

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**‘Teamster Politics’ draws interest at Havana book fair**  
— PAGE 9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 11

MARCH 21, 2016

## DC, Chicago protesters say ‘Abortion is a woman’s right!’

BY JOANNE MURPHY

WASHINGTON — “There is only one clinic that provides abortion in Mississippi,” said Valencia Robinson. “This decision will affect us.” She and four others from Jackson, Mississippi, traveled here on a bus with abortion rights supporters from Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee to rally at the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court March 2.

As the court heard arguments in a challenge to a Texas anti-abortion law, more than 1,000 supporters of women’s rights gathered outside, far outnumbering a few dozen opponents of the right to choose abortion. Buses came from Boston, Cleveland, New York, Pittsburgh and other cities.

The same day 75 people held a sister rally at the Federal Building in Chicago. The action was called by Feminist Uprising to Resist Inequality and Exploitation, or FURIE, which has been organizing in defense of women’s right to choose abortion. Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president,

Continued on page 10

## 1,000 rail workers rally as NJ Transit strike looms

Boss media whips up anti-labor scare campaign



Militant/Jacob Perasso

March 5 rally against New Jersey Transit concession demands. Some 4,200 unionists, who have been without a contract for five years, have set March 13 as strike deadline.

BY JACOB PERASSO

WOODBIDGE, N.J. — A thousand workers — members of 11 rail unions and their supporters — rallied here March 5 to demand New Jersey Transit bosses back off concession demands and sign a contract. The railroad’s 4,200 workers are represented by a coalition of unions. The contract expired five years ago.

“Long Island Rail Road will stand by you,” Anthony Simon, general chairman of SMART/UTU union on the LIRR, told those at the rally. Workers there waged a similar contract fight in 2014.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and the big business media are whipping up a scare campaign seeking to turn the tens of thousands who rely on government-run New Jersey Transit to get to work against rail workers.

Commuters will be the ones to pay,  
Continued on page 5

## Socialist Workers Party: ‘Back workers struggles!’

BY NAOMI CRAINE

“The Socialist Workers Party supports your fight,” Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for U.S. vice president, told rail workers he joined in Woodbridge, New Jersey, to rally against New Jersey Transit’s concession demands March 5. Unions involved have set a strike deadline of March 13. “If you walk out, I’ll be on the picket line and urge other workers to do the same.”

**SOLIDARITY WITH WORKING PEOPLE OF SYRIA!**  
— SWP statement page 10

Hart and Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy put the struggles of working people worldwide, from Syria to Ukraine to Puerto Rico, at the heart of their campaign. The worldwide crisis of capitalist production and trade — and the attacks on workers and farmers that it produces — along with the increasing breakup of the “world order” Washington and its imperialist allies imposed after World War II, affect every struggle by working people.

Millions of workers and others in the U.S. are fed up with all the bour-  
Continued on page 6

## Idaho protest: ‘Arrest sheriffs who killed rancher Jack Yantis’



Justice for Jack

Some 100 people marched in Council, Idaho, March 5 to keep attention on the Nov. 1 killing of rancher Jack Yantis by sheriff deputies. “We don’t trust the police,” said Rebecca Barrow.

BY EDWIN FRUIT

COUNCIL, Idaho — “Every voice, every face, every pair of feet will make Jack and his family proud,” co-chair Michael McLaughlin told a rally of some 100 people before they marched here March 5 demanding justice for Jack Yantis, a cattle rancher who was shot dead by Adams County sheriff deputies Brian Wood and Cody Roland Nov. 1.

Yantis had been called by police

to put down one of his bulls that had been hit by a car near his ranch. Yantis’ wife Donna and his nephew Rowdy Paradis were with him when he took aim at the bull, which was suffering after the deputies shot it but failed to kill it. He was spun around by one of the deputies, who grabbed the scope of Yantis’ rifle, and then shot by the other.

His wife and nephew tried to go to

Continued on page 8

## Washington’s Syria deal with Moscow aims at securing interests of US rulers

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Washington and Moscow have firmed up an arrangement aimed at meeting their national interests in Syria that includes consolidating President Bashar al-Assad’s control over large parts of western Syria. The deal has brought a reduction of hostilities in a number of areas of the country, but allows Russian bombers, Assad’s troops and their allied combatants from Iranian special forces and Hezbollah to selectively hammer foes of Assad’s brutal regime.

The modern history of the Middle East is one of regimes and borders imposed by deals among the stronger capitalist powers — like the secret 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement between the rulers of France and the United Kingdom that carved out today’s Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey. From weakness, U.S. imperialism today feels incapable of using its full military might and is driven to seek help from Moscow in an effort to achieve some stability in the region to protect its economic and political interests.

As part of the deal, Washington

seeks to prevent the Turkish government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan — which opposes Assad and feels threatened by the changing situation in Syria as well as by the growing strength of Kurdish forces in both Syria and Iraq — from provoking new confrontations with Moscow.

Continued on page 10

### Inside

New UN sanctions, US war ‘games’ threaten North Korea 2

Start with the class struggle, not capitalist laws, courts 4

Lea Bockman: 45-year cadre of Socialist Workers Party 7

—On the picket line, p. 5—

United Airlines mechanics say ‘No!’ to company takebacks

Locked-out New Zealand meat workers win jobs back



# New UN sanctions, US war ‘games’ threaten NKorea

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.N. Security Council voted a range of new trade and shipping sanctions against North Korea March 2 that U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power called the strongest “in more than two decades.” On March 7, Washington and Seoul kicked off one of their largest joint military maneuvers on the Korean Peninsula, mobilizing 300,000 South Korean and 15,000 U.S. troops. The annual exercise, called Key Resolve and Foal Eagle 2016, is aimed at intimidating the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the North.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry responded with a statement protesting the Washington-Seoul maneuvers, calling them “dangerous war rehearsals.”

The new U.N. sanctions — introduced by Washington and Beijing and passed unanimously — mandate the inspection of all cargo to and from North Korea, bans the shipment of jet fuel and all weapons sales, and restricts exports of coal, gold, titanium ore and rare earth minerals.

More than 90 percent of North Korea’s foreign trade is with China. The *Nikkei Asian Review* reports the Chinese government has already begun implementing the coal ban at Dandong, China’s largest city bordering North Korea. In a concession to Beijing, the trade ban excludes oil exports to North Korea and the contracting out of North Korean workers in other countries. Thousands of workers from North Korea work in northeast China,

bringing sorely needed income to the Koreans.

Philippine authorities announced March 5 that they had seized a North Korean freighter, one of 31 North Korean ships listed by the U.N. as banned from entering foreign ports. The ship was unloading palm kernels.

At the same time Beijing barred cargo ship Grand Karo from docking in Rizhao, and two other freighters on the U.N. blacklist sailed away after being anchored off Chinese ports.

The pretext for the punishing new sanctions, which hit working people the hardest, is the North’s Jan. 6 test of a small nuclear weapon and the successful Feb. 7 launch of a communications satellite. The Security Council demands Pyongyang end its nuclear weapons program, but says nothing about Washington’s deployment of nuclear weapons on U.S. ships and warplanes in the region.

Washington and North Korea officially remain in a state of war. The U.S. government has refused to sign a peace treaty with the North, 63 years after the Korean people fought to a standstill U.S.-led, U.N.-uniformed forces that divided the Korean Peninsula in two.

Washington has refused repeated demands by the North Korean government to agree to an end to the war, saying Pyongyang has to agree to “denuclearization” first.

### War ‘games’ target North Korea

With their habitual cynicism, U.S. commanders informed the North Ko-



Sipa via AP/Lee Young-ho

March 7 protest near U.S. Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, against joint U.S.-South Korean military maneuvers. Over 300,000 troops are carrying out mock attacks, including “decapitation” raids simulating mission to eliminate leadership of North Korean government.

rean government that their two-month military exercises with Seoul, with hundreds of thousands of ground, air, naval and special operations troops, has a “non-provocative nature.”

According to the *Washington Post*, the maneuvers include practicing for strikes against nuclear and missile facilities as well as “decapitation” raids to simulate elimination of North Korea’s central leadership.

The same day the Security Council adopted the sanctions, the South

Korean National Assembly passed a “counterterrorism” bill expanding the power of the government’s National Intelligence Service, allowing it to wiretap and access financial records of anyone it considers a terror suspect.

The March 2 vote took place after the Minjoo Party, the main opposition party, ended a nine-day filibuster protesting the bill. The entire opposition walked out of the assembly and the bill was passed with only the votes of the ruling Saenuri Party.

## ‘Militant’ announces staff volunteer Naomi Craine to be managing editor

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Naomi Craine, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, has been assigned as the managing editor of the *Militant*. John Studer remains the paper’s editor.

Craine organizes production work involved in putting the paper out and fills in as editor when Studer, who also serves as the national campaign director for the Socialist Workers Party, takes time to attend to those responsibilities.

Craine, 45, moved to New York to join the volunteer staff in early 2015, after spending several years in Miami, where she was SWP branch organizer

and worked in a marine hardware factory. In Florida she helped organize activities defending the Cuban Revolution and demanding release of the Cuban Five from U.S. jails, and was the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Florida in 2014 and U.S. Senate in 2012.

She had written for the *Militant* starting in 1992 and served as editor from 1996 through 1999.

Craine, a leader of the New York Socialist Workers Party, is active in a coalition organizing a citywide public meeting for leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women March 19.

THE MILITANT

*Protest cop brutality and killings*

*From Baltimore to Salt Lake City to Seattle and Council, Idaho, the ‘Militant’ covers fights against cop brutality and killings. It points to the importance of these actions for strengthening the working class and forcing the capitalist rulers to begin to rein in their police.*



Salt Lake Tribune/Lennie Mahler  
Friend of Abdi Mohamed, shot by cops in Salt Lake City, speaks at Feb. 29 rally there.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

☐ \$20 for 6 months

☐ \$35 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

E-MAIL

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,  
306 W. 37TH ST., 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 80/No. 11

Closing news date: March 9, 2016

Editor: John Studer  
Managing Editor: Naomi Craine

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Gerardo Sánchez, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in August and one week in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman  
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899  
Fax: (212) 244-4947  
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com  
Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £26 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, 2nd Floor, 83 Kingsland High St., Dalston, London, E8 2PB, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 120 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15.

New Zealand: Send NZ\$55 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$55 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

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.



# Iran vote shows support for nuke deal, political openings

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Feb. 26 election in Iran points to the popularity there of the nuclear accord signed with Washington, Moscow and others last July leading to the lifting of crippling sanctions against Tehran that hit working people hardest.

Both major bourgeois political forces in Iran — those associated with President Hassan Rouhani and his “reformist” allies and those associated with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guards — supported the pact and ensured its terms were swiftly implemented.

Candidates backed by Rouhani won at least 85 seats in the 290-member parliament, including control of all 30 delegates from Tehran.

About half the candidates who registered to run, many backed by Rouhani, were disqualified in pre-election rulings by the government’s Guardian Council, which Khamenei controls. It refused to allow the Kurdish United Front to enter the election as a Kurdish party. Nonetheless, three Kurds from different parts of the country did win legislative seats.

The *New York Times* reported that as many as 20 women were expected to win parliamentary seats, a record for Iran.

Parliament’s powers, however, are limited, as decision-making on key issues remains in the hands of Khamenei.

The results, coupled with the easing of the economic squeeze caused by the sanctions, opens room for workers to practice politics and advance their interests.

Candidates linked with Rouhani also made some gains in elections held the same day to the 88-member clerical Assembly of Experts, which chooses a new Supreme Leader when the current one dies.

“While the government and its supporters clearly won a sweeping victory in the capital, the picture in the rest of the country is much more diffuse,” reported the *Times*. Khamenei and the Guards — who control the military and key aspects of production and trade — have no intention of yielding political and economic power. This points to the danger of sharp clashes if they feel threatened.

Washington seeks to build on the nuclear deal to deepen collaboration with Tehran, and with Moscow, to influence politics in the broader area and protect its interests. Rouhani, who held various high-level government responsibilities for more than two decades prior to being elected president in June 2013, is open to advancing collaboration for mutual benefit.

In February 1979, oil, rail and other workers in massive mobilizations led a revolution that toppled U.S.-backed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his repressive regime. Workers organized factory councils, as did farmers and students. Washington lost a bulwark in defense of its interests in the Middle East.

Counterrevolutionary clerical forces led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini organized goon squads to attack revolutionaries and fighting workers and prevent encroachments on capitalist rule.

In September 1980 Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi army, then backed by Wash-

## Seattle march protests cop killing of Che Taylor



Militant/Clay Dennison

SEATTLE — Chanting “Whose life matters? — Che’s life matters,” more than 100 people marched and rallied in front of police headquarters here Feb. 25 to protest the killing of Che Taylor by Seattle cops five days earlier. Many people joined in as the demonstration went through downtown. Protesters demanded Michael Spaulding and Scott Miller, the two cops who fired at Taylor, be charged and that Police Chief Kathleen O’Toole be fired.

“We have a purpose. The cause must be clear, we must not be destructive,” André Taylor, above left, Che’s brother, told the rally. “Let us tell the police and every city official: “Not this time.”

“This is not just about Che,” Taylor said. “It is about a cause.”

Gerald Hankerson, Seattle King County NAACP president, called the shooting “cold-blooded murder” at a Feb. 23 press conference. He said police efforts to highlight Che Taylor’s felony record were an attempt to tarnish him. “Whatever he did in life,” Hankerson said, “is irrelevant to us.”

The family and supporters invited people to attend Che Taylor’s March 5 funeral, publicizing the time and place on the Internet.

— CLAY DENNISON

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### MINNESOTA

#### Minneapolis

**Flint Water Crisis — Crumbling Infrastructure and the Rulers’ Contempt for Working People.** Speaker: Helen Meyers, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 18, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**Class Struggle in United States, the Cuban Revolution Today Focus of New Books on Cuban Five at Havana International Book Fair.** Speaker: Patrick Brown, Communist League in New Zealand and volunteer at Pathfinder booth at Havana book fair. Sat., March 19. Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 6:30 p.m. Upstairs 281-7 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

### CANADA

#### Calgary

**Washington-Moscow Deal on Syria Disregards Disaster for Working People.** Speaker: Katy LeRougetel, Communist League. Fri., March 18, 7:30 p.m. 4909 17th Ave. SE. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

#### Montreal

**Drop Frame-Up Charges Against Rail Workers Tom Harding and Richard Labrie! New Revelations Show Government, Rail Boss Collusion to Boost Profits Was Behind 2013 Lac-Mégantic Disaster.** Speaker: John Steele, Communist League. Fri., March 18, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Manchester

**Moscow — A Counter Pole to Washington, London, NATO?** Speaker: Hugo Wils, Communist League. Sat., March 19, 6:30 p.m. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.

## —CALENDAR—

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**Increasing Aboriginal Adult Literacy: The Cuban “Yes I Can!” Literacy Campaign in Australia.** Speakers: Jack Beeton, Aboriginal leader and head of Literacy for Life Foundation; José Chala Leblanch, Cuban adviser to “Yes I Can!” Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign; Yexenia Calzado, Asia and Oceania department of Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples; Mary Waites, Brewarrina campaign coordinator of “Yes, I Can!”. Thurs., March 31, 5:30 p.m. Lecture Theatre 104, New Law School, Eastern Avenue, Sydney University. Tel.: Lia at 0413 753 115 or Sydney at acfs.blogspot.com.au. Supported by the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society and the Literacy for Life Foundation.

Now available online!

### New International

*A magazine of Marxist politics and theory, 1934-present*

Articles, polemics and reports by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and world communist movement. A wealth of political material bringing lessons of 80 years of the working-class movement to today’s fighters.

**Links at themilitant.com and pathfinderpress.com**

ington, attacked Iran. The war raged for several years and many of the most revolutionary-minded workers died fighting to defend the country. The Islamist counterrevolution consolidated its power, pushing the working class off center stage in politics, but the power of the 1979 revolution prevented it from crushing the working class.

To obfuscate the real situation, both Tehran and Washington always try to erase the distinction between the 1979 revolution and the counterrevolutionary developments that followed.

As the counterrevolution made gains, the Revolutionary Guards built a growing industrial empire that has continued to expand, even in the face of imperialist sanctions. They have wide control over oil, construction, transportation, telecommunications and other industries.

The sanctions had a devastating effect on the lives of working people,

including loss of jobs, rising living costs and low wages. Shifts reflected by the elections and lifting of sanctions open the door for an easing of the conditions of life and efforts to make more changes.

In mid-January, 28 workers from Khatton Abad Copper Mines were arrested after participating in a demonstration demanding reinstatement of 170 contract workers who had been promised permanent positions. Protests in Iran and internationally led to the release of 23 of them a month later. The fight continues demanding the other five be released and all charges be dropped.

Haft Tapeh sugar company workers, who founded an independent union in 2008, halted work Jan. 30 to demand payment of back wages. Two weeks later they marched to government offices to press their demands, the United Kingdom Trades Union Congress said.

## BOOKS FOR WORKING-CLASS FIGHTERS ...

### The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class

*“It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System” \$15*  
Also in Spanish

### The Jewish Question

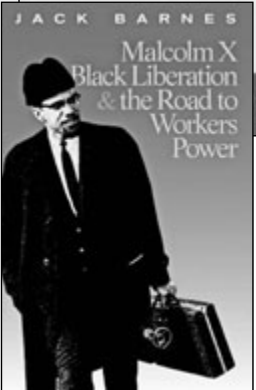
*A Marxist Interpretation by Abram Leon \$25*

### Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

*by Jack Barnes \$20*

Also in Spanish, French, Farsi, Greek, Arabic

See distributors on page 6 or visit:  
**WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM**





# Start with the class struggle, not capitalist laws, courts

BY MAGGIE TROWE

August Nimtz's letter published below addresses problems in my article "Scalia's Death Prompts Debate on Supreme Court, Bill of Rights" in the Feb. 29 issue. I agree the point isn't to discern what kind of Supreme Court the working class "needs."

The article began with the partisan debate over when and how to fill the

## COMMENTARY

Supreme Court vacancy caused by the death of Antonin Scalia, as if that had any importance to working people.

President Barack Obama and the meritocratic layer of lawyers, professors and functionaries he is part of favor the appointment of a liberal justice who will use the court to make "progressive" medicine, regardless of the law. Many on the right of bourgeois politics favor stalling until after the election, hoping for a less liberal new president who will nominate a like-minded judge to do the same.

Class-conscious workers have no interest in how long the Supreme Court seat stays vacant, or in any way "oiling the machinery of exploitation in order to make it function more smoothly and effectively," as Socialist Workers Party leader James Cannon wrote in 1937 when President Franklin Roosevelt tried to enlarge the Supreme Court to pack it with justices that agreed with him (see reprint on this page).

History shows that even small con-

cessions can't be won "without the most determined struggle," Cannon wrote. "And a genuine rectification of the gross inequalities and injustices of capitalism is to be attained only by the development of these struggles to their logical and inevitable climax — the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. A 'liberal' Supreme Court can't and won't aid these struggles. And a 'reactionary' Supreme Court can't stop them."

Cannon wrote those words when the class struggle was on the rise. Workers were building powerful industrial unions through sit-down strikes and broad regional organizing drives supported by farmers and the unemployed. It made it easier for workers to see this was the road forward, not trying to put "friends" on the bench.

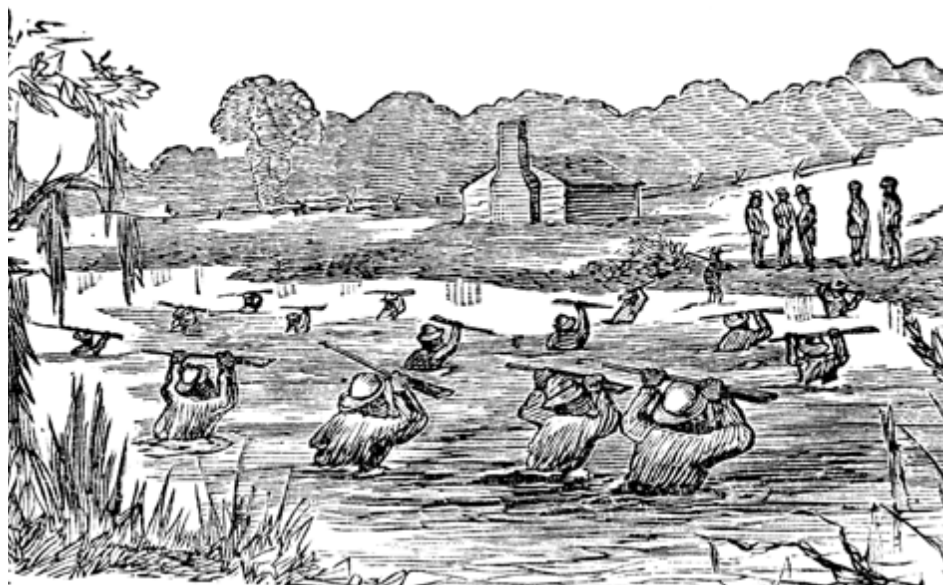
Similar editorials appeared in the *Northwest Organizer*, the newspaper of the Minneapolis Teamsters Joint Council, whose ranks included members of the Socialist Workers Party who helped lead labor battles throughout the region. The paper ran scores of articles reporting how capitalist courts ruled for the bosses and issued injunctions against the unions.

### Class struggle key

Communists don't start with the Constitution or the courts. We start with the class struggle, defending ourselves from the rulers' attempts to divide us and undermine our confidence and class-consciousness on the road to taking political power.

cent against the ridiculous illusion that the addition of a half dozen more exponents of the capitalist system to that judicial body will do away with the class struggle or materially affect the relationship between the workers and their exploiters in any way whatever.

The Supreme Court, like all other political and judicial institutions in modern society, is a class instrument, pure and simple. The conservative attitude of the court is not derived



Schomburg Center/New York Public Library

Recently enfranchised Blacks on way to vote after Civil War in Lincoln County, Georgia, rifles in hand. Legal protections won by workers can only be enforced through struggle.

The Constitution, including its amendments, is an instrument of capitalist rule. But it is marked by the impact of the revolutionary war that overthrew British colonialism and the second American Revolution that brought down slavery.

Farmers, laborers and artisans fought for and won the "Bill of Rights" amendments after the northern businessmen and southern plantation owners who wrote the Constitution declined to include protections against government attacks on freedom of speech, the right to worship and the right to bear arms, against denial of due process of law, against unreasonable search and seizure.

The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, by-products of victory of the North in the bloody four-year Civil War, prohibited slavery and guaranteed equal protection of the law and the right to vote. The enforcement of these protections, as Nimtz points out, has

only been possible through persistent working-class struggle.

Further gains were registered in struggle in winning women's suffrage and lowering the voting age to 18.

Having no solution to the capitalist crisis other than deepening attacks on working people — and fearing the inevitable response by workers and farmers — the propertied rulers have turned increasingly to growing centralization of power in the executive branch. No war since World War II has been declared by Congress; all have been launched by presidential action. Unelected federal regulatory agencies decide the outcome of union struggles to the detriment of working people, control land use to the detriment of farmers and ranchers and dictate other important questions for our class and its allies.

Workers get off track if we spend energy trying to divine which judges will act more or less in our interests, any more than if we follow the ill-advised exhortations from labor officials to vote for the "lesser evil" of the capitalist politicians.

We need to rely on ourselves, on our class. On transforming ourselves as we fight, chart a course to overthrow the dictatorship of capital and build a society based on human solidarity and organized by self-confident workers and farmers. As a by-product of that revolutionary struggle, we can extract some concessions.

## 'Workers need revolution, not judicial reform'

The following editorial appeared in the Feb. 27, 1937, issue of *Labor Action*, the paper of the *Western Federation of the Socialist Party*, which James P. Cannon edited at that time. An excerpted section is quoted in the accompanying commentary by Maggie Trowe.

We have nothing against any plan to "liberalize" the United States Supreme Court. But we are one hundred per

For further reading...

### Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

As the proletarian-based struggle for Black rights was advancing in the U.S., the social transformation fought for and won by Cuban toilers set an example that socialist revolution is not only necessary — it can be made and defended. **\$10**

### Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution

by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer

The unprecedented integration of women in the ranks and leadership was inseparably intertwined with the proletarian course of the leadership of the Cuban Revolution from the start. **\$20**

### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes

Building the kind of party working people need to prepare for coming class battles through which they will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all society. **\$24**

[www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com)



fundamentally from its composition, nor from the age of its incumbents, but from the nature of its essential function as a protecting barrier of the system of private property and private profit. Roosevelt, the "reformer," avowedly stands for the maintenance of that system just as ardently as do the nine old men on the Supreme Court bench. The quarrel between them is merely this: What is the best, most effective and economical way to protect the system of private property in the impending social storms?

The whole dispute is essentially the affair of the rulers of America and their political representatives. To us it appears that Roosevelt, with his liberal demagoguery and his policy of minor concessions to take the edge off the harsh collisions of the classes, is a more effective champion of the capitalist cause than the nine old fossils muttering into their beards. The most wide-awake and far-sighted elements of the money crowd think so too. That is why they supported him in the last election — along with the labor leaders, the old guard Socialists, the Communists and the great mass of duped workers. ...

The question is solely a question of power. The development of the workers' power to attain their historic aims — the abolition of capitalism and all its institutions, including the Supreme Court — that is the real business of the intelligent workers.

Let the bosses and their dupes argue the fine points of judicial reform. What the American workers need is a revolution.

### Letter from a reader

Dear Editor,

The *Militant's* Feb. 29 "Commentary" on the Supreme Court says, "Until working people can build a movement strong enough to overthrow the dictatorship of the capitalist class we need a Supreme Court that strictly enforces protections we have won in the class struggle and enshrined in the Bill of Rights and other constitutional amendments." That sentence suggests that workers should look to the Court for enforcing the most progressive features of the Constitution. But history says otherwise. Not until workers began mobilizing at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries did the long-dormant Bill of Rights become a living set of norms. Not until the Freedom Now movement of the 1950s and '60s, the Second Reconstruction, did the post-Civil War amendments become a reality.

August Nimtz

Minneapolis, Minnesota



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

## Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles across the country!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including Steelworkers opposing concessions, construction workers demanding safe conditions and workers fighting for \$15 and a union. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

### United Airlines mechanics say 'No!' to company takebacks

SAN FRANCISCO — For the second week in a row, hundreds of Teamster airline mechanics picketed at airports around the country Feb. 26, protesting the concession contract United Airlines is demanding. The workers had voted down by 93 percent United's "closeout proposal" 10 days earlier.

Workers are outraged that despite its huge profits in 2016, United wants to impose wage and benefit cuts on new hires. It will take new employees eight and a half years to reach full scale, whereas now it takes five years. New hires will never achieve the same amount of vacation time as those currently working.

"United wants the old-timers to retire and replace them with younger, more poorly paid workers," long-time mechanic Mikey Albertin told the *Militant* at the all-day picket here that drew about 200 people.

"Many workers voted for the B scale for new hires and regretted it later," Albertin said, referring to the success United and other airlines had in the 1980s in dividing workers and weakening the union by paying new hires less. "Now is the chance to make up for this by rejecting this contract."

Other concessions opposed by the workers include higher medical payments and opening the door to increased outsourcing of union work. Workers also want a defined pension. In the 2002 United bankruptcy their pension was replaced with a 401(k) plan.

"I am really happy to be out here protesting," said Tony Vargas, a mechanic for 30 years at the United Airlines Maintenance Base here. "To feel the energy, with so many here."

Mechanics and supporters will hold an informational picket at the J.P. Morgan Aviation, Transportation and Industrials Conference in New York City March 8 beginning at 7 a.m. Another national protest is scheduled for March 17, when members of the Association of Flight Attendants will join mechanics on the picket line.

— Betsey Stone and Tom Tomasko

### Locked-out New Zealand meat workers win jobs back

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Locked-out members of the Meat Workers Union returned to work at the AFFCO plant in Wairoa Feb. 22 having pushed back the company's attempts to weaken the union and impose a concession contract.

"We walked back in wearing our 'Union Hard' T-shirts," butcher Hilton Rohe, who has worked at the plant since 1969, said in a phone interview Feb. 23.

In another victory, union shed secretary Bertie Ratu and shop steward Charmaine Takai, who had been fired

for talking to union members on a different shift, won "interim reinstatement" at AFFCO's Rangiora plant Feb. 19.

Union members at Wairoa were locked out after their seasonal layoff last September when 200 refused to sign "Individual Employment Agreements" demanded by the company in lieu of renegotiating the union contract. The agreements include longer hours, fewer breaks, lower overtime rates and the removal of seniority on job allocation and recall from layoff.

Workers at most of AFFCO's seven other plants signed Individual Employment Agreements last June and went back to work.

The union won an Employment Court ruling Feb. 11 ordering the company to reinstate the locked-out workers on their former jobs and shifts. In response to a similar ruling in November, the company had offered only night shift work in defiance of se-

## Rail unionists rally as NJ Transit strike looms

### Continued from front page

Christie told the press March 3, saying, "It comes from them, either in fares, in taxes or a combination of both."

"The newspapers say we are demanding too much," said Dave Decker, general chairman of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, pointing to the anti-union campaign in the press. "It's outrageous that they want us to accept a substandard agreement."

The unions are seeking a contract from July 2011 through the end of 2017 with retroactive pay and wage increases of 17 percent over six and a half years.



Militant/Betsey Stone

Teamster airline mechanics and supporters picket at San Francisco International Airport Feb. 26, part of union protests nationwide against concessions demanded by United Airlines.

niority, which the workers refused.

During the lockout the unionists operated a community center, distributed food bought with donations, traveled to Parliament in Wellington and to court hearings in Auckland to publicize their fight.

Tania Kenney, a lamb cuts worker at Rangiora, told the *Militant* she organized raffles to benefit the Wairoa workers. "Some of us were also putting in money every week to help with their kids' school uniforms," she said.

While 160 union members returned

to work, another 43, who joined the union recently and were on Individual Employment Agreements before the lockout, have been told that they must reapply for their jobs. "That's our next battle," said Rohe. "We're going to look after them the way we were looked after."

These victories put workers in a better position in the ongoing fight for a union contract at the AFFCO plants. "I think people have had enough and are starting to stand up," said Takai.

— Felicity Coggan

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



### March 22, 1991

Next to the Iraqi people the Palestinians have suffered the most from the U.S.-led imperialist war in the Middle East. Working people around the world should stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and protest the blatant violations of their basic rights as well as the continuing denial of their right to self-determination.

Caught in the pincers of the imperialist war and Saddam Hussein's demagogic and false rhetoric claiming to support their struggle, the Palestinians are paying a great price.

Since the first hours of the Iraqi invasion, the 400,000 Palestinians living and working in Kuwait suffered the displacement and hardship that all workers in the region confronted as the imperialist war drive began. Now at the end of the war, they are being victimized by the Kuwaiti military forces.



### March 21, 1966

Malcolm X often said that Negroes won the "right" to die for Uncle Sam in World War II. But Uncle Sam has been even more generous in the Vietnam war. The government admits that 18.3 percent of the Americans killed in Vietnam since 1961 were Black soldiers, and a giant 22.1 percent of army enlisted men killed were Black.

In contrast, there are now about 14.8 percent Afro-Americans in Vietnam, and about 11 percent in the U.S. population as a whole.

There is only one explanation for these figures, and that is the rank racism in the U.S. armed forces which results in Negroes being sent into the worst and dirtiest fighting — to do the most dying.

The U.S. army has always been a bastion of racism. It wasn't until the Korean war that official segregation was ended in the army.



### March 22, 1941

[Franklin] Roosevelt's speech to the White House Correspondents Association last Saturday night clearly indicated the role which he has assumed as the leader of the Roosevelt-Churchill Axis in the struggle against the Hitler-Mussolini-Mikado Axis.

He graciously complimented Churchill, leader of British imperialism, but the tone and the manner were those of one who felt himself to be a superior complimenting a subordinate associate.

From now on Roosevelt, as the representative of American imperialist interests, takes charge of the struggle against Hitler Germany.

With the lend-lease law now behind him, there was no longer any note of diplomacy. Bluntly Roosevelt named Germany, Italy and Japan. It was the speech of the head of a nation at war.



# SWP: ‘Back workers struggles’

Continued from front page

geois politicians and are looking for answers to the grinding effects of years of capitalist crisis. They have responded to Donald Trump, who has strengthened his position as Republican front runner — to the horror of party leaders and liberal commentators alike. Trump extended his lead, winning contests in Michigan, Mississippi and Hawaii March 8.

Similar sentiments account for the support for Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primaries, who came back from more than 20 percent behind to win the Michigan primary.

“I’m for anybody but Hillary [Clinton],” rail worker David Blanding told Hart as he took copies of campaign flyers at the New Jersey rally.

“Working people need to break with all of the capitalist politicians and parties,” Hart said, “and rely on our own strength and organization. We need to build and strengthen our unions, use union power, and build a labor party based on the unions to mobilize against the economic, social and political attacks of the bosses, and organize along the road toward overturning this dictatorship of capital.”

Blanding took extra copies of the campaign literature, and got a subscription to the *Militant*.

## Fight for right to choose abortion

Hart and SWP supporters were among the more than 1,000 defenders of women’s right to choose abortion who rallied in front of the U.S. Supreme Court March 2. SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy took part in a sister rally in Chicago.

“Since abortion was legalized in 1973, why isn’t it considered a human right 43 years later?” Cecilia Ellis, a student from Ohio University, asked Hart.

“That’s a great question,” he responded. “This wasn’t a gift from the Supreme Court. The judges acted, on behalf of

the capitalist rulers, to try to cut short a rising movement for women’s rights. They granted the right to abortion, but ensured the fight would continue by basing it on medical criteria, which changes, rather than the basic equal rights of women guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.

“The defense of this right today is in the hands of the working class, not the Supreme Court and ‘pro-choice’ politicians,” Hart said. “That’s why the Socialist Workers Party calls for a nationwide campaign of public action to defend it. That’s how to advance the fight for equal protection for women.”

“I just got back from a trip to Cuba, where I was part of a team at the Havana book fair,” Hart told Gabrielle Lasoncy from Philadelphia. “The involvement of women in the revolution, and their participation in mass campaigns like the literacy drive after the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship there, transformed women’s place in Cuba and women themselves. As part of this, they made abortion a woman’s choice.”

## Shake-up of capitalist parties

Signs of a new capitalist downturn are growing, including a contraction in manufacturing in China, the U.S., the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Central banks in Japan, Sweden and the European Union have turned to negative interest rate schemes to try to “stimulate” the economy, without success. The bosses won’t invest in expanding production if they can’t make a profit from it.

“The Republican Party Is Shattering,” headlined a column by Peggy Noonan, former speechwriter for Ronald Reagan, in the March 3 *Wall Street Journal*. The Trump campaign shows “the top of the party and the bottom have split,” she warned. “Party leaders and thinkers should take note: It’s easier for a base to hire or develop a flashy new establishment than it is for an establishment to find itself a new base.”

“Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud,” former presidential candidate Republican Mitt Romney, declared in a March 3 speech. “He’s playing members of the American public for suckers.” It didn’t work. If anything Romney’s speech solidified Trump’s support.

Interviewed on MSNBC March 4, former Virginia Sen. Jim Webb, who dropped out of the Democratic race before the primaries, said he couldn’t support Clinton, but wouldn’t rule out



Militant photos: Top, Ellen Brickley, inset, Laura Anderson

“If you walk out, I’ll be on your picket line,” Socialist Workers Party vice-presidential candidate Osborne Hart told New Jersey Transit rail workers at March 5 action. Above, Hart at rally with NJ Transit worker David Blanding, right, and campaign supporter Craig Honts, center. Inset, Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for president, speaks at March 2 rally in Chicago defending right to choose abortion.

voting for Trump. The reason Trump gets support is not racism, Webb said, but that many see him “as the only one who has the courage to say, ‘We’ve got to clean out the stables of the American governmental system right now.’”

“If you’re voting for Hillary Clinton you’re going to get the same thing,” he said. “Do you want the same thing?”

Clinton’s campaign faces other problems that could derail it. The Justice Department announced March 2 it has granted immunity to a former State Department staffer who worked on Clinton’s private email server to cooperate in a criminal investigation into whether she mishandled classified information during her tenure as secretary of state. The administration has assigned more than 100 FBI agents to the investigation.

Polls show Bernie Sanders, whose “outsider” campaign mirrors that of Trump, would fare better than Clinton in a November election against either Trump or his closest rival Ted Cruz.

## SWP files for Senate in California

Eleanor García, an aerospace worker and Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California, filed nomination petitions March 9 to get on the ballot for an all-party June primary there.

“We are joining struggles big or small, whether labor battles to organize



or win a contract, fights to beat back attempts by the bosses to make workers pay for their crisis, actions by women demanding abortion rights, and protests against the killing of cattle rancher Robert Finicum by Oregon State police and the FBI,” García said in a press release announcing her filing.

“Today, campaign supporters are joining a rally here in Los Angeles that is part of protests worldwide calling for the release of Nadia Savchenko, a Ukrainian pilot who was kidnapped and imprisoned by authorities in Russia. And we will be at a rally of El Super workers fighting for union recognition.”

Several of García’s co-workers at Triumph Vought Aerostructures, where she’s employed as a structural mechanic, signed her petitions. “At break time I talked to a group of co-workers,” she said. “A sealer from Tennessee signed, saying I’m going to vote for you. He said it’s just so different for a worker to run for office. Some weren’t so excited and hid behind their cellphones. Another told me he wants to go campaigning with me.”

Arlene Rubinstein in Washington and Bernie Senter in Los Angeles contributed to this article.

## Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2016!

To get involved, for information, or to make a contribution, contact SWP units listed below or:

**SWP 2016 Campaign**  
227 W. 29th St, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
646-922-8186  
swp2016campaign@gmail.com

## IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

### UNITED STATES

**CALIFORNIA:** **Oakland:** 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Zip: 94621. Tel: (510) 686-1351. Email: swpoak@sbcglobal.net **Los Angeles:** 2826 S. Vermont. Suite 1. Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 643-4968. Email: swpla@att.net

**FLORIDA:** **Miami:** 7911 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 2. Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 390-8310. Email: swpmiami@att.net

**GEORGIA:** **Atlanta:** 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. Email: swpatlanta@bellsouth.net

**ILLINOIS:** **Chicago:** 2018 S. Ashland Ave. Zip: 60608. Tel: (312) 455-0111. Email: SWPChicago@fastmail.fm

**MINNESOTA:** **Minneapolis:** 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Zip: 55414. Tel: (612) 729-1205. Email: tcswp@qwestoffice.net

**NEBRASKA:** **Lincoln:** Tel: (402) 217-4906. Email: swplincoln@windstream.net.

**NEW YORK:** **New York:** 227 W. 29th St., 6th Floor. Zip: 10001. Tel: (646) 964-4793. Email: newyorkswp@gmail.com

**PENNSYLVANIA:** **Philadelphia:** 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 20. Zip: 19149. Tel: (215) 708-1270. Email: philaswp@verizon.net

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Zip: 20011. Tel: (202) 536-5080. Email: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

**WASHINGTON:** **Seattle:** 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Email: seattleswp@qwestoffice.net

### AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. Email: cl\_australia@optusnet.com.au

### CANADA

**QUEBEC:** **Montreal:** 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: clc.can@bellnet.ca **ALBERTA:** **Calgary:** 4909 17th Ave. SE, Unit 154. T2A 0V5. Tel: (403) 457-9044. Email: clccalgary@fastmail.fm

### FRANCE

**Paris:** BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15. Tel: 01 40-10-28-37. Email: milpath.paris@laposte.net

### NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** 188a Onehunga Mall, Onehunga. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140. Tel: (09) 636-3231. Email: clauack@xtra.co.nz

### UNITED KINGDOM

**ENGLAND:** **London:** 2nd Floor, 83 Kingsland High St., Dalston. Postal code: E8 2PB. Tel: (020) 3583-3553. Email: clondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** Room 301, 3rd floor, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Postal code: M1 2EH. Tel: (016) 1478-2496. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com

## A Packinghouse Worker’s Fight for Justice

The Mark Curtis Story

by Naomi Craine

The story of the victorious eight-year battle to defeat the political frame-up of Mark Curtis, a union activist and socialist sentenced in 1988 to twenty-five years in prison on trumped-up charges of attempted rape and burglary.

\$8, also in Spanish and French

pathfinderpress.com





# Lea Bockman: 45-year cadre of the Socialist Workers Party

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA — “Lea Bockman made the decision to join the SWP in the early 1970s,” Dave Prince, member of the SWP National Committee, told a meeting here Feb. 28 to celebrate her life and political contributions as a 45-year cadre of the Socialist Workers Party. Bockman died Feb. 12 at the age of 93. “She made her decision in response to big political events in the class struggle — the mass proletarian movement and social revolution that smashed Jim Crow, the actions of millions against the war in Vietnam and the courageous example of the Vietnamese fighters, and the developing fight for women’s liberation.”

Bockman became a well-known and respected party spokesperson, on the front lines of many labor and social struggles.

Among the 64 people from the Atlanta region who attended were party members and supporters; others who did not agree with Bockman’s politics, but wanted to share their respect for her and her party that they gained while debating and discussing the way forward as they fought together side by side; friends and family; and those who wanted to learn more about her political life. Rachele Fruit from the Atlanta SWP chaired the meeting.

Bockman was born in 1923 into a prominent Atlanta family, married at age 21 and raised seven children. She said that her social position protected her from the Depression and isolated her from broader society. That started to change during the second imperialist World War when she began working at the Dobbins Air Force base in Marietta training pilots on flight simulators.

The Montgomery bus boycott and response to the racist lynching of Emmett Till in 1955 had a big impact on her. “I knew the racial situation was wrong, that I had to do something about it,” she told *Southern Exposure* magazine in 1979.

Raised in a Catholic family, Bockman was chosen as the Catholic representative on a religiously mixed panel of mothers, including Coretta Scott King, organized by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. They spoke out in the early 1960s for school desegregation before PTA meetings, in classrooms and on radio and TV. She joined in building support for the Freedom Riders in the early 1960s as they fought to desegregate interstate buses and bus terminals across the South.



Freedom Riders in early 1960s fought to desegregate interstate buses and bus terminals across the South. Bockman built support for Freedom Rides and joined fight for Black rights in Atlanta.

“She came to the conclusion that the system cannot be sandpapered,” Prince explained, “and that a more fundamental question was involved: Which class will rule? Dictatorship of capital or dictatorship of the proletariat? She decided to join the party.”

“The Cuban Revolution of 1959, just 90 miles away, showed that what may have seemed impossible can be done, as did the Russian Revolution of 1917,” Prince said.

## Helps establish SWP in South

Bockman helped establish the SWP in the South, when branches were formed in Atlanta and Houston.

The SWP ran Linda Jenness for mayor of Atlanta in 1969 and then for governor of Georgia in 1970. “Lea frequently spoke for the campaign,” SWP member Ilona Gersh wrote in one of a number of messages sent to the meeting. “She was inspired by the young people coming around the party and spent a lot of time working on winning them to the Young Socialist Alliance.”

“Lea’s response to the big events of the time was to go forward with that revolutionary continuity and program,” Prince said. “You can’t decide what times you are born in but you can decide where you cast your lot.

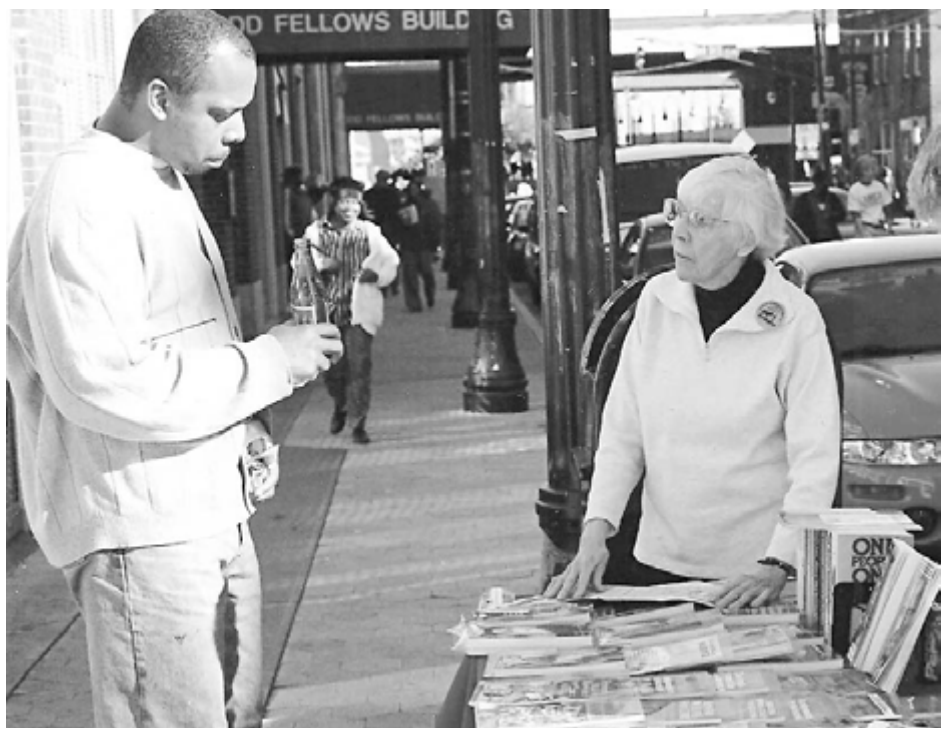
“This is what the SWP offers today as we’re living through 10 years of a smoldering depression, Washington’s war in the Middle East and the rulers’ disregard for human life in Syria,” he said, “the resistance that grows to that, and the big class battles, sooner or later, that loom ahead.”

## Fighting frame-up of Mark Curtis

James Harris, SWP National Committee member from Washington, D.C., told the meeting that in 1972 the party supported an important strike here by more than 700 workers at the Mead Packaging plant. One of the leaders of that strike, Gary Washington, attended the meeting.

“Lea seemed like a seasoned member, I didn’t realize she had just recently joined the party,” Washington said at the reception afterwards. Twenty years later he and Bockman organized speaking engagements together in defense of SWP member Mark Curtis, who was framed up, brutally beaten by cops in Des Moines, Iowa, and imprisoned in 1988 on false charges of sexual abuse and burglary.

Curtis was a packinghouse worker



Bottom, Militant/Bob Braxton

“She was ready to serve in whatever capacity we needed and highly competent in whatever she did,” said Socialist Workers Party leader James Harris at Feb. 28 meeting to celebrate life of Lea Bockman. Top, Bockman at SWP literature table. Bottom, audience at meeting.

involved in a fight to defend the rights of immigrant workers at the big Swift plant where they worked. Thousands of people worldwide joined the struggle to free Curtis. He was released on parole in 1996.

“In 1974 Lea and I were on the front lines in mass demonstrations against police killings here,” Harris said, “that eventually led to the firing of the police chief.” Harris also spoke about the party’s participation in Black farmer struggles in the late 1990s against systematic racial discrimination they faced from the U.S. government.

“Lea was part of the many trips we took to the countryside to get to know these farmers,” Harris said. “Some of them began to look broader and became interested in the Cuban Revolution, taking trips to Cuba to ‘learn how to fight,’ as they put it.”

Bockman helped organize a 2002 tour of the South for Victor Dreke, who fought with Che Guevara in the Cuban Revolution and in the Congo and who remains active in Cuba today. “She was ready to serve in whatever capacity was needed and highly competent in whatever she did,” Harris said. “We had just finished a petitioning campaign to get a candidate on the ballot and we hadn’t planned how to get the petitions notarized. Lea announced she had become a notary public.”

In the mid-1970s a wave of struggles broke out by coal miners, steelworkers and others, signaling new opportunities to carry out communist politics in the industrial unions. The SWP decided to get its members into the unions, to wage fights from within the unions, to win solidarity for social struggles and revolutionary battles worldwide, and win recruits to the party.

Jeff Rogers from Atlanta described how he was one of 15 workers fired by Lockheed-Georgia in late 1980 and early 1981 for their connection with the SWP.

“The fight against these firings,” SWP

member Chris Hoeppner, another of the fired workers, wrote in a message, “uncovered an elaborate network of company spies and surveillance aimed at the union and at all those who held ideas the company disagreed with.”

“This was part of the COINTELPRO program of the U.S. government against all kinds of organizations,” Rogers said. “Lea helped win broad support for our fight in the labor movement and from civil rights leaders and religious figures. She was 100 percent.”

The SWP filed a lawsuit in 1973 exposing decades of covert spying and disruption against the SWP by the FBI and other federal police agencies, Rogers said. The party won the suit, along with an injunction against the government using any of their spy files. This victory, he said, is a weapon in the hands of working people fighting today to keep open political space to speak, organize and act in our own interests.

“The party jumped into the explosive rise of the women’s liberation movement in the 1970s,” Atlanta SWP leader Susan LaMont said. “Lea saw abortion rights as a central question for the working class in order for women to be part of coming class battles.

“She was a tenacious debater for the party’s program, explaining there are no personal solutions, no reforms to end women’s oppression within the framework of capitalist society,” LaMont said.

“I didn’t know her, I wish I had,” Devon Harris, a young retail worker, said after the meeting. “It leads me to want to act on what’s not right. And to know more about the party.”

There was a display of photos and other material on Bockman’s contributions to building the party and the class battles that shaped the party’s political activities over those years, along with a book of all the messages received for the meeting. Volunteers prepared a delicious spread of food. Participants at the meeting contributed \$2,082 to advance the work of the party.

# US gov't expands frame-up against Nevada ranchers

BY SETH GALINSKY

U.S. prosecutors issued an expanded indictment March 2 accusing 19 ranchers and others of criminal charges for their role in an April 2014 confrontation between federal agents and supporters of Nevada cattle rancher Cliven Bundy.

Several hundred people, including some armed members of militia groups, forced Bureau of Land Management agents and heavily armed federal cops to back off on attempts to sell 400 cows belonging to Bundy that the U.S. government seized, claiming they were illegally grazing on federal lands.

Six of those charged, including Cliven's sons Ammon and Ryan Bundy, were already in jail awaiting trial on frame-up charges of "conspiracy to impede a federal officer" for their participation earlier this year in the peaceful occupation of the Malheur bird refuge in Harney County, Oregon. That action was organized to draw attention to the frame-up and imprisonment of father and son Harney County ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond as well as to U.S. policies that are driving many smaller cattle ranchers off the land and destroying their livelihoods.

Cliven Bundy was arrested at the Portland airport Feb. 10 while on his way to visit Ammon and Ryan in jail.

"Why arrest and indict him now?" Mike Arnold, Ammon Bundy's attorney, told the *Militant* from Eugene, Oregon, March 5. The U.S. government took no action for nearly two years, even though Cliven Bundy had traveled all over the country, he said. "Many believe this is just in retaliation."

Arnold said many liberals and environmentalists in Oregon "are just going crazy demanding that the Bundys be incarcerated without their due process rights being honored because they don't agree with their views, saying they are rightists. Don't they realize that this could be used against their rights too?"

Ammon Bundy told the *Oregonian* March 3 that he takes his inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr. "We needed to make a lot of noise to get people to understand what is happening," he said.

Those charged in the April 12, 2014, protest in Bunkerville, Nevada, face 16 felony counts ranging from "Conspiracy to Commit an Offense Against the United States," "Use and Carry of a Firearm in Relation to a Crime of Violence" and "Interstate Travel in Aid of Extortion." They face sentences of up to 20 years in prison and confiscation of their farms.

In fact, no violence occurred at the protest.

The indictment charges Cliven Bundy with broadcasting a video with "false, deceitful and deceptive statements to the effect that the BLM was stealing BUNDY's cattle." It says the protest was "conspicuous" for flying the Nevada state flag above the U.S. flag.

The interstate travel charge doesn't say Bundy traveled outside Nevada.

It is for use of "the internet or world-wide web, with the intent to commit a crime of violence" by asking supporters from other states to come to their ranch to stop federal agents from taking Bundy's cattle.

## 'Wild, mean, ornery cows'

The political and vindictive nature of the charges comes through clearly in the government memorandum asking the U.S. District Court to deny bail to Cliven Bundy.

The memo charges that Bundy lets his cattle "run wild on the public lands with little, if any, human interaction" and that his cows "are wild, mean and ornery."

The Bundy family began ranching in 1877. Like most ranchers in the West they had no choice but to use federal land to graze. Nearly 50 percent of all land west of the Mississippi River is owned by the federal government; in Nevada 87 percent is under federal control.

The Bundy's had grazing permits from the Bureau of Land Management from 1953 until 1993.

After the desert tortoise was listed as "threatened" in 1990 under the Endangered Species Act — and even though federal agencies admit there is no proof that livestock grazing harms tortoise populations — the Bureau of Land Management slashed the number of cows they would allow on federal land.

In 1993 the BLM "modified" the Bundy permit, limiting him to only 150 cows, not even close to the number needed to stay in business. Bundy stopped paying grazing fees or applying for permits, but kept grazing his cattle.

The government says Bundy owes more than \$1 million in grazing fees and fines, but refuses to say how it calculated that figure.

## Idaho protest: 'Arrest sheriffs who killed Jack Yantis!'

Continued from front page

his aid, but were stopped by the cops and handcuffed. Donna Yantis suffered a heart attack.

"The sheriffs had no reason to have their guns drawn, let alone kill him," Jerry Yantis, another of Jack's nephews, told the *Militant*.

It's been 126 days since the shooting, co-chair Rebecca Barrow told the rally, and "we have heard nothing from the state of Idaho."

"We don't trust the police department. If they can murder somebody in Council they can murder anyone in this nation," she said.

A large banner at the front of the march to the sheriffs' office said, "Justice for Jack." Signs included "Ranchers lives matter," "Your badge is not a license to kill," and one carried by the Socialist Workers Party that read "Prosecute sheriffs who shot Jack Yantis." People driving and walking past the protest waved and honked in support.

Several at the rally pointed to the connection between the problems that ranchers and farmers face in Idaho and those that led to recent protests and the

## Protests hit FBI, Oregon cops ambush of Finicum

Protests took place in more than 30 cities and towns in the West and across the country March 5, including 70 people in Bend, Oregon, right, demanding an independent investigation into the killing of Arizona rancher Robert "LaVoy" Finicum by Oregon State Police and the FBI. Finicum, along with other participants in the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge outside Burns, Oregon, were on their way to a community meeting off the refuge Jan. 26 when they were ambushed by cops.

Finicum, Ammon Bundy and others organized the occupation to draw attention to the frame-up of father and son Oregon ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond, as well as to federal policies that are driving ranchers and farmers off the land. For decades federal authorities pressed the Hammonds to sell them their land and harassed them when they refused. They used the Bill Clinton-era Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act to push up their sentences and imprisoned them twice for the same small fires. Ranchers throughout the West have protested against the frame-up of the Hammonds.

"There's a lot of rights being taken away from us," Keith Hart told KTVZ News, "and LaVoy getting killed — that was a complete murder."

A handful of environmentalists held a counterprotest in Bend hailing the police action.

— SETH GALINSKY



Militant/Louise Goodman

Until the tortoise was listed as endangered there were some 50 cattle-ranching families in Clark County, Nevada. Bundy was not the only one to fight the restrictions. But one by one, all the rest gave up.

While other ranchers sympathize with Bundy's plight, there are a wide variety of opinions on the April 2014 protest and Bundy's position that the federal government has no right to the land.

The government regulations are "causing rural communities in the West to wither on the vine," the Nevada Cattlemen's Association said at the time of the protest, but added it "does not condone actions that are outside the law in which citizens take the law into their own hands."

occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are trying to put ranchers and farmers out of business so that the federal government can acquire their land, said Iva Henderson, who runs a small farm in Pollock.

Alvin Yantis, Jack's brother, told the *Militant* his ranch was started up by his grandmother decades ago under the Homestead Act. He was recently given a noncompliance order. "We paid for the rights to graze our cattle on federal land and now they are saying we overgraze," he said, an example of the harassment ranchers face.

Jerry Yantis said he went to Oregon and took part in protests against the killing of Robert "LaVoy" Finicum, one of the occupiers of the Malheur refuge, who was killed in an ambush by the FBI and Oregon State Police Jan. 26. Finicum and other participants in the occupation were on their way to speak at a community meeting in John Day, Oregon.

"We tried to have a meeting in Halfway, Oregon, to demand justice for both

The "ornery cow" memo has been used to slander the ranchers. A March 2 story by Fox News reporter Hollie McKay uses the government memo to bolster claims the cows owned by the "rogue rancher" are "left to fend for themselves year-round, fighting off predators and scrounging for the meager amounts of food and water," while they destroy fragile plant species and sacred Indian artifacts.

McKay says government officials don't know what to do about the "unruly herd" and that they may be sold by the Bureau of Land Management.

McKay's story is "full of false information," Carol Bundy, Cliven's wife, wrote on the family's Facebook page March 2. "She interviewed me and didn't add anything I said."

my uncle and for Finicum," Yantis said. "No place would rent us a space for a peaceful meeting. We ended up doing it in someone's backyard."

Letters of solidarity were sent to the rally by Anita Wills and Dolores Piper, both of whom have been involved in protests against police brutality in the San Francisco Bay area.

"When reading the police account of Mr. Yantis' killing, it seemed like déjà vu because it is the stock answer we get here," wrote Wills, who is active in the National Stolen Lives Tour. "We here in the Bay Area send solidarity to the people who are standing up for Jack Yantis. We want justice for all of our murdered loved ones."

The Yantis family and organizers of the action welcomed support from other areas. They thanked people who came from other parts of Idaho, Oregon, Salt Lake City and Seattle. Many said they didn't know Yantis personally but wanted to show solidarity.

Rally co-chairs McLaughlin and Barrow said they want to get Yantis' case more widely known and plan to hold further protests.



# ‘Teamster Politics’ draws interest at Havana book fair

Book ‘shows how workers, with leadership they deserve, can transform their unions into instruments of struggle’

BY RÓGER CALERO  
AND OSBORNE HART

HAVANA — Representatives of Cuba’s trade union movement joined others here in launching the Spanish translation of *Teamster Politics*, by Farrell Dobbs, at a Feb. 13 event during the Havana International Book Fair.

*Política Teamster*, published by Pathfinder Press, is the third of a four-volume series by Dobbs offering a firsthand account of the historic labor battles and organizing drives led by Local 574 of the Teamsters union in the Midwest in the 1930s.

The book was presented by Heriberto González, who works with the Americas department of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), and Martín Koppel, editor of the Spanish-language translation of the book. Among union leaders in the audience were Aníbal Melo, head of the North America department of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) — the country’s union federation — and members of the transportation workers union.

The program followed a presentation of Pathfinder’s Spanish-language edition of *50 Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington’s Political Police and the American Working Class*. That title was presented by long-time Cuban leader Ramón Sánchez-Parodi and Pathfinder President Mary-Alice Waters. (An article on this meeting appeared in the March 7 *Militant*.) Many in the audience attended both events.

## Lessons of Teamsters battles

The Teamster books, Koppel said, “show how workers, if they have the leadership they deserve, can begin to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary working-class struggle.” He described the course, presented in *Teamster Politics*, that the Minneapolis Teamsters leadership carried out “toward unifying the working class and its allies to overcome divisions fostered by the employers.”

Those efforts included organizing the unemployed as a Federal Workers Section of the union; deploying a sizable Union Defense Guard that stopped a fascist group’s recruitment operations in Minneapolis; mobilizing labor opposition to Washington’s imperialist war aims in World War II; and promoting a course of political action independent of all capitalist parties, including the need for workers to organize a labor party based on the unions.

Today, as a smoldering world economic depression unfolds, capitalism is pushing more and more workers to fight, Koppel said, and the course of struggle explained in *Teamster Politics* is an example working people can study and draw on.

González said the account in *Política Teamster* “offers a class approach and is little known” in Cuba and other countries. The publication of the book in Spanish “is a valuable and timely contribution to making known this struggle by workers in the United States.” He pointed to the role of Dobbs and other leaders of the Communist League, precursor of the Socialist Workers Party, in the leadership of the Minneapolis truckers union.



Militant photos by Patrick Brown  
**Cuban trade unionist Heriberto González, above center, speaks at Feb. 13 Havana book fair on *Teamster Politics*, Pathfinder book on class questions that faced fighters building the Teamsters union in the 1930s. With him are Martín Koppel, right, editor of book’s Spanish translation, and moderator Róger Calero. Inset, participants buy books. Right, Philippe Tessier of Communist League in Canada.**



He underscored how the Teamster militants confronted attacks by both the national union bureaucracy and the U.S. government. This included an FBI frame-up of its central leaders under the newly adopted Smith “Gag” Act on charges of conspiring to “advise and teach” the revolutionary overturning of the US government.

González said this panel was part of many years of collaboration between the Havana-based regional office of the WFTU and the Socialist Workers Party. In 2009 leaders of the WFTU and Cuba’s National Sugar Workers Union spoke at the launching of the Spanish translation of the first two volumes of Dobbs’ series, *Teamster Rebellion* and *Teamster Power*.

In the discussion period, an audience member asked the speakers to comment on the argument frequently heard in the capitalist world that the working

class and the unions are becoming superfluous because workers are “being replaced” by robots.

González and Koppel replied that capitalist bosses cannot eliminate the working class. The exploitation of workers who must sell their labor power to survive is the bosses’ source of surplus value. Together with the earth’s natural resources, it is the source of their profits. Under capitalism, Koppel said, bosses use technological advances to squeeze more labor out of fewer workers, increasing safety hazards, and these are among the conditions that push workers to fight and organize.

Speaking from the audience, Isabel Monal, a revolutionary fighter since the 1950s and today editor of the Cuban magazine *Marx Ahora* (Marx now), pointed to what Marx and Engels wrote about the role of the ruling class in the capitalist economy. With the disaster

that capitalism is producing worldwide today, she said, one would have to ask, “Which class is really superfluous, the working class or the bourgeoisie?”

Sales of *Política Teamster* and other Pathfinder titles throughout the Feb. 11-21 book fair indicated noticeably greater interest in the U.S. class struggle than in previous years. In addition to the many who purchased *Teamster Politics*, eight people bought sets of all three volumes available in Spanish.

“To really understand what happened, I think I need to read all three,” said David Martínez, a Honduran youth studying in Cuba, who attended the book launch. “Then I’m going to send them to trade unionists I know in Honduras.” Martínez was glad to hear that the final volume in the Teamster series is scheduled to be published in Spanish next year.

Two days before the book presentation, the CTC invited three communist workers from the United States and Canada — part of the team introducing Pathfinder books at the book fair — to meet workers and union leaders at Autochapt, a shop that repairs and rebuilds cars, small trucks and buses. Nearly two years ago the former state enterprise was reorganized as a cooperative.

The visitors learned how the 156 workers at Autochapt are part of efforts by Cuban working people to confront today’s economic challenges and improve working and living conditions. The CTC also hosted a visit to another cooperative in Havana that makes construction materials. Cooperative members at both shops are members of the construction workers union.

A presentation of *Política Teamster* at a Havana depot for long-distance truck drivers is scheduled for early May. The event, organized by the CTC, is planned to coincide with the participation of U.S. delegations in activities to celebrate May 1, International Workers Day.

## SWP leader ‘talks with Cuban construction workers’

Printed below are major excerpts from a Feb. 11 article in the Cuban trade union newspaper *Trabajadores*, titled “US Political Activist Talks with Cuban Construction Workers.”

BY VIVIAN BUSTAMANTE

The strength of the working class in Cuba was emphasized by activist Mary-Alice Waters, a member of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. She is visiting the island with a schedule filled mainly with presentations at the International Book Fair of books aiming to educate people in her country about Cuba.

She pointed to the Cuban people’s resistance to decades of an unjust blockade, in face of which they have nonetheless maintained a socialist revolution that is an example for the world.

Waters, who is also president of Pathfinder Press, had a brief exchange with members of the National Committee of the Union of Construction Workers (SNTC). She also participated in an event in which, for the second year in a row, the nonagricultural cooperative Autochapt received an award as an outstanding collective because of its ex-

traordinary achievements in productivity and trade union work.

Autochapt, one of 69 such entities in this sector, is a vanguard in demonstrating the vast potential offered by this form of self-employment, said Carlos de Dios Oquendo, general secretary of the SNTC. Such efforts were strengthened after the [April 2011] Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba approved updating Cuba’s economic model.

Autochapt does body work, painting, and reupholstery to rebuild vehicles, especially those used in construction. Its workshops repair and completely rebuild heavy equipment such as cranes, trucks, and cement mixers. They also repair Transmetro city buses and rental cars for the tourist industry.

The event honored vanguard workers, most of them for their work in the union-organized emulation campaign. ...

The afternoon awards included a declaration certifying that work areas in the plant have safe conditions. Roberto Betharte, head of the labor affairs department of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC), said the award comes out of a movement initiated in the 1980s to promote safer work-

ing conditions, involving all the workers as well as administrators and union leaders.

Betharte said the cooperative had implemented steps to monitor safety and minimize occupational hazards and fatal accidents.

Osmany Batista Díaz, president of Autochapt, gave a brief history of the cooperative. It was established May 6, 2014, with 44 members, former employees of the Havana unit of the Empresa de Talleres de Cienfuegos that was part of the Ministry of Construction. Today it has 156 members, working in a plant more than twice the size of the original, in the Boyeros district of Havana.

### Women and the Cuban Revolution

Federation of Cuban Women  
leaders speak in NYC

Sat. March 19

Reception 6:30, Program 7 p.m.

1199SEIU Auditorium  
310 W. 43rd St.

Info: 917-887-8710 or 212-926-5757



# Solidarity with working people of Syria

*The following statement was released March 9 by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, and Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for vice president.*

The Socialist Workers Party calls on working people to stand with our fellow workers in Syria — in solidarity with their struggle to throw off the hated dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad, to liberate sections of the country where the toilers have fallen under the tyranny of the reactionary Islamic State, and to aid the Kurdish people in their struggle to win independence and control over the regions where they live. All Syrian working people — Sunni, Shia, Christian, Alawite, Turkmen, Kurdish and others — have a common interest in fighting for these demands.

These struggles require international working-class solidarity. Syrian toilers need the space to mobilize in political action, to learn in struggle, to be transformed from victims into conscious actors in history. All of the imperialist and capitalist forces intervening in Syria today are obstacles to this course. We oppose the U.S. rulers’ involvement in the war in Syria and Iraq and call for Washington, its allies and others — from London and Paris to Moscow, Ankara and Tehran — to withdraw their warplanes, ships and troops now.

The relative weakness of U.S. imperialism in the Mideast today is a confirmation that Washington lost the Cold War. The U.S. ruling class lost the political assistance it got from Stalinist regimes and parties, which had used the prestige of their long-broken connection to the mighty Russian Revolution to disorient and destroy workers’ struggles worldwide. The vacuum of working-class leadership left by decades of class-collaboration by Stalinist parties in the region and the exhaustion of bourgeois nationalist forces there will take time and political space to fill.

Fearing the consequences of using their raw mili-

tary might in the Middle East, the U.S. propertied rulers sought a bloc with Moscow and Tehran to replace the deepening disintegration of the old world order, in the futile hope of achieving stability for U.S. imperialism in the region. The truce Washington and Moscow have driven through strengthens the murderous Assad dictatorship, guaranteeing many more working people will be killed or driven from their homes.

“The drawing together of struggles by working people the world over opens the way toward winning more and more revolutionists to become communists, toward rebuilding proletarian leadership and an international communist movement,” the Socialist Workers Party’s 1990 resolution “U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War” explains. “The world in the making will see more Malcolm Xs, more Maurice Bishops, more Thomas Sankaras, more Nelson Mandelas, more Che Guevaras, more Fidel Castros. They will continue to be thrust forward through struggle toward the renewal of communist leadership. They will more and more recognize communism as the opposite of Stalinism and social democracy, as a road toward overthrowing world capitalism, not accommodation with it.” This perspective remains the way forward out of the devastation in Syria today.

The Cuban Revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista is an excellent example of how ordinary working people can come together, become stronger and more conscious and build a new society based on human solidarity. The 1954-65 Algerian Revolution led by Ahmed Ben Bella that overthrew French colonialism and established a workers and farmers government in a country where the majority is Muslim and Arab shows what is possible.

Help spread the truth about battles and the class realities unfolding in Syria, help get the *Militant* around! Solidarity with the working people of Syria!

## Washington’s Syria deal with Moscow

**Continued from front page**

Reuters reported March 6 that Washington has nearly completed construction of an airfield in Rmeilan in Kurdish-controlled northern Syria, and that another near Kobani on the Turkish border was being built. Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis wouldn’t confirm the claim, saying, “That we have people there and that we have made deliveries there, and that they have to get there by some means should be no secret, but we are not going to comment on the means.”

The truce brokered by Moscow and Washington permits bombing of Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra, a branch of al-Qaeda. Al-Nusra forces are spread throughout areas where more secular opposition forces, many aligned with the U.S., Saudi or Turkish government, are located. Assad and Moscow use this to target these forces, which grew out of widespread popular mobilizations against the regime in 2011.

One result of the reduction in bombings in a number of cities, especially where Assad’s troops have been driven out, was residents took advantage of the political space provided by the temporary lull to organize street demonstrations demanding his ouster.

The pause also allowed Washington to step up bombing and plans for wider attacks against Islamic State-allied forces elsewhere. Reuters reported March 8 that U.S. aircraft and unmanned drones carried out an airstrike in Somalia that killed more than 150 people who Washington said were with al-Shabaab, an Islamist group linked to al-Qaeda.

The same day the Pentagon proposed a campaign of airstrikes against Islamic State targets in Libya, the *New York Times* reported. As its positions in Syria and Iraq have weakened, IS has shifted some forces to Libya, where there is no national government.

### Social crisis for refugees

The truce hasn’t staunched the flow of refugees from the five-year war, which has displaced more than half the country’s 22 million people and killed nearly half a million. More than 135,000 migrants and refugees crossed into Europe in the first two months

of this year, following more than 1 million last year, 80 percent of them from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Many sought to enter EU countries from Turkey, where there are still more than 2.5 million Syrian refugees.

The exodus has created a social crisis for the refugees. Tens of thousands are trapped in Greece, attempting to move on to Germany and other more prosperous countries.

It has also created a political crisis among Europe’s capitalist governments and within their European Union. Regimes that claim to yearn for an “ever closer union” find themselves building fences on their borders, railing against neighboring rulers who they accuse of letting refugees cross over, and threatening nationalist reprisals.

Capitalist leaders in Europe are trying to bribe and bully Ankara into a deal in which EU countries will return migrants to Turkey, even though such “push-backs” — sending asylum seekers to the country they came from without processing their application — are banned by the EU.

Ankara demands the deal include a provision that for every Syrian returned to Turkey the EU will accept a different Syrian refugee. Ankara also demands steps toward its long-denied entry into the EU and expedited visas for Turks seeking to work in Europe.

Erdogan seeks to take advantage of the European crisis to tell the rulers there to back off from criticism of his brutal attacks on democratic rights on Kurds in Turkey, Syria and Iraq.

On March 4 Turkish authorities seized *Zaman*, the most widely circulated paper in the country, whose owner is an opponent of Erdogan. When employees and supporters locked themselves inside the paper’s Istanbul office building that day, police used tear gas and water cannons to force their way in.

Similarly, capitalist rulers in Europe are blackmailing Athens to warehouse migrants, offering to slightly ease the draconian cuts in social spending they demand the Greek government make in order to qualify for “debt relief” from its yearslong economic crisis.

## ‘Abortion is a right!’

**Continued from front page**

was among those who spoke to the overwhelmingly young crowd.

Lara Boyle, one of three members of Medical Students for Choice who drove to Washington from New York, said she wanted it known that the American Medical Association does not agree with the Texas law known as HB2. “These laws are not about protecting women’s health,” she said. Chants and signs at the action read, “Stop the sham.”

The case before the court, *Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt*, challenges two provisions in the 2013 Texas law: that doctors performing abortions must have admitting privileges at local hospitals, and that abortion clinics meet hospital-like standards. The first of these rules has been allowed to take effect, though a couple clinics have been granted temporary exemptions. As a result, about half of the state’s abortion providers have already closed. If the Supreme Court upholds the law, half of the others would also be shuttered, leaving no more than 10 clinics in a state that is larger than France. There would be none in the Rio Grande Valley or the western part of the state. This will make it much harder for working-class and rural women to have access to the procedure.

HB2 also bans most abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy — one of the earliest limits nationwide — and imposes procedures on medical (pill) abortions that require women to make three or four separate trips to the doctor. These regulations aren’t part of the Supreme Court case.

The Texas law is one of hundreds that have been passed by state governments in recent years designed to shut down abortion providers and otherwise limit access.

These laws make use of the problems built into the *Roe v. Wade* ruling that decriminalized abortion. The Supreme Court acted in 1973 to head off a rising movement for women’s rights that stood on the conquests of the massive struggle for Black rights.

As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has often pointed out, the decision was not based on women’s right to equal protection of the laws under the 14th Amendment, but rather on “privacy” and the rights of doctors. The whittling away by federal and state governments at access to safe and legal abortions, especially for working-class women, began immediately.

In 1992 the Supreme Court upheld major aspects of *Roe v. Wade*, while opening the door wider for onerous restrictions on the right to choose, such as imposing waiting periods, including in the earliest stages of pregnancy. In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, it upheld laws openly intended to discourage abortions, as long as they didn’t place an “undue burden” on a woman making the final decision.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, 21 states besides Texas have some type of mandate for abortion providers to meet hospital-like standards. Ten others have adopted requirements for doctors performing abortions to have hospital admitting privileges, although several are on hold pending court decisions.

On March 4 the Supreme Court blocked Louisiana from implementing its admitting privileges law, which would close all but one clinic in that state, pending a ruling in the Texas case.

Young people were a majority at the March 2 rally here. Fifty American University students met at a Metro stop in D.C. to come as a group. “I’ve never been to a rally,” said student Ally Bock. “But, I’m very passionate about this issue.” She grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The Center for Reproductive Rights, National Abortion Rights Action League, Planned Parenthood, Women’s Medical Fund and other groups had contingents at the action.

“I’m here because I can’t believe I still have to be here,” said Dazon Dixon-Diallo of Atlanta, a member of SisterLove and In Our Own Voice, a Black women’s organization. “This is most definitely a fight for equal protection under the law. Whether it’s a youth searched for a crime he or she did not commit or a woman exercising her basic human rights, the fight for the 14th Amendment is on.”

*Ilona Gersh in Chicago contributed to this article.*