

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**Cuba's fight against Zika shows difference a revolution makes**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 14 APRIL 11, 2016

## Washington backs deal to keep Assad in power in Syria

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Secretary of State John Kerry met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow March 24 and agreed to promote a political deal that maintains Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad in power, at least for now. Washington's aim is to establish stable conditions to defend the U.S. imperialist interests in the region. The deal is combined with a stepped-up U.S. military offensive against areas in Syria and Iraq controlled by Islamic State.

The five-year civil war that began with the Syrian government's crushing of protests against Assad's tyranny has been devastating for working people throughout the country. Nearly half a million people have been killed and millions displaced.

The plan promoted by Washington and Moscow involves Assad being part of a "transitional governance structure" that's under discussion at

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## Castro, Cuban people answer 'sugar-coated' words of Obama

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. government "is continuing the game of the carrot and the stick," wrote Elier Ramírez in the March 26 issue of *Juventud Rebelde*, daily paper of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba. "There is no change in their strategic objective of regime change."

Ramírez was responding to President Barack Obama's March 20-22 visit to the island. Despite many "sugar-coated" words — as Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro described Obama's comments — Washington's goal of overthrowing the Cuban Revolution and restoring capitalist exploitation came through loud and clear. Numerous articles in the Cuban press have answered aspects of the U.S. rulers' shift in methods.

In his March 22 speech, broadcast on Cuban TV, Obama said the U.S. government was leaving behind "the

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## 'Working-class alternative to brutality of capitalism'

SWP candidates say 'Join today's struggles'



Militant/Mike Shur

Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy speaks at NY forum March 25. From left, Norton Sandler, chair, and Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for vice president.

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

NEW YORK — "The Socialist Workers Party is running against capitalism and its brutal consequences for working people the world over. The Socialist Workers Party campaign is

candidate for U.S. president in the 2016 elections at a public forum here March 25. At the center of the party's campaign is joining struggles that advance the interests of the working class, including organizing unions, opposing police brutality and fighting government frame-ups, she said.

"Workers we meet ask, 'What can we do?' Join these fights, and join the SWP. Workers are always going to fight, but to take power we need a revolutionary party forged in struggle well ahead of time. The SWP has a history and continuity going back

Continued on page 7

### Socialist Workers Party candidates speak out

presenting a working-class alternative to everything that capitalism and its candidates, from Trump to Cruz to Kasich to Sanders to Clinton, stand for," said Alyson Kennedy, the party's

## 'Prosecute cops who killed Jamar Clark' in Minneapolis



Fibonacci Blue

Hundreds demonstrate in Minneapolis March 26 to keep spotlight on police killing of unarmed Jamar Clark, 24, last November. Investigators have still not released video of shooting.

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

MINNEAPOLIS — More than 400 people rallied at the Hennepin County Government Center here March 26 to demand the prosecution of Mark Ringgenberg and Dustin Schwarze, the Minneapolis police officers who killed Jamar Clark, 24, last Nov. 15. Clark, who was Black, was unarmed.

Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman announced March 16 that he will not send the case to a grand jury but will decide himself by the end of March whether or not to indict the

cops. Several eyewitnesses say that cops handcuffed Clark before shooting him in the head. The cops claim he was not handcuffed, and reached for an officer's gun.

Freeman said March 30 there would be no charges.

"For almost four months they have covered this up," Minneapolis NAACP President Nekima Levy-Pounds told the crowd, referring to several videos of the shooting that the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Ap-

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## Oregon ranch land protesters could be tried in 2 states at once

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a decision that makes a mockery of the constitutional right to legal counsel, a federal judge March 22 ruled that Ammon Bundy and six other participants in the January occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon could face prosecution in separate cases in both Oregon and Nevada at the same time. They are part of a group of 26 people indicted for their roles in the non-violent occupation.

Bundy organized the occupation to protest the jailing of Harney County, Oregon, cattle ranchers Dwight and

Steven Hammond for a second time on the same frame-up charges of arson and to draw attention to federal policies — often in the name of protecting endangered species — that

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Kaiser nurses in L.A. strike for contract, against short staffing  
 Flight attendants, mechanics at United picket for union contracts

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# Oregon land protesters

Continued from front page  
are driving many small ranchers and farmers off the land.

The seven face frame-up charges ranging from “conspiracy to impede” a federal officer to “possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in federal facilities” in connection with the Malheur occupation. After those charges were filed, they were then indicted on similar criminal charges, along with 12 others, for joining an April 2014 protest in Nevada that blocked federal agents from confiscating 400 head of cattle belonging to Cliven Bundy, Ammon’s father.

In her ruling, U.S. District Judge Anna Brown in Portland, Oregon, said that Ammon Bundy, Ryan Payne and the others could be sent to Nevada April 13 to be arraigned there and then returned to Oregon within 10 days.

Payne’s attorney in Nevada, Shari Kaufman, told the judge she can’t have meaningful preparation with her client with constant shuttling back and forth.

Federal prosecutor Craig Gabriel said it’s not “the government’s doing” if the trials are simultaneous, but the fault of the accused for their part in “crimes that were committed here and in Nevada.”

“This is not a fair fight,” Ammon Bundy’s attorney, Mike Arnold, said by phone March 24. “There are teams of FBI agents working around the clock. They have unlimited resources. Because the defendants have little money, we have to get permission from the court to hire a single investigator.”

“The point of the prosecution is to

make an example of them and to chill future protests,” Arnold said.

While opinions on the wisdom of the Malheur occupation are mixed, opposition to the frame-up of the Hammonds is widespread among small ranchers, farmers and other working people in rural areas of Oregon and beyond.

“A lot of people thought Ammon went about it the only way he could, given that other avenues to win justice for the Hammonds had all been exhausted,” Harney County rancher Erin Maupin told the *Militant*. “Others support the sentiment 100 percent but thought he went about it the wrong way. And there are some people in town that think it was evil.” Maupin and her husband, who grew up with Steven Hammond, have a small ranch with 350 mother cows.

Dwight and Steven Hammond, father and son cattle ranchers, had a running dispute with federal land agencies that for years have wanted them to sell their land to expand the Malheur refuge.

In April 2014 they were found guilty of arson under the 1996 Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. They had set controlled fires on their own land — a common practice by ranchers and federal land agencies alike — to combat invasive juniper trees and block wildfires. The government says this burned a tiny amount of federal land.

The judge imposed sentences of three months for Dwight Hammond and one year for Steven Hammond. Prosecutors successfully appealed, saying that under the 1996 act the required minimum sentence was five

## Minnesota rally backs right to choose abortion



Militant/Helen Meyers

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Hundreds rallied in support of a woman’s right to choose abortion at the Planned Parenthood offices here March 25. It was the annual Good Friday Solidarity action in response to the anti-abortion forces who had hundreds also picketing the clinic. Aaron Decker, 26, works in customer service and was attending her first abortion rights action. “I didn’t have insurance when I came to Planned Parenthood and I got birth control anyway,” she said.

— KATHY WHEELER AND HELEN MEYERS

years. The Hammonds returned to prison Jan. 4.

### Small ranchers change their views

“I used to support mandatory minimum laws. It came across as do you want murderers and rapists running around,” Maupin said. “And then you see it applied to the Hammonds.”

“Every step we take we’re told by our political representatives that there’s nothing anybody can do for the Hammonds,” she said. “That we have to change the mandatory minimum laws — for the next person.”

“We’ve been pretty sheltered out here,” Maupin added. “What boggles my mind is how the media twists everything around.” Maupin was one of hundreds of ranchers that attended community meetings during the occupation. She is widely known for speaking out for the release of the Hammonds. “Then I’d go home and watch the TV news report and it was like they were at a different meeting than I was.”

On Jan. 26 Oregon State Police and the FBI ambushed and killed Robert “LaVoy” Finicum, a leader of the occupation, and arrested Bundy and others who were on their way to a community

meeting 100 miles from the refuge.

After Finicum was killed, the FBI kept up highway roadblocks for two more weeks. Some ranchers report being stopped, thrown on the ground and handcuffed with the FBI pointing automatic weapons at them before letting them go.

Because of these experiences many ranchers and other working people are changing their views. Maupin used to see people protesting police brutality in big cities as rioters. “But now I wish that LaVoy’s family and the mothers and wives of people killed by the cops in New York could communicate and see that they have something in common.”

## — CALENDAR —

### CANADA

#### Montreal

**Who Is Really Responsible for the July 6, 2013, Lac-Mégantic Rail Disaster?**  
Speakers: Thomas Walsh, lawyer for framed-up train engineer Tom Harding; Fritz Edler, retired Amtrak locomotive engineer and member of Rail Workers United. Thurs. April 7, 2 p.m. *University of Quebec, Room R-R120. Tel.: (438) 871-3865. Sponsored by UQAM Socialist Students.*

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# THE MILITANT

## US out of Guantánamo! End embargo now!

The ‘Militant’ reports on and builds support for the fight to end the U.S. embargo of Cuba and demand Washington get out of Guantánamo. It points to what our class is capable of, as shown by the workers and farmers of Cuba and their revolutionary leadership.



Cuban President Raúl Castro speaking March 21 during Obama’s trip to Cuba.

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# 'We need a workers party independent of capitalists'

BY HELEN MEYERS  
AND LISA ROTTACH

MINNEAPOLIS — David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress here, joined a March 26 protest of 400 people demanding prosecution of the two cops who killed 24-year-old Jamar Clark in November.

"It seems like we're back in the '50s and '60s with the way the cops act," Oscar Day, a blues musician, told Rosenfeld.

"I think persistent actions like this and others around the country have increased the number of prosecutions of killer police in the past year," responded Rosenfeld.

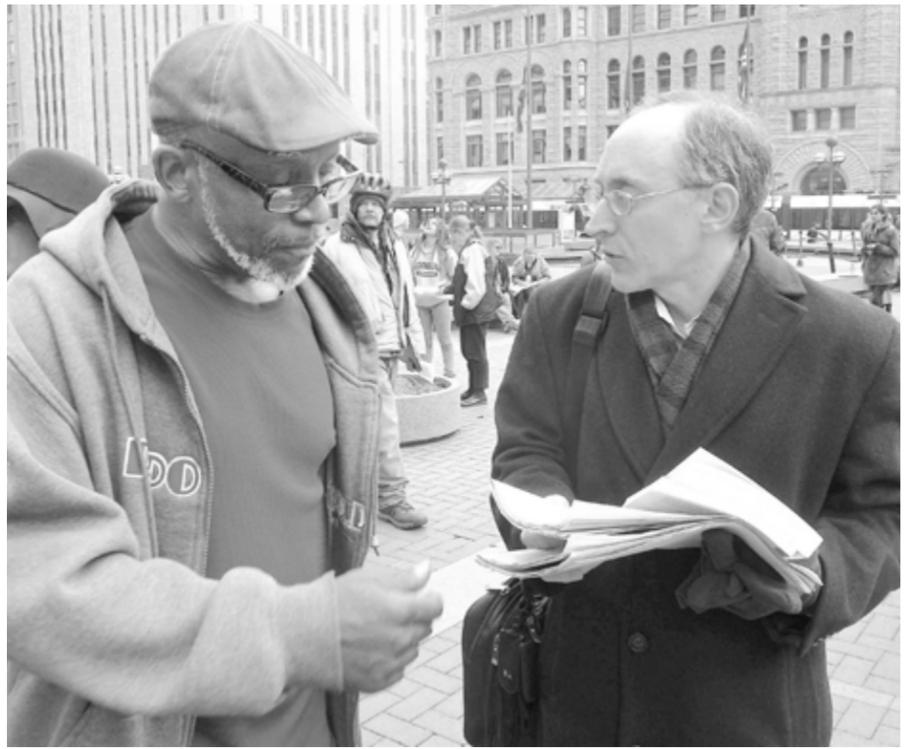
Day told the candidate, "I don't know who I'm voting for, but I'm definitely not voting for Trump. Maybe having a woman president will make another war less likely."

"Both the Democrats and Republicans are the bosses' parties," Rosenfeld said. "The challenge for the working class is to stop looking to them to solve our problems. We need to organize a political movement that is independent of

the capitalists." Day decided to buy the book *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* and a copy of the *Militant*.

A day earlier Rosenfeld joined hundreds of supporters of the right of women to choose abortion outside the Vandalia Street Planned Parenthood clinic in St. Paul. They were countering the yearly Good Friday rally by opponents of abortion rights.

The Twin Cities SWP branch is stepping up the pace and geographical spread of its campaigning and involving more people in preparation for an ambitious three-week drive starting May 17 to put the SWP presidential ticket of Alyson Kennedy and Osborne Hart on the Minnesota ballot. Those who would like to be part of that effort can call (612) 729-1205 or send email to [tcswp@qwestoffice.net](mailto:tcswp@qwestoffice.net).



Militant/Lisa Rottach

David Rosenfeld, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in Minnesota, discusses fight against police brutality with Oscar Day at rally in Minneapolis March 26 demanding prosecution of cops who killed 24-year-old Jamar Clark in November.

## Who the Socialist Workers Party candidates are

In addition to Alyson Kennedy for president and Osborne Hart for vice president, the Socialist Workers Party is running candidates across the country. The party has announced U.S. Senate candidates Eleanor Garcia in California, Sam Manuel in Georgia, John Staggs in Pennsylvania, Jacob Perasso in New York, Dan Fein in Illinois and Cindy Jaquith in Florida. Other candidates include David Rosenfeld in Minnesota and Glova Scott in Washington, D.C., for U.S. Congress, as well as Mary Martin for governor in Washington state. In this issue we reprint biographies for Staggs and Perasso, released by the Socialist Workers Party National Campaign Committee.

### John Staggs, U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania

John Staggs, 69, was born and raised on a farm in Illinois. He participated in fights against foreclosure and for government-funded cheap credit and price supports for working farmers.

He took part in civil rights movement struggles of African-Americans and their supporters in the 1960s and '70s.

A Walmart cashier, Staggs is part of the fight for \$15 an hour minimum wage,

full-time work and a union for fast-food, Walmart and millions of other workers. Staggs has used his campaign to support and join rallies and picket lines of Steelworkers who were locked out for seven months by Allegheny Technologies Inc., and of workers at ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel fighting against concession contract demands.

Staggs is an opponent of Washington's imperialist wars — in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. He calls for protests against the US-backed Turkish bombing of Kurdish fighters in Iraq and Syria and assaults against Kurds inside Turkey as well.

A supporter of the fight against police brutality, Staggs has joined protests against the killings of Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Eric Garner in New York, Frank McQueen in Chester, Pennsylvania, and others.

Staggs joined the 2015 Philadelphia march celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and backs continuing fights to win equality and access for those with disabilities, including millions of veterans maimed by Washington's wars.

Seeking to expand the space for working people to organize and fight —

from the picket line to voting rights — Staggs used his 2006 campaign for State Assembly to successfully overturn a Pennsylvania "loyalty oath" law barring ballot status to communists and other opponents of U.S. government policies.

### Jacob Perasso, U.S. Senate in New York

Jacob Perasso, 39, is a freight rail conductor for CSX railroad and a member of United Transportation Union Local 1447 in New York. He grew up in a working-class neighborhood in San Jose, California. As a 19-year-old student there he witnessed the cops cover up the killing of an unarmed worker on the block where his family lived. Perasso joined the fight to jail the cop and has been part of similar struggles ever since, including the case of Mohamed Bah, killed by police in Harlem in 2012.

As a high school student Perasso became active in struggles to defend immigrants from deportation and other forms of victimization. He joined the Young Socialists in 1996 and the Socialist Workers Party three years later.

Over the past two decades, Perasso helped organize activities in defense of Cuba's socialist revolution, demanding an end to Washington's strangling embargo and the return of Cuban territory at Guantánamo. He was part of the successful international campaign to win the release of the Cuban Five — revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned by Washington for defending their country against violent attacks organized from south Florida.

Perasso is using his campaign to speak out in defense of rail workers Tom Harding and Richard Labrie, who face frame-up charges for the deadly oil train wreck that killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. The 2013 disaster put a spotlight on the disregard of the bosses and government regulators for the safety of workers on the railroad and the communities near the tracks. Perasso opposes bosses' efforts to cut train crew size and he points to the need for strong unions to enforce safer working conditions.

Perasso is active in fights to win \$15 an hour and a union, to defend women's right to choose abortion and in the struggle to free Oscar López Rivera, a Puerto Rican independence fighter jailed in the U.S. for nearly 35 years.

### Celebrate political life of Natalie Bombaro



Come to a meeting to celebrate the five-decade-long political work of Natalie Bombaro in building the Socialist Workers Party.

**Sunday, April 3**  
**Reception, 2:30 p.m.**  
**Program, 3:30 p.m.**

New York SWP hall  
227 W. 29 St., 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Messages to the meeting can be sent to [newyorkswp@gmail.com](mailto:newyorkswp@gmail.com)  
For further details: (646) 964-4793

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GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ, RAMÓN LABAÑINO, ANTONIO GUERRERO,  
RENÉ GONZÁLEZ, FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ

Five Cuban revolutionaries, framed up by the U.S. government, spent up to 16 years as part of the U.S. working class behind bars. In this 2015 interview they talk about U.S. capitalist society and its "justice" system, and about the future of the Cuban Revolution.

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MARY-ALICE WATERS

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### Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

JACK BARNES

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

VILMA ESPÍN, ASELA DE LOS SANTOS, YOLANDA FERRER

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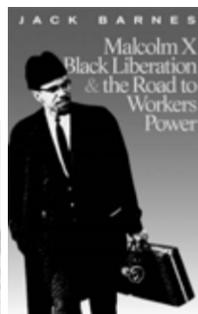
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JACK BARNES

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# More cops, surveillance of Muslims after Belgium attack

BY MAGGIE TROWE

In the aftermath of the bloody March 22 Islamic State terrorist attacks in Brussels, capitalist rulers in Europe and the U.S. stepped up police actions and attacks on workers' rights. With much fanfare, authorities carried out raids and roundups in Belgium, France and Germany. Many bourgeois politicians called for policing Muslims and mosques and slowing or halting immigration, accelerating the tightening of borders within the European Union.

Belgian authorities arrested Faycal Cheffou March 24 and accused him of being the man seen on a surveillance video accompanying two alleged Islamic State operatives who carried out the suicide bombing at the airport in Brussels. Cheffou was released four days later when evidence showed he was home at the time of the attack. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation has sent agents to work with their Belgian counterparts.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said that police in Paris had arrested Reda Kriket, a man the *Financial Times* said "has known ties" to people who carried out the Islamic State attacks in Paris in November that killed 130 people. Cazeneuve said Kriket's arrest stymied a plot "to strike our country."

Brussels police wearing balaclavas surrounded and shot a man at a tram station March 25, arresting him and two others alleged to have connections with Kriket.

## Refugees face miserable conditions

An agreement between EU governments and Ankara to return all refugees arriving in Greece to Turkey took effect March 20. Since then the number of refugees and migrants landing on Greek shores has dropped off. In the first week after the agreement, daily arrivals fell from 930 to 78.

Conditions in detention camps where new arrivals await deportation are miserable. In the camp on the Greek island of Lesbos, surrounded by a thick concrete wall and double razor-wire fence, hundreds of people are held under police guard, banned from moving within the

facility without cop escort. There are no separate quarters for women and children, the *Times* reported March 27.

An estimated 15,000 migrants — the majority from sub-Saharan Africa — have crossed the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa to Italy's shores since the beginning of the year. The deal with Turkey may lead more Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi migrants to attempt that dangerous route. In the past the EU's passport-free travel zone made it easy for immigrants to travel north from Greece or Italy. But now the Austrian government has announced it will increase border checks and restrict the number of refugees entering. Paris is expected to do the same.

Police presence and surveillance has been stepped up across the U.S. as well, from the federal Transportation Security Administration to Washington D.C.'s Metro Transit Police and the New York National Guard.

On the day of the attacks, Republican presidential hopeful Ted Cruz declared, "We need to empower law enforcement

# Washington backs Syria deal keeping Assad in power

Continued from front page

U.N.-sponsored negotiations involving the governments of the U.S., Russia, imperialist powers in Europe, capitalist rulers in the region, the Assad regime, and some opposition Syrian forces. The Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), which is leading the effort to establish an autonomous federation in the Kurdish-controlled region in northern Syria, is not invited. The next round of talks is set for April 9.

Over the last six months, Russian airstrikes and troops from Iran and its allied Lebanese-based Hezbollah militia have helped Assad's forces regain territory in western Syria from opposition groups, some backed by Washington.

As the White House has accepted the Russian government's role in consolidating Assad's control over these territories, it has backed away from



Militant/Marc Kinzel

"We reject state of emergency, we will increase solidarity!" says banner at March 9 labor protest in Marseille, France, referring to "anti-terrorism" measures Paris imposed in November.

to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become radicalized." When criticized for his scapegoating, he cited what he called the successful New York Police Department surveillance of Muslim congregations ordered by then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg following the Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

In 2012 the Associated Press released

secret police files documenting years of NYPD spying on Muslims on campuses, mosques and in their communities.

The project was protested by a broad layer of individuals and groups and officially discontinued.

But large-scale, if lower profile, spying on Muslims is a fixture of policing in New York and other cities. The NYPD also fields agents in other countries.

demanding an end to Moscow's threats against Ukraine. "The atmosphere during Mr. Kerry's three-day visit [to Russia] appeared better than at any time since Moscow's annexation of Crimea in early 2014," the *Financial Times* noted.

"Obama's theory here is simple," writes Jeffrey Goldberg in the April *Atlantic* magazine. "Ukraine is a core Russian interest but not an American one." The president told Goldberg, "The fact is that Ukraine, which is a non-NATO country, is going to be vulnerable to military dominance by Russia no matter what we do."

## Weakening of Islamic State

The reactionary Islamic State is being weakened in both Syria and Iraq. Its expansion in Libya and its terror attacks against civilians in Brussels are signs of that weakness. While Kerry was conducting talks in Moscow, the Syrian army, backed by Russian airstrikes, took control of Palmyra in central Syria from Islamic State March 25. Many of the city's ancient ruins have been destroyed since the jihadist group seized the city in last May.

Russian strikes have also aided the Syrian regime in making gains against Islamic State in the city of Bab, near Aleppo in northern Syria, and parts of Raqqa province, where the group's de facto capital is located.

Washington is continuing its operations throughout the region as well. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said March 25 that U.S. special forces had killed a top Islamic State commander, Haji Imam, in a raid that week. And a U.S. airstrike killed at least 40 people in Yemen March 22 at what Washington said was an al-Qaeda training camp.

Backed by forces from the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq, Iraqi government troops recently retook four villages in Nineveh province. The area is about 40 miles from Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, which Islamic State seized in June 2014. Washington is trying to build up a local ground force to recapture it. It's

unclear whether Iranian-backed Shiite militias will play a role in such an operation; the Kurdish forces oppose their involvement.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said March 25 he is recommending an unspecified number of additional U.S. troops be sent to Iraq as part of the effort to retake Mosul. Officially, the number of U.S. troops in Iraq is capped at 3,870, but there are already nearly 5,000 on the ground, according to the *Military Times*.

## Syrian Kurds set autonomous region

In mid-March the PYD, together with representatives from Arab, Assyrian, Turkmen and other groups, voted to establish an autonomous federation known as Rojava in the Kurdish-controlled areas in northern Syria. Kurds — an oppressed nationality living in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey — have been fighting for a homeland against imperialist powers and local capitalist rulers for a century.

The move was opposed by both the Assad regime and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Washington also expressed concern about Kurds in the northwestern area of Afrin, Syria, taking action against Islamic State that would expand their control of areas further east along Turkey's border.

The Kurds now control some two-thirds of Syria's 560-mile border with Turkey. The Turkish rulers fear the gains won by Kurds in Syria, along with an autonomous regional government in northern Iraq since the early 1990s, will inspire some 15 million Kurds living in Turkey in their fight for self-rule.

"Round-the-clock 'curfews' in Kurdish cities of Turkey since August 2015 continue with full force," said a statement issued by the Kurdish-based People's Democratic Party (HDP) in Turkey March 23. "Entire towns have been razed to the ground by heavy military offensives, while hundreds of thousands of Kurds have been forced to evacuate their homes."

## — MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

### CALIFORNIA

#### Oakland

**Solidarity with Working People of Syria.** Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Rd., Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**It's Not Who You Are Against, It's What You Are For!** Speaker: Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate. Sat., April 9. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 2018 S. Ashland Ave. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

### NEW YORK

#### New York

**Cuba's Experience with Ebola Crisis, the Fight Against Zika Virus Today, What Working Class in Power Can Do.** Speaker: Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 8. Dinner, 6:45 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 227 W. 29th St., 6th Floor. Tel.: (646) 964-4793.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**The World Capitalist Crisis and the 2016 Federal Elections.** Speaker: Ron Poulsen, Communist League candidate for senate in

federal elections. Sat., April 9. Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 6:30 p.m. *Upstairs 281-7 Beamish St.* Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

### CANADA

#### Alberta

**New Revelations Point to Bosses, Government Responsibility for Quebec Rail Disaster.** Speaker: Michel Dugré, Communist League. Fri., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 328 Centre St. SE, Unit 246. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Oppose Police Crackdowns After Belgium Terror Attacks! No to Disruption of Trump Rallies! Defend the Right of Workers to Speak Out and Organize!** Speaker: Felicity Coggan, Communist League. Fri., April 8, 7 p.m. 188a Onehunga Mall. Tel.: (09) 636-3231.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Manchester

**The Working Class Alternative to the Capitalist Parties.** Speaker: Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for City Council. Sat., April 9, 6:30 p.m. 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. (016) 1478-2496.

# —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

## Kaiser nurses in L.A. strike for contract, against short-staffing

LOS ANGELES — Chanting “Kaiser, Kaiser you can't hide, We can see your greedy side,” hundreds of registered nurses at Kaiser Permanente's Los Angeles Medical Center rallied March 21 on the last day of their seven-day strike to press their fight for a contract.

The walkout involved 1,200 nurses who voted to join the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United last July and are now seeking their first contract. A central question in the strike is short-staffing.

The strikers held spirited daily pick-

ets at the hospital as well as actions at Kaiser's Southern California corporate offices in Pasadena.

“Before we had 32 beds in ICU. We were already short-staffed,” Gerald Bailey, an intensive care unit nurse for eight years, told the *Militant*. “We opened a neuro ICU with 16 beds but didn't hire more nurses.” Bailey said he's worked up to 22 hours straight.

A year ago management said workers would be fired for using hospital food utensils, he said. “Even in prison you get utensils.”

“Everything is about cost-cutting,” said Rodrigo Ramirez, a registered



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Members of California Nurses Association/National Nurses United rally March 21 at Kaiser Permanente's Los Angeles Medical Center on last day of weeklong strike for a first contract.

nurse at the medical center for 11 years. “We haven't had a wage increase in six years. They want to eliminate the sitter so if someone falls, there is no one to catch them. Or they want to restrain pa-

tients.”

“Right now they are videoing in people's rooms, which is an invasion of privacy,” added striker Gus Mata.

Kaiser made over \$14.4 billion in profit over the past six years.

—Deborah Liatos

## Big protests in France oppose anti-labor ‘reform’ law

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS — Tens of thousands of workers and students demonstrated in Paris, and several hundred thousand throughout France, on March 9 opposing the attacks by the ruling Socialist Party government of Francois Hollande on the working class through a proposed revision of the labor code. The same day striking rail workers cut off two-thirds of all French rail traffic.

In addition to labor slogans, some demonstrators carried banners demanding an end to the French government's “state of emergency” law that limits protests in the name of fighting terrorism.

As production and trade contracts worldwide, capitalists in France want to solve their crisis on the backs of workers. With official unemployment above 10 percent, bosses claim the labor law “reforms” will make it easier for them to hire.

In France industry-wide agreements are binding in every workplace, with or without a union presence. The draft law would allow bosses to unilaterally impose changes in working hours and overtime pay, lengthen the 35-hour workweek and secure local agreements inferior to those won industry-wide. It would also limit severance pay bosses must provide in case of a layoff.

“Earlier generations of workers fought for these gains and it is up to us to defend them,” Vivien Casado, 26, a Peugeot auto assembly worker at the Poissy plant, told the *Militant*, as he marched with 80 co-workers.

### Erosion of workers' power

The demonstrations show the determination of workers and youth to fight the bosses' attacks. However, the framework put forward by the leadership of all three major union federations — defense of the 3,400-page labor code and the huge bureaucracy that comes with it — evades the central challenge facing the working class in France today. Decades of collaboration with successive capitalist governments by labor officials has led to the erosion of workers' power and dependence on state regulation.

Only 8 percent of workers in France are union members, but many support

one or another of the unions, which are affiliated with competing political parties. Union offices in major workplaces and “union time” for officials are paid for by the bosses.

The union tops have focused on the “permanent” workers who make up their base in workplace elections, which helps determine the resources each union gets from the employers and municipal government. Meanwhile, the working class faces growing unemployment, particularly among young people, and the mushrooming of temporary, short-term and agency work contracts.

No massive union-led worker mobilization has sought to organize “temporary” workers and fight for a massive public works program to build housing, roads, schools and rural medical facilities. That kind of fight would be a working-class answer to the bosses' propaganda that the way to create more jobs is

to give the capitalists even more power.

“The longest job I've had lasted one year,” Jerome Kinzel, 25, who took part in the demonstration in Marseille, told the *Militant*. Kinzel has worked as a chef at restaurants and once briefly at a hotel. “I've never worked in a place that had a union presence. We work on weekly contracts. At the hotel some of my co-workers were in their 50s and had been trying to support a family working on weekly contracts for over six years.”

Following the March 9 demonstrations, the government said they would consider some “tweaks” to their draft law. Some 100,000 students, joined by many trade unionists, demonstrated March 17. Another national day of actions has been called for March 31.

*Derek Jeffers and Claude Bleton in Paris and Marc Kinzel in Marseille contributed to this article.*

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 12, 1991

In an interview published in the March 11 *New Republic*, [Gen. Norman] Schwarzkopf said the greatest lesson of the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada was “never underestimate your enemy.”

“What started as a highly conventional operation went sour right away,” he said. “And it went sour because of the assumption that the Cubans weren't going to fight. We had 800 Cubans on the island who were well armed and damned sure *were* going to fight.”

The Cubans had volunteered to help build a public airport in Grenada during the 1979-1983 revolution led by Grenada Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. Bishop's overthrow and murder by a Stalinist clique led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard handed Washington an opportunity to invade and assert its domination over the island. The Cuban construction workers, attacked by the invading U.S. troops, fought back despite overwhelming odds.



April 11, 1966

It appears that [south Vietnamese] Premier Nguyen Cao Ky's noisy threats and the U.S. air-lifted troop movement to Danang have failed to end the virtual insurrection in that city, leaving Danang and her sister city of Hué still in the hands of anti-Ky forces. Meanwhile, violent anti-government student demonstrations in Saigon have entered their fourth day in spite of police attempts on the previous three days to break them up with clubs, tear gas and smoke bombs.

These developments have completely exposed the fraudulence of Washington's pretense for involvement in south Vietnam — pretense that the U.S. is fighting for the south Vietnamese people's freedom. The Ky regime stands exposed as a U.S. puppet, and as a hated military dictatorship which not only the peasants in the countryside oppose, but the masses in the cities as well.



April 12, 1941

The 400,000 striking soft coal miners of the eight-state Appalachian region appear to be headed toward a major victory. This was indicated in the announcement Sunday that the Northern operators, employing at least 65 percent of the miners, have agreed to sign a contract granting demands of the United Mine Workers (CIO) for a general dollar a day wage increase and paid vacations.

The gains already known to be won have confirmed the soundness of the UMW position on the Mediation Board. Within less than a week, this strike has won improved wages and conditions which unquestionably would have been delayed for months or lost altogether had the miners yielded to Roosevelt's and the bosses' pressure and continued to work while the question of their contract was left in the hand of the employer-dominated Mediation Board.

# Cuba anti-Zika fight shows difference revolution makes

BY SETH GALINSKY

Before there was one case of Zika, a mosquito-borne virus, in Cuba the revolutionary government began organizing to combat it. In February President Raúl Castro issued a “Call to our people” to join the efforts of health care workers, unions and other mass organizations to keep mosquitos at “levels that are not dangerous.”

In the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, however, government officials have almost given up the fight before it has begun. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention told the *New York Times* they expect a quarter of Puerto Rico’s 3.5 million people will get the disease within a year.

The Zika virus has spread to 32 countries in the Americas. It is transmitted by the Aedes mosquito, which also carries dengue and the chikungunya virus.

Zika came to international attention when news broke that it was linked in Brazil to an outbreak of microcephaly — an abnormally small head in infants of pregnant women who catch the virus. There are 508 confirmed cases with the birth defect in Brazil and may be as many as 3,900. Some 1.5 million Brazilians have been infected with the virus.

Cuba’s response is graphic proof of the difference a socialist revolution makes. In Cuba health care is not a business with the central goal of maximizing profit but a human right and central priority of the entire society.

In his call, Castro announced that 9,000 soldiers and army officers, both active duty and reserve, and 200 police officials, had joined the effort to eliminate breeding grounds as well as fumigate at workplaces and in residential areas, both inside and outside.

Soldiers, health workers and student volunteers have been going door to door to educate people on how to prevent the disease and to eliminate stagnant water, trash and other conditions that allow the mosquitos to breed.

In Mayabeque alone, more than 1,500 medical students are going door to door, reported *Juventud Rebelde*.

In Havana more than 9,000 members of the Federation of University Students and 1,200 members of the Federation of High School Students have been part of the day-to-day effort.

“We check 30 houses a day,” first-year medical student Diolxis Torres

Salabarría told the paper. “We explain the precise health measures, the causes and symptoms of Zika, chikungunya, dengue and yellow fever, as well as other tasks that contribute to a clean and healthy city.”

Students from around the world who are studying medicine in Cuba have joined the effort.

“I’ve learned a lot, above all how to find the breeding grounds of Aedes,” said Caetano Zumba, from Angola. “In Cuba the training is not just theoretical, but practical. This will be a big help when I return to my country.”

In some parts of the country, the anti-Zika teams have faced some resistance. “Most people cooperate,” Manuel Ángel Sobrino Prado, a health care worker in Cienfuegos who fumigates house to house, told *Juventud Rebelde*. “But there are always those difficult cases.”

In Sancti Spiritus, more than 3,335 fines have been issued to people and workplaces that don’t eliminate stagnant water or leave out garbage. The focus of the effort is on raising consciousness about the risks, Norma Martín Alonso, a government worker there, told the pa-



Above, Calixto Llanes/Juventud Rebelde  
Above, student volunteers receive their morning orientation before heading out to go door to door in Havana in fight against mosquitos that carry Zika virus. Inset, workers in Las Tunas, Cuba, check work site for possible mosquito breeding grounds to be eliminated.



Trabajadores/Jorge Pérez Cruz

per, but fines are issued for repeat offenders.

The revolutionary effort is paying off. As of March 25 there were only seven cases of Zika in Cuba, most in people traveling from other countries.

## Puerto Rico heads to disaster

Under colonial rule Puerto Rico, in contrast, is heading for a disaster. Health officials reported March 28 that there

are 350 confirmed cases of Zika, including 40 in pregnant women, with 100 new cases last week.

Under the impact of the capitalist economic crisis, thousands of Puerto Ricans have been immigrating to the United States. Abandoned homes abound,  
**Continued on page 9**

# Cubans answer Obama’s ‘sugar-coated’ words

Continued from front page

last remnant of the Cold War” because “what the United States was doing was not working.”

He didn’t spell out what it was that didn’t work: years of terrorist operations, the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, assassination attempts, as well as attempted diplomatic isolation and the unparalleled economic embargo that remains in place to this day, more than 55 years after it began.

And the commander in chief of U.S. imperialism conveniently left unsaid the failed goal: overturning the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the workers and farmers government it brought to power, taking land away from small farmers and giving it “back” to capitalist landlords, and bringing back the so-called free market so that Cuba’s working people and the island’s resources can be a source of superprofits for U.S. capitalists.

In an article in *Granma*, the paper of the Communist Party of Cuba, Enrique Ubieta Gómez pointed out that “during these decades of harassment, U.S.-based terrorists caused 3,478 deaths and left 2,099 people disabled.” Luis Posada Carriles, “the intellectual co-author of the blowing up of a civilian Cuban plane in mid-flight who is responsible for the death of all its passengers and crew, is living comfortably in Miami” to this day, he noted.

And “on the territory occupied against our will in Guantánamo for a century not a single word” from Obama, Ubieta said, referring to the U.S. naval base that U.S. imperialism forced down Cuba’s throat at gunpoint in 1903.

One of the most outlandish statements by Obama was his claim that “we took different journeys to our support for the people of South Africa in ending apartheid. But President [Raúl] Castro and I could both be there in Johannesburg to pay tribute to the legacy of the great Nelson Mandela.”

“I don’t know what support he is referring to,” Ubieta wrote, “because the government that jailed Mandela was a strategic ally of Washington.”

Under the U.S.-backed white supremacist regime in South Africa blacks — who were some 80 percent of the population — could not vote, change jobs at will, own land, or travel from one side of a town to the other without permission.

“Cuba paid tribute to Mandela with the blood spilled by its men and women in the African jungle, while together with Angolan combatants they repulsed the invasion by racist South Africa,” Ubieta said, referring to the nearly 400,000 Cuban internationalists who voluntarily fought in Angola from 1975 to 1991.

## Heart of Washington’s new tactics

To weather the storm created by the world capitalist economic crisis and challenges Cuba faces as the only country where the workers hold state power, the revolutionary government has implemented measures that increase the influence of the world capitalist market, while defending workers control, a planned economy and the social values of solidarity. The measures include promoting the growth of small businesses — *cuentalpropistas* or self-employed in Cuban parlance — and encouraging more foreign investment in Cuba.

The U.S. rulers see this as an opportunity to create pressure from below, to create a capitalist class and get the Cuban government to make more concessions to U.S. and other capitalist businesses.

Throughout his trip Obama pushed the Cuban leadership to allow direct employment by foreign enterprises operating in Cuba. He wants those capitalists to have the right to hire and fire workers directly. Currently they must hire through a government-run employment agency. With more control, foreign

capitalists — limited to a maximum 49 percent control of joint ventures with the Cuban government — can begin to undermine union protections and workers control of job conditions.

One day before Obama’s visit, Starwood Hotels & Resort Worldwide announced it had signed agreements to invest in and manage Hotel Inglaterra and Hotel Quinta Avenida in Havana and a letter of intent to manage the Santa Isabel, a “boutique” hotel. It becomes the first U.S. company since 1959 to do so.

Starwood “will be advocates for change; they will be forceful,” said John Kavulich of the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council in New York.

In his speech to an entrepreneurship and opportunity event in Havana, March 21, Obama told participants that being a small businessman means “if you’re willing to work hard, you can make your own way and improve your situation in life, for the next generation. It’s the spirit of youth.” In other words, “look out for number one” — the “me first” ethos that characterizes capitalism as opposed to the solidarity that is the product of the proletarian socialist revolution in Cuba.

Obama wants “to seduce the youth, stimulate selfishness within them and a desire for purely individual improvement to present capitalist growth as the universal panacea and not the cause of the crisis,” Darío Machado wrote in the March 25 *Granma*. “It’s our turn to explain this.”

“Nobody should be under the illusion that the people of this dignified and selfless country will renounce the glory, the rights, or the spiritual wealth they have gained with the development of education, science and culture,” Fidel Castro wrote in the March 28 *Granma*. “We are capable of producing the food and material riches we need with the efforts and intelligence of our people. We do not need the empire to give us anything.”

## Recommended reading



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

# Working-class alternative

Continued from front page many decades,” said Kennedy.

The event, and a similar meeting the next evening in Philadelphia, kicked off the Socialist Workers Party 2016 campaign in the region. Both programs featured Kennedy and Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for vice president, along with state candidates.

Norton Sandler, SWP chairperson in New York, urged those present to help the efforts over the next two months to put the party’s ticket on the ballot in Colorado, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, Tennessee and Washington state. The New Jersey petitioning drive will begin April 16. “These efforts are an important part of protecting the ability of working-class parties to participate in politics,” Sandler said.

Kennedy said she had planned to join a picket line at JFK airport for a one-day strike for \$15 and a union March 23. But the action was called off by Service Employees International Union officials after the brutal terrorist bombings in Brussels. “The SWP is against calling off the class struggle in the name of fighting terrorism,” she said. “We need these actions. They help defend our political space.

“We start with the world, with the interests of working people worldwide. The bourgeois candidates start with ‘America,’” she added. “They don’t care about the lives of workers, whether it’s here or in Syria, where the U.S. government is collaborating with the governments of Russia and Iran to assure Washington’s continued domination and plunder in a part of the world the imperialist powers have carved up over and over again,” said Kennedy.

## ‘U.S. out of the Mideast!’

Although there has been some easing of bombings in recent weeks, the



Militant/Willie Cotton  
Osborne Hart, right, SWP candidate for vice president, talks with Nina Riggs at March 2 rally to defend abortion rights in front of the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

brutality of the war in Syria continues. “The Socialist Workers Party demands Washington get out of the Middle East now. It’s one more obstacle in the fight against the Bashar al-Assad regime, the greatest enemy of Syrian toilers today, and to the ability of working people in the region to put together the revolutionary working-class leadership they need,” said Kennedy.

She described the impact of the world capitalist crisis of trade and production on the lives of workers and farmers, including growing layoffs from the oil fields to railroads. “The capitalist class cannot make a high enough rate of profit from industrial production, so they invest in stocks, bonds, hedge funds. You can see these bubbles of speculation spiraling again, like in 2008,” said Kennedy.

The Socialist Workers Party candidates point to the need to fight for a federally funded jobs program to put millions back to work.

“Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders talk about unemployment, and some capitalist candidates even mention the working class,” she said. “But they will never point to working people fighting in our own interests as the answer. The SWP is explaining that our class can organize a revolutionary movement and make a socialist revolution, a road forward.”

SWP vice-presidential candidate Osborne Hart spoke about why opposing the scapegoating of immigrants, including attacks on Muslims and their mosques, is a life-and-death question for the working class. “These are fellow workers, part of the fight for jobs, for unions, for dignity,” he said. “Unless we approach every worker that way, we can’t build a movement to overturn capitalism.”

“Workers need to build a labor party, based on the unions, that organizes independently of all the capitalist parties,” Hart said. “We need to act as a class, I don’t care what country you’re from, what language you speak, what religion you practice.”

“As the crisis of the capitalist system deepens, there is more pressure on women. The right to control their own bodies is fundamental to women’s equality,” said Hart, who took part in a March 2 rally in Washington, D.C., to defend women’s right to choose abortion.

## ‘Return Guantánamo, end embargo’

Jacob Perasso, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, joined Kennedy and Hart on the platform in New York. Perasso is a freight rail conductor for the CSX railroad and a member of United Transportation Union Local 1447, on leave from his job for the campaign.

“The SWP calls on working people to demand that the U.S. government return Guantánamo to Cuba,” said Perasso, “and end the embargo, which is still enforced against the Cuban people. U.S. imperialism has changed its tactics, not its objective to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

“The main thing Barack Obama tried to do in Cuba was ramp up pres-



Militant photos: above, Arlene Rubinstein; inset, Dan Fein Above, John Staggs, right, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania, with Steelworker Dwayne Smedley at rally against lockout at Allegheny Technologies Inc. in Washington, Pennsylvania, Feb. 11. Inset, SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy, left, talks with Bojka Milanovich about why U.S. troops should get out of Mideast. Kennedy campaigned in Milanovich’s neighborhood in Elmhurst, Illinois, March 12.

sure on the Cuban government and push capitalist dog-eat-dog values,” he continued. “The Cuban Revolution has proletarian values, exemplified by the Cuban Five. In Cuba, as Ramón Labañino explains in the new book *The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class*, it’s normal for people to help one another, to cooperate. The SWP points to the need to emulate that revolution as a precondition to building a society based on those values here. SWP campaign supporters will get this book out broadly, to explain what we stand for.” (See book specials on page 3.)

## ‘You explain what we can do’

John Staggs, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania, chaired the March 26 program in Philadelphia, which also celebrated the opening of an attractive new campaign headquarters.

“Pennsylvania has the distinction of being one of the top states for deaths due to drug overdoses,” said Staggs. “The SWP campaign is speaking out about the abysmal failure of the capitalist system to provide health care and jobs for millions.”

“The other candidates are not for the working class,” Cecelie Brown,

a Walmart worker who attended the meeting, told Kennedy. “You’re explaining what we can do. I like that.” Brown met Hart at a protest for \$15 and a union last year on April 15. SWP candidates will be joining similar protests being organized in many cities April 14.

Carmen Guerrero, who is active in opposing attacks on immigrant workers in Philadelphia, brought greetings. Delphine Matthews, whose son, Frank McQueen, was killed by police in June 2014, stopped by after a day of leafletting for People Against Injustice, an anti-police brutality group.

Jim Moran, chair of the Joseph Dougherty Legal Defense Fund, also spoke. Dougherty, 74, who was business manager of Ironworkers Local 401, was sentenced last year to 19 years in prison on frame-up charges of racketeering, conspiracy, arson and extortion.

“A 10-person SWAT team appeared on his lawn in full battle array. Joe told me all that they had to do is pick up the phone. The case against him doesn’t pass the smell test and workers shouldn’t put up with it,” Moran told the meeting.

Participants in the two meetings contributed \$6,841 to the campaign.

## Join in campaigning with the Socialist Workers Party!

The Socialist Workers Party is campaigning across the country — joining picket lines and protests, knocking on doors to discuss politics with workers and explain the party’s revolutionary proletarian program, expanding readership of the *Militant*, raising money and holding house meetings and rallies.

Between now and June, campaign teams will be working to put the SWP ticket on the ballot in Colorado, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, Tennessee and Washington.

To get involved, for information or to make a contribution, contact party units listed on page 8 or:

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

### Cross Canada tour **Gerardo Hernández** **of the Cuban 5**

**Toronto**  
**Sun., April 3, 2:30 p.m.**  
Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St.  
Info: 416-431-5498 or 416-654-7105

**Montreal**  
**Wed., April 6, 7 p.m.**  
Centre St-Pierre, salle Fernand  
Daoust 1205, rue de la Visitation  
Info: 514-728-7222 or 514-923-7222

**Ottawa**  
**Sat., April 9, 5:30-8:30 p.m.**  
Cuban Embassy, 388 Main St.  
Info: ottawacubaconnections@gmail.com

# Lessons of 1934: Gov't mediators are no 'friends of labor'

The History of American Trotskyism, 1928-1938: Report of a Participant is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. In 12 talks given in 1942, James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the communist movement in the U.S., recounts the effort to build a proletarian party that aspired to emulate the Bolsheviks. "Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine, but the restoration, the revival, of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and the Communist International," Cannon said in his first talk. Cannon was national secretary of the Social Workers Party until 1953 and then national chairman until 1972. This excerpt is from the chapter "The Great Minneapolis Strikes." Copyright © 1944 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Above, Teamsters defend themselves against police during 1934 strike in Minneapolis. Inset, Local 574 strike leaders, from left, V.R. Dunne, Grant Dunne and Miles Dunne, with copy of strike paper the Organizer. During negotiations with federal mediators Grant Dunne would sit "saying nothing, but scowling at any talk of concessions."



## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The strike began July 16, 1934, and lasted five weeks. I think I can say without the slightest exaggeration, without fear of any contradiction, that the July-August strike of the Minneapolis truck drivers and helpers has entered into the annals of the history of the American labor movement as one of its greatest, most heroic, and best organized struggles. Moreover: the strike and the union forged in its

fires are identified forever in the labor movement, not only here but all over the world, with Trotskyism in action in the mass movement of the workers. Trotskyism made a number of specific contributions to this strike which made all the difference between the Minneapolis strike and a hundred others of the period, some of which involved more workers in more socially important localities and industries. Trotskyism made the contribution of organization and preparations down to the last detail. That is something new, that is something specifically Trotskyist. Second, Trotskyism introduced into all the plans and preparations of the union and the strike, from beginning to end, the class line of militancy; not as a subjective reaction — that is seen in every strike — but as a deliberate policy based on the theory of the class struggle, that you can't win anything from the bosses unless you have the will to fight for it and the strength to take it.

The third contribution of Trotskyism to the Minneapolis strike — the most interesting and perhaps the most decisive — was that we met the government mediators on their own ground. I tell you, one of the most pathetic things observable in that period was to see how in one

strike after another the workers were outmaneuvered and cut to pieces, and their strike broken by the "friends of labor" in the guise of federal mediators.

These slick rascals would come in, take advantage of the ignorance and inexperience and political inadequacy of local leaders, and assure them that they were there as friends. Their assignment was to "settle the trouble" by extorting concessions from the weaker side. Inexperienced and politically unschooled strike leaders were their prey. They had a routine, a formula to catch the unwary. "I am not asking you to give any concession to the bosses, but give me a concession so that I can help you." Then, after something had been given away through gullibility: "I tried to get a corresponding concession from the bosses but they refused. I think you had better make more concessions: public sentiment is turning against you." And then pressure and threats: "Roosevelt will issue a statement." Or, "We will feel obligated to publish something in the papers against you if you aren't more reasonable and responsible." Then get the poor greenhorns into conference rooms, keep them there hours and hours on end, and terrorize them. This was the common routine these cynical scoundrels employed.

They came into Minneapolis all greased up for another standard performance. We were sitting there waiting for them. We said, "Come on. You want to negotiate, do you? All right. That is fine." Of course our comrades put it in the more diplomatic language of the negotiations "protocol," but that was the gist of our attitude. Well, they never negotiated two cents out of the Trotskyist leaders of Local 574. They got a dose of negotiations and diplomacy which they are still gagging from. We wore out three of them before the strike was finally settled.

A favorite trick of the confidence men known as federal mediators in those days was to assemble green strike leaders in a room, play upon their vanity, and induce them to commit themselves to some kind of compromise which they were not authorized to make. The federal mediators would convince the strike leaders that they were "big shots" who must take a "responsible" attitude. The mediators knew that concessions yielded by leaders in negotiations can very rarely be recalled. No matter how much the workers may oppose it, the fact that the leaders have already committed themselves in public compromises the position of the union and creates demoralization in the ranks.

This routine cut many a strike to pieces in that period. It didn't work in Minneapolis. Our people weren't "big shots" in the negotiations at all. They made it clear that their authority was extremely limited, that they were in fact the more moderate and reasonable wing of the union, and that if they took a step out of line they would be replaced on the negotiations committee by other types. This was quite a poser for the strike-butchers who had come to Minneapolis with their knives out for unsuspecting sheep. Every once in a while Grant Dunne would be added to the Committee. He would just sit in a corner saying nothing, but scowling every time there was any talk of concessions. The strike was a hard and bitter fight but we had plenty of fun in planning the sessions of the union negotiations committee with the mediators. We despised them and all their wily artifices and tricks, and their hypocritical pretenses of good fellowship and friendship for the strikers. They were nothing but the agents of the government in Washington, which in turn is the agent of the employing class as a whole.

*April* **BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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**The History of American Trotskyism, 1928-1938**  
Report of a Participant  
by James P. Cannon  
In 12 talks given in 1942, Cannon recounts a decisive period in efforts to build a proletarian party in the U.S.  
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**Aldabonazo**  
Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground 1952-58  
by Armando Hart  
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**Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929)**  
by Leon Trotsky  
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by Frank Kofsky  
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**Je mourrai comme j'ai vécu**  
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# U.S. imperialism out of Mideast!

Today's refugee crisis — the displacement by war of millions in Syria and Iraq as well as working people fleeing depression conditions wreaking havoc in North Africa — is a symptom of the world crisis of capitalism and the result of years of imperialist military assaults in the Mideast.

In their quest to impose a new imperialist order — as the one put together by the victors of two World Wars unravels — the U.S. rulers have forged an alliance with Moscow and Tehran that has resulted in shoring up Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad.

Washington, which invaded Iraq twice in the last quarter-century and has troops in Afghanistan, is stepping up bombing of areas in Iraq and Syria where Islamic State took advantage of the coming apart of those countries to establish its repressive, anti-working-class rule.

The road forward in that region, as in the imperialist countries, is to unite workers and farmers regardless of nationality or religious belief, and gain the confidence and experience to be able to replace the capitalist rulers, including forces like Islamic State. This can only be done by forging communist parties rooted in the working class that draw on the continuity of the international revolutionary movement since the time of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Workers in the U.S. and around the world need to demand that Washington and its allies get their troops and warplanes out of the Mideast. They are an obstacle to working people in the region building the leadership they need to fight against the Syrian regime, Islamic State and other oppressors and exploiters.

There is no easy road forward there or here, but there is no other road. The example set by workers and farmers in Cuba shows it is possible. With a proletarian leadership of the highest caliber, they made a socialist revolution nearly 60 years ago and have defended it ever since, while giving solidarity to workers from Algeria and Angola to Vietnam and Venezuela.

The labor movement in the U.S. and other imperialist centers needs to reject attempts by the bosses and their political parties to pit us against each other based on where we were born, our religion or the color of our skin. We need to see each other as fellow workers — not refugees, immigrants, native born — and fight together to organize unions, demand public works jobs programs, fight government scapegoating attacks on Muslims and mosques and oppose imperialist war. It is on this path that we can build the kind of internationalist proletarian movement of new men and women capable of replacing dog-eat-dog capitalism with a society based on values of human solidarity.

## 'Prosecute cops who killed Jamar Clark'

Continued from front page

prehesion refuses to release until its investigation is complete.

"We're here to demand the cops be prosecuted now," said Mel Reeves, an organizer of the Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar. "We have to keep protesting."

"I want to see these officers prosecuted," James Clark, the adoptive father of Jamar Clark, told the rally. "What happened to my son could happen to anyone."

Bill Kirvelay, whose brother Michael was killed by the police nine days after Jamar was killed, also spoke. Clark walked across the platform to shake his hand. The Kirvelays are Caucasian. Other speakers included relatives of other victims of police brutality, students, artists and representatives of groups that have organized protests since November.

Minneapolis Police Chief Janee Harteau released

a violence-baiting video to the press two days before the rally warning that "anyone who violates" the law during protests "will be held accountable." Her video included selected footage from weeks of protests that followed the shooting, highlighting confrontations between a handful of protesters and cops.

For 18 days after the shooting of Clark, protesters occupied a street in front of the Fourth Precinct police station. On Dec. 2 cops in riot gear closed down the encampment, arresting seven protesters.

"We will not let threats of violence from the chief of police stop us and shut us down," Levy-Pounds told the crowd. "She can't stop us from exercising our rights to free speech."

"This rally is excellent," Collin Robinson, a Southwest High School student, told the *Militant*. "We are people from all kinds of experiences and backgrounds coming together to fight for justice."

## LETTERS

### Workers in China and U.S.

An article in the *New York Times* notes that the number of workers involved in labor struggles in China has doubled in the past year as more and more Chinese workers fight back against stepped-up closures of factories and mines by the government and private employers alike. Some of the laid-off workers have become full-time organizers trying to build independent labor unions.

A video attached to the article shows one such organizer, Wu Guijin, as he meets with groups of workers. A key organizing tool for Wu Guijin: a video of *Harlan County USA*, the award-winning 1976 movie documenting the struggle of striking coal miners and the United Mine Workers of America as they battled the coal companies in eastern Kentucky in the 1970s. The video shows Hazel Dickens leading the singing of "Which Side Are You On" and miners' confrontations with the cops — all subtitled in Chinese.

The future of the labor movement — in the U.S. and China — all wrapped up in a single image!

Bob Braxton  
Atlanta, Georgia

### On wildlife refuges

I need to respond to Monica Adams' letter in the March 28 *Militant* calling for more wildlife refuges. I take issue with her comment that "if the federal government has been buying up land in order to establish wildlife refuges, I am all for it."

I grew up in rural central Pennsylvania surrounded by corn, wheat, oat, tomato, and hayfields along with fruit orchards. There were hog, chicken, dairy and beef farms. The vast majority of the residents in the area were Caucasian — including Mennonite and Amish families. Hunting was popular.

My African-American family along with others took advantage

of visiting state parks and natural attractions. I grew up hiking, biking, swimming, canoeing, bird-watching and berry picking. Some of these pursuits I enjoy today.

I am simply appalled by the idea that the federal government should have the right to buy farms and ranches just to set up a wildlife refuge, thus forcing people from their right to pursue a living off the land. I find this idea wrong and reactionary.

Glova Scott  
Washington, D.C.

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California

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

## 'We were lied to a lot' in shooting by police

BY JANICE LYNN

SENECA, S.C. — "If I can help someone else not go through what we had to go through, it is worth the fight," Angie Hammond told the *Militant* at her home March 15. Her son, 19-year-old Zachary Hammond, was shot and killed in a parking lot July 26 by Seneca Police Lt. Mark Tiller.

She testified at a state Senate panel March 9 in support of a measure that would require authorities to provide families of those killed by cops with quicker access to police video and autopsy results. She and her husband Paul Hammond have also filed a civil suit against Tiller, the Seneca police and the police chief, which is in the discovery stage. A separate federal investigation is ongoing.

The Hammonds fought for three months to have the dashcam video of the shooting released, trying to understand what happened to their son. Various media outlets also filed a suit demanding its release. "We were lied to a lot," she said. "Their story kept changing."

State prosecutor Chrissy Adams finally released the footage Oct. 27, at the same time she announced no charges would be filed against Tiller, despite what the video revealed.

It clearly shows Tiller running up to the car with his gun drawn, yelling, "I will blow your f\_\_\_ ass off," as Hammond tries to drive away. As the car goes around Tiller, he fires two shots, hitting Hammond in the side and the back. Even though Tiller was never in the path of the car, he claimed he feared for his safety. Both Tiller and Hammond are Caucasian.

"We didn't even know the video had been released. They gave us no warning," Angie Hammond said. She told the Senate panel her younger son was at school when he saw the video of his brother being killed, before they even had a chance to talk about it, and was devastated. "He was completely unprepared," she said.

"When their versions don't add up, it makes you not trust authorities," she told reporters after the March 9 hearing. "We felt like we had to investigate Zach's death. No mom should ever have to investigate their child's death."

The proposed measure, which came in the form of an amendment to another bill, was rejected by the senators as not relevant. They said they may consider it later. "I will testify to tell our story again if needed," she told the *Militant*.

Meanwhile, a federal judge has ordered Tiller to provide a deposition March 25 in the civil lawsuit against him, rejecting a request by the cop's attorneys for a 90-day postponement on grounds that a federal criminal investigation is still underway.

## Fighting Zika in Cuba

Continued from page 6

many with birdbaths, pools and unsealed septic tanks. Many schools have no air conditioning or even window screens. Thousands of government workers, including health care workers, have been laid off in massive budget cuts.

The response in Puerto Rico has been lackluster at best. The government did move 900,000 used tires, potential mosquito breeding grounds, away from residential areas.

With no plan to wipe out the mosquito, install screens at all the schools, or systematically fumigate homes, officials there say they will focus on pregnant women.

About 5,000 pregnant women have attended lectures on Zika at government-operated clinics.

At one class of seven women attended by a *New York Times* reporter, the clinic had already run out of kits it was supposed to give to participants with insect repellent, a mosquito net and condoms — the disease can also spread through sexual contact. It had only received 30.

"I'm not going to oversell this," Dr. Johnny Rullán, a special Zika adviser to the governor of Puerto Rico, told the *Times*. "It's not a perfect world. We'll do as much as we can."