

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Attacks on Muslims in US
are highest since 2001

— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 47 DECEMBER 19, 2016

Moscow, Assad deepen brutal assault against Syrian people

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Following months of starvation siege, the dictatorial Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, with backing from Moscow, Tehran and Shiite militias from Lebanon and Iraq, is driving to crush opposition forces in Aleppo.

Observers report 643 deaths in Aleppo in the last three weeks, including 74 children. Tens of thousands of civilians have fled their homes as pro-government forces have captured roughly half of the rebel-held districts in eastern Aleppo since late November. Many more remain trapped, under heavy bombardment, as conditions go from terrible to even worse.

“Those who refuse to leave of their own accord will be wiped out,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Dec. 6.

U.S. imperialism has been pushed to the sideline in the continuing civil war, forced to look to Moscow. Wash-

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SWP wins support for campaign for mayor in LA

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — “What is the difference between you and Bernie Sanders? What would you do different if you were elected mayor? Why do you talk about international issues, like the Cuban Revolution and Washington’s wars in Iraq and Syria, when you’re running for City Hall?”

These were some of the questions packinghouse workers asked Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, as he talked to people for over two hours Nov. 30 during shift change at the Farmer John meatpacking plant here.

“Sanders says his goal is to take over the Democratic Party, to change the leadership to one that is more ‘progressive,’ to carry out an ‘Occupy Wall Street’ type program to reform capitalism,” Richter said. “There are two classes and three parties in the U.S. The bosses have the Democratic

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‘Cuba will overcome any threat to building socialism’

Mass tribute to Fidel strengthens revolution



Reuters/Edgard Garrido

Tens of thousands hear Raúl Castro speak in Santiago, Cuba, Dec. 3 on legacy of Fidel Castro, culminating mobilizations by workers across country pledging to defend socialist revolution.

Millions line streets across Cuba for Freedom Caravan

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Through his example, Fidel Castro showed the Cuban people — and by extension working people worldwide — “that yes we could, yes we can, and yes we will overcome any obstacle, threat or turmoil in our determined efforts to build socialism,” Raúl Castro, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee and president of the Councils of State and Ministers, told a massive crowd in Santiago de Cuba Dec. 3. The event

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Raúl Castro: Fidel showed us, ‘Yes we can, yes we will’

Remarks by Army Gen. Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and president of the Councils of State and Ministers, during the tribute to the commander in chief of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, held in Santiago de Cuba’s General Antonio Maceo Grajales Square, Dec. 3, 2016, “Year 58 of the Revolution.” Translation is by the Militant.

Esteemed heads of state and government; outstanding figures who join us today; fellow Cubans representing the eastern provinces and Camagüey; people of Santiago de Cuba; dear people of Cuba:

This afternoon, when the funeral procession carrying Fidel’s ashes — which retraced in reverse the route of the January 1959 Freedom Car-

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Protesters cheer Standing Rock victory, say ‘fight not over yet’

BY TONY LANE
AND KEVIN DWIRE

OCETI SAKOWIN CAMP, N.D. — “We want to thank everyone who played a role in advocating for this cause,” Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II said Dec. 5, hailing the victory won when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers de-

nied an easement for the Dakota Access Pipeline to cross Lake Oahe here, and announced it will begin looking for alternative routes for the oil pipeline.

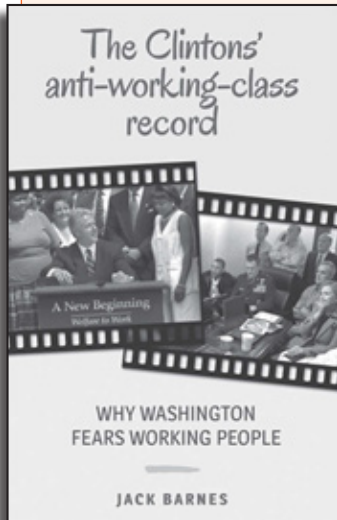
“We thank the tribal youth who initiated this movement. We thank the millions of people around the

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

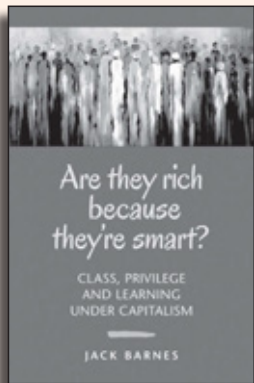
Three books for today’s deepening debate among working people looking for a way forward in face of capitalism’s global economic crisis, social calamity and spreading wars.

SPECIAL OFFER \$5! The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record

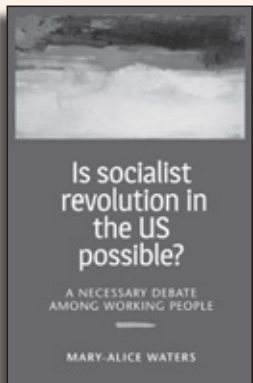


Coming soon in Spanish

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Also in Spanish, French



Also in Spanish

Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? and Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? \$7 each or \$5 each with a subscription to the Militant.

In new attack on abortion, Texas tells women: Bury or cremate fetuses

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Just days after the U.S. Supreme Court in June struck down a Texas law restricting access to abortion, Texas officials quietly initiated a new obstacle to women exercising their right to decide whether to continue a pregnancy. The new rule, requiring women to bury or cremate fetal tissue from an abortion or miscarriage, will take effect Dec. 19.

This and continuing attacks against access to abortion by other state governments underscore the importance for the working class to organize public actions in defense of women’s right to choose.

The proposed Texas rule was pub-

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NY Momentive strikers: ‘Solidarity just keeps coming’
U. of Calif. Teamsters strike one day in Los Angeles, San Diego

Fight to free Oscar López is gaining broad support

BY SETH GALINSKY

The fight to free Oscar López Rivera is picking up steam. The U.S. government — which has kept López in jail for more than 35 years, including over 12 in solitary confinement — has never been able to break his spirit or his dedication to the fight for the independence of Puerto Rico.

At the urging of the National Boricua Human Rights Network and others, more than 106,000 people have signed a petition on the White House website calling on President Barack Obama to release López before his presidential term ends. The White House says it will respond to any petition that gets 100,000 or more signers in 30 days. Signatures can still be added until Dec. 11.

In Puerto Rico support for López’s release cuts across the entire political spectrum, from supporters of independence to leaders of the two main bourgeois parties there that take turns administering U.S. colonial rule.

The AFL-CIO labor federation, the N.Y. City Council and the United Methodist Church General Synod are among the scores of U.S. organizations, labor unions, religious groups and prominent individuals calling for his release.

López moved to Chicago from Puerto Rico in 1957, when he was 14 years old. Eight years later he was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to fight in Vietnam.

“We see the results in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan of interfering in the affairs of other countries,” López said in an interview published Dec. 3 in Puerto Rico’s *El Nuevo Día*, discussing U.S. imperialism’s military interventions around the world. “I experienced the war in Viet-

nam in flesh and bone. I can guarantee that the Vietnamese people did not accept us.”

Upon returning to Chicago, López threw himself into struggles against job discrimination, police brutality and poor housing, for bilingual education, and for the release of Puerto Rican Nationalist fighters imprisoned in the U.S.

He was arrested in 1981 and accused of being a leader of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), which took credit for the bombing of businesses in the U.S. with interests in Puerto Rico. López was not accused of involvement in a single act of violence, but framed up on charges of “seditious conspiracy” and sentenced to 55 years in prison.

“No Puerto Rican can seditiously conspire against the U.S. government, because colonialism is a crime against humanity,” López told *El Nuevo Día*. “Everyone who is colonized has the right to self-determination and independence, utilizing all methods at hand, including violence. Puerto Rico, nevertheless, has not been violent.”

In an effort to counter the growing campaign for López’s release, Fox News posted a scurrilous article on its website Dec. 1, titled “Please, President Obama, FALN Terrorist Oscar Lopez Rivera Should Not Go Free.”

The article repeats lies against López. “Rivera has refused to admit or take responsibility for the numerous terror attacks perpetrated by FALN under his guidance,” author Liz Peek said. She implies that López was responsible for the 1975 bombing of the Fraunces Tavern in New York City that killed four people.

El Nuevo Día asked López about



Participants in Nov. 18 Casa del Alba Cultural event in Havana hold up photos of Oscar López and his daughter Clarisa. At right in front is Fernando González, one of Cuban Five.

that attack.

“If the federal agency had a fingerprint connecting me to anything that caused deaths, I would have been sentenced to life in prison,” he said, pointing out that the FBI knew that he was in Puerto Rico when the bombing occurred. “They have the records of the hotel where I stayed, the car I rented, the plane ticket.”

El Nuevo Día also asked López about his views on Cuba and its revolution, saying, “Fidel Castro is criticized because, among other things, he did not permit multiparty elections.”

“Democracy is found in the participation of the citizenry,” replied López, a long-time supporter of the workers and farmers revolution in Cuba.

“I know many Cubans and I was privileged to share five years with Fernando González, one of the five Cuban national heroes,” he said. González and four other Cuban revolutionaries spent

more than 15 years in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges.

González and another of the five, Gerardo Hernández, joined a Nov. 18 meeting at the Casa del Alba Cultural in Havana to promote the campaign to win Lopez’s release. Winners of a “Freedom for Oscar López” photo contest were announced at the packed meeting.

González said that when he and the Puerto Rican independence fighter were together in prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, they were able “to support each other and exchange views about political and ideological topics.”

If Obama does not free López before leaving office, “we will continue the struggle because dignity and reason are on our side,” said Edwin González, a representative from the Puerto Rican Mission in Cuba.

You can write López at: Oscar López Rivera, #87651-024, FCI Terre Haute, P.O. Box 33, Terre Haute, IN 47808.

THE MILITANT

Back actions for \$15 an hour and a union

The fight for \$15 an hour minimum wage, a union and dignity on the job is an important component of helping to revitalize the labor movement to counter the capitalist rulers’ drive to solve their crisis on our backs. The ‘Militant’ covers these actions.



Militant/Betsey Stone
Protesters rally at San Francisco airport Nov. 29 for \$15 minimum wage and union.

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Sign the petition to free Oscar López!



The National Boricua Human Rights Network and other supporters of the fight to free Oscar López have gotten more than 100,000 signatures on an online petition to the White House and are going for more.

“President Obama, do what is right and release Oscar López Rivera before your term ends,” the petition says.

To add your name, go to: <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/president-obama-free-oscar-lopez-rivera-he-ends-his-term-president>

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SWP wins support in LA

Continued from front page

and Republican parties and the working class has the Socialist Workers Party.

“A working-class party is necessary to lead the millions who produce all the wealth to the revolutionary conquest of state power,” Richter said. “This is what’s needed to end the exploitation of workers and to form a workers and farmers government that can lead the transformation of society.

“The Cuban Revolution — and the leadership example of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party — show workers worldwide that we are capable of uniting, of transforming ourselves in struggle to overthrow the propertied rulers,” he said. “Our party will continue to put defense of Cuba and its socialist revolution at the forefront of our campaign.

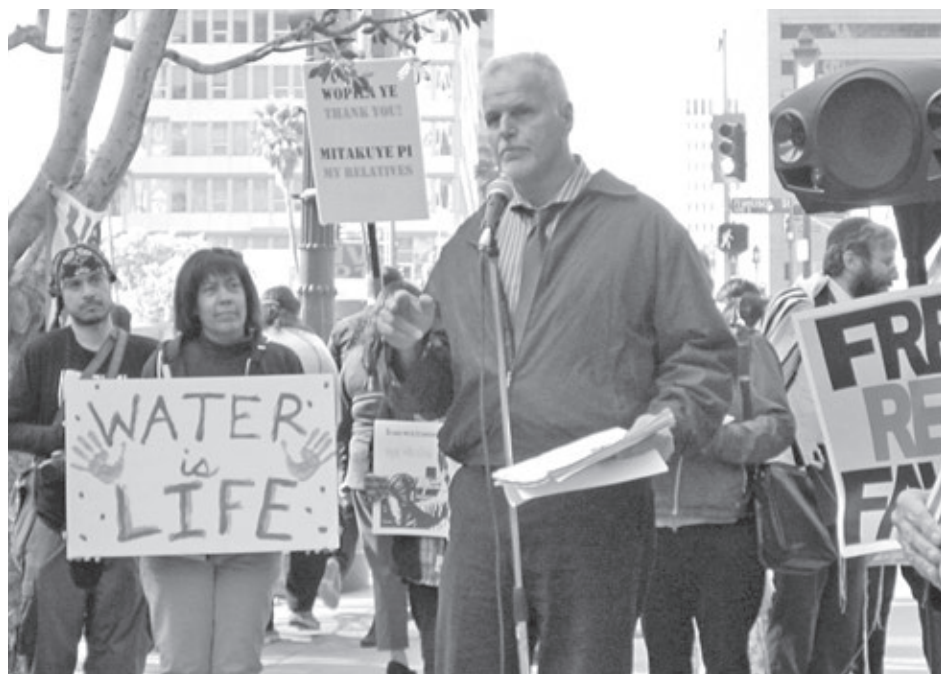
“Along the road, we can win important reforms for the working class, no matter who controls Congress or the White House,” he said. “That’s the lesson of the mighty struggle we waged to

overthrow Jim Crow segregation and to end the bloody U.S. war against the people of Vietnam.

“But in the end the working class has to end the dictatorship of capital, under which everything and everyone is a commodity to be bought and sold,” Richter said. “We need a revolution to open up the possibility of ending racism, sexism and all forms of human degradation once and for all.”

A key component of the SWP campaign effort to build the party and put Richter on the ballot is getting into workers’ hands three new books by party leaders — *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* both by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? A Necessary Debate Among Working People* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters — as well as subscriptions to the *Militant*.

Since Nov. 19, workers have bought 164 copies of these three books and 50



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, speaks at rally in solidarity with Standing Rock Sioux Dec. 5. “When I grew up in western Minnesota, I joined protests backing the fight for Native American rights at Wounded Knee,” he said. “I join those calling for freedom for Leonard Peltier, still in prison after being framed up for helping lead that fight.”

subscriptions. One worker at the Farmer John plant gate got two other Pathfinder books in Spanish — *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own* and *Abortion Is a Woman’s Right!*

Forty-eight workers there signed petitions to put Richter on the ballot.

From the southern Los Angeles port neighborhoods of Wilmington and San Pedro to Van Nuys and Northridge in the San Fernando Valley, the focus of the campaign has been visiting with workers on their doorsteps, where workers have contributed \$210. The party gathered over 1,200 signatures to put Richter on the ballot, more than twice the requirement, and filed Dec. 7.

“What is your opinion of Obamacare?” asked Crystal Rodin when Richter knocked on her door in Eagle Rock Dec. 2. Rodin is a single mother who works as a tutor.

“Obamacare doesn’t solve workers’ right to health care. It was designed to boost the profits of the drug and insurance companies,” Richter said. “The working class needs to fight to stop health care from being a commodity to enrich capitalists. Medical care should be guaranteed for all from cradle to grave.”

“A big issue for me is Child Protective Services,” Rodin said. “They are attacking single parents, trying to take their kids away. This is a huge thing in L.A. County.”

Richter showed her *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, describing the devastating effect on women and children when then-President Bill Clinton “ended welfare as we know it.”

Rodin got the book and said she would like to bring some of her friends together with Richter to discuss this. “It will be a lot of single mothers. Are you ready for that?” she asked.

They began making plans to set up the meeting.

If you would like to join the Socialist Workers Party in campaigning in working-class neighborhoods and at working-class protests, contact the party in Los Angeles at swpla@att.net or (323) 643-4968.

Trump move to keep Carrier jobs in US popular with workers

BY MAGGIE TROWE

President-elect Donald Trump is developing an “economic plan” and set of cabinet appointments he says will stimulate the economy and keep “American jobs” from going overseas. Fiscal moves like government spending on infrastructure repairs and construction may give a short-term boost to U.S. bosses’ profits and some workers’ jobs. But the propertied rulers and their politicians have no solution to the underlying capitalist crisis and coming crash, except continued attacks on the working class at home and abroad.

On a short “victory lap” in the Midwest, Trump visited the Carrier furnace factory in Indianapolis Dec. 1 to milk support from a deal with company bosses to keep 800 production jobs there that had been scheduled to move to Mexico. Vice President-elect Mike Pence, the governor of Indiana, helped make the deal possible with \$7 million in state tax break largesse. Trump and Pence got a welcome response from workers in the plant.

The Carrier deal made Trump more popular with workers, including many who had opposed him in the election.

Most radicals and leftists find it impossible to explain Trump’s appeal. Instead, they argue workers are just getting more and more reactionary and racist and that’s why he gets support.

In his speech at the factory Trump lavished praise on the bosses at United Technologies, Carrier’s parent company. He talked up plans to reduce the corporate tax rate from 35 to 15 percent and end environmental and other government regulations adopted by the Barack

Obama administration. “I just want to let all the other companies know that we’re going to do great things for business,” he said.

Trump made unemployment in the Midwest “rust belt” and opposition to the projected layoffs at Carrier a centerpiece of his election campaign. His nationalist demagoguery for “American jobs” echoes the views of most union officials.

“The Socialist Workers Party is in solidarity with Carrier workers,” Dan Fein, then SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Illinois, told workers at a union rally against Carrier’s job cuts in April. “But the nationalist, patriotic slogans raised by the speakers here today are not the answer. Divide and rule is the bosses’ trick to weaken the unions. We need international working-class solidarity. All workers need jobs.”

And the type of infrastructure jobs Trump is pushing are temporary. They don’t build new plants or expand the economy.

The president-elect also stopped in Cincinnati Dec. 1, demagogically telling several thousand people, “It’s time to remove the rust from the rust belt and usher in a new industrial revolution.” The next day Trump called on bosses at another Indiana manufacturer, Rexnord Corporation, to scrap plans to move some 300 jobs to Mexico.

Some figures from the left and right of bourgeois politics have criticized Trump for interfering with free trade. On Dec. 2 former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers called the Carrier deal “an act of ad-hoc deal capitalism”

“A business must have freedom to locate where it wishes,” wrote former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, a prominent conservative. She called the subsidies for Carrier “special interest crony capitalism.”

But the problem for workers isn’t “crony capitalism,” it’s *capitalism*.

Trump’s economic proposals and his nomination of investment banker Steven Mnuchin for Treasury secretary mark a shift by the propertied rulers from monetary to fiscal measures to try to stimulate the depressed capitalist economy.

President Obama’s administration used monetary measures — lowering interest rates to nearly zero and printing

reams of money — in an effort to stave off a deeper crash during the 2008 financial collapse and continuing capitalist contraction of production and trade since, precipitated by the collapse of the housing debt bubble. But those measures failed to boost profit rates, lead to investment in new plant and production or create jobs.

The ongoing slow-burning depression conditions workers face produces widespread anger at the deepening devastation of their lives. That was a central factor in the recent election. And so was Hillary Clinton’s insistence that the capitalist economy was doing just fine, and her dismissal of workers of all nationalities who were attracted to Trump’s promise he would do something about jobs as “deplorables.”

Former presidential candidate Bernie Sanders hopes to rebuild the Democratic Party around himself and other radicals and reformers by emulating Trump in speaking for the working class.

Capitalist policy can’t solve crisis

Trump wants to claim credit for stopping some bosses from seeking higher profits by moving production to places where wages are lower. He projects government spending on infrastructure that he hopes will produce at least a small uptick in the business cycle. But such measures can’t change the reality that the capitalist system is in a historic crisis and, sooner or later, catastrophe is in the cards. No policies of the rulers or their political parties can reverse this reality.

“Such policies may be able to *postpone* or temporarily *buffer* the effects of the next breakdown, but they cannot and will not *prevent* it. Let alone ‘kick start’ economic growth and employment,” writes 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. “Workers everywhere are looking for an explanation of capitalism’s grinding and destructive decline, and even more important, how to chart a way forward to combat its consequences.”

This book, Clark says, aims to arm workers to understand and to fight, and to introduce the Socialist Workers Party.

Join NY actions to free Oscar López

Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. — Concert featuring Danny Rivera, Nelson González and his All Star Band. *Hostos Community College, 500 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY*
Info: 718-518-4455

Sun., Dec. 25, 4 p.m. — Christmas Day protest by 35 Women for Oscar. *Times Square at 44th Street in Manhattan.*

**In New International no. 12
Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter
Has Begun** by Jack Barnes \$16



pathfinderpress.com

Standing Rock victory

Continued from front page

globe who expressed support for our cause,” Archambault said. “We thank the thousands of people who came to the camps to support us, and the tens of thousands who donated time, talent, and money to our efforts to stand against this pipeline in the name of protecting our water.

“We especially thank all of the other tribal nations and jurisdictions who stood in solidarity with us, and we stand ready to stand with you if and when your people are in need,” he said. Hundreds of Native Americans from all across the country have come to back the Standing Rock Sioux in their monthslong fight to protect their water supply, tribal burial grounds and sacred cultural lands.

The decision of the Barack Obama administration to back down and halt efforts to run the pipeline through the area follows a marked escalation of attacks on the protesters by state and local authorities. They have used rubber bullets, pepper spray, explosive grenades and water cannons against the thousands of “water protectors.”

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple announced Nov. 28 that he was ordering evacuation of the area, citing “anticipated harsh weather conditions.”

In response to this order and recent attacks, a group of armed forces veterans named Veterans Stand for Standing Rock announced they were organizing to come to the reservation and lend a hand. Over 2,000 veterans volunteered to participate. Organizers said they would serve as “human shields” between protesters and the cops.

They were also raising funds to build housing, heating and medical facilities to enable protesters to make it through the winter. Through Nov. 30 over half a million dollars has been donated.

During the evening of Dec. 4 there was a mile-long line of cars waiting to get into the main camp. “The way the militarized police were treating U.S. citizens broke my heart,” Wayland McIntire, a retired and disabled Army veteran from Oklahoma, told the *Militant*. “I came here to stand between the police and the protesters. Working people need to be more active.”

Manuel Valenzuela, a Vietnam veteran, came from Colorado Springs. He told us he is facing deportation for a more than 20-year-old misdemeanor.

“I got pissed off when I saw the violence being used against the protesters,”

he said. “In the military we took an oath to protect U.S. citizens against enemies foreign and domestic. Well, here the domestic enemy is the U.S. government.”

Art Woodson and two other vets drove 17 hours straight from Flint, Michigan, to join in defending the protest. Workers in Flint have faced a health crisis because government authorities let water laced with lead from rotting pipes poison children there.

“In Flint water is in dire need,” the 49-year-old Gulf War Army veteran told the Associated Press. “In North Dakota they’re trying to force a pipeline on people here. And in Flint we’re trying to get pipes for safe water.”

Many protesters said the mobilization against the pipeline is the largest outpouring of Native Americans in decades. The decision of the government to deny a permit for the pipeline, which threatens the Standing Rock Sioux and their sacred ground, is a “victory for all of Indian Country,” said Brian Cladoosby, president of the National Congress of American Indians.

Other recent arrivals here include a contingent of U.S.-based medical professionals who got their training at the Latin American School of Medicine in Cuba. They said they came “to humbly serve in solidarity with the Sacred



Reuters/Lucas Jackson

Veterans join others marching near Oceti Sakowin camp Dec. 5, opposing plan to build pipeline next to Standing Rock Sioux reservation and denouncing police attacks on demonstrators.

Water Protectors on the front lines of the current human rights and ecological crisis occurring right now in North Dakota.”

“This is an enormous victory,” said White Buffalo Boy, a Hunkpapa Sioux, speaking for the Voice of the Camp at a news conference here Dec. 5. “But last night the lights were still on at the pipeline site, and the company’s helicopters were still busy. Until we go to the drill pad and see they are no longer drilling, this is not over,” he said.

The company says they are going to

finish the pipeline without changing the route. Their lawyers went into federal court Dec. 5 to seek a judgment against the Corps decision.

“The White House’s directive today to the Corps for further delay is just the latest in a series of overt and transparent political actions by an administration which has abandoned the rule of law in favor of currying favor with a narrow and extreme political constituency,” Energy Transfer Partners, the owners of the pipeline, said in a Dec. 4 statement.

Attacks on Muslims in US are highest since 2001

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Taking advantage of Islamic State-inspired terror attacks in Paris; San Bernardino, California; Orlando, Florida; and elsewhere in the past two years, the propertied rulers in the U.S. — and other imperialist countries — have whipped up a campaign to scapegoat and target Muslims and immigrants. Assaults against Muslims in the U.S. last year rose to the highest level since 2001.

According to the FBI, there were 257 reports submitted to police agencies documenting attacks on mosques and Muslims, a jump of about 67 percent over 2014. The harassment and attacks have continued this year.

Last month a 16-year-old Lakewood High School student in Cleveland wearing an Islamic skull cap was shot in the shoulder while walking home from work, the Council on American-Islamic Relations reported. The thug called him a “terrorist” as he pulled the trigger.

At the University of Washington in

Seattle, 18-year-old Muslim student Nargro Hassan was hit in the face with a glass bottle as she walked across campus Nov. 15. A week earlier several Muslim students at the university’s Bothell campus were harassed by a group of men demanding they remove their hijabs, according to the *Seattle Times*.

On a subway train in New York Dec. 1 three men harassed 18-year-old Yasmin Seweid. They shouted “Trump, Trump!” and called her a ‘terrorist,’” the *New York Post* reported, as they tried to rip her hijab off her head.

Governments from the U.S. to France to Australia have ramped up cop and informer spying on political protests and institutionalized surveillance on social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Google.

New software technology — with names like Geofeedia, SnapTrends, Dataminr and Digital Stakeout — enable cops to snoop on the political activities of millions of people. The International

Association of Police Chiefs reports that at least 550 police agencies across 44 states use such tools to spy on email and social media. Cops in Boston recently announced plans to spend some \$1.4 million on social media spy software.

The Oregon Department of Justice used such blanket spying to target demonstrations by Black Lives Matter groups. Cops in Baltimore used the technology to obtain photos identifying protesters at actions against the police killing of Freddie Gray last year.

The capitalist rulers have used their anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant campaign to make further inroads on political rights won in struggle by working people. The French government has maintained a state of emergency since the Islamic State-inspired murderous attack on the magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015. The measure has been used to justify barring union rallies challenging attacks by the bosses and to restrict the right of others to public protest.

Similar attacks on political rights are orchestrated by the capitalist rulers in other imperialist centers. In the United Kingdom, a new Investigatory Powers surveillance law allows the government to create databases on individuals’ online activity. British intelligence services can legally hack into smartphones and computers. And internet providers and phone networks are required to store everyone’s browsing data for possible government use for up to a year. A petition on the British government’s website demanding repeal of the law has been signed by more than 130,000 people.

In Australia, Parliament passed the so-called High Risk Terrorist Offenders Bill Dec. 1, allowing indefinite imprisonment of individuals convicted of terrorism-related charges. Even after their sentences run out, they can be held in prison until they die if authorities claim they “have not been rehabilitated.”

Edwin Fruit in Seattle contributed to this article.

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NY Momentive strikers: ‘Solidarity just keeps coming’

BY JACOB PERASSO

WATERFORD, N.Y. — The strike headquarters of Local 81359 of the International Union of Electronic Workers-Communications Workers of America here was a beehive of activity and high spirits Dec. 2, as the strike of some 700 members against Momentive Performance Materials entered its fifth week. Pickets came in to warm up, get some food and collect their strike pay before heading back out to the line. The headquarters and strike kitchen are set up in what had been a vacant diner across from the plant.

“The solidarity from other unions and people in the area has been good and has not slowed down,” union trustee Gilbert Travis said as five donated pizzas were delivered. “A week after Thanksgiving we still have turkeys left over.”

Momentive bosses’ drive to increase their profits at the expense of union members is well known in this industrial region. Every day union pickets confront scabs being shepherded into the plant.

Some 50 firefighters from nearby towns joined the picket line Dec. 1. Strikers explained that union workers are trained and organized into fire-fighting units within the factory, because the industrial sealants and adhesives are volatile and combustible. “It takes the workers years to learn how to operate that plant safely,” Frank Razzano, president of Troy Uniformed Firefighters Association, told the *Times Union*.

The unionists have maintained round-the-clock pickets since walking out Nov. 2 after voting down several company offers that attacked workers’ rights and conditions. Strikers said Momentive’s concession demands would raise the cost of health insurance, downgrade health care for retirees and cut company contributions to workers’ 401(k) retirement accounts. Pay raises would not keep up with inflation.

“They are trying to make us look greedy, but we are just trying to stay even,” said Travis.

A steady stream of solidarity is heard as passing motorists honk their horns. “Our strength comes from the ranks,” said former chief shop steward John Ryan. He is on disability but comes to the picket line daily. “Spirits among the workers are high and many show up even when they aren’t scheduled.”

Strikers picket four hours a day, five days a week, in rotating shifts. They are prepared for winter with burn-barrels and tents to keep them warm and dry. The local has organized movie nights to encourage family participation and expanded picket lines most Saturdays.

Ryan said members of the CWA who struck Verizon earlier this year have picketed, as well as members of the teachers, nurses, confectionery, pipefitters and sheet metal unions and area local labor councils. Visitors have signed a “wall of solidarity” outside strike headquarters.

Local 81359 is in a contract together with two other locals, one of 50 members at the company’s Willoughby, Ohio, plant and the other representing 80 technicians here. The majority of the three locals voted up Momentive concession contracts in 2010 and 2013 that fell hardest on the local here. This year Local 81359 members voted overwhelming against the contract and it was rejected. Ryan said workers at the Ohio plant returned to work after approving the contract 43 to 1 Nov. 7.

The unionists receive \$400-a-week strike pay and will begin collecting unemployment benefits Dec. 21. The union reimburses strikers’ medical bills.

“We need to stay in the public eye,” said William Johnson, a 30-year worker at the plant. “We’ll be stronger after the strike. We are getting to know ourselves. They won’t be able to push us around.”

Johnson said cops have visited the homes of some workers because the company accuses them of “industrial sabotage.” Chief shop steward Shawn Mastropietro said no charges have been filed against anyone.

“Something has to happen in this country,” said retired chemical operator Stephanie Greene. “The corporations think they can squeeze every dime out of us.”

Jacob Perasso, a freight train conductor, is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1447. Dean Hazlewood contributed to this article.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Strikers picket Momentive plant in Waterford, New York, Nov. 7. “We’ll be stronger after the strike,” said striker William Johnson Dec. 2. “We’re getting to know ourselves.”

—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

Univ. of Calif. Teamsters strike one day in Los Angeles, San Diego

LOS ANGELES — Electricians, plumbers, carpenters, painters, service engineers, elevator mechanics and other workers represented by Teamsters Local 2010 recently conducted one-day strikes at two University of California locations. They have been working without a contract for four years.

Nearly 600 Teamsters picketed the UCLA campus and UCLA Health Systems hospital in the Westwood community of Los Angeles Nov. 16.

The next day over 200 Teamsters from 15 job classifications picketed several locations at the U.C. San Diego campus in La Jolla and the UCSD Health Systems hospital in the Hillcrest community of

San Diego.

The pickets allowed patients, emergency vehicles and medical supplies through the picket lines in San Diego, but turned away construction, food service and laundry trucks.

“UCLA skilled trades workers are paid as much as \$10 an hour below prevailing wage in the area,” Local 2010’s website reports.

Members of other campus unions, including hospital and facilities workers, technical employees, teaching assistants and professors joined the picket lines.

The contract of some 14,000 administrative and support workers, also members of Local 2010, at the 10 University of California campuses expired Nov. 30.

— Bill Warrick

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 20, 1991

More than 2,400 foreign troops are stationed on a major military base in Cuba. The base has an additional 7,000 military and civilian personnel and family members.

Large-scale naval, amphibious, and air maneuvers involving thousands of troops are periodically carried out on and around this military facility, which is strategically located in the Caribbean.

It is the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo, which occupies Cuban territory against the will of the people of Cuba. In the latest provocative move, U.S. authorities are now using the base as a concentration camp for thousands of Haitians fleeing military terror in Haiti.

On October 26 Cuba denounced several recent violations of its national territory “by U.S. combat aircraft from the territory occupied by the Guantánamo Naval Base.”



December 19, 1966

Labor-baiters will no doubt derive satisfaction from the Supreme Court decision upholding the jury-tampering conviction of Teamster Union President James Hoffa.

The Supreme Court affirmed the charge despite a plea by the American Civil Liberties Union to set it aside. The conviction had been obtained on the basis of testimony by a government informer.

In addition to the use of a planted, tainted stool pigeon, the government has used wire-tapping and electronic bugs in its anti-Hoffa drive.

Washington’s claim that it is merely trying to protect the union ranks from “crooks” is just bull. More than one crooked union bureaucrat hustles votes for the Democrats and dines at the White House. The government’s target is the Teamsters union itself, an initial target in a drive it intends to widen.



December 20, 1941

With the Smith Slave Labor Bill hanging over them threateningly, AFL and CIO leaders were called this week to Washington to commit the trade unions to a War Labor Board similar to that of World War I.

Like its 1918 predecessor, the new board has as its main function the task of depriving organized labor of its right to strike “for the duration.”

The AFL and CIO representatives are being called upon to agree “voluntarily” to the essential sections of the Smith Bill, with the broad hint that any balking by the unions will result in the enactment of the bill, which has already been passed in the House Representatives.

With the War Labor Board of 1918, the workers suffered a terrific slice in real wages, primarily because of their inability to employ their most potent bargaining weapon, the strike.

Support IUE-CWA strike against Momentive

Tuesday, December 13
Waterford, NY

12 noon: Pig roast
Strike headquarters
301 Hudson River Road, across from Momentive plant

5:30 p.m.: Assemble
Strike headquarters

6 p.m.: March
to Chrome Food & Spirits
405 Hudson River Road.

For information call (518) 727-7534

‘Cuba will overcome any threat to building socialism’

Continued from front page

van — arrived in this heroic city, it passed several historic landmarks in Santiago de Cuba, cradle of the revolution. And here, just as in the rest of the country, it was met with demonstrations of love by the Cuban people.

Fidel’s ashes will be laid to rest tomorrow in a simple ceremony in the Santa Ifigenia Cemetery, close to the Mausoleum of National Hero José Martí¹ as well as to the resting place of his comrades in arms at Moncada,² on the Granma expedition³ and the Rebel Army and the urban underground, and on our internationalist missions.

Just a few steps from here are the tombs of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, father of the homeland, and the legendary Mariana Grajales, mother of the Maceo⁴ brothers and — improvising here, I dare to say — also the mother of all Cuban men and women.

Also close by is the pantheon holding the remains of the unforgettable Frank País García — a young man from Santiago, murdered by the Batista tyranny’s henchmen when he was only 22 years old, one month after his younger brother, Josué, died fighting in an action here.

Frank’s age didn’t stop him from accumulating an exemplary experience of resistance against the dictatorship. He stood out as leader of the Nov. 30, 1956, armed uprising in Santiago de Cuba, in support of the landing of the Granma expedition, and for his role in organizing the crucial sending of weapons and combatants to the nascent Rebel Army

in the Sierra Maestra.

Ever since the news of the death of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, in the late evening of Nov. 25, pain and sadness have overwhelmed the Cuban people. Deeply moved by his irreparable physical disappearance, they have shown integrity, patriotic conviction, discipline and maturity as they have joined events in tribute to Fidel in massive numbers and committed themselves to the pledge of loyalty to the concept of revolution Fidel outlined May 1, 2000. On Nov. 28 and 29, millions of compatriots signed their names in support of the revolution. [The pledge was printed in last week’s *Militant*.]

Amid the pain of these days we have once again felt pride and comfort in the impressive response by Cuban children and youth, who reaffirm that they are prepared to continue to uphold loyally the ideals of the leader of the revolution.

On behalf of our people, party, state, and government and of the family members, I offer again our most heartfelt thanks for the countless displays of respect and affection toward Fidel, his ideas and his work, which continue to arrive from the four corners of the world.

Faithful to Martí’s view that “all the glory of the world fits in a kernel of corn,” the leader of the revolution rejected any expression of a cult of personality. He remained true to this position through the final hours of his life. He insisted that after he died, his name and likeness never be used to designate institutions,

plazas, parks, avenues, streets, or any other public spaces. And that no monuments, busts, statues or other forms of tribute be erected in his memory.

In accordance with compañero Fidel’s decision, we will introduce the necessary legislation at the next session of the National Assembly of People’s Power to ensure his wishes are carried out.

Our dear friend [Abdelaziz] Bouteflika, president of Algeria, rightly said that Fidel possessed the extraordinary ability to travel into the future, return and explain it. On July 26, 1989, in the city of Camagüey, the commander in chief predicted — two and a half years in advance — the disappearance of the Soviet Union



Workers in Santiago de Cuba salute Fidel Castro as caravan taking his ashes to cemetery passes Dec. 4. Right, Cuban and Angolan troops with captured South African tank in Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, 1988. 375,000 Cuban troops defended Angolan sovereignty, delivering “harsh blow to apartheid regime,” hastening its downfall, Raúl Castro said.

and the socialist camp. And he stated there before the world that if this were to happen, Cuba would continue to defend the banner of socialism.

Fidel’s authority and his close relationship with the people were decisive to the country’s heroic resistance during the dramatic years of the Special Period — when our gross domestic product fell 34.8 percent, the Cuban people’s nutrition deteriorated significantly, we suffered blackouts lasting 16 to 20 hours a day, and much of our industry and public transport was paralyzed. Despite this, however, we were able to safeguard public health and education for the entire population.

I recall the party meetings held in July 1994 in different regions — in Holguín in the east; in Santa Clara in the central region; and in Havana, the capital, in the west. We discussed how to confront, with greater efficiency and cohesion, the challenges of the Special Period, the tightening imperialist blockade and the media campaigns aimed at sowing discouragement among our citizens.

We left these meetings, including the one led by Fidel in the western region, convinced that with the strength and intelligence of the masses brought together under the leadership of the party, we could transform the Special Period into a new, victorious battle in the country’s history. And that’s what we did.

At the time, few in the world thought we could resist and overcome in face of adversity and the enemy’s intensified encirclement. Nevertheless, under Fidel’s leadership our people gave an unforgettable lesson in tenacity and loyalty to the principles of the revolution.

Recalling these difficult moments, I think it’s right and fitting to return to what I said about Fidel more than 22 years ago, on July 26, 1994 — one of the most difficult years — on the Isle of Youth.

I quote, “The most visionary son of Cuba this century, the one who showed us that yes, the attempt to capture the Moncada garrison was possible; that yes, that setback could be turned into a victory.” And we achieved that victory five years, five months and five days later, on that glorious Jan. 1, 1959. This last comment I have added to the words I spoke on that occasion. (*Applause*).

He showed us, “that yes, we could

reach the coast of Cuba on the Granma yacht. Yes, we could resist the enemy, hunger, rain and cold, and organize a revolutionary army in the Sierra Maestra mountains following the debacle at Alegria de Pio.⁵

“That yes, we could open new guerrilla fronts in the province of Oriente, [Juan] Almeida’s column and ours.

“That yes, with 300 rifles we could defeat the great offensive by more than 10,000 soldiers,” a victory that, as Che [Guevara] wrote later in his campaign diary, broke the back of the dictatorship’s army.

“That yes, we could repeat the feats of Maceo and [Máximo] Gómez, extending the struggle from the east to the west of the island with Che and Camilo [Cienfuegos]’s columns.

“That yes, with the support of the entire people we could defeat the Batista tyranny backed by U.S. imperialism.

“He showed us that yes, we could defeat in 72 hours,” or even less, “the mercenary invasion of Playa Girón and simultaneously continue the campaign to eradicate illiteracy within a year,” which is what we accomplished in 1961.

“That yes, we could proclaim the socialist character of the revolution 90



miles from the empire, and do that as its warships advanced toward Cuba, backing the brigade of mercenary troops.

“That yes, we could resolutely uphold the inalienable principles of our sovereignty, without fearing the threat of nuclear blackmail by the United States during the October 1962 missile crisis.

“That yes, we could send aid and solidarity to our sister peoples struggling against colonial oppression, foreign aggression and racism.

“That yes, we could defeat the South African racists, defending Angola’s territorial integrity, forcing Namibia’s independence and delivering a harsh blow to the apartheid regime.

“That yes, we could turn Cuba into a powerhouse in the medical field, and reduce infant mortality — first to the lowest rate in the Third World, and then as compared with the world of rich countries. On this continent, for example, Cuba’s rate of mortality for children under one year of age is lower than that of Canada and United States itself. (*Applause*) And at the same time, we have significantly increased the life expectancy of our people.

“He showed that yes, we could transform Cuba into a great center of science. Advance in the modern, decisive fields of genetic engineering and biotechnology. Break into the exclusive domain of the international pharmaceutical industry. Develop tourism

despite the U.S. blockade. Build causeways in the sea to make Cuba more attractive and increase hard-currency income from our natural beauty.

“That yes, we can resist, survive and

Mass tribute to Fidel Castro strengthens revolution

Continued from front page

was organized to honor the life and work of Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, who died Nov. 25 at the age of 90. (See speech alongside this article.)

The event marked the culmination of a week during which workers and youth turned out by the millions to reaffirm their commitment to the revolution and discuss how to maintain its values of internationalism, solidarity and uncompromising opposition to U.S. imperialism.

Leaders of the mass organizations of the Cuban people addressed the flag-waving and determined crowd. The heads of state of Bolivia, Nicaragua, Venezuela and South Africa were among international guests seated on the platform. The Barack Obama administration, the 11th U.S. administration to try to overthrow the Cuban Revolution, sent no one.

“Fidel unconditionally defended revolutionary ideas and principles,” Ulises Guilarte, secretary general of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, told the gathering.

“The Cuban working class not only found a solution to their demands as labor” through the revolution led by Fidel, he said, “but became a protagonist in the transformation demanded by the construction of socialism.”

“Young Cubans accept responsibility for one overriding order — to always take care of this revolution,” said Susely Morfa, first secretary of the Union of Young Communists. “We vow to fight as long as imperialism exists and, with the sound guidance of our party, we will not fail!”

“You encouraged us to unite and organize,” said Teresa Amarelle Boué, general secretary of the Federation of Cuban Women. “A revolution within the revolution” — that’s what you called the participation of women.”

The revolution gave Cuban women “the possibility to become full human beings,” she said, by pulling up by the root “the legacy of discrimination, exclusion and humiliation.”

Fidel “defended the independence of Algeria, fought the unjust war in Vietnam and combated apartheid in Africa,” said Miguel Barnet, president of the Na-

develop without renouncing our principles or the achievements of socialism. And do so in the unipolar world, dominated by the multinational corporations, that emerged after the fall of the socialist camp in Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

“Fidel’s enduring lesson is that yes we can, that humans are capable of overcoming the harshest conditions — if their willingness to overcome does not falter, if they accurately assess every situation and don’t give up their just and noble principles.”

These are the words that I spoke more than two decades ago about a man who, after the initial disastrous battle at Alegria de Pio — the day after tomorrow will be its 60th anniversary — never lost faith in victory, and 13 days later on Dec. 18 that same year, now in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra, having assembled seven rifles and a handful of combatants, said: “Now we will win the war!” (*Applause*)



Raúl Castro delivers concluding remarks at Dec. 3 mass rally in Santiago de Cuba.

tional Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba. “His anti-imperialism made no truces and was hostage to no concessions.”

“The Association of Combatants will forge the unity of the generations,” said Maj. Gen. José Antonio Carrillo, the association’s president, “with the new pines and the old pines making a formidable beam.” The organization brings together 300,000 Cuban veterans of revolutionary struggles in Cuba and internationally.

“Cuba is ours to take care of and defend,” said Jennifer Bello, president of the Federation of University Students. “Each university classroom will be our Moncada.”

Rafael Ramón Santiesteban Pozo, president of the National Association of Small Farmers, and Carlos Rafael Miranda, national coordinator of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, also spoke.

“Before Fidel’s remains,” Raúl Castro said in closing, “we pledge to defend the homeland and socialism!” The plaza resounded with shouts of “We pledged!”

“And together we all reaffirm,” Castro continued, what Antonio Maceo, hero of the 19th century independence fight, said: “Whoever attempts to conquer Cuba will gain nothing but the dust of her blood-soaked soil — if they do not perish in the struggle!”

The Santiago tribute came at the end

and shouts of “Fidel, Fidel! That’s Fidel!”)

This is the undefeated Fidel who brings us together through his example and demonstration that, yes we could, yes we can, and yes we will! (*Applause and shouts of “Yes we can!”*) I repeat, he demonstrated that yes we could, yes we can, and yes we will overcome any obstacle, threat or turmoil in our determined efforts to build socialism in Cuba. Or to say it another way, which is the same thing: To guarantee the independence and sovereignty of our homeland! (*Applause*)

Before Fidel’s remains in the General Antonio Maceo Grajales Revolutionary Square, in the heroic city of Santiago de Cuba, we pledge to defend the homeland and socialism! (*Shouts of “We pledge!”*)

Together we all reaffirm the vow of the Bronze Titan: “Whoever attempts to conquer Cuba will gain nothing but the dust of her blood-soaked soil — if they do not perish in the struggle!” (*Shouts*)

Fidel, Fidel! ¡Hasta la Victoria! (*Shouts of “¡Siempre! Onward!”*)

of a four-day Freedom Caravan that bore Fidel’s ashes from Havana, retracing in reverse the march taken in January 1959 by victorious Rebel Army units led by Fidel Castro after the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista fled in defeat.

The revolutionary struggle began when Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro and dozens of other fighters stormed the Moncada barracks in Santiago on July 26, 1953, aiming to mobilize working people in revolutionary struggle against the dictatorship. Dozens were killed and Fidel was captured and put on trial. His testimony, smuggled out and widely disseminated under the title, “History Will Absolve Me,” was used by revolutionaries to build the July 26 Movement, which led the fight for power to victory.

Millions turned out to greet the caravan, with thousands lining the streets of Santa Clara, Camagüey and other cities, and people standing at attention along the highway in rural areas, some on horseback.

“There was palpable excitement in Santiago and in the small towns along the Central Highway where throngs lined up to greet the caravan,” the *Miami Herald* was forced to admit Dec. 3.

The Cuban Revolution sets an example for workers, peasants and youth around the world. Members of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and Communist Leagues in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, who focus their activity on going door to door in working-class areas introducing their parties and making contacts, are discussing this example.

They make good use of books on the Cuban Revolution published by Pathfinder Press and last week’s *Militant*, which contains Raúl Castro’s Nov. 29 speech in Havana, a revolutionary pledge signed by millions of Cubans and a letter to Raúl Castro from SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. The letter concludes, “With unshakable confidence in the working class and its allies, we will continue to organize and act on the course Fidel uncompromisingly presented to the world in 1961, a month before the victorious battle of Playa Girón: ‘There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba.’”



Fidel Castro joins Cuban troops, volunteers as they prepare to defeat U.S.-organized Bay of Pigs invasion, April 1961.

1 José Martí was a lifelong combatant for Cuban independence. He founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1892 to fight Spanish colonial rule and frustrate U.S. designs on Cuba. He was killed in battle in 1895 war.

2 On July 26, 1953, some 160 revolutionaries under the command of Fidel Castro attacked the Moncada army headquarters in Santiago de Cuba hoping to begin an insurrection against the Batista dictatorship. After the attack failed, Batista’s forces massacred more than 50 of the captured revolutionaries and imprisoned Castro.

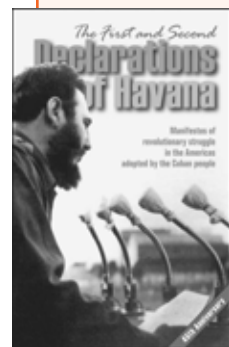
3 Granma was the name of the yacht used

by the revolutionaries to travel from Mexico to Cuba in 1956 to launch the struggle that overthrew Batista in 1959.

4 Antonio Maceo was a central military leader in Cuba’s 1868-78, 1879-80 and 1895-98 wars of independence. Like his three brothers and his father, he died in battle against the Spanish occupation.

5 Rebel combatants who had landed with the Granma were surprised by Batista’s troops at Alegria de Pio on Dec. 5, 1956, and dispersed under heavy fire. Half the rebels were murdered or imprisoned. Thirteen days later eight of the survivors rebels, including Fidel and Raúl, made it to the Sierra Maestra.

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Join fight to free Oscar López!

Support for the fight to free Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López is growing, in Puerto Rico, the U.S., and revolutionary Cuba. It deserves the active support of workers, farmers and youth in the U.S. and around the world. López was framed up on conspiracy charges for opposing Washington’s colonial occupation and oppression of the people of Puerto Rico. His dignity and determination during 35 years in U.S. prisons have inspired growing solidarity and strengthened his resolve to continue to fight for independence for Puerto Rico.

The attacks on workers by the “fiscal control board” — imposed by the propertied ruling class in the U.S. to guarantee payment to bondholders on the backs of workers — have shined a spotlight on Puerto Rico’s colonial status and fuel the fight to demand President Barack Obama pardon López before he leaves office.

Workers worldwide have seen the weeklong mass outpouring of working people of all generations in Cuba to salute the life of Fidel Castro and rededicate themselves to advancing and defending their revolution. This reinforces and gives momentum to the demand for a pardon. At the same time, Cuba’s revolutionary government and people are stepping up their efforts to advance the fight for Oscar’s release.

“For those of us who love justice and freedom, want a better and more just world free of colonialism and imperialism, revolutionary Cuba has been and will

continue to be a beacon of hope and an example to emulate,” López has said.

Cuban heroes Fernando González and Gerardo Hernández — two of the Cuban Five who served years in U.S. jails for defending the Cuban Revolution against counterrevolutionary aggression condoned by Washington — joined a recent meeting in Havana to build the fight to free López. The international campaign that over 16 years made the case of the Cuban Five widely known and won their freedom shows that victory is possible for López and others.

We should add to the signatures, already totaling more than 106,000, on the White House petition to free Oscar López. Organize and join activities in your area to put pressure on the administration. If Obama doesn’t pardon López, this fight will continue and gain strength until the day it forces open the prison gates and Oscar walks free.

The international fight also helps defend his right to be politically active as long as he remains behind bars.

“The people of Puerto Rico and working people in the U.S. have common interests, a common enemy, a common struggle,” said Socialist Workers Party leader Alyson Kennedy at the hearing of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization in June.

End U.S. colonial oppression! Independence for Puerto Rico!

Join the fight to free Oscar López!

Gov’t frames up Somali youth in Minnesota

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

MINNEAPOLIS — Three 22-year-old Somalis framed up in June on charges of conspiring to go to Syria to join Islamic State were sentenced to harsh prison terms here Nov. 16. U.S. District Judge Michael Davis sentenced Guled Omar to 35 years and Abdirahman Daud and Mohamed Farah to 30.

The government built its case on paid informers, wiretaps and video surveillance. Star government witness Abdirahman Bashiir admitted getting \$119,000 from the FBI to set up and record the young men.

Two other youth charged with being part of the conspiracy, Abdullahi Yusuf and Abdirizak Warsame, pled guilty and testified for the government. Yusuf was freed with 20 years’ supervised release and Warsame got a reduced 30-month sentence.

Four others pled guilty and got 10 to 15 years.

In handing down the stiff sentences, Davis said he wanted to make an example of the youth and deal with a “terrorist cell” functioning in Minnesota. He said the fact that friends and family of the youth had filled the courtroom and organized protests outside showed this. “We have to incapacitate this cell,” he said.

Some of the youth told the court they had been attracted to Islamic State, but had changed their minds. “I’ve always had energy for justice as a young man, but I lost my way,” Omar told the court.

“You can’t fix manipulative,” prosecutor Andrew Winter responded. “You can’t fix deceitful. And you can’t fix Guled Omar.”

The Minneapolis area Somali-American community is the largest in the country. FBI snoops have set up shop here for about a decade, targeting youth for harassment and entrapment.

Texas tells women: Bury or cremate your fetuses

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lished in the Texas Register July 1 with no announcement. Gov. Greg Abbott said it was “to protect the unborn.”

The rule is designed as a “source of stigma for anyone seeking an abortion,” Heather Busby, executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Texas, told the *Militant* Dec. 3. “They haven’t shown any evidence it benefits public health or improves safe medical practices.”

Supporters of women’s rights delivered more than 5,600 petition signatures protesting the rule to the Department of State Health Services Oct. 26. The Texas Medical Association and the Texas Hospital Association oppose it, as does the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Texas, which pointed to the costs that will fall on abortion providers and ultimately on patients.

In its June 27 decision in Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt, the Supreme Court rejected the Texas government’s claim — based on zero facts — that it was protecting women’s health by requiring that doctors performing abortions have admitting privileges at local hospitals and that abortion clinics meet hospital-like standards.

The ruling lays the basis to challenge other onerous restrictions. Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Reproductive Rights filed lawsuits Nov. 30 against abortion restrictions in Alaska, Missouri and North Carolina.

The Missouri law is very similar to the one the court threw out in Texas. The Alaska regulations effectively ban outpatient abortions later than 12 weeks of preg-

nancy. And the North Carolina law, prohibiting abortion after 20 weeks except in medical emergencies, had been amended earlier this year to require doctors to wait until a woman’s health deteriorated to a particular point of severity before performing the procedure.

Since the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that decriminalized abortion, states have passed more than 700 laws restricting access, often using spurious claims of “protecting women’s health.” The attacks have been made easier by the fact that the Supreme Court based Roe v. Wade on medical criteria, such as pregnancy “trimesters” and “viability” of the fetus, instead of women’s right to equal protection under the law.

The Hellerstedt ruling was a victory, but without a fight by defenders of women’s right to choose abortion it won’t stop the attacks.

A campaign is underway in Arkansas to ban the most common second-trimester abortion procedure, called dilation and evacuation. Similar laws are in effect in Mississippi and West Virginia, while bans in several other states are on hold due to legal challenges.

The Ohio Department of Health revoked the operating license for the Women’s Med Center of Dayton Nov. 30, claiming it failed to obtain a transfer agreement with nearby hospitals for emergencies. The clinic had been allowed instead to operate with two backup doctors for many years. In 2015 officials said three doctors were needed, and the clinic complied. Within weeks the health department demanded four. Abortion opponents in Dayton subject doctors involved in abortions to harassment and intimidation.

Assault on Aleppo

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ington offers a deal to collaborate against Islamic State, in hopes such an arrangement would allow U.S. propertied rulers to protect their interests in the region.

The Turkish government has been brokering talks between some of the anti-Assad forces and Moscow. “The Russians and Turks are talking without the US now,” the Dec. 1 *Financial Times* quoted an unnamed Syrian opposition figure as saying.

Capitalist governments in the region, including those in Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have provided arms and funds to various Syrian opposition groups. They are now adjusting their positions, as it becomes clear the Russian-backed Assad regime will not be displaced anytime soon.

In particular, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has sought to improve relations with Moscow and deepen Ankara’s direct intervention in Syria. On Dec. 1, at Moscow’s urging, Erdogan publicly reversed his call for Assad’s overthrow.

Turkish troops and allied Syrian opposition militias moved into northern Syria in August, in an offensive against both Islamic State and the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG). Ankara says the YPG is a front for the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) inside Turkey, labeling both as “terrorists.” Ankara’s goal is to take control of a 1,900-square-mile area of Syrian territory and block Syrian Kurdish fighters from linking up the areas they control along the border.

The incursion in Syria is part of Ankara’s broader attacks on the Kurdish national struggle, and on democratic rights inside Turkey. The government continues to carry out mass arrests and firings of people it accuses of supporting the PKK or the movement led by U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, a former ally who Erdogan accuses of orchestrating a failed coup in July.

Another 15,000 public employees, from soldiers and police to doctors, were fired Nov. 22, bringing the purge to 125,000. Some 36,000 people have been arrested, including a growing portion of the leadership of the Kurdish-based Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP).

Unraveling imperialist order in Mideast

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in 1991, the U.S. rulers misread the world situation, thinking they had gained a free hand to ride roughshod over the world. Events in Syria underscore how the last 25 years of Washington’s wars in the Mideast, from Iraq to Afghanistan, have led to the unraveling of the imperialist order there, with workers and farmers of the region paying a tremendous price.

“That era is over,” conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer lamented Dec. 1. “Look no further than Aleppo. ... Russia drops bombs; America issues statements.”

The civil war in Syria began in 2011 after the Assad regime responded with bloody repression to mass protests demanding political rights. While bemoaning Assad’s brutality, the Barack Obama administration backed off threats to intervene against his regime in 2013 after Moscow brokered a deal to stop the Syrian regime from continuing to use chemical weapons.

Washington found itself incapable of launching another Mideast ground war. It opted instead for a largely ineffective effort to fund “moderate” Syrian forces and use air power to attack Islamic State, a reactionary force that grew out of elements from al-Qaeda and former officers of the Saddam Hussein regime toppled by Washington’s 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Under these conditions, shifting coalitions of Islamist as well as secular opposition groups have been competing for territory and fighting government forces since then, as well as fighting Islamic State.

President-elect Donald Trump has said Washington should end all backing for opponents of Assad, and work with Moscow to defeat Islamic State. A growing number of U.S. political figures, like former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, agree that Washington should accept the reality that Assad will remain in power.

The largest area still held by opposition forces, aside from the Kurdish-controlled regions, is the province of Idlib, west of Aleppo. Both rebel fighters and civilians forced out of other areas by the government offensive are increasingly concentrated there.

Amid the battle for Aleppo, Moscow has escalated airstrikes in Idlib, one of which killed more than 60 people at a market in the town of Kafranbel Dec. 4.