

# THE MILITANT

**EXCERPT FROM NEW BOOK:**  
**Washington's unending wars,**  
**from Iraq to Yugoslavia**  
 — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 48 DECEMBER 26, 2016

## Moscow, Assad brutalize Syria rebels, Ankara targets Kurds

BY NAOMI CRAINE

After weeks of a relentless starvation siege and continuous bombardment by Moscow's warplanes in rebel-held Aleppo, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's military units, joined by troops from Tehran and Shia militias from Lebanese Hezbollah and from Iraq, are crushing opposition forces there, slaughtering hundreds.

Efforts by the Turkish government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan to broker the evacuation of remaining rebel forces from the rubble continue as we go to press. News reports say an agreement reached Dec. 14 has fallen apart and attacks have resumed.

"The Aleppo deal was also notable for the lack of a role for Washington," reported the *Financial Times*, "whose influence in the Middle East appears to be waning."

Washington's inability to use ground troops in the area, or to find satisfactory "moderate" anti-Assad rebels it can champion, has led the

**Continued on page 8**

## Protests in Washington: 'Free Leonard Peltier!'

Victory in Standing Rock boosts Peltier fight



AP/Alex Brandon

March in solidarity with Standing Rock in Washington, D.C., Dec. 10. Action came at end of week of activities to step up fight to win clemency for Native American activist Leonard Peltier.

BY SETH GALINSKY

WASHINGTON — Hundreds took part in a week of actions here Dec. 4-10 to press President Barack Obama to free Native American political activist Leonard Peltier, who has been held in prison for 40 years. Highlights

of the week included daily vigils outside the White House; screening of the film "Warrior: The Life of Leonard Peltier"; a national press conference; a public meeting on indigenous rights and environmental issues, including the fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock in North Dakota; and a conference on "U.S. Prisons: Conditions of Confinement."

The victory won by the Standing Rock Sioux and their supporters, keeping the oil pipeline from crossing sacred land and threatening their wa-

**Continued on page 6**

## SWP in LA: 'Workers need to build our own party'

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — "Workers face slow-burning depression conditions in the U.S. and much of the world today," Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor here, told Daniel Lopez, a 23-year-old UPS worker in the Highland Park neighborhood Dec. 11. "We need to get together and build our own party to fight for the working class and to take political power. That's what the SWP is all about."

After more than two weeks of campaigning, knocking on workers' doors and introducing the party, the SWP got word from city officials that Richter was on the ballot for the May election. Party members and campaign supporters had gathered over 1,000 signatures, more than double the requirement.

"Rents are going up and we're getting kicked out of where we live," Lopez, a member of Teamsters Local 396, told Richter. He said that after the elections he hoped something would be done to protect immigrants in Los Angeles.

"It is in the interests of the entire working class to defend immigrant rights and oppose deportations," Richter said. "Attacking immigrants is one of the ways the bosses and their parties — both Democrats and Re-

**Continued on page 3**

## First Declaration of Havana: 'No to exploitation, no to imperialism!'



Granma/Rogelio Arias

"Cuba will never give up its principles," says banner at Feb. 4, 1962, rally in Havana that adopted Second Declaration of Havana, which still guides Cuban revolutionaries today.

Below are excerpts from the First Declaration of Havana, issued by Cuba's revolutionary leadership in 1960. Millions of Cuban workers and youth mobilized to reaffirm their commitment to defend and advance their socialist revolution after the recent death of revolutionary leader Fidel Castro. At a mass rally in Havana's Plaza of the Revolution Nov. 29, Raúl Castro, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, recalled that at that site the First and Second Declarations were presented by Fidel Castro and

adopted by millions-strong General Assemblies of the Cuban People on Sept. 2, 1960, and Feb. 4, 1962. Both are available in The First and Second Declarations of Havana: Manifestos of Revolutionary Struggle in the Americas Adopted by the Cuban People. Copyright © 2007 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

[T]he National General Assembly of the Cuban People:

Condemns the backward, inhuman  
**Continued on page 6**

## Support grows for fight to reverse censorship of 'Militant' at Attica

BY SETH GALINSKY

More than one month after the *Militant* appealed the impoundment of its Oct. 3 issue by Attica prison authorities, the New York State Department of Corrections has still not responded.

**NEW YEARS GREETINGS TO WORKERS BEHIND BARS**  
 — Editorial, p. 8

Attica officials banned a second issue, the Oct. 31 *Militant*, claiming that allowing an article reporting on the appeal to get into the prison "could incite disobedience."

The *Militant* subscriber, Jalil Muntaqim (formerly Anthony Bottom), has faced other arbitrary acts of censorship and violation of his constitutional rights by Attica prison authorities.

Last year Attica officials banned four books sent to him, including one of poems that he wrote, and have been

interfering with his mail.

The *Militant* article officials banned "consists of objectively true statements of fact," wrote David Goldstein, the *Militant's* attorney, of

**Continued on page 3**

### Inside

UK: Workers discuss crisis of capital, how to go forward 2

Over the top! Over \$100,000 to SWP Party-Building Fund! 3

'Is Trump a fascist?' 'Are workers going to the right?' 4

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Unionists join day of solidarity to back NY Momentive strikers

Ottawa conference discusses Lac-Mégantic rail disaster



# UK: Workers discuss crisis of capital, how to go forward

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Millions of workers here have seen their wages and broader conditions of life decline, amid a mounting economic and social crisis. As a result, there is a growing desire for some deep change among working people.

British capital is especially vulnerable to the interconnected worldwide crisis of capitalist production, trade and employment for which no capitalist politician or political party has any solution — other than to make the working class pay.

From its dominant position in the world in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the capitalist rulers in the U.K. have experienced a sharp decline against their leading imperialist rivals. Washington’s rise to top dog, sealed by its victory in the inter-imperialist slaughter of World War II, delivered the coup de grace.

The British ruling families were hit especially hard by the 2007-2008 financial crisis. Industrial production remains 9 percent below what it was in 2006 and manufacturing output has failed to recover.

Labor productivity in the U.K. lags behind its competitors by a large margin — trailing Germany by 36 percent and the U.S. by 30 percent, as investment in plant and production has stalled or declined for decades. Bank lending to U.K. business, key to investment in capacity-expanding plant and equipment, has continued to decline.

The only productivity gains made by the bosses have resulted from forcing

longer hours and worsening job conditions on workers’ backs. Real incomes have declined by over 10 percent since 2007. Social provision, from health to welfare, has been eroded.

Part of the attack on the working class has been a stunning increase in the number of workers the bosses designate as “self-employed” or insist on hiring through temporary agencies.

As of Oct. 1, there are 4.8 million “self-employed,” up 1 million since 2008. The median wage of these workers is half that of regularly employed workers, and they don’t have the same legal protections.

An additional 1.7 million workers are employed by temporary agencies. Of these, 900,000 are on “zero hours” contracts, meaning that some 20 percent of workers in the U.K. don’t know if they’ll get a full week’s work each week.

### Crisis of capitalist politics

The coming apart of what many pro-capitalist pundits call “globalization” — the international expansion over the last several decades of world trade, capital flows and labor migration — was reflected in the June 23 referendum vote to pull out of the European Union.

“Brexit” is part of a broader fracturing of the EU, as the illusion of an “ever greater union” runs up against the reality of the sharpening of conflicting interests among the ruling classes of its member states. Uncertainty hangs over what will be protracted negotiations between London and the U.K.’s rivals across The Channel.

Workers here sense we face a glob-



Militant/Dag Tirsén

**Peter Clifford, right, Communist League candidate for mayor of Greater Manchester, talks with Mark Fraser about the League and its program as workers face depression conditions.**

al capitalist crisis like none of us have seen before. The economic contraction and financial crisis is generating grinding depression conditions that arouse anger and bitterness among millions of working people. This has forced a crisis in the rulers’ political parties as workers look for a new way to make change.

The Labour Party no longer has any semblance of being a party of labor, its working-class vote is hemorrhaging. Hundreds of thousands of young professionals, students and middle-class people on the left of capitalist politics have joined, attracted by new leader Jeremy Corbyn’s appeal to “create a country that works for everyone, not just a privileged few.”

New Conservative Party leader and Prime Minister Theresa May has taken up the same banner.

Fearful of the “quiet revolution” underway within the working class, she told the October Conservative Party conference in her keynote speech, “We have a responsibility to step up, represent and govern for the whole nation. That means tackling unfairness and injustice, and shifting the balance of Britain decisively in favor of ordinary working-class people.”

There is a marked closeness in the political terrain occupied by the Labour and Conservative parties today.

At the recent Labour Party conference, Corbyn’s criticism of May’s leadership of the Conservatives was that she may “talk the talk” but she can’t “walk the walk.”

In these circumstances, the Communist League gets unprecedented interest from fellow workers.

“Workers need to see our capacity to build a movement to replace capitalism,” Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for mayor of Greater Manchester, told Mark Fraser, a coffee shop agency worker, when he knocked on his door to introduce the League. “Workers don’t need to look for a lesser evil to manage capitalism.

“In face of the deep-going economic, political and social crisis — and their unending wars abroad,” Clifford said, “workers need our own party to advance a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

“That’s what the Communist League aims to be,” Clifford said. Fraser said he wanted to hear more and, like hundreds of others who’ve talked to League members on their doorsteps, bought a copy of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.

# THE MILITANT

*Defend Native American sovereignty!*

*The fight of Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota to defend their sovereignty and prevent construction of a pipeline near their land has won support around the world. The ‘Militant’ explains the stakes in the struggle and builds support for it among workers.*



Reuters/Lucas Jackson  
Veterans join Dec. 5 march backing Standing Rock Sioux fight against pipeline.

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# ‘Workers need our own party’

**Continued from front page**  
publicans — attempt to divide working people. We can’t depend on politicians like Mayor Garcetti to give us ‘safe places’ for workers without papers.”

The status of undocumented workers is a big question here. Some 1 million immigrants without papers live in Los Angeles County. Democratic Party Mayor Eric Garcetti, running for re-election against Richter, has said he and the L.A. cops will not search workers for their papers or round up and deport those who don’t have them.

These workers will have “safe spaces and safe places” in Los Angeles, Garcetti said Nov. 30.

“You can’t depend on the politicians in Los Angeles or anywhere else. We have to do what working people did in 2006,” Richter said. “I was working in a meatpacking plant in Chicago and we walked off the job and joined the nationwide one-day strike of 2 million people on May Day and killed the anti-immigrant Sensenbrenner bill.

“This is a key fight for the working class,” Richter said. “The bosses make billions off exploitation of immigrant workers.

“We need to organize all workers, those with papers and those without, into our unions,” he said, “and transform our unions to lead the fight against deportations, E-verify and all moves to scapegoat immigrant workers and divide our class.”

“That’s right,” Lopez agreed, “everyone has to come together.”

“We need to have a revolution,” Richter said. “We need to get rid of the dictatorship of capital.”

### ‘Build affordable, safe housing’

“Housing is another big issue,” Richter said. “For the landlords and the government the only question is how to make it profitable.

“After the warehouse fire in Oakland, the city government blames those who are forced to live in such dangerous structures,” Richter said. “But the

tenants aren’t responsible. It’s the owners and their agents who cut corners to make money. Like all the bosses in this dog-eat-dog system. We need to demand cheap, plentiful and safe housing be built.”

“It wasn’t safe but they’re going to blame the people,” Lopez said. “That’s the way capitalism is.”

“There is an example for workers here just 90 miles offshore in revolutionary Cuba,” Richter said.

“The press says everything is bad in Cuba but I saw the way the people turned out there,” Lopez said, referring to the massive mobilizations to honor Fidel Castro and defend the revolution there.

“Fidel said it was possible to make a revolution in the interests of workers and farmers and then he led them to do exactly that,” Richter said. “They’ve been defending it for over 55 years

## Fight grows to reverse ban on ‘Militant’ at Attica

**Continued from front page**  
the prominent civil liberties law firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman in appeal of the latest censorship.

“It is difficult to conclude that the censoring of this brief article is anything other than a blanket ban on any mention of Attica, of the Attica uprising, or of prisoners’ constitutional rights, unless parroting a viewpoint approved by prison officials,” Goldstein wrote. “However, prison authorities, including at Attica, have no license either to single out *The Militant* for censorship or to ban reporting on censorship at Attica.”

“Nothing in the article could rationally be construed to ‘advocate’ ‘acts of disobedience,’” Goldstein wrote.

“Whether prison officials agree with what is in the pages of this or any other publication, the men inside of Attica remain citizens of the United States with rights under our constitution,” wrote Dr. Heather Ann Thompson in a statement of support sent to the *Militant* Dec. 4.



Dennis Richter, left, SWP candidate for Los Angeles mayor, campaigns in West Adams Nov. 19.

and advancing solidarity to workers all over the world. We have to do the same thing here.”

To join the Socialist Workers Party campaigning across Los Angeles and

around the country, discussing how to build a party that can unify the working class and defend our interests, contact the party at [swpla@att.net](mailto:swpla@att.net) or (323) 643-4968.

“These men have a right to read and to think for themselves and there is nothing on the pages of *The Militant* that poses a direct or immediate threat to the safety of any prison official or employee inside of Attica.”

Thompson, a history professor at the University of Michigan, is the author of “Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy.” The book highlights both the humanity of the prisoners who rebelled against atrocious conditions, and the abuse, torture and violence used by police and guards after they regained control of the prison.

Her book was reviewed by dozens of papers leading up to the 45th anniversary of the uprising Sept. 9. The Oct. 3 issue of the *Militant* featured a front-page article on the rebellion.

The American Friends Service Committee has also spoken out against Attica’s censorship of the *Militant*. The need for security “should not be exercised in a way that unjustly and unreasonably limits the access to information for those incarcerated,” wrote Lewis

Webb Jr. Dec. 2. He is director of the AFSC Healing Justice Program.

“The *Militant* is great for men and women behind bars to read,” wrote Antonia Brooks, a spokesperson for Mothers and Families of prisoners in Alabama, in a statement calling on New York state authorities to lift censorship of the paper.

Muntaqim — a former member of the Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army and a founder of the Jericho Movement, which backs the fight for amnesty for political prisoners in the U.S. — was put in solitary confinement on Dec. 6. According to a report at [www.freejalil.com](http://www.freejalil.com), officials apparently objected to his mentioning the Black Panther Party as part of the Black history course he teaches to dozens of fellow inmates.

He has been in jail since he was 19 years old, accused of killing two police officers in 1971. Muntaqim has repeatedly been denied parole. His supporters are calling on Gov. Andrew Cuomo to commute his sentence.

“Attica and the Department of Corrections are acting as if they are above the law,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “Those joining the fight against censorship of the *Militant* are defending freedom of the press and free speech.”

Statements of support are needed to keep up the pressure until Attica authorities reverse this decision and allow subscribers to read the paper. See box below for list of supporters and how you can help.

## Over the top! Over \$100,000 to Party-Building Fund!

BY EMMA JOHNSON

“The movement needs money to grow,” said Carmen Guerrero in Philadelphia when she gave a contribution to the Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund. “Because we live under the capitalist system, we need to build the power of the party.”

Guerrero, who is active in the fight for the rights of immigrant workers, is one of hundreds who helped take the fund over its goal, raising \$103,300. Regular contributors to the annual effort gave generous contributions. There were also many first-time contributors who met the SWP when members knocked on their doors to introduce the party. Many of these contributors also bought books by party leaders Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, and decided to subscribe to the *Militant*.

“We got pledges from 11 new contributors and went over our goal,” wrote Ilona Gersh from Chicago. “Now we’re organizing to get back to people to discuss further why the SWP is their party and why they should join.”

In the final stretch of the drive the Cuban Revolution moved to the center of the discussions. Many workers took notice of the massive mobilizations by working people in Cuba in defense of their revolution after Fidel Castro’s death, and how that didn’t fit with the capitalist media’s picture of Cuba. They wanted to learn more about it.

The SWP is financed by contribu-

tions from working people. Along with weekly voluntary sustainers from its members, the party-building fund is a cornerstone of financing the work of the party to educate and organize the working class in the fight to abolish capitalism and join the worldwide struggle for socialism.

### Support fight against censorship at Attica!

The following organizations and individuals have sent statements calling on New York state prison officials to end censorship of the *Militant* at Attica.

American Friends Service Committee  
The Gathering for Justice and Justice League NYC  
Mothers and Families, New Market, Alabama,  
National Lawyers Guild  
New York Civil Liberties Union  
PEN America  
Yusef Salaam, one of the Central Park Five  
San Francisco Bay View newspaper  
Heather Ann Thompson, professor of history, University of Michigan, author of *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy*

Get your union, church group and others to send statements of support to [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com).

Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund Sept. 24 - Dec. 7 - Final			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Atlanta	\$11,000	\$11,788	107%
Chicago	\$11,500	\$12,593	110%
Lincoln	\$300	\$322	107%
Los Angeles	\$9,000	\$9,425	105%
Miami	\$3,500	\$3,521	101%
New York	\$22,500	\$22,895	102%
Oakland	\$15,000	\$15,056	100%
Philadelphia	\$4,500	\$4,563	101%
Seattle	\$8,000	\$8,225	103%
Twin Cities	\$4,500	\$4,877	108%
Wash., DC	\$8,500	\$8,835	104%
Other		\$1,200	
Totals	\$98,300	\$103,300	103%
Should be	\$100,000	\$100,000	100%

# ‘Is Trump a fascist?’ ‘Are workers going to the right?’

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Does the election of Donald Trump signal the development of a fascist movement in the U.S.? Are the millions of workers who voted for him turning to the right, increasingly racist and reactionary?

These are among the questions readers sent in about the Nov. 28 article, “Socialist Workers Party: ‘Our Party Is Your Party!’ Trump Victory Registers Crisis of Bosses’ Parties. 2016: Most Important US Election in 100 Years.”

One reader, who didn’t want her name used, asked, “What does the *Militant* think about Trump and his right-wing KKK comrades” and is he a “neofascist?”

Trump’s victory over Democrat Hill-

## REPLY TO READERS

ary Clinton had nothing to do with fascism or a new rise in racism. It had everything to do with how Trump spoke about the economic and social crisis facing the working class. He promised to create jobs and grow the economy, albeit with nationalist demagoguery thrown in aimed at shoring up capitalist rule, in sharp contrast to Clinton, who said the economy was fine and wrote workers off as “deplorables” and “irredeemable.”

Trump took advantage of the lack of any fighting leadership in the labor movement to address millions of workers hard hit by grinding depression conditions and to propose measures he claims will boost the economy.

### Liberal, left contempt for workers

Liberal and petty-bourgeois left currents, oozing contempt for the working class and utter lack of interest in the rich lessons learned by the revolutionary working-class movement in past fights against fascism, call Trump’s victory a triumph of reaction.

The *Washington Post* has featured articles like, “This Is How Fascism Comes

to America.” On Dec. 9 CNN asked, “Is Donald Trump a Fascist?”

“For the most part, those who attend and cheer at Trump rallies are deplorable,” Workers World Party leader Teresa Gutierrez wrote, echoing Clinton’s smear of workers. They “reflect a danger.”

Trump is rebuilding the Republican Party, not as a bastion of white supremacy, but as a party with a working-class base, seeking to stabilize bourgeois rule by convincing workers of all nationalities that “we” — capitalists and workers — have common American interests. He appeals to workers of every nationality.

His appointment of South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations reflects this. She is a pro-business Indian-American who ordered the Confederate battle flag down after the murder of African-Americans by a white supremacist in 2015. The rapid fall of that racist emblem across the South and the participation of large numbers of Caucasians in protests against police killings of African-Americans across the country demonstrate that race prejudice in the working class is at an historic low.

Donald Trump isn’t leading a thugish force of anti-labor henchmen smashing unions, scapegoating Jews and submerging democratic rights in a sea of blood. That’s what happened in Italy and Germany in the 1920s and ’30s.

Workers who voted for Trump as a way to try to change grinding depression conditions aren’t volunteering to serve as fascist storm troopers against Jews, Blacks and others.

## — LETTERS —

### Is Trump a fascist?

I would appreciate it if you could please discuss if the SWP considers Trump a neofascist. What does the *Militant* think about Trump and his right-wing, KKK comrades?

Name withheld by request

### Are Trump’s people fascist?

I have appreciated the *Militant*’s coverage of the 2016 election and am convinced of the argument that Trump won in spite of his derogatory comments



Reuters/Mike Segar

President-elect Donald Trump talks with workers at Carrier plant in Indianapolis Dec. 1 after getting bosses to keep hundreds of jobs in U.S. He won election by building a base among workers, speaking about jobs crisis, not by building a fascist movement to attack working class.

Far from facing assaults while campaigning at Trump rallies, SWP members got a hearing by presenting a working-class road to unify the class in struggle and fight for political power.

The Socialist Workers Party draws on its revolutionary continuity to explain to workers what fascism is, its deadly danger and how to fight it.

“In all the countries where fascism became victorious, we had, before the growth of fascism and its victory, a wave of radicalism of the masses — of the workers and poorer peasants and farmers, and of the petty bourgeois class,” Leon Trotsky said in 1939. Trotsky was one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution who collaborated with the SWP until he was murdered by a Stalinist agent in 1940. “Fascism was able to conquer only in those countries where the conservative labor parties prevented the proletariat from utilizing the revolutionary situation and seizing power.”

There is no mass revolutionary upsurge in the U.S. or any imperialist country today. As broad labor and social struggles develop in the future, however, the working class will have a shot at taking power. Its success will depend on revolutionary leadership built well in advance. The Socialist Workers Party’s purpose is to do just that.

### SWP fights for jobs on road to power

Reader Philippe Tessier asked what the difference is between Trump’s proposals to create jobs by repairing infrastructure and the Socialist Workers Party’s call for workers to fight for a government-funded public works program “that would make a worker support the SWP demand and not the Republican program?”

“We’re going to rebuild our infrastructure,” Trump pledged in his victory speech. “And we will put millions of our

Continued on page 8

### Correction

The article “Millions Turn Out in Cuba for Freedom Caravan” in the Dec. 12 issue incorrectly described Jairo Rodriguez as “Cuban-born.” He is Cuban-American.

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Are reports and worries of attacks simply “liberal hysteria” or something else? What should be the position of workers on the appointments Trump is making, like Steve Bannon and Jeff Sessions for example?

Kyle Edwards  
Minnesota

### SWP vs. Trump on jobs

I had a question on the article “2016: Most Important US Election in 100 Years,” published in the Nov. 28 issue. It states that Trump wants to kick start “growth” and “jobs” with \$1 trillion in infrastructure construction and repairs.

The SWP 2016 presidential campaign platform says, “We are part of the fight for a government-funded public works program to create jobs at union-scale pay to replace crumbling infrastructure and build schools, medical, childcare and recreation centers, and other things working people need.”

What is the difference between these proposals that would make a worker support the SWP demand and not Trump’s program?

Philippe Tessier  
Montreal, Quebec

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.



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

## Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including strikers at Momentive, California port truckers fighting to be classified as workers, not owners, and United Auto Workers members locked out by Honeywell in Indiana. 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

### Unionists join in day of solidarity to back NY Momentive strikers

WATERFORD, N.Y. — “This strike has brought us together, made our union stronger,” chemical operator Dian Welch told the *Militant* during a day of support here Dec. 13 for the strike by members of the International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America Local 81359 against Momentive Performance Materials. “Before, I knew the five people in my section,” Welch said. “Now on the picket

line we're getting to know everybody.”

The 700 workers went on strike Nov. 2 after voting down several concession contract offers.

More than 300 strikers and supporters marched from picket lines to nearby Chrome Food and Spirits, an establishment supportive of the strike, as residents shouted support from their porches. Earlier strikers feasted on a donated roast pig at the strike headquarters, and mounted the pig's head, complete with cigar, on a stick to represent the boss.



New York State AFL-CIO/Kevin Eitzmann

Momentive strikers, supporters rally in Waterford, New York, during Dec. 13 day of solidarity.

Joining the march were members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, United Steelworkers, Letter Carriers, Carpenters, Verizon workers, family and friends. Members of the New York

State Nurses Association stopped by earlier with hats and scarves.

— Candace Wagner

## Ottawa conference discusses Lac-Mégantic rail disaster

BY JOHN STEELE

OTTAWA, Ontario — Who was responsible for the July 2013 Montreal, Maine and Atlantic oil train derailment and explosion that killed 47 people and destroyed downtown Lac-Mégantic — framed-up rail workers Tom Harding and Richard Labrie or the Canadian government and rail bosses? That was a central question discussed at a Dec. 8 conference of some 60 people here on “Have the Lessons of the Lac-Mégantic Rail Disaster Been Learned?”

The gathering, sponsored by the University of Ottawa law faculty, was initiated by Bruce Campbell, author of a series of articles exposing the complicity of Transport Canada, the federal transportation agency, with Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway in its disregard for safety in search of higher profits.

Locomotive engineer Harding and train controller Labrie, members of the United Steelworkers, along with Jean Demaitre, a low-level official with the now bankrupt and defunct MMA, are charged with 47 counts of criminal negligence. If convicted, they could face life in prison.

“How did the MMA get approval to run one-man crews from Transport Canada? Why did both Conservative and Liberal governments oppose demands for an independent public inquiry into the disaster?” Robert Bellefleur, spokesperson for Citizens and Groups Coalition for Rail Safety in Lac-Mégantic, said in the opening panel. “Why did Ottawa secretly pay \$75 million into a compensation settlement to the victims that protected the government and its ministers from any legal liability?”

Bellefleur and four other coalition members described the fight they have waged to force the federal government to build a rail bypass around the town.

Other panels discussed the need to strengthen rail safety laws and regulations.

“The railway barons are stronger than ever. They write the rules, and then apply for exemptions,” said Brian Stevens, National Railway director of Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union, who worked for years as a locomotive brake mechanic. “Company rules prevented Harding from using a 10-second procedure to activate the automatic air brakes that would have prevented the

disaster, in order to save 15 minutes of startup time the next day.”

“At least 80 percent of the Lac-Mégantic population thinks the charges against Harding and Labrie should be dropped and that MMA owners and top Transport Canada officials should be charged with criminal negligence,” this writer said in the discussion.

“Charging Harding and Labrie shows the government thinks we must all be stupid,” said Lac-Mégantic resident Claude Roy.

“The laws and justice system are biased against workers,” Communist League member Annette Kouri said. “In 2015, the government threatened back-to-work legislation to pressure 2,000 Canadian Pacific rail workers to end their strike against imposed work schedules that were causing dangerous worker fatigue conditions. A victory for Harding and Labrie will help to encourage rail workers to take control of safety conditions through their unions.”

“We can't forget that the key stakeholders on all these questions discussed here are rail workers themselves,” said Fritz Edler, a retired Washington, D.C.,

engineer and member of Rail Workers United active in the defense of Harding and Labrie. “We know what the problems around rail safety are and what has to be done to fix them on the ground.”

Harding's lawyers, Thomas Walsh and Charles Shearson, told the *Militant* they will argue for a “stay in proceedings” to permanently drop the case at a Jan. 26-27 court hearing.

After continual delays, the workers' trial won't begin until Sept. 11, 2017 — 40 months since they were charged.

There has been a massive backlog of criminal cases in courts across Canada, and in particular in Quebec. In July the Supreme Court ruled that under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 30 months should be the maximum in “reasonable delays” in criminal cases.

“The public should follow closely what is going on in the court,” Lac-Mégantic Citizens' coalition activist Gilbert Carette told the *Militant*. “We should fill the courtroom for the next hearing.”

Solidarity messages for Harding and Labrie can be sent to USW Local 1976/Section locale 1976, 2360 De Lasalle, Suite 202, Montreal, QC H1V 2L1.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 27, 1991

LONDON — In what is believed to be their largest ever joint operation, more than 200 police supported 38 Home Office officials raiding Smith's Meters, a South London factory, in a crackdown on immigrant workers. The raid occurred on November 27 as the night shift arrived for work.

The entire shift of 250 workers were taken to the company cafeteria where, surrounded by police, they were addressed by Home Office officials. Following three hours of questioning, 35, including 29 from Ghana, were arrested for allegedly breaking immigration laws. One woman was arrested later. Sixteen have since been released. Several of those arrested had previously applied for political asylum.

A Home Office spokesperson said they had “the full cooperation of the company” in the operation.



December 26, 1966

Washington made another phony Christmas “peace offer” at the United Nations. U.S. Ambassador Goldberg instructed Secretary General Thant to “bring about the necessary discussions which could lead to ... a cease-fire.” But Goldberg's note expressed no change in Washington's policies towards the war. It boils down to the totally unacceptable position that if Hanoi agrees to negotiate, Washington might cease fire.

This has been rejected by Hanoi before and it will be again. Washington is the aggressor in Vietnam and has no right to dictate terms to anyone. Even though north Vietnam is being battered by U.S. bombing attacks, Hanoi refuses to negotiate in the name of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front.

Johnson was perfectly aware of the orders to bomb workers' homes in Hanoi — he gave them.



December 27, 1941

Last week the employer representatives at the Washington labor-industry conference on war labor policy extracted a no-strike pledge from AFL and CIO leaders under Congressional threat of anti-strike laws. This week they are pressing for an agreement to “freeze” the open shop for the duration of the war.

Their objective is to prevent further organizational drives and to establish the most favorable conditions for undermining present union strength. Given a hand by the labor leaders, the employing class is trying to slice off a whole arm.

The employers are following a long-term plan aimed at paralyzing or destroying the union altogether. Agreement by labor to “freezing” of the open-shop will be a sign for the employers to extend their demands still further. The next step would be the “freezing” of wage levels.



# Cuba: No to exploitation!

**Continued from front page**

landed-estate system of agricultural production, a source of misery and poverty for the rural population. It condemns starvation wages and the grossly unjust exploitation of human labor by illegitimate and privileged interests. It condemns illiteracy, the lack of teachers, schools, doctors, hospitals, and care for the elderly that prevails in Latin America. It condemns the discrimination against Blacks and Indians. It condemns the inequality and exploitation of women. It condemns the military and political oligarchies that keep our peoples in utter misery and hinder the development toward democracy and the full exercise of their sovereignty. It condemns the handing over of our countries' natural resources to the foreign monopolies as a policy of concessions that surrenders and betrays the interests of the peoples. It condemns the governments that ignore the sentiments of their people in order to obey Washington's dictates. It condemns the systematic deception of the people by the news media in the interests of the oligarchies and the imperialist oppressor. It condemns the monopoly of the news media by Yankee agencies, instruments of the U.S. trusts and agents of Washington. It condemns repressive laws that prevent workers, peasants, students, and intellectuals — the great majority of each country — from organizing to fight for their social demands and patriotic aspirations. It condemns the imperialist monopolies and companies that constantly plunder our wealth, exploit our workers and peasants, bleed our economies and keep them in backwardness, and force Latin America, in matters of policy, to submit to their designs and interests.

In short, the National General Assembly of the Cuban People condemns the exploitation of man by man, and the exploitation of the underdeveloped countries by imperialist finance capital.

Therefore, the National General

Assembly of the Cuban People proclaims before the Americas: The right of peasants to the land; the right of workers to the fruit of their labor; the right of children to education; the right of the sick to medical and hospital care; the right of the young to a job; the right of students to free education that is both practical and scientific; the right of Blacks and Indians to "full human dignity"; the right of women to civil, social, and political equality; the right of the elderly to a secure old age; the right of intellectuals, artists, and scientists to use their work to fight for a better world; the right of states to nationalize the imperialist monopolies, thereby recovering their national wealth and resources; the right of countries to engage freely in trade with all the peoples of the world; the right of nations to their full sovereignty; the



National Institute of Agrarian Reform

**Peasants establish farm cooperative in Cárdenas, Cuba, early 1960s. Millions-strong National General Assembly of Cuban People proclaimed right of peasants to land in 1960 declaration.**

right of the peoples to turn garrisons into schools, and to arm their workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, Blacks, Indians, women, young peo-

ple, old people, and all the oppressed and exploited, so they themselves may defend their rights and their destiny.

## Protests in Washington: 'Free Leonard Peltier!'

**Continued from front page**

ter supply, has given a boost to efforts to win clemency for Peltier.

The Native Americans who led the struggle at Standing Rock are fighting "for the same purpose" that Peltier has spent his life fighting for, his son Chauncey Peltier told the press conference Dec. 7.

Peltier was framed up on charges growing out of battles for Native American rights on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in the 1970s. Dozens of organizations and prominent individuals worldwide have joined the campaign for his release, including the American Association of Jurists, the National Congress of American Indians, Amnesty International, the International Federation of Human Rights, the World Council of Churches and the European Parliament.

Others at the press conference included Justin Mazzola for Amnesty International; John Dulles, former regional director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; former American Indian Movement members Jean Roach and Norman

Patrick Brown; and Cynthia Dunne, one of Peltier's lawyers.

"At a lot of construction sites, you put your name on your hard hat," noted Chauncey Peltier, who is a union construction worker in Oregon. Co-workers and supervisors have asked if he's Leonard's son. "Some tell me, 'I've read both sides and your father got a bad deal, he should be free.'"

"Free Leonard Peltier," said Gabrielle Tayac, of the Piscataway Nation, welcoming hundreds of participants to a "Standing Rock and Beyond" rally and march Dec. 10. Chauncey Peltier was a featured speaker.

In his petition for "executive clemency and/or commutation of sentence" sent to Obama in February, Leonard Peltier noted that the goal of the American Indian Movement at the time of his arrest was to protest "the Bureau of Indian Affairs funding cuts for already failing native schools, inadequate health care; the mining and takings of sacred lands; continuing violations of Treaties by the U.S. government; and many other avoidable injustices facing Natives across the country."

In 1973, Peltier says, the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization was formed "to challenge the corrupt leadership of the then-tribal-chairman Dick Wilson." Wilson banned AIM members from speaking at tribal meetings and planned to give tribal lands to the National Park Service. With the aid of the FBI, Wilson formed a thug group, the Guardians of the Oglala National, known by its acronym GOONS, to harass and beat opponents of his rule in collaboration with Washington.

AIM organized a 71-day occupation of Wounded Knee on the reservation in 1973 that ended with 100 participants arrested, AIM members dead, and 12 missing following attacks by federal agents and GOONS.

Many AIM activists, including Peltier, set up camp on the reservation to protect residents from Wilson, his GOONS and their FBI allies. It's against this background that a June 26, 1975, shootout took place in Oglala. Peltier was falsely accused of killing two plainclothes FBI agents, Jack Coler and Ronald Williams. AIM activist Joe Stuntz was also killed.

Peltier was given two life-sentences,

even though the government admitted after the trial there is no physical evidence linking Peltier to the deaths. A federal appeals court ruled he was not entitled to a new trial because new information made it "possible" but not "probable" he would have been acquitted.

Speakers at the "U.S. Prisons: Conditions of Confinement" conference at American University law school included Robert King, of the Angola 3, who spent 31 years in jail at Louisiana state prison; Pooja Gehi, executive director of the National Lawyers Guild; Jamelia Morgan, American Civil Liberties Union National Prison Project; Lenny Foster, Navajo Nation Corrections Project; Nick Estes, Red Nation; Jasmine Heiss, International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee; and Daniel McGowan, who spent several years in prison in the notorious Communication Management Units in Terre Haute, Indiana, and Marion, Illinois.

Like many in the aging U.S. prison population, Peltier has serious health problems, Heiss said. Authorities have often put obstacles to his getting needed medical treatment. Right now he is suffering from a dangerous aneurism that prison authorities are delaying care for.

Despite his age and medical problems, Peltier is being held in a maximum security prison in Coleman, Florida. This makes it difficult for his family in North Dakota to visit.

"We can't fall victim to pessimism," said Nick Estes of the Red Nation. "Let's celebrate the victory at Standing Rock and move forward."

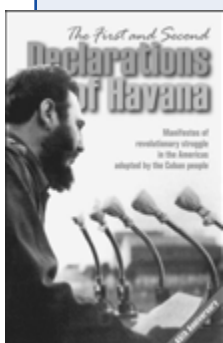
To get involved, visit: [www.whoisleonardpeltier.info](http://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info). Write President Barack Obama to demand he grant clemency, at the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20500.

And write to Leonard Peltier, #89637-123, USP Coleman I, P.O. Box 1033, Coleman, FL 33521.

**Free Oscar López!**  
*Puerto Rican independence fighter jailed in U.S.*

**New York**  
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# Washington’s unending wars, from Iraq to Yugoslavia

*Below is an excerpt from The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. This section is based on a public talk given in March 2001, just after President Bill Clinton left office. Copyright © 2016 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

**BY JACK BARNES**

During the days prior to Clinton’s inauguration in January 1993, the outgoing Republican Bush administration rained down bombs on Iraq, as

**FROM THE PAGES OF  
THE CLINTONS’ ANTI-  
WORKING-CLASS RECORD**

it had continued doing over the nearly two years since the “cease-fire” in the 1991 US-led Gulf War. The new Democratic administration followed suit the very next week. In fact, Iraqi civilians have been killed in intermittent US raids month in and month out since the 1991 war, and more have been wounded, many mutilated for life.

Washington’s military campaign against the Iraqi people should remind us of something in Cuban General José Ramón Fernández’s testimony in July 1999 before the Provincial People’s Court of the City of Havana. The court was hearing a lawsuit filed by eight Cuban organizations to demand that the US government pay damages for the thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in physical destruction caused by Washington’s decades-long efforts to overthrow the Cuban Revolution by force and violence.

The Cuban general reported that during the April 1961 US government-organized mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, Washington supplied the mercenaries with napalm, which they used against Cuban



Above, M. Despotovic

“Washington presided over the systematic destruction of the Yugoslav Revolution’s conquest of national unification by breaking up that country along centuries-old national and religious divisions,” says Jack Barnes. Above, farmer in Pepeljevac in Serbia explains his house was destroyed in April 1999 U.S.-NATO assault. Map at right shows expansion, begun under Bill Clinton administration, of U.S. imperialism-led NATO alliance right up to Russian border.



working people in the militia, armed forces, and police defending Cuba’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, its socialist revolution. The one thousand five hundred invaders were defeated in fewer than seventy-two hours of combat during what Cubans call the battle of Playa Girón. ...

The Clinton administration also led the efforts of the US and European imperialist rulers to restore capitalist social relations in Russia and other former republics of the Soviet Union, as well as across Eastern and Central Europe. These were the heydays of Washington’s so-called “shock therapy” privatization in these countries, with shattering effects on the lives of millions of workers and farmers and the sudden enrichment of a privileged handful (including some Harvard professors and other US “economic advisers,” “investors,” and “entrepreneurs,” who ended up as wealthy as the thieves they are).

Washington presided over the systematic destruction of the Yugoslav Revolution’s conquest of national

unification by breaking up that country along centuries-old national and religious divisions. In 1994–95 and again in 1999, the US rulers and their NATO partners employed cruise missiles and aerial bombardment from afar against working people in Serbia, Bosnia, Kosova, and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia.

In the process, Washington reinforced US imperialism’s post-World War II position as the dominant “European” military power.

Under Clinton the expansion of NATO extended the reach of US imperialism’s armed might closer and closer to the borders of Russia, bringing in three former Warsaw Pact countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. During the 2000 presidential campaign both Bush and his Democratic opponent Albert Gore advocated further expansion, with the next countries in line — the former Soviet Baltic republics, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia (all of them militarily annexed under Stalin’s direction in 1940) — bringing imperialist US military pressure ever nearer Russia’s main urban centers.

The Clinton White House has al-

ready initiated plans for an Alaska-based anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system that will serve as the starting point for more extensive ground- and submarine-based missiles by the new Bush administration. The aim, with bipartisan backing in Congress, is to leverage US military might to increase the US rulers’ political dominance vis-à-vis other powers in Europe that have developed nuclear arsenals: not only Paris and London, but Moscow first and foremost.

More immediately, a US anti-ballistic missile system will target China and North Korea, two countries in Asia where the imperialist yoke was thrown off half a century ago. Washington already has hundreds of nuclear-tipped missiles targeted on these two countries. In the process, the US rulers are slowly but surely drawing Tokyo into the world of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

In addition, the US rulers seek to instill terror into the government of any semicolonial country — Iraq, Iran, India, Pakistan — that has built missile-based defenses that could be used against future imperialist aggression.

## NATO expansion, US missiles aimed at Russia

Twelve eastern and central European countries have been incorporated into the NATO imperialist military alliance since 1991. These are the three Baltic states directly bordering Russia — Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — as well as Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

With Moscow brutally annexing Crimea in 2014 and maintaining military pressure on the Ukraine/Russia border, a July 2016 NATO summit provocatively violated a 1997 NATO agreement with Russia “on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security.”

Washington and other NATO members pledged that the alliance would “carry out its collective defence and other missions” by means other than “additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces” near Russia’s borders. To rationalize getting around this pact, the July 2016 summit announced that NATO will permanently “rotate” up to 4,000 US, German, UK, and Canadian troops through eastern Poland and the Baltic states.

In June 2002 the Bush administration withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Moscow. The White House implemented plans for ground-based ABM systems in eastern Europe, Alaska, and California, as well as sea- and land-based systems in Asia.

The Obama administration deployed a ground-based antiballistic missile system in Romania in 2016, with another set for Poland in 2018. An ABM system targeting North Korea, China, and Russia, will be operational in South Korea in 2017.

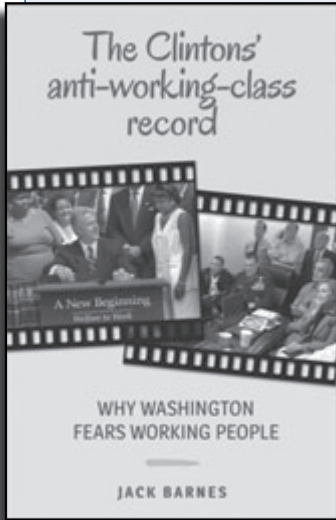
None of these ABM systems come anywhere close to giving Washington the capacity to cripple long-range Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles from Russia or China in their boost or later stages, and thus none give the US rulers nuclear first-strike capacity. What’s more, there’s no reason to believe that’s a reachable goal at any foreseeable time — for political reasons, above all.

— from *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*

## It’s their system that’s deplorable, not us!

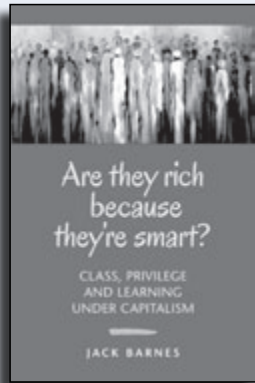
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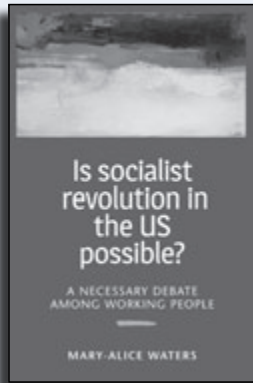


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# Greetings to workers behind bars

New Year's greetings from the *Militant* to fellow workers behind bars! Washington is the world's biggest jailer, with more than 2.2 million people locked up and nearly 5 million on probation or parole.

The U.S. rulers use prison to send a message to working people — whatever the individual circumstances that put them behind prison walls: Stay in your place! Don't speak up! Be obedient!

Their prisons are one part of the barbaric criminal "justice" system — plea-bargaining that eviscerates the right to a trial, mass incarceration, disproportionately coming down on those who are Black, Hispanic and Native American, and widespread solitary confinement.

And nearly 6 million people were denied the right to vote in 2016 because of a felony conviction.

The campaigns to free Puerto Rican *independentista* Oscar López, in jail for more than 35 years, and Native American activist Leonard Peltier, incarcerated more than 40 years, are picking up steam. These fights boost efforts to free others who are in jail on frame-up charges or serving disproportionately long sentences because of their political views. Join these fights.

This year we have seen two Oregon ranchers, Dwight and Steven Hammond, sent to jail a second time on the same frame-up charges of arson.

We have seen Jalil Muntaqim and other former Black Panthers turned down for parole.

Join the fight to overturn Attica's ban on Muntaqim getting his subscription to the *Militant*!

But our brothers and sisters behind prison walls have not been silent. Mumia Abu-Jamal, a radio journalist and former Black Panther railroaded to jail in Pennsylvania in 1982, has been fighting for hepatitis C treatment for himself and thousands of other prisoners who are denied essential medical care.

Women facing deportation have carried out hunger strikes protesting the conditions faced by thousands held in U.S. immigration jails.

Prisoners in California and their supporters have protested sleep deprivation torture and pushed back that state's brutal use of solitary confinement.

This year the *Militant* celebrated the release of Albert Woodfox, the last of the Angola 3 political prisoners in Louisiana. He spent more than four decades in solitary confinement. We saluted the life of Mondo we Langa, who died in the Nebraska State Penitentiary in March, and backed the ongoing fight to free fellow former Panther Ed Poindexter.

Many revolutionary leaders have served time in the rulers' jails. The response of millions of workers and youth in Cuba following the death of Fidel Castro — pledging to defend and advance the revolution he led — was an inspiring tribute to the man who was imprisoned for leading the 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks that announced the coming revolution.

We stand with brother and sister workers behind prison walls fighting for dignity, respect and democratic rights. The *Militant* is proud to offer complimentary or reduced-price subscriptions to prisoners.

# Moscow, Assad brutalize rebels in Syria

Continued from front page

U.S. rulers to seek a deal with Moscow and other Mideast regimes in an effort to defend its imperialist interests there.

Its only bargaining chip is the offer of a grand alliance against Islamic State, the reactionary Sunni terror group that stepped into the vacuum created amid decades of unresolved U.S.-led wars in the region. But Moscow, Damascus, Tehran, Ankara and other capitalist powers in the region are concentrated on their own conflicting interests.

The capture of Aleppo, one of the last urban strongholds of the groups fighting Assad's rule, marks a crucial juncture. The Syrian civil war began in 2011, after the regime responded with brutal force, including arrests and bombings of civilian neighborhoods, to crush mass protests demanding political rights.

President-elect Donald Trump indicated Dec. 1 he would renounce efforts to overthrow the Assad regime and focus on building the broadest possible coalition against Islamic State. "We will stop looking to topple regimes and overthrow governments," he said. "We will partner with any nation that is willing to join us in the effort to defeat ISIS and radical Islamic terrorism."

Islamic State took advantage of the focus on Aleppo to retake the city of Palmyra in a surprise attack Dec. 11, driving Assad's troops and their Russian military supporters out. One of their goals was to replenish their armaments. They reported seizing 14 tanks, 16 cannons, a rocket launcher and two missile platforms.

Unable to affect developments in Aleppo, Washington is moving to strengthen its influence by stepping up efforts to lead an offensive against IS in its self-proclaimed capital of Raqqa.

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced Dec. 10 that 200 more U.S. troops are headed to Syria, joining 300 special operations forces already there. U.S. officials said they will train and assist Kurdish and Arab militias grouped in the Syrian Defense Forces in the offensive to take Raqqa. The Kurds have been Washington's most reliable ally on the ground in Syria.

## Growing rift with Ankara

Washington's course is widening its rift with the Erdogan regime in Turkey. Ankara has repeatedly condemned U.S. support and collaboration with the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG). Ankara brands the YPG as "terrorist," calling it the Syrian wing of

the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is banned in Turkey. The Kurds are an oppressed people divided between Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, with a long history of struggling for national rights.

Ankara is using a pair of terror bombings that killed 44 people in Istanbul Dec. 10 — the day Erdogan proposed a new constitution to strengthen his presidential powers — as a pretext to intensify its war against the Kurdish population in Turkey and Syria. The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), a small splinter from the PKK, reportedly claimed responsibility for the blasts.

The Kurdish-based Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) immediately condemned the attack, but Turkish officials stepped up their propaganda campaign branding party leaders as "terrorists" and arresting dozens of them across the country.

The editors of *Daily Sabah*, which speaks for the Erdogan government, seized the moment to call for military action against the YPG in the Syrian cities of Afrin, Manbij and Kobani. They accused U.S. officials of being "state sponsors of terrorism" for backing the YPG in the fight against Islamic State.

Turkish troops entered northern Syria in August, along with Free Syrian Army militias that Ankara had organized and trained among Syrian refugees in Turkey. Saying they were joining the shooting war against terrorists, they have focused on blocking advances by the YPG. Their drive toward the IS-held city of al-Bab, north of Aleppo, has stalled in recent days. Taking al-Bab is aimed at blocking the YPG, which is also advancing toward the city, from linking Kurdish areas along the Turkish border.

Ankara's military operations in Syria, war against the Kurdish people in Turkey, and repression against political opponents come amid a deepening economic and political crisis. Gross domestic product fell 1.8 percent in the third quarter, the first decline since 2009, and inflation is around 7 percent. The Turkish lira has fallen 18 percent against the dollar this year, hitting record lows. Erdogan called on Turkish citizens Dec. 2 to be patriotic by buying lira or gold, instead of holding onto dollars or euros. Following his comments, the lira dropped further.

Since an attempted coup in July, Erdogan has deepened Ankara's rift with Washington and European imperialist powers and increasingly ruled by decree, jailing and disappearing tens of thousands of Kurds, journalists and government opponents.



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# Is Trump a fascist?

Continued from page 4

people to work as we rebuild it."

Trump's plan is consistent with a growing ruling-class consensus to shift from monetary to fiscal tools to try to resolve long-term capitalist stagnation, to turn away from zero interest rates and buying up corporate debt. He presses for cutting taxes on the wealthy and launching construction and road repair projects.

The Socialist Workers Party calls for workers to fight for a government-funded public works program to create jobs at union-scale pay to replace crumbling infrastructure and build schools, medical, child care and recreation centers, and other things working people need; for \$15 and a union; and for free and comprehensive health care for all.

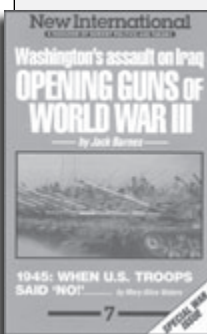
In this fight the party joins with workers and farmers as actors, not passive recipients, and links it with organizing the unorganized and strengthening the fight for higher wages and workers' control of safety.

Trump's proposal aims to strengthen capitalism, rebuild bosses' profits and "give" some temporary jobs to workers. Trump favors capping the federal minimum wage at \$10 an hour.

"Neither Washington nor Wall Street has any course that can contain the explosive international ramifications of capitalism's banking and financial contradictions," wrote Socialist Workers Party leader Steve Clark in the introduction to *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. "None of them is pursuing policies that can reverse the slump of capitalist production, trade, and hiring that is ravaging the lives and livelihoods of workers. ... *Because there are no such policies.*"

Only the working class, uniting, transforming itself and building international bonds of solidarity on the road to ending the dictatorship of capital can provide a solution. That's what the SWP's fighting proposals point toward.

## RECOMMENDED READING



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

by Jack Barnes  
In *New International* no. 7

"The Kurdish people have come to the center stage in world politics as never before, not primarily as victims, but as courageous and determined fighters for national rights."

— Jack Barnes

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## U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes  
In *New International* no. 11

The roots of the unraveling of the U.S. dominated imperialist world order, and the coming struggles by workers and farmers that the capitalist rulers will be forced to confront.

\$16. Also in French, Spanish, Farsi, Swedish, Greek, Icelandic



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