal occupation of that southern Ukrainian peninsula by the Black Sea. They have surrounded Ukraine military posts, taken over the parliament building and "disappeared" opponents of the Russian occupation. They are aided by gangs recruited among ethnic Russians who emigrated there in previous decades as part of Moscow's efforts to Russify Crimea.

Thousands of troops from the Russian naval base at Sevastopol have been reinforced by 16,000 troops brought over the Russian border. On March 10 Russian troops were "moving methodically down roads

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## EDITORIAL

WORKING PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER should stand with fellow workers and farmers of Ukraine in demanding Russian troops out now! Defend the sovereignty of independent Ukraine!

The Russian government of President Vladimir Putin is raising the specter of war. This is a threat to workers and farmers of Ukraine — Ukrainian, Russian, Tatar, Jews, etc. — as well as to working people in Russia, the rest of the former Soviet republics, and beyond.

The Ukrainian toilers overthrew Moscow's puppet government of Viktor Yanukovich, opening up space

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## LA art exhibit wins support for fight to free Cuban Five



Militant/Nick Castle

Launching of watercolor exhibit by Antonio Guerrero, one of Cuban Five, drew 70 people to Los Angeles Coffee and Crepes cultural center (above). Inset, participant Don Smith views "The Cell with Cockroaches."

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN AND ELLIE GARCÍA

EAST LOS ANGELES — Seventy people attended a March 2 program at Coffee and Crepes cultural center here opening an exhibit of "I Will Die the Way I've Lived," 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five. The paintings will be on display through the end of March.

The Five — Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and René González — are Cuban revolutionar-

ies who were framed up and jailed by the U.S. government in 1998 on various conspiracy counts and other trumped-up charges. The five had been carrying out a mission from Havana to prevent bombings, acts of sabotage and provocations against Cuba and supporters of the socialist revolution there by rightist paramilitary groups based in Florida. (See "Who Are the Cuban Five?" on page 4.)

Guerrero's watercolors depict the

Continued on page 4

## What's behind White House's plans to downsize US military?

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Barack Obama administration is carrying through a plan to cut back army troop levels to the lowest size since before World War II. The move is in line with the administration's avoidance of troops-on-the-ground military intervention. But this downgrading of regular military force is being met with growing opposition within the U.S. ruling class, who see their interests threatened by growing conflicts around the world.

At a Feb. 24 news conference, Secretary of Defense Charles Hagel announced plans to cut the number of active-duty soldiers from 520,000 to between 440,000 and 450,000. Special operations forces, however, will increase by 6 percent to nearly 70,000.

The plan would eliminate the Air Force's fleet of 300 A-10 jets, used heavily in Iraq and Afghanistan to

support ground troops. Other cutbacks include replacing U-2-manned spy aircraft with Global Hawk drones; reducing the Navy's use of littoral combat ships; and increasing health

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Lenin led political battle for liberation of oppressed nations 6

# Students in Lebanon discuss book on class struggle in US

‘Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and Road to Workers Power’ in Arabic

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

NABATIYEH, Lebanon — “This book is about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of the class struggle in the United States,” said Omari Musa, a member of the Socialist Workers Party from the U.S. Musa was speaking to 80 students at the Lebanese International University in Sidon Feb. 26, the first of three campus events in southern Lebanon launching the Arabic edition of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes.

Sixty-five students attended the presentation at the LIU campus in the agricultural center here the next day, followed by a meeting of 50 in Tyre. All these events were organized by instructors Rawad Kansoun and Makram Haj Hassan and were hosted by the LIU administration.

“These discussions are invaluable today, as the worldwide crisis of capitalist production and trade is devastating hundreds of millions of working people worldwide,” said Natasha Terlexi, president of Diethnes Vima, a publisher in Greece mostly of Greek translations of books on revolutionary working-class politics by Pathfinder Press.

“Malcolm X was once asked, ‘did he seek to awaken African-Americans to their oppression?’” said Tony Hunt, a leader of the Communist League in the United Kingdom. “‘No,’ Malcolm replied, ‘to their humanity, to their own

worth.’ That’s the discussion we seek to have with working people in the U.K. Working people *can* rise to the level of running society in the interests of the toiling majority of humanity.”

“Socialist workers in the U.S. use this book and many others on communist politics together with the *Militant* newspaper in discussions with workers we meet knocking on doors and participating in protests, picket lines, events to build support for the fight to free the Cuban Five and other political activity,” Musa said.

“Our reality is different than what you describe,” said one student in Sidon during a discussion period after the presentations. “Our society here is divided into religious sects, financially, militarily and otherwise. How can we adapt these lessons to our divided streets?”

“You all have to figure that out yourselves based on your reality,” said Musa, who talked about his experience as part of the proletarian battles in the 1960s that overthrew Jim Crow racial segregation and created new possibilities for united action among working people of all backgrounds.

“The uprising in Tunisia began through the action of a worker,” said one participant at the meeting in Nabatiyeh. “But as the Arab Spring escalated the beast of the world hijacked it. We no longer have an Arab Spring but an autumn.”

“The popular protests that led to the toppling of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak and Morsi in



Inset, Georges Mehrabian

Above, student from Bahrain at Lebanese International University in Tyre, Feb. 28, asks question after talk on Arabic edition of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. Inset, revolutionary literature attracts attention at Sidon campus Feb. 26.



Bashar Abu-Saifan

Egypt was the opening of a new period of struggle in the Middle East that will have ups and downs,” said Musa. “Workers and farmers will go through important experiences over the coming decades. They are not defeated. I think that we are not at the autumn, but very early in the spring.”

Other questions included: Do you think that whites are capable of understanding Malcolm X’s words? Is a revolution in the U.S. possible? Why did

Malcolm X focus on the role of women?

A total of 19 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* — 11 in Arabic and eight in English — were sold during the trip. Four copies of the new book *Voices from Prison: The Cuban Five* and three copies of *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*, both on the Cuban Five, were purchased. An additional five other titles were picked up, along with two subscriptions to the *Militant*.

## ‘Glad to pass bosses’ bribe to communist movement’

“At a huge international agricultural implements manufacturer, which makes combines in the Omaha area, we were called together to get a gift card this week as a ‘thank you’ for ‘working so hard’ and ‘doing a great job and putting in a lot of hours.’ I’m glad to be passing it into the hands of the communist movement,” wrote Rebecca Williamson from Omaha, Neb., in a Feb. 15 note she sent in with a check for \$50.

From Jan. 24 to Feb. 24, 19 workers donated a total of \$1,347 to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund in “blood money” contributions — from company gift cards and so-called bonuses, such as “profit-sharing,” attendance and no reported injuries. These bribes doled out by bosses to get us to accept wage cuts, dangerous working conditions, concession contracts and speedup were turned over to help build the communist movement.

“Our crew puts together about two to two-and-a-half engines per day and is notorious for having 10 hours endlessly,” Williamson wrote. “While it’s optional, the pressure is that you’re putting it on your co-workers to make up the slack since the bosses won’t replace you or adjust production schedules. We took the \$50 gift card as a crumb to keep us plowing on 10-hour days. It had zero effect on workers’ morale.”

To contribute to the long-range work of the party by making a blood money donation to the Capital Fund, contact a distributor on page 6.

— EMMA JOHNSON

# THE MILITANT

## Back Syrian toilers’ fight against Assad dictatorship

*The civil war in Syria is taking an enormous toll on working people. Assad’s forces, backed by Russian arms, Hezbollah troops and special forces from Iran, have stepped up bombardment of working-class areas. The ‘Militant’ covers this struggle. Don’t miss an issue.*



UNRWA Archives  
Thousands line up to get UN food parcels at Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria Jan. 18.

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Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant’s* views. These are expressed in editorials.

# 'Militant': Workers' voice

Continued from front page

face framed up in prison. It will offer the opportunity to discuss the relentless attack on women's right to choose abortion, the debate about fracking and energy policy and other critical questions facing our class.

*Militant* readers will also bring books on revolutionary working-class politics, from the recently published *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five to Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power to Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?*

Over the past four weeks we have won 413 renewals and new long-term readers. As we turn now to going broadly with the paper and books to talk to workers about the need for independent working-class political action — in the U.S., in Ukraine and elsewhere — and winning new subscribers, we will continue to win renewals as readers come to see that the news and political viewpoint of the paper are essential to gaining a class perspective on the world today.

This is the best way we can respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the threat of wider war. It is precisely at times like this that clear class perspectives are crucial as a guide to action. Join us in this effort!

"In a combination of participating in protests against Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, activities around the March 7-8 International Commission of Inquiry into the case of the Cuban Five, and visits to subscribers, we got six renewals, six introductory subscriptions and sold 105 copies of the paper over the last four days," Ólöf Andra Proppé reported from London.

"I first heard about the Cuban Five and the campaign to free them yesterday", said Dangis Kveksas, a Lithuanian worker, at a March 8 protest outside the British prime minister's residence against Russia's intervention in Ukraine. "Now I want to read to learn more about the Cuban Revolution and the good things they have done in the world."

The following day he joined *Militant* supporter Debra Jacobs going from the prime minister's residence, where Ukrainians and others were protesting, to a rally demanding the release of the Cuban Five. He subscribed and bought a copy of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, one of the 11 books on special with a subscription.

"We also sold other campaign books, among them *Los cosméticos, las modas, y la explotación de la mujer, The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* and *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*," Proppé wrote. "Top sellers were *Voices From Prison* with 20 copies and *I Will Die the Way I've Lived* with 18."

"The largest events in support of the struggle for Ukrainian sovereignty were a March 8 concert, honoring the 200th anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko and a March 9 protest rally," wrote Joel Britton from San Francisco. "Each drew some 200 people."

Shevchenko was a 19th century Ukrainian poet who championed the national rights and literature of his people.

The concert was held at the main branch of the San Francisco public library where an exhibit of Shevchenko's paintings and poetry are on display.



Militant/Ólöf Andra Proppé

**Militant supporters in London join action March 9 to demand release of Cuban Five. Holding sign is Dangis Kveksas, a Lithuanian worker, who took part in rally against Russia's intervention in Ukraine outside the British prime minister's residence the day before.**

Participants in events over the weekend bought 55 copies of the *Militant*. Two picked up introductory subscriptions and one signed up for a year.

From Chicago, Betsy Farley reported that *Militant* supporters joined a March 7 event commemorating Shevchenko at the Ukrainian National Museum there. Some 150 people celebrated the overthrow of Moscow-backed President Viktor Yanukovich and the continuing struggle against Russia's intervention in Crimea.

Several participants bought copies of the paper and one attended the Militant Labor Forum the next day to hear Tom Fiske, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party from Minneapolis, speak on "Popular mobilizations topple Ukrainian government: Why workers should back the fight against Russian domination."

"Going door to door March 8 in the

city's largest Ukrainian neighborhood we sold seven copies of the paper and one introductory subscription," Farley wrote. "A young worker bought a paper, saying 'this is exactly what we need to explain the fight in Ukraine to American workers.'"

Madina Maguiraga, a co-worker of Katy LeRougetel in Montreal, originally from Mali, invited her and Michel Prairie over for a West African meal March 8. Along with Jean-louis Salfati from Paris, Prairie recently visited Mali and Burkina Faso to expand circulation of Pathfinder Press books on revolutionary, working-class politics. Bookstores and libraries took orders for more than 1,000 copies of a range of titles.

Maguiraga had given Prairie introductions to several people in Mali's capital Bamako.

"We have a saying that you should never underestimate what one contact with another can create," Maguiraga said. "I got to know Michel because I knew Katy. And there are people in Mali who wouldn't have seen the books if I hadn't put him in touch with my family. It's not just that the books get exposure, they're telling our history. You can see the interest in Thomas Sankara." Sankara led a revolutionary government in Burkina Faso from 1983 until his assassination in 1987.

She signed up to receive the weekly French-language *Militant* articles, and bought *Thomas Sankara Parle*, offered at a discount for those receiving the articles.

To join the campaign demanding Russian troops out of Ukraine and to expand the reach of the *Militant*, contact a distributor listed on page 6 or the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899.

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by Asele de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others  
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(Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women)  
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See distributors on page 6

**The Cuban Five**  
Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free  
from pages of the 'Militant'  
\$3 with subscription (regular \$5)

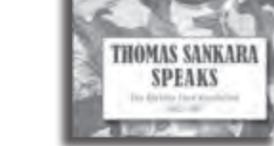
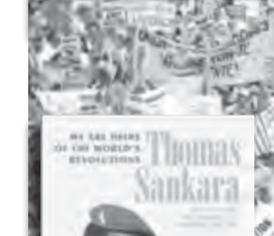
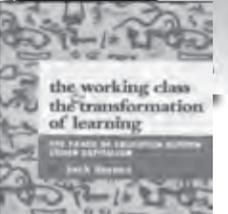
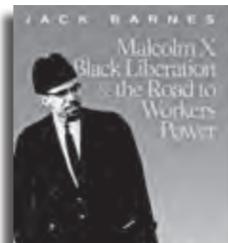
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**Miami**  
Egypt: Gov't Demands Sacrifice; Workers Fight Devastating Effects of World Capitalist Crisis. Books on Marxism Popular at Cairo International Book Fair. Speaker: Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party and volunteer at Pathfinder booth at book fair. Sat., March 22. Dinner 6 p.m.; program 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A.

### ILLINOIS

**Chicago**  
Cities in Capitalist Crisis: Is Chicago the Next Detroit? Speaker: Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 28, 7:30 p.m. 806 W. Washington Blvd., Suite 202.

# LA art exhibit for Cuban 5

**Continued from front page**  
 revolutionaries' first 17 months in jail, spent in solitary confinement in the Miami Federal Detention Center. The collection reflects both the inhumane treatment meted out to workers behind bars, as well as the resilience, integrity and social solidarity that marked the Five's conduct under these conditions.

The program, which included short talks, music and refreshments, celebrated Fernando González's return to Cuba. A photo display of his arrival in Havana Feb. 28 was featured at the exhibit.

In addition to Coffee and Crepes, the exhibit was sponsored by a number of groups and individuals: Carlos Ugalde, photographer and professor emeritus at Glendale Community College; Films4Cuban5; artist Oscar Albuerne; Ed Turner, International Association of Machinists Local 1932 shop steward; Peter Schey, president, Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law; Socialist Workers Party; journalist Raimundo Reynoso; Alternative Media and Trade Editions; and Lawrence Reyes, Puerto Rican Alliance.

Beatriz Tasha Magaña, a student at East Los Angeles College, opened the

program by welcoming people to the exhibit on behalf of Coffee and Crepes owner Victoria Chavez.

Chavez said she had not heard of the Five before getting involved in organizing the showing. "Now I'm wearing a 'Free the Five' button," she said. "For me one of the most important questions has always been immigration reform. My father, Angel Chavez, is the only surviving ex-bracero from the year 1942. They faced many bad things. The Cuban Five are political prisoners. We have to learn about and talk about how they can be free."

Guerrero's writings that accompany the paintings "are inspiring and truthful," said Magaña. "I like the poetry about the Cuban Five and their fight. I feel humbled, it's a big thing that is happening."

"Fernando González is back home on Cuban soil. He is a free man, because he never broke," said Turner. "Now is the time to organize showings of Antonio Guerrero's paintings, so more people can get to know the facts about the Cuban Five."

"Today we celebrate Fernando's release, and we redouble our efforts to get Antonio, Ramón and Gerardo released," said Norton Sandler of the Socialist Workers Party. "The Five were carrying out the defense of Cuba. René and Fernando were legally advised to separate their cases from the other three. They said 'no.' They entered prison as revolutionists, they functioned as revolutionists in prison, and they will walk out as revolutionists, an example for working people the world over."

Ugalde matted, framed and hung the paintings in the café. He urged everyone present to sign a letter he drafted demanding President Barack Obama free the three who remain in prison.

"I hope the Los Angeles exhibit of the art work of Antonio Guerrero is a success and send greetings and solidarity to the Cuban Five and their supporters," said Schey, attorney for Gerardo Hernández, in a message to the meeting. He testified later that week at the March 7-8 International Commission of Inquiry into the case

## Quebec hotel workers view Guerrero's watercolors



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

SAINT-HYACINTHE, Quebec—More than 30 workers on strike against Hotel des Seigneurs viewed "I Will Die the Way I've Lived," an exhibit of watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, and discussed their fight for freedom after their weekly union meeting here March 10.

Adriana Stan, a university teaching assistant, and Katy LeRougetel, a factory worker, gave a brief presentation on the fight by the five revolutionaries, who were jailed in the U.S. in 1998 on frame-up charges, including conspiracy to commit espionage.

"It may seem like the case of these Cubans is far removed from our lives," said Michel Trépanier, a union staff member, during the discussion. "In 1970, Michel Chartrand, a union militant in Quebec, was accused of conspiracy to commit sedition. He and four others were jailed for four months and then released when the charges were dropped. These were union leaders in Quebec to whom this happened." Chartrand was charged under the War Measures Act by the Canadian government in response to a rise in labor and national struggles in Quebec at the time.

After browsing the exhibit some workers copied Guerrero's prison address in order to write him.

— KATY LEROUGETEL

## Showings of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five

### *I Will Die the Way I've Lived*



## Exhibits

### Los Angeles March 2-30

Coffee and Crepes, 4545 Cesar Chavez Ave. Tel.: (323) 263-4544; (323) 661-1980. Exhibition schedule: Tues.-Thurs., 10AM-4PM; Fri.-Sat., 12PM-8PM.

### Chicago March 21-April 13

Opening reception: Sat., March 22, 7-9PM. Beverly Arts Center, 2407 W. 111th St. Tel.: (773) 445-3838. Exhibition schedule: Mon.-Fri., 9AM-9PM (closes at 5 p.m. if no evening event); Sat., 12PM-5PM.; Sun., 1-4PM.

### Philadelphia Fri., March 21

Reception: 7 p.m. Exhibition: 7-9 PM. Imperfect Gallery, 5601 Greene St. (Germantown) Tel.: (917) 957-4504, imperfectgallery.com

### Atlanta March 17-April 5

Opening program: Thurs., March 20, 5-8PM. Spelman College, Cosby Building, 3rd Floor, in the Cloister. 350 Spelman Lane SW

of the Cuban Five in London.

"I'm very moved by these paintings," said Rosa Carrillo, an artist, after viewing them. "Deprived of all stimulation, prison couldn't suppress Antonio of his humanity. My favorite is the rose in front of the prison grill. Where did that creativity come from?"

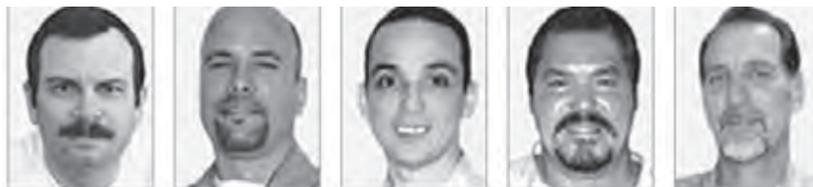
"Seeing the beautiful art is empowering," said Armando Flores Jr., a student at East Los Angeles College. He first learned about the Cuban Five in a Latin America studies class five years ago. "The system tries to break us all. It didn't break him. It's inspiring."

Participants purchased 11 copies of

*Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five and nine of I Will Die the Way I've Lived.* Leaflets were distributed for the third "5 Days for the Cuban 5" in Washington, D.C., June 4-11.

An open mic and a dance with Cuban music will take place March 14 at the exhibit. The final program March 29 will include a showing of the film "Maestra" about the literacy campaign in Cuba.

## 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.

## 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.

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## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Workers strike IBM plant in China over wages, conditions

More than 1,000 workers went on strike at an IBM plant in Shenzhen, China, March 3 over wages, severance pay and work conditions after the company sold its x86 computer server factories to Chinese-owned Lenovo Group Ltd. for \$2.3 billion.

A video and photos posted on the Internet by TVsohu.com and others show hundreds of workers marching around the plant in blue factory smocks during several days of protest. At a March 4 action they carried handmade banners that read: "Workers are not a commodity" and "Give us back our respect," reported the *New York Times*.

IBM set a March 12 deadline for its employees to either continue at Lenovo at wages "comparable" to what they currently earn or be laid off with severance pay workers consider inadequate. Workers are demanding higher payments both for those who agree to continue with Lenovo and those who decide to leave.

The strike began after IBM fired 20 workers at the plant March 3 without providing any financial compensation, reported WantChinaTimes.com.

The strikers are also protesting long shifts and demanding "occupational health and safety checkups for departing employees and extra compensation for pregnant women workers and nursing mothers," reported Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin.

"Many of us work from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. for 15 days without a single day off," an unnamed worker told the group.

The strike is being organized independently of the government-sanctioned All China Federation of Trade Unions.

In another development, workers at several Pepsi factories across China went on strike March 5 against company plans for layoffs, pay cuts and reduced benefits, reported China Labour Bulletin. There were 656 workers' strikes and protests in China last year, the group said, up from 382 in 2012.

— Brian Williams

### British Columbia: truck drivers halt work to protest low rates

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — More than 1,300 truck drivers at Port Metro Vancouver have stopped

work here to protest long waits and low rates for the loads they carry.

The drivers, who are paid by the load, are demanding that the port make changes to cut their wait time or ensure they receive an hourly wage while they wait.

Some 1,000 members of the United Truckers Association parked their rigs Feb. 26. More than 300 drivers who belong to Unifor-Vancouver Container Truckers Association then went on strike March 10 after voting 98 percent to reject a proposed "Return to Work Agreement." Leaders of UTA and Unifor had recommended their members approve the deal, which included conducting a review of "terminal wait times," "rate undercutting" and "trip rates."

"Our members have spoken: the deal was too little, too late," said Paul Johal, president of Unifor-VCTA.

"There's like 180 different employers, there's different unions, non-union, fake unions and so it's crazy and there's no stability," Unifor's Brit-



Reuters/Alex Lee

Workers rally outside IBM plant in Shenzhen, China, March 7 after going on strike four days earlier demanding higher wages, severance payments and improved working conditions.

ish Columbia Area Director Gavin McGarrigle, told the *Vancouver Sun*.

According to federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt, about \$885 million worth of cargo moves through the port every week, about \$46 billion a year.

"Our people have taken out credit

lines, second mortgages and borrowed money for diesel," UTA spokesman Manny Dosange told the *Globe and Mail*. "They need some [assurance] that if they're going back to work they're going to have income coming in."

— Dan Grant

## Metro-North rail worker killed on job in NY

BY EMMA JOHNSON

NEW YORK — James Romansoff, 58, a worker at Metro-North Railroad here, was killed March 10 while restoring power to the tracks after weekend maintenance.

Romansoff, who had worked for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for eight years, was hit shortly before 1 a.m. on Manhattan's East Side by a train en route from the city to upstate Poughkeepsie.

His death is the latest in a series of so-called accidents on Metro-North trains over the last year. The railway bosses' relentless drive for profit over the past few decades has led to cuts in crew size, speedup, skimping on maintenance and refusals to install safety equipment.

Four passengers were killed and more than 70 injured when a train derailed in the Bronx Dec. 1. An initial media campaign to blame the train's

engineer for the crash subsided after rail workers organized a campaign to defend him and facts surfaced about the company's long-standing neglect of safety.

Under a federal law passed in 2008 after a deadly derailment in California, all major freight and passenger companies are required to implement a more extensive automated safety system — Positive Train Control — by 2015. Metro-North says the earliest it can get the system on track is 2019.

Even without Positive Train Control, the derailment could have been avoided. Just a week after it occurred Metro-North installed sensors in the track at the curve where the derailment took place. The sensors trigger an alarm that automatically applies the brakes if the engineer doesn't slow the train down before entering the curve. The company also could have

assigned a co-worker to be in the lead car together with the engineer, a standard practice until rail bosses slashed crew sizes.

In September, an electrical cable failed in Mount Vernon, N.Y., knocking out service for 132,000 commuters for 12 days. In July, a freight train derailed in the Bronx, at the same curve as the Dec. 1 incident. In late May, a track foreman was killed in West Haven, Conn., when a passenger train hit him. Earlier that month a passenger train derailed in Bridgeport, Conn., injuring 73 passengers, two engineers and a conductor.

A week before Romansoff's death the MTA announced its "100-Day Action Plan," to "promote a culture of safety."

In a request for comment, an MTA spokesperson referred to its statement saying, "The incident is under investigation."

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 24, 1989

Under the guise of stepping up the fight against drug trafficking, government officials at all levels are pressing for greater use of the death penalty.

There were 2,188 prisoners on death row at the start of this year. California, Florida, and Texas have more than 200 each. Since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated state death penalty laws in 1976, a total of 106 people have been executed.

The moves to step up the use of the death penalty and to strengthen repressive laws have nothing to do with fighting drug trafficking. In fact, many cops are up to their eyeballs in the drug trade, a lucrative business that exploits the capitalist-imposed misery of working people.

The aim of the death penalty and stiffer legislation is to intimidate working people, especially Black, Latino, and Asian workers — the main victims of the drug trade.



March 23, 1964

NEW YORK — Malcolm X is establishing a Muslim Mosque in Harlem that will be so organized as to permit Negroes who are not Muslims to participate in the political, economic and social programs it will carry on. The Mosque will take an active part in the civil-rights movement and in the political life of the community, he said. He hopes to see similar mosques opened in other parts of the country.

Elaborating his plans at a jam-packed press conference at the Park Sheraton Hotel March 12, he said he was forced to leave the Nation of Islam by other high officials of the church, that he remained a devout Muslim, but would utilize his present situation to join in the Freedom Now struggle in a more direct and flexible way.

As one concrete form of political action, he proposed collaboration in eliminating New York's recently adopted "stop-and-frisk" and "no-knock" laws.



March 24, 1939

Stalin is trying to balance himself on the razor edge of imperialist rivalries in Europe.

He thinks he is going to save the Soviet Union in its hour of mortal peril by playing off Hitler-Mussolini against Chamberlain-Daladier.

That road, followed without basing the main defense of the Soviet Union on the bulwark of a revolutionary policy designed to arouse the working class of the entire world against its own masters, is the road to disaster.

The revolutionary might of the international working class is the only power in the world that can save the Soviet Union.

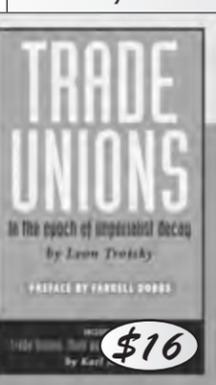
The Soviet Union is in mortal peril. Despite the ravages of the decadent Stalinist bureaucracy, the socialized means of production created as a result of the October Revolution remain the most precious possession of the international working class.

### TRADE UNIONS in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky

"More food for thought (and action) than will be found in any book on the union question."

— FARRELL DOBBS



INCLUDES: "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present and Future" by Karl Marx

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# Lenin led political battle for liberation of oppressed nations

In *Democracy and Revolution*, author George Novack (1905-1992), a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party, traces the evolution of democracy from ancient Greece to its decline under modern capitalism. The chapter "Socialism and Bureaucracy" recounts the social advances of workers and peasants under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in the early years of the 1917 Russian Revolution, as well as the historical circumstances that enabled a privileged bureaucratic caste led by Joseph Stalin to organize a bloody counterrevolution and reverse that course. The excerpt reprinted here focuses on the fight advanced by Lenin for self-determination and for national liberation of peoples oppressed under the czarist empire. Copyright © 1971 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Humbert Droz Archives

Revival of Russian chauvinism and national oppression in Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin and Moscow's "attempted Russification of East European peoples" were "criminal transgressions of the spirit of Leninist policy." Above, First Congress of Peoples of the East in Baku, Azerbaijan, 1920, drew toilers of Asia into Communist International as equals in struggle.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

It is notorious that this program for a democratic workers' state, envisaged by the founders of Marxism and attempted after 1917 by the Bolsheviks led by Lenin and Trotsky, could not be realized under the given historical circumstances. The democratic initiatives and institutions of the Russian Revolution of the early years of the Soviet republic were extinguished after Lenin's death and the suppression of the Com-

munist Left Opposition. Soviet, party and trade-union democracy, already curtailed by the imperatives of civil war and the first years of economic reconstruction, was totally extirpated by the Stalinist machine. ...

The Russian people had to go through three years of imperialist bloodletting, two revolutions in one year and three years of civil war. After having given so much, they sank back in a collective exhaustion of their energies. The decimation of the revolutionary cadres, the weariness of the Soviet masses, the overwhelming preponderance of the peasantry over a small, fragmented proletariat involved in a shattered industry, led to a loss of faith in immediate relief from outside and in the original perspectives of international revolution.

These objective conditions facilitated the bureaucratization of the Soviet state apparatus and the gradual conservatizing of the Communist cadres at its head. The decline and destruction of Soviet and party democracy, the crushing of the Leninist wing of the party and the replacement of socialist internationalism by nationalist considerations and conceptions, formulated in the theory of building socialism in a single country, further promoted the arbitrary rule of a

new aristocracy of functionaries.

Stalin's tyranny was the outgrowth of special economic as well as historical conditions. Soviet democracy was laid low by the meager productivity of Russian industry and agriculture and the terrible poverty and misery it engendered. It has been pointed out that, even under capitalism, a flourishing democracy has largely been the privilege of wealthy nations and that, even where poor countries have set up democratic institutions, as in the colonial and semi-colonial world, they are not very sturdy and stable. ...

The attitude of the workers' state toward weak, poor, oppressed and underdeveloped nationalities has turned out to be no less important for the world socialist revolution than it was for the bourgeois state in its democratic forms. There are two main sides to this problem. The first concerns national minorities situated within the boundaries of the given state.

In view of the deprivations and indignities they have suffered from chauvinist governing powers in the past and their apprehensions that the new regime may perpetuate such mistreatment, these sections of the population are entitled to special consideration and concessions.

Discrimination or abuse against any grouping or person because of their ethnic origin, race or color will be a serious crime in a workers' state. Such acts will meet with especially severe penalties if committed by official sources or government jobholders. One of the functions of education and culture in the new society will be the creation of a public opinion designed to forestall and quarantine such manifestations.

The second aspect involves the relations between independent workers' states. Socialist policy and morality demands more than formal acknowledgment of respect for the rights and integrity of all nations and peoples. Even capitalist states profess to abide by that rule of equality, however much they disregard it in actuality.

A big, rich and powerful workers' state has special obligations. It must lean over backwards in all dealings with small nations and weaker peoples to give them complete assurance that it is not misusing its superiority and authority to their detriment. The Stalinized Soviet Union has had an abominable record in both respects. Moscow's maltreatment of its own national minorities, such as the Volga Germans, the Crimean Tartars and the Jews, its vilification of the Yugoslavs after the Stalin-Tito split, its vassalization and attempted Russification of the East European peoples, the withdrawal of economic aid from the People's Republic of China, the suppression of the Hungarians in 1956 and the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 have been criminal transgressions of the spirit of Leninist policy on the national question. The haughty attitudes and infamous actions of the Soviet rulers in this domain befit oriental potentates rather than socialists or democrats.

The right of a people to self-determination is hollow unless it can separate from its oppressor and form its own sovereign state. Though this democratic right was guaranteed by the Bolsheviks and is still acknowledged in the Soviet constitution, the slightest hint of it from any abused nationality under the Kremlin's jurisdiction is treated as treason. Revolutionary Marxists support the demand of any nationality to be free and independent of both the Soviet bureaucracy and imperialism.

**March BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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# 'Green' policies lead to floods

Continued from front page  
in Basingstoke has mixed with sewage.

"We've been without mains water and surrounded in floodwater for five weeks now and Thames Water and the Environmental Agency have done nothing," Deborah Carter, in nearby Wraysbury, told *The Independent*.

Flooding began in Somerset in December and spread to other areas of south England following record rainfall in January. Residents in the southwest complain they were flooded for six weeks before they received any government assistance. Government Minister Eric Pickles admitted the government should have dredged the Somerset Levels to speed water drainage. Yet repeated calls by farmers for dredging were disregarded for months.

Flood waters on the Somerset Levels have been rising for the last few years. Four main rivers running across the

Levels — home to a fifth of Somerset's farmland — became so clogged with silt that water from record high rainfall could not escape.

In 1996, Britain's new Environment Agency took over management of rivers, diminishing the role of local bodies that had organized flood control for generations. Farmers and engineers told Christopher Booker, who wrote an article on the roots of the flood problem in the Feb. 15 issue of the *Spectator*, that this change coincided with a decline in regular dredging, neglect of pumping stations and a rash of new "environmental" regulations.

## Gov't cuts back dredging, drainage

Dredging was cut back further in 2002 after the Labour government appointed wildlife zealot Barbara Young, Baroness of Old Scone, as chief executive of the Environment Agency. In 2008 the agency halted drainage on the



Reuters/Kieran Doherty

Man ferries a local resident in village of Datchet in Berkshire, southern England, Feb. 12.

Somerset Levels under the rubric of protecting biodiversity. "For instant wildlife just add water," Young, who previously headed up the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Natural England,

blithely advocated at the time.

Elsewhere, the Thames has not been properly dredged since 1996, following European Union environmental protection directives that made it more expensive for landowners to dredge rivers than to collect government subsidies to develop so-called conservation schemes.

Agronomists estimate that farmers on the Somerset Levels may not be able to grow crops for up to two years as a result of the floods. Half of the flood pumps could not be used because of damage to the banks of the Parrett River.

The current coalition government has also reduced spending on flood defenses. Prime Minister David Cameron tried to hide behind "abnormal weather" and "climate change" as reasons for the disaster. Yet around 5 million people in the U.K. are known to live in areas prone to flooding.

The impact of the flooding has also called forward a chorus of panic-mongering from liberal commentators. A lead article in the *New Statesman* warned that "the U.K. faces the prospect of food shortages, more floods, extreme heat waves and mass refugee flows."

Rather than target government priorities and the social conditions working farmers in the areas affected face, *Guardian* writer and self-described environmentalist George Monbiot blames them, alleging the government pays farmers "for the privilege of having our wildlife exterminated, our hills grazed bare, our rivers polluted and our sitting rooms flooded."

The reality working farmers face was described in a phone interview with Surrey dairy farmer Youleite Parkes. "The knock on effect of having to buy more cattle feed at higher prices because of the floods will be with us for some time," she said, describing how government regulations prevent farmers from drawing water off rivers and also draining ditches on their land as frequently as necessary.

For many working farmers flood insurance for their land "is too expensive to even consider," she said.

Insurance companies predict price rises in premiums. The bad weather has been a boon for these capitalists. An article in *The Times* was headlined, "Profits soaring, the insurance industry must love floods."

Fearing potential electoral losses, Cameron has visited areas affected and pledged tax breaks and grants to businesses and households hit by the floods. In order to provide subsidies to insurance companies, the government announced it would impose a new tax on everyone holding home insurance across the United Kingdom.

# What's behind plans to downsize US military?

Continued from front page

premiums of active and retired military members.

Washington still accounts for one-half of the world's military spending and possesses the most advanced weaponry and military technology.

The Obama administration is in some respects like none other before it. The president is neither an experienced businessman, a tested general or a seasoned bourgeois career politician. Presiding over the government on behalf of the capitalist ruling class, the heart of the Obama administration beats with that of the self-styled cosmopolitan meritocracy, drawn not from the big owners of capital but from the highly-paid professional, academic and administrative layers of the middle classes.

Divorced from the processes of capitalist production, these social layers serve to maintain the social relations of capitalist production. Existing solely at the behest of the propertied rulers, they are insecure, bourgeois-minded in values and moral outlook, but lacking the confidence of the bourgeoisie. This

shapes their world view and approach to U.S. foreign policy.

Obama's foreign policy is marked by the notion that Washington's interests can be advanced best through dialogue and acknowledgement that U.S. meddling is the cause of the world's problems.

"America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire," said Obama in his Cairo University speech of June 2009.

"Our efforts must be measured against the history of putting American troops in distant lands among hostile populations," he said at the National Defense University last year. U.S. military action "risks creating more enemies and impacts public opinion overseas."

But the weakness it projects and the consequences for U.S. capitalist interests — from Iraq to Afghanistan to Libya and Syria — has led to growing opposition within the ruling class.

The administration's response to conflicts in the world shows a lack of confidence and unpredictability. Its first inclination has been to rely heavily on hunter-killer operations by special forces and aerial drones, avoiding any boots on the ground. But when plans go awry and things appear out of control, the administration has shown a tendency to lash out with dangerous consequences.

## 'Based on fantasy'

The *New York Times* praised the Pentagon's proposals Feb. 26 as "a military budget to fit the times." But the *Washington Post*, a prominent liberal newspaper that has backed Obama, ran an editorial March 2 headlined, "President Obama's Foreign Policy Is Based on Fantasy."

"For five years, President Obama has led a foreign policy based more on how he thinks the world should operate than on reality," the *Post* said.

It's time for "a more interventionist phase,"

wrote conservative columnist Max Boot in the *Weekly Standard*. "There is an opening here for a presidential contender smart enough to grasp it. If history is any judge, the swing back to interventionism is coming, and soon."

History also shows how the army's size can change rapidly. In 1945 at the end of World War II it reached 6 million, rising from well below half a million five years earlier. After then downsizing to about half a million in 1950, it rose over the next two years to 1.6 million during the Korean War. Similarly, during the Vietnam War troop levels were below 1 million in 1965, but up to 1.6 million three years later.

## Doubts about Afghan troop 'surge'

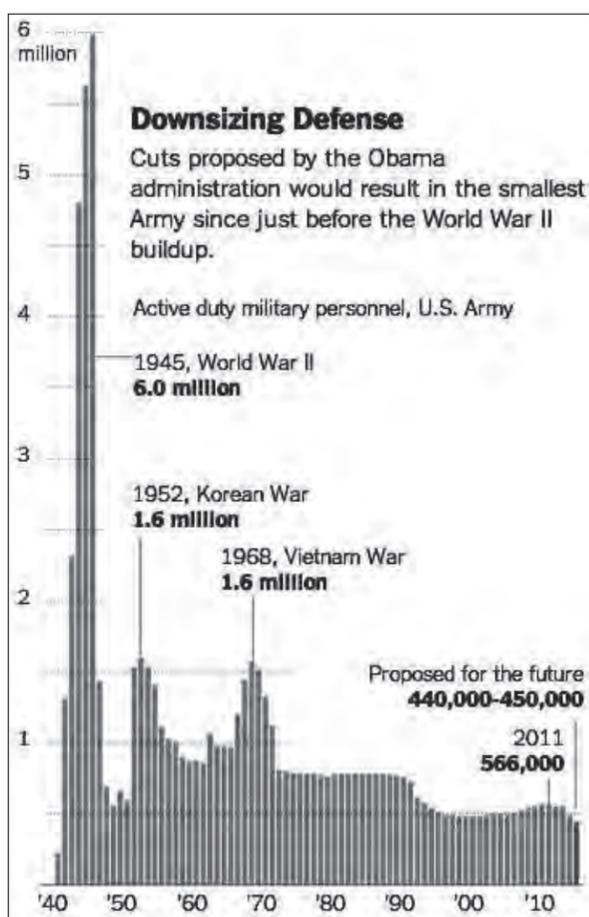
Obama ran for president in 2008 calling for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq and reinforcing those in Afghanistan. At the end of 2009 he ordered a 30,000-troop "surge" there. But the president "did not really believe the strategy he had approved would work," wrote Robert Gates, former defense secretary under Obama, in his recently published memoirs.

"When he finally terminated the surge he did so in the middle of the 2012 fighting season. Militarily incoherent — but politically convenient. It allowed Obama to campaign for reelection proclaiming that 'the tide of war is receding,'" wrote Charles Krauthammer in the *American Conservative*.

"Don't 'Iraq' Afghanistan," headlined a Jan. 20 *Army Times* editorial, drawing a parallel between the Taliban reasserting its dominance once U.S. forces leave with the resurgence of al-Qaeda forces in Iraq's Anbar province, where U.S. troops fought hard battles to defeat them nearly 10 years ago.

In Syria, despite tough talk about drawing a "red line" over Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's use of chemical weapons, Obama signed a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Syrian regime's ally, for removal of these weapons that strengthened Assad's hold on power.

The military cutbacks don't represent a march toward a peaceful America. The most powerful ruling class in history finds its interests around the world more, not less, threatened — and will do what is necessary to protect them.



# 'Fight to eradicate women's oppression is integ

*Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* was released in a Spanish translation in February and is now available to be read and used for the first time in that language in the U.S. and elsewhere that Pathfinder Press books are sold.

The book — by Joseph Hansen (1910-1979), Evelyn Reed (1905-1979) and Mary-Alice Waters, three central leaders of the Socialist Workers Party — was published in English in 1986. This new Spanish edition includes a new preface by Waters, who is president of Pathfinder, and a talk by Isabel Moya, a leader of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and director of its publishing house, Editorial de la Mujer. Moya's presentation was given at a 2011 event in Havana that launched an edition of the book that was published and distributed in Cuba.

The new book has been updated with additional photos and illustrations and a glossary of terms related to the origins of women's oppression used in the book. Reprinted here is the preface by Waters. Copyright © 2014 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## PREFACE TO 'COSMETICS, FASHIONS, AND THE EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN'

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

*Beauty has no identity with fashion. But it has an identity with labor. Apart from the realm of nature, all that is beautiful has been produced in labor and by laborers.*

EVELYN REED

Half a century ago, a New York-based socialist weekly that proudly proclaims it is "published in the interests of working people" ran a humorous, if at the same time serious, exposé of plans by the cosmetics arm of the "fashion industry" to once again bolster sales and increase profit margins. It was capitalist business as usual, the *Militant* reported in 1954. The merchants of "beauty" were ramping up another advertising campaign, aimed at convincing working women they simply *had to have* a new line of products in order to be happy, secure, employable, and sexually desirable to men.

A few readers of the paper responded with angry letters to *Militant* editor

Joseph Hansen, attacking the author of the exposé, Jack Bustelo. They accused Bustelo of ridiculing working-class women and attacking their "right" to strive for "some loveliness and beauty in their lives." It turned out that "Bustelo," the brand name of a dark-roast coffee popular in New York City among Puerto Ricans and Cubans, and much liked by the paper's editor, was the pen name under which Joseph Hansen himself had drafted the article.

The lively polemic that ensued, first in the pages of the *Militant* and then continued in a discussion bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party, became a textbook in the fundamentals of Marxism. Articles originally published in the bulletin, such as Hansen's "The Fetish of Cosmetics," provided a popular introduction to the most comprehensive critique of political economy that exists, Karl Marx's *Capital*. It rendered the seeming mystery of "commodity fetishism" understandable.

In clear and pedagogical responses to Bustelo's critics, Evelyn Reed joined the debate. She explained how norms of beauty and fashion are above all *class* questions that cannot be separated from the history of the class struggle. She explained how and why ever-changing standards of "beauty" and "fashion" imposed on women — and men — are integral to the perpetuation of women's oppression. How millennia ago, as private property and class society emerged through bloody struggle, women were reduced to a form of property. They became "the second sex."

Today the fight to eradicate women's subordinate status is not reducible to simply a "woman question," Reed explained. It is an integral part of the working-class struggle for power, the



Top, Militant/Seth Galinsky

"The expansion of women's participation in the workforce worldwide during the last half century points toward women taking on greater leadership responsibilities than ever before in revolutionary working-class battles to come." **Top**, School bus workers on strike in New York, Feb. 2, 2013. **Bottom**, In recent decades, "the manufactured compulsion to 'shop,' playing on the emotional insecurities of women and adolescents above all, has only deepened and spread," writes Waters. "The pressure to be 'fashionable' — that is to be 'employable,' and attractive to a potential spouse — has penetrated even more deeply into the working class."

battle for socialism.

The "Bustelo controversy," as the polemic became known, found fertile ground in the relative prosperity of the post-World War II years in the United States. This was a period of working-class retreat as well as an emboldened offensive by the capitalist rulers to housebreak militant sections of the trade union movement that emerged from the labor battles of the 1930s and mid-1940s.

Within a few short years of the Bustelo affair, however, the political landscape had changed dramatically.

The 1959 victory of the Cuban Revolution brought renewed proof of the capacity of ordinary working people to take power and begin transforming the world they inherited. It provided unimpeachable evidence, moreover, of the vulnerability of the U.S. rulers.

In the United States, the broad radicalization of the 1960s — manifested in the mass proletarian fight to bring down the system of Jim Crow racial segregation in the U.S. South, and in demonstrations by millions opposing Washington's war to prevent the unification of the Vietnamese people and deny them their sovereignty—gave rise to a growing women's liberation movement as well. It was a movement that took to the streets, fighting to decriminalize abortion and assure its availability as a woman's right, to expand public child-care facilities, and win greater equality on the job and in employment opportunities.

At the end of the 1960s, with this explosion of the "second wave" of the modern fight by women to cast off the shackles of their second-class status beginning to spread internationally, the "cosmetics debate" became a powerful educational tool, one that was often in demand. Dog-eared copies of the mimeographed bulletin containing the articles and letters published here as *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* passed from hand to hand among hundreds, even thousands, of young women — and men — who were searching for explanations of women's oppression and how to fight to end it. The uncompromisingly historical approach and working-class perspective they found in these pages helped many to become communists — or better communists. It helped them understand that the fight to end women's oppression is inseparable from the fight to replace the dictatorship of capital and its consequent universal fetishism of commodities, with the political power of the working class and its transformed property relations.

The "cosmetics debate" entered its third life when it was published as a book in 1986, almost thirty years ago. By then the capitalist expansion born out of the brutal U.S. victory in World War II had slowed, and the relative prosperity of the postwar years was threatened. The roots of the long, grinding crisis that has now exploded internationally had begun to manifest

## Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women

by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, Mary-Alice Waters

Why do ever-changing standards of beauty, as well as moral values, always reflect those of the ruling class? How do the wealthy owners of the cosmetics and fashion "industries" play on women's insecurities to sell products and rake in profits? How have the foundations of women's oppression weakened as a result of the integration of women into the workforce? When did women become the "second sex" and what social forces have the power to end this second-class status?

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# gral part of working-class struggle for power'

themselves. With profit rates declining, many of the gains for women won by battles in the 1960s and '70s came under assault by the employers and their government.

Access to medically safe abortion services, and the *right* of a woman alone to decide whether and/or when to bear a child — the most fundamental precondition of women's emancipation — was being curtailed county by county, state by state. Affirmative-action programs that reduced divisions within the working class were beginning to be rolled back and transformed into a source of executive, professional, and academic perks that widened class divisions.

An ideological campaign — a "culture war" — was being mounted against working women, who had entered the labor market in historically unprecedented numbers in the previous three decades, especially those who had led the way into occupations previously considered male preserves. The purpose was not to permanently drive them out of the workforce, but to make them more vulnerable, more exploitable, more expendable — to *lower the price of their labor power*. The mass media that serves the interests of capital was full of articles seeking to convince readers that affirmative action is unfair to men, especially Black men, that job exclusions and wage dif-

ferentials between men and women are justified and to be expected. After all, biology *is* woman's destiny, and her primary social responsibility, and source of "fulfillment," is hearth and home.

In face of this concerted counteroffensive, the diverse class forces that had comprised the rising women's liberation movement were fractured and demobilized. It was a rout, one that mirrored what was happening in the organized labor movement.

The introduction to the first edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*, which is included here, put these mounting pressures in a broader class and historical framework. Looking back at a similar economic, political, and ideological offensive during the post-World War II years — and the promotion of the "feminine mystique," as it was called — helped clarify what was bearing down on even the most politically conscious women and men in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Included in these



Above, Library of Congress

"During World War II women had been incorporated into the labor force in larger numbers than ever before," said Waters. "Even more importantly, they were hired to perform many jobs from which women had previously been excluded. This broadened the social and political horizons of tens of millions of women." **Above**, Textile workers on strike in Greensboro, Ga., 1941. **Inset**, Rail workers in Clovis, N.M., 1943.



vanguard ranks were many women who had been in the forefront of efforts to break into industrial jobs in the coal mines, steel mills, factories, railroads, and building trades — jobs traditionally closed to women.

Since its first appearance, the book has sold widely in the English-speaking world, with cumulative sales topping ten thousand copies. A Farsi edition published in Tehran in 2002, today in its second printing, has sold more than four thousand. In 2010 a Spanish edition was released in Cuba by Ciencias Sociales. The first Pathfinder edition in Spanish now makes the book available to an even broader audience worldwide. The excellent translation is by Esther Pérez, the editor of *Caminos* magazine published by the Martin Luther King Center in Havana.

As each day's news accounts bring home to us ever more sharply, we are today living through the opening years of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles worldwide. The qualitative expansion of women's participation in the workforce virtually around the globe during the last half century points toward working women taking on greater leadership responsibilities than ever before in history in the revolutionary, working-class-based battles to come.

*Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* has begun its fourth life — and not a moment too soon.



Two questions asked by thoughtful readers since the initial publication of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* are useful to consider.

First, are questions addressed in a debate over cosmetics and fashions more than fifty years ago still relevant? Aren't they long bypassed?

Second, isn't Reed's article on "Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?" outdated? Hasn't knowledge of the earliest human societies moved far beyond what was known in the mid-1950s?

The response to the first question is underscored by Hansen's rhetorical question in "The Fetish of Cosmetics."

**Continued on page 10**

## Is beauty deeper than cosmetics?

From the pages of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*

Editor:

I appreciate Louise Manning's criticism in last week's *Militant* of my article "Sagging Cosmetic Lines Try a Face Lift." She raises some interesting and important questions that go beyond what was intended in my report in the July 26 issue of the declining cosmetics sales and what the hucksters plan to do about it.

On one point, however, I must disagree with her. I do not believe that "beauty is predominantly monopolized by the wealthy" and that the "wealthy are beautiful because the workers are wretched."

It appears to me that you might just as well say that "morality is predominantly monopolized by the wealthy," and that the "wealthy are moral because the workers are immoral."

If you were to try to prove that the wealthy are beautiful by citing examples, certain difficulties would at once arise. Among the bourgeoisie, what period would you choose? The period of their rise, when the closefisted miser and the puritanical house economist were the models? Or the period of imperialist expansion, when the pigeon-breasted officer strutting his war ribbons and medals is the model? Or a period of ostentatious wealth when the stockholder lounging on a yacht deck is the model? Clearly, it is difficult to find absolute beauty within bourgeois society. The ideal seems to change.

Seeking a firmer standard, we might go beyond the limits of capitalist society and compare its concepts of beauty with that of other societies. For example, the postwar American bourgeois ideal of the beautiful bosom — the upholstered, steel-girded front (or the flattened chest recently decreed by Christian Dior to replace it) — would make an interesting subject for comparative study with say the Balinese ideal where women prefer their breasts free of clothing.

In the field of cosmetics we might compare the frozen mask of the neurosis-ridden bourgeois clotheshorse with the primitive who beautifies himself by filing his teeth, putting a bone in his nose, saucers in his ear lobes, and who makes his hair alluring with rancid butter. And, really, is the one more beautiful than the other?

Even in feet, it is difficult to find an absolute standard transcending society. The current bourgeois ideal of beauty there — a woman balanced on spiked heels — is perhaps better than the ideal of the rich Chinese mandarin whose

wife, out of devotion to beauty, bound her feet. But then how do both compare with the sandal wearers? Or with those who go barefoot?

From a materialist point of view, the norms of beauty like the norms of morals, are functions of society. Although the relation may be remote, they are determined in the final analysis by the ruling class. The norms are far from fixed. And when a revolution comes along, they are often deposed with startling swiftness.

I think that when capitalist society gives way to socialism, and the new generations take stock of what they have inherited, not much in the bourgeois lumber room of morals and beauty will prove very useful.

The new society will at first probably be much more interested in truth, above all the truth about the human mind, its physical under-structure, its endowments, its relation to other minds, its potentialities and how to realize them.

From the study of such patterns in the world brotherhood of enduring peace and well-being will emerge — if I may venture a prediction — completely new and unsuspected fields where the great artists of the future will again consider the problem of beauty on a qualitatively different level.

The emphasis on cosmetics in our miserable, superficial society will then be seen for what it really is, one of the signs of the barbarism of the times. Lovers of beauty in the new society will feel no need, I believe, to decorate lilies.

As to the feeling that Louise Manning expresses of my presenting "women as being a little ridiculous" despite my good intentions, I am somewhat at a loss for an answer. I do not deny that the unconscious can play tricks on us, but I hope that I will be held responsible only for what I was aware of.

I think most of the customs and norms of capitalist society are ridiculous and even vicious, including the customs and norms of wealthy bourgeois women. As for so-called ordinary women, whether housewives or workers, I think they are beautiful, no matter how toil worn or seasoned in experience, for they are the ones who will be in the forefront of the struggle to build a new and better world.

They will be admired in future times the way we admire the hardy, ax-swinging pioneer women of America, for their beauty lies in their character and it is manifest not in the cosmetics they indulge in but the deeds they perform.

Jack Bustelo  
New York City

# Women's oppression

Continued from page 9

In the whole history of capitalism, he asks, “has the bourgeoisie ever gone about cultivating the fetish of commodities more cold-bloodedly than American big business?”

The resources devoted by capitalist enterprises to advertising and the creation of markets, far from being a thing of the past, have expanded astronomically in the last half century as the working class has been pushed into “needing” everything from must-have cell phones, to the latest model automobiles, \$500 torn blue jeans, an exploding array of “cosmetic” surgeries, designer handbags, and cosmetics-designed-to-make-you-look-like-you're-not-using-cosmetics. All these and more are pushed on hapless “consumers” without truce. The pressure to be “fashionable” — that is, to be “employable,” and attractive to a potential spouse — has penetrated even more deeply into the working class. Television and the internet greatly intensify the all-pervasive intrusions.

The manufactured compulsion to “shop,” playing on the emotional insecurities of women and adolescents above all, has only deepened and spread. The “marketing” Hansen pokes such fun at in the 1950s seems amateur by comparison to the sales techniques employed today. “Shop

munist Manifesto, “the cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which [the bourgeoisie] batters down all Chinese walls.... It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.”

As the not-so-outdated polemic of the 1950s makes clear, in periods of working-class retreat such as we have lived through the last quarter century — a period of retreat far longer and more devastating than the relatively brief post-World War II interlude — the “heavy artillery” of capitalism takes its greatest toll, including among the most politically conscious layers.



The answer to the second question is equally important.

The articles by Evelyn Reed — “The Woman Question and the Marxist Method” and “Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?” — are two of the earliest she wrote on these subjects. They were, in effect, “first drafts” of work that she continued to edit, expand, write about, and lecture on for another quarter century. This Spanish edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and*

## “The ‘culture war’ against working women sought to make them more vulnerable, exploitable, expendable. . .”

until you drop” has gone from being a humorous exaggeration to a description of an actual social condition pushing increasing numbers of working-class families into more and more debt at usurious rates.

The impact of the twenty-first century capitalist advertising “industry” is, if anything, even more insidious as it spreads into areas of the globe previously buffered to some extent from the imperialist world market. In large areas of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, marked by imperialist-enforced agricultural and industrial underdevelopment, as well as in countries previously part of the now-defunct economic and trading bloc once dominated by the Soviet Union, the siren song of the commodity fetish is an imperialist weapon like none other.

In the eloquent words of the Com-

*the Exploitation of Women*, in fact, incorporates Reed’s editing on “The Woman Question and the Marxist Method” when she prepared portions of it in 1969 for inclusion in *Problems of Women’s Liberation*. That title, along with *Sexism and Science, Is Biology Woman’s Destiny?* and Reed’s widely acclaimed book *Woman’s Evolution* have been published in editions around the world in more than a dozen languages.

The focus of the sharp polemic in *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* is what Reed often referred to as the “Hundred-Year War in Anthropology.” Here, as elsewhere, Reed defends the historical materialism of nineteenth-century anthropologist Lewis Morgan, whose work Karl Marx and Frederick Engels drew on extensively in their writings on the subject, and Morgan’s twentieth-century continuator Robert Briffault.

As Reed points out, one of the major battle lines in this century-plus war over historical materialism has been the question, does something akin to the modern bourgeois “patriarchal system of marriage and family relations [go] all the way back to the animal kingdom”? Or did what is often referred to as “patriarchy,” and the second-class status of women, arise in relatively recent times as a corner-



“Norms of beauty and fashion are above all class questions that cannot be separated from the history of the class struggle,” says Waters. In primitive society body ornamentation signified, among other things, social equality. But in class society, Evelyn Reed explains in the book, “they became fashions and decorations that signified social inequality.” Above, Nobles get ready for a day in court of French king, prior to 1789 bourgeois revolution in France.



Bottom, Militant/Bob Braxton

Counteroffensive against gains women won during struggles of 1960s and '70s included defeat of Equal Rights Amendment and restrictions on rights and access to abortion. The rulers' assault on latter has accelerated in recent years. Top, Union contingent in 1978 Chicago demonstration demanding ratification of ERA, a proposed constitutional amendment that stipulates “equality of rights under the law.” Bottom, March around Georgia Capitol building in Atlanta, Feb. 25, 2014, to protest proposed law that would further restrict access to abortion.

stone of class-divided societies?

As agriculture and animal husbandry were developed, as the productivity of human labor increased, as a surplus of food beyond that needed for mere survival became possible, didn't private rather than communal property come to dominate all social relations, including those between men and women? In that complex historical process, repeated many times in different parts of the globe, didn't a small number of men emerge for the first time as a ruling class, in bloody conflict subjugating other men — and, in the process, women as well?

“Concealed behind the debate,” Reed explains, is “a question of class struggle and class ideology.”

If class society and the accompanying subordinate status of women is only a stage of human history, one that arose at a certain historical juncture for specific reasons, then it can be eliminated at another historical juncture for other specific reasons.

If there has been an evolution of social relations through distinct stages of the prehistory and history of human society, determined by increasing levels of labor productivity and changing property relations — and accompanied by enormous, and extended, conflict and violence — then capitalism is no more permanent than the property and social relations that preceded it.

Those studying and writing today about the development of social labor and the earliest stages of social organization are able to draw on a larger and richer body of research than the earliest anthropologists, or even those of Reed's generation. Of that there is no doubt. Light will continue to be

shed on the complexities and variety of human social evolution. But as Reed points out, recognition of diversity “is no substitute for probing into social history and explaining the evolution of human society as it advanced through the ages.”

To argue that different marriage forms are found in the relics of primitive groups the world over, thus “all you have to do is pay your money and take your choice,” Reed explains, is like saying “that because there are still relics today of feudalistic and even slave class relations, there was no historical sequence of chattel slavery, feudalism, and capitalism; that all we have is merely a ‘diversity of forms.’”

The hundred-years war in anthropology is far from over. If anything, the dominance today of “politically correct” ideologues, comfortable in their middle-class academic and professional sanctuaries, who dissolve difficult questions of history and the forms of class struggle into the soothing balm of “cultural diversity,” only sharpens the debate.



“The class struggle is a movement of opposition, not adaptation,” Reed underscores. And that “holds true not only for workers in the plants, but for women as well, both working women and housewives.” This new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* is offered as a contribution to that movement and that struggle.

As Reed expressed it in her dedication of *Woman's Evolution*, “To women, on the way to liberation.”

December 2013

# Invasion of Crimea raises threat of war

Continued from front page

in convoys that included BTR armored personnel carriers, mobile electronic warfare vehicles and transport trucks with beds packed with troops in helmets,” the *New York Times* reported.

The government of Russian President Vladimir Putin has threatened further war moves in Ukraine and beyond. Putin claims that the new Ukraine government is a mob of fascists and anti-Semites who are attacking Russian-speaking Ukrainians. Moscow asserts it has the right to intervene in Crimea, in eastern and southern Ukraine, and, in the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Putin also ordered military drills in the Baltic Sea. On March 4 the Russian president accused Lithuania and Poland of training “extremists” who overthrew Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. The Russian parliament voted to approve the use of force to defend Russian speakers outside Russia.

“Had Putin failed to request permission to use force,” Sergey Markov, a pro-Putin commentator, told *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, a Russian tabloid, U.S. and European NATO troops would “have been in Moscow.”

The invasion comes in response to months of mass mobilizations against the pro-Russian Ukraine government of Yanukovich. After a failed attempt to outlaw public protests and his riot police killed more than 80 protesters, Yanukovich lost all political support and fled to Russia. Millions of workers and farmers celebrated their victory in overthrowing Russian domination of Ukraine.

A new government was formed, which called for elections on May 25. Thousands remain in the Maidan — Independence Square — in Kiev, the nation’s capital, determined to place their stamp on politics. In the political space that has opened, working people are debating what course they should take to defend and extend their victory.

“Right now we are thinking what steps should we make to change the system,” said Olga Bogomolets, a doctor who helped organize the network of medical clinics in the Maidan.

She turned down two positions she was offered in the new government, saying all she sees is “a few new faces, but our goal was not to change the faces.”

## Russian propaganda

Bogomolets has been the victim of Russian propaganda that slandered the protests and branded participants as murderous thugs. *Russia Today* and other Putin-backed media have claimed that Bogomolets said protesters and police were killed with the same bullets during the riot police attacks that provoked outrage and hastened the fall of the Yanukovich government.

“*Russia Today* feasted on the story, presenting it as evidence to back President Vladimir Putin’s allegation that the deaths in Kyiv came at the hands of opposition provocateurs,” the March 8 *Toronto Star* reported.

But the story is made out of whole cloth. Bogomolets said the only people she saw who were killed were protesters shot by snipers.

There is also no evidence to support Putin’s accusation that the protesters are carrying out anti-Semitic pogroms. The *Jerusalem Post* reported Feb. 25, that Hillel Cohen, a representative of Hatzalah Ukraine, dressed in what he called a “visibly Jewish” fashion and walked from one end of the Maidan to the other. He didn’t meet any hostility, he said. In fact, Jewish activists have been among the combatants in the fight to bring down the Russian-dominated government, including at least one of those killed by cop snipers.

Putin and the Russian capitalist interests he represents are acting from a position of weakness. The country’s economy, based overwhelmingly on natural gas and oil, is weak and vulnerable in a world where prices of these commodities are under pressure as new and cheaper supplies are coming on the market. The propertied rulers in Russia see no other road but expansion of economic and political control in the “near abroad,” as they call the former Soviet republics on Russia’s border.

Putin feels encouraged by successfully backing off the administration of President Barack Obama in Syria and elsewhere. Soon after taking office Obama promoted the notion of a “reset” with Russia and the idea that U.S. foreign policy should be based more on diplomacy and dialogue and less on military action.

Russian forces orchestrated the proclamation of Sergei Aksyonov as new Crimean prime minister Feb. 27. Aksyonov is leader of the Russian Unity party, which won a tiny percent of the votes in the last parliamentary election and elected only three of the parliament’s 100 deputies.

On the day of the “vote” the legislature building was surrounded by masked Russian soldiers. Inside, according to Russian Unity, 61 of 100 deputies were present and voted to elect Aksyonov and set a referendum for Crimea to break with Ukraine and join Russia.

However, Reuters, Norwegian *Aftenposten* and other media have reported that numerous parliament members recorded in the official minutes as voting for the bill, did not even attend the meeting, and there was no quorum.

While the press is full of reports of Crimean connections with Russia to justify Moscow’s intervention, the fact is that the region is dependent on its integration with Ukraine. It receives more than 80 percent of its water, 82 percent of its electricity and 35 percent of its gas from Ukraine, as well as almost all its coal and steel.

## Tatars a special target of Moscow

A special target of the Russian forces — who travel in military uniforms without identification in vehicles with Russian license plates — are the 270,000 native Crimean Tatars, who make up more than 12 percent of the province’s population. The Tatars have waged a centuries-long struggle against Russian national oppression — broken only by a flowering of national culture under the rule of Crimean workers and farmers allied with the Russian Revolution under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party and V.I. Lenin in the 1920s.

After the death of Lenin, a privileged social layer growing in the government apparatus carried through a counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin. The Stalinist regime arrested and murdered Tatar revolutionary leaders, reimposed Russification policies of the czarist era and trampled on the national rights of non-Russian people in Crimea and Ukraine.

Tatars have spearheaded mobilizations of tens of thousands — attended by significant numbers of Ukrainians and ethnic Russians — against the Russian invasion and secession ploy. These actions have been larger than counterdemonstrations by Russian Unity.

Refat Chubarov, leader of the Tatar Mejlis council, appealed March 6 on ATR TV for “all residents of Crimea, regardless of their ethnicity, to completely boycott” the referendum, saying there can be no free choice “at a time when there are troops on the streets.”

The referendum only allows two choices, both of which lead to separation from Ukraine. It includes no option for those who want to leave things as they are.

Tatars have also been organizing self-defense units to protect their communities from attack.

Many ethnic Russians also oppose the Russian occupation and referendum. “This is a farce,” Crimea resident Oleg Ilushkin, a railroad engineer born in Donbas, Russia, told the *Wall Street Journal*. “Who are these people to decide the course of my life and my children’s lives?”

## Pussy Riot protests in Russia

Maria Alyokhina, one of the two members of Pussy Riot sentenced to two years in prison in 2012 for protesting Putin’s election as president, published an article March 2 against the Russian occupation of Crimea entitled “Russia is repeating 1968.” The reference is to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

“Troops are marching through the streets of Crimea today,” Alyokhina said, at the same time police in Russia are “ready to grab and arrest those who have declared no to war.” Calling for action against the war and the Putin government, Alyokhina said, “We should decide how long we will live like this.”

Four days later, she and fellow Pussy Riot member Nadezhda Tolokonnikova were in Nizhny Novgorod where prisoners in the penal colony where Alyokhina had been jailed asked for their help. They were attacked by a gang of police-organized goons, who sprayed them with acidic green dye, threw garbage at them and pushed them around.

They have no plans to stop protesting.

## — EDITORIAL —

# Russian troops out!

Continued from front page

to debate, discuss and organize. Supporting their victory is part of advancing labor’s fight around the world against the bosses’ assaults on our living standards, rights and very dignity.

The Putin government’s annexationist maneuvers are being carried out under false claims of defending “self-determination” in Crimea and protecting ethnic Russians. Moscow is organizing a fake plebiscite at gunpoint as its state media spews a fountain of lies, which dries up in the face of every credible on-the-scene report. Russian speakers are not fleeing to the motherland. There is not a significant movement in Crimea in favor of joining Russia or becoming an “independent” vassal of Moscow. Russian churches and Jewish synagogues in Ukraine are not under assault.

The propertied rulers of both Russia and Ukraine — as well as in Western Europe and America — are driven by fear of the mobilization of working people. And it has found an echo in the “left,” including among many who claim to stand for socialism and the interests of the working class.

As self-serving justification for turning their back on the mobilizations of hundreds of thousands of working people in Ukraine, much of the radical left has clung to a fantastic tale of conspiracy: “Fascist forces have taken over in Ukraine, swept to power by a secret operation engineered from Washington.” The presumption is that U.S. imperialism is the one source of all problems and the enemy of my enemy is automatically my friend.

Further confusion comes wrapped in notions that the Russian regime is a progressive force in the world because it checks the influence of U.S. imperialism. Moscow is a rival of Washington. But both are enemies of working people. And in Ukraine, it’s Russian troops that are on the ground.

Others claim there are residual gains of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia today. There are not. And if there were, would that not be also true of Ukraine? This is a case of a stronger capitalist nation, Russia, attacking a weaker capitalist nation, Ukraine. It is an example of the Great Russian chauvinism that defined the czarist empire’s “prison house of nations” and that was revived as part of the bloody counter-revolution led by Joseph Stalin in the 1920s.

This is why the truth about the early years of the Bolshevik government under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin following the 1917 Russian Revolution is so important. It is the only time in which the rights and aspirations of nations and peoples oppressed under the Russian empire were respected and championed. It is in that same Leninist tradition that the sovereignty of Ukraine must be defended today.

Hidden behind the slanders that demonstrators in Ukraine are “fascists” is a contemptuous view of workers and farmers, of their “backwardness,” their supposed ignorance and lack of sophistication. This begins with disdain toward workers at home, who naturally sympathize when they see people like them fighting against tyranny.

Working people should oppose Washington’s denial of visas to Russian officials, imperialist threats of sanctions against Russia or any U.S. intervention in the affairs of Ukraine, military or otherwise.

Workers in the U.S. and Western Europe should demand imperialist governments provide unconditional economic aid, not more loans, and cancel all debts to Ukraine on the brink of economic collapse.

And what if Ukraine joins the European Union trade alliance? We would join struggles by Ukrainian toilers against inevitable mass layoffs and other hardships the capitalist rulers of Europe would impose. And we would welcome the deeper integration of Ukrainian workers with the rest of their class in Europe.

The working class in the former Soviet republics was not defeated with the fall of the Soviet Union. The goal of the Russian regime in a war against Ukraine would be to deal the kind of blows to the morale, confidence and combativity of the working class that the Stalinist bureaucracy never did, to the chagrin of the capitalist rulers in Europe and America.

Russian troops out! Defend Ukraine sovereignty! Oppose Moscow’s war moves!