

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 82/NO. 4 JANUARY 29, 2018

## 'Militant' wins overturn of Florida prison ban — again

BY SETH GALINSKY

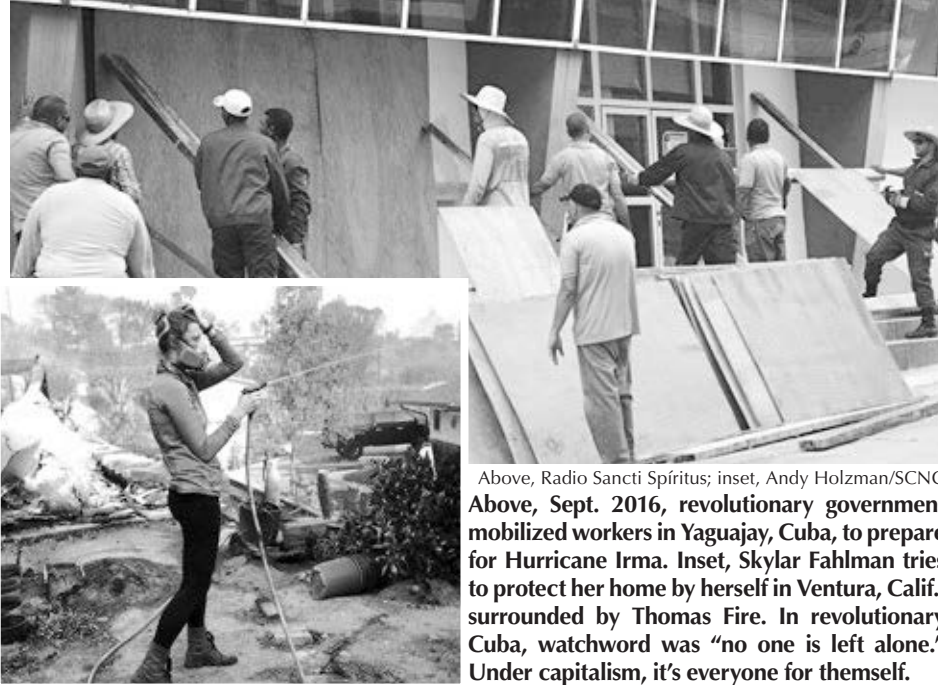
The Florida prison system's Literature Review Committee says that the impoundment of the Dec. 18 issue of the *Militant* was a "mistake" and has been reversed. Officials at the Florida State Prison in Raiford banned the issue because of the article "Join Fight to Overturn Ban Against 'Militant'!" which reported on the *Militant's* successful efforts to stop censorship of the paper.

Officials at the Raiford prison failed to inform the *Militant* of the impoundment, contrary to state prison guidelines. The paper learned about it from letters received from subscribers behind bars.

Inmates at both the Charlotte Correctional Institution in Punta Gorda and at Santa Rosa Correctional Institution in Milton, Florida, sent the *Militant* copies of impoundment notices they received. One said he had appealed the decision.

It's standard operating procedure  
Continued on page 3

## Social disaster in mudslide is result of capitalist rule



Above, Radio Sancti Spiritus; inset, Andy Holzman/SCNG  
Above, Sept. 2016, revolutionary government mobilized workers in Yaguajay, Cuba, to prepare for Hurricane Irma. Inset, Skylar Fahlman tries to protect her home by herself in Ventura, Calif., surrounded by Thomas Fire. In revolutionary Cuba, watchword was "no one is left alone." Under capitalism, it's everyone for themselves.

## Catastrophe in California product of profit system

BY SETH GALINSKY

Like other government officials and the big-business news media, Rob Lewin, head of the Santa Barbara County's Office of Emergency Management, blamed residents of

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## Cuban Revolution: Example for working people in U.S.

Hurricanes, mudslides, wildfires, earthquakes, floods. Under capitalism all natural disasters turn into social catastrophes for working people.

Buildings can be constructed to

## EDITORIAL

better withstand hurricanes and earthquakes. Working-class housing can be built on higher land, out of the reach of killer waves and flooding, instead of on the cheapest, most vul-

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## Both of the bosses' parties have disdain for immigrant workers



AP Photo/ Mark Lennihan

Ravi Ragbir, center, at March 2017 New York protest against deportations, was arrested Jan. 11.

BY JOHN STUDER  
AND SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — Over the past few months the Donald Trump administration has carried out a series of moves that threaten the ability of a number of immigrant workers to live and work here. They began phasing out the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program for some 800,000 young people and announced the ending of Temporary Protected Status for more than 200,000 Salvadorans, Haitians and Nicaraguans. On Jan. 10 immigration agents carried out coor-

ordinated raids at 98 7-Eleven stores, arresting 21 people and telling store owners they had to submit to immigration "audits."

The raids were a follow-up to Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids under the Barack Obama administration that ended up with charges filed against a number of store owners for employing workers without papers.

Over the last few weeks ICE detained three immigrants associated with the sanctuary movement, includ-

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## Iran: Workers discontent is driven by war, economic crisis

BY TERRY EVANS

The working-class discontent fueling protests that swept Iran beginning Dec. 28 was driven by workers' response to growing economic hardship, continuing restrictions on political rights, widening class divisions and the toll on working people of Tehran's wars across the region.

Iran's counterrevolutionary clerical rulers have no intention of giving up political power or the military interventions that have expanded their reach against capitalist rivals across the Middle East. Nor can they reverse the causes of the economic carnage devastating the lives of workers and farmers at home, rooted in the worldwide capitalist crisis of production, trade and profits.

Having deployed the Revolutionary Guard across the country and thrown thousands of young rebels into jail, including Tehran's notorious Evin prison, the Iranian rulers have quelled large-scale working-class-led protests, at least for now. Both wings of the clerical regime — one led by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the other by so-called reformers led by President Hassan Rouhani — have joined in the crackdown.

Both have also moved to try to defuse workers' anger. Khamenei acknowledged Jan. 9 that protest voices "should

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## US rulers give high marks to Trump administration policies

BY TERRY EVANS

The economic uptick in the U.S. and Washington's moves to defend U.S. imperialist interests around the world are consolidating support among the propertied rulers for the course of the Donald Trump White House. This has not stopped liberals and others in the middle-class left, who never reconciled themselves to Trump's victory, from intensifying their demands that he be driven from office.

The boss press is running articles of praise. "For Businesses, Donald Trump's First Year Is a Net Success," the *Wall Street Journal* said Jan. 16.

"What the critics don't acknowledge is that Trump and his national security team have actually scored some real foreign policy wins," CNN said Dec. 27.

The bosses give Trump plaudits for cutting taxes on the propertied owners. Factory orders are increasing as bosses predict further capitalist growth off the backs of working people. He has slashed the number

of federal regulations and red tape on businesses and banks, and says he will cut the size of the Washington bureaucracy.

His administration is working to secure a bipartisan agreement on

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IG Metall workers strike in Germany, demand pay raise

# Vancouver, B.C.: Opioid deaths rise as capitalist crisis deepens

BY JOE YOUNG

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Over 1,100 people died from drug overdoses in this province in 2017. More than 80 percent of the deaths have been linked to fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid that is wreaking havoc in areas hard hit by the effects of the capitalist economic and social crisis across North America.

In April 2016 Dr. Perry Kendall, British Columbia's chief health officer, declared a "public health emergency" over the high number of overdose deaths, but the capitalist rulers have done nothing to address the underlying class realities responsible. The *Vancouver Sun* reported Sept. 27 that the British Columbia ambulance service had fielded 36,000 overdose calls in the previous 18 months.

These conditions are the result of the workings of today's crisis of capitalist trade, production and employment. As members of the Communist League knock on doors in working-class communities to discuss the roots of this crisis, what we can do about it, and to build the League, we often hear how friends, co-workers and family members have been ravaged by the crisis.

Many workers use opioids because they face chronic pain as a result of a history of on-the-job injuries, or from military service in imperialist wars abroad. Fraser Health, which serves a wide expanse of southwestern British Columbia, says men between 19 and 59 years old who work in industry are disproportionately affected by the drug crisis.

People of indigenous descent are three

times more likely to die of an overdose than people of non-indigenous descent.

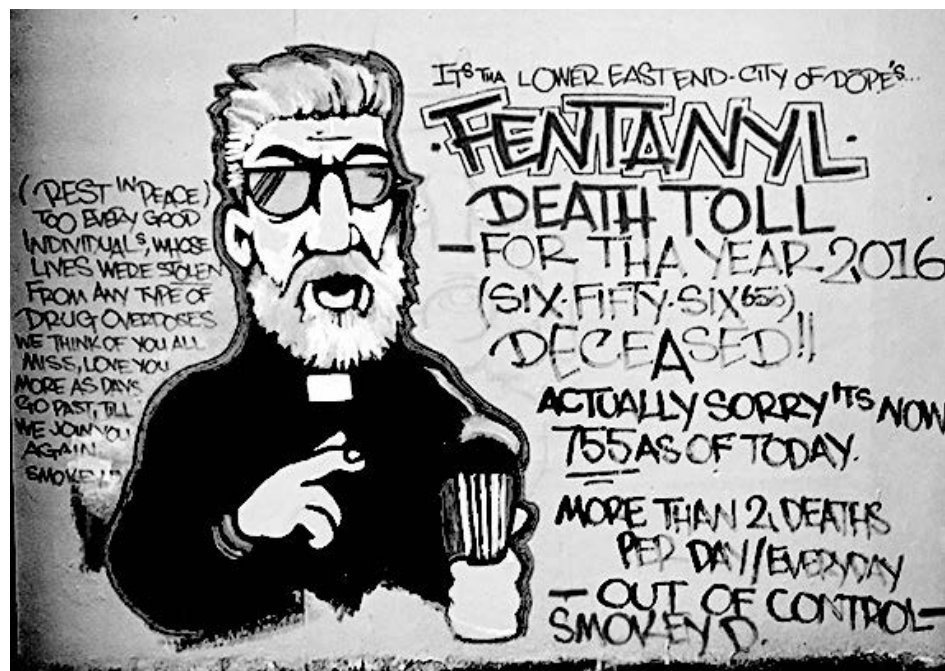
Some capitalist politicians say the answer is more criminalization of those involved in drug sales and use. Mike Farnworth, British Columbia minister of public safety, is considering tougher penalties for fentanyl dealers, including charging them with manslaughter.

But the drug trade is just a business, like other capitalist businesses, with higher returns because of higher risks. It doesn't go away. Repression simply forces drug users underground, criminalizing them, and makes getting treatment more difficult.

While social service agencies and medical personnel call for increased attention to this social crisis, none points to its roots in the dog-eat-dog capitalist system and the wars and social crises it breeds.

The British Columbia government is reopening Riverview psychiatric hospital in Coquitlam, a Vancouver suburb, as a mental health and addiction center, but at the same time is closing the Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction. The net result will be the addition of only 11 beds.

Hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs have been eliminated in Canada since the worldwide capitalist financial crisis exploded in 2007, forcing many workers who had relatively well-paid steady work into a series of lower-paying temporary or part-time jobs. Temporary work has grown 12 times faster than regular jobs for workers between the ages of 25 and 54. More and more workers are living



Mural by street artist Smokey D. in the Downtown East Side of Vancouver, British Columbia.

paycheck to paycheck, unable to make ends meet.

Housing costs and rents are sky high in Vancouver and other major Canadian cities. Many workers struggle to keep a roof over their heads and those of their families. The health service is deteriorating, and workers with job injuries or health challenges lack support. Facilities are woefully inadequate for those struggling with mental illness.

The Communist League calls on the labor movement to mobilize working people in an ongoing social struggle to demand a government-funded public works program to provide tens of

thousands of union-scale jobs to build hospitals, schools, day care centers, mental health clinics and other things workers need.

We can build on this fight to chart a course of independent working-class political action to overthrow capitalist rule and put a workers and farmers government in power. Through this struggle, working people will transform themselves, conquering the capacity to run society ourselves to meet human needs, not for capitalist profits.

Katy LeRougetel contributed to this article.

## Pussy Riot speaks out about fight against prison conditions in Russia

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Pussy Riot members Maria Alyokhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova became known around the world for performing a "punk prayer" against the regime of President Vladimir Putin in Moscow's Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Christ in February 2012 that led to two-year prison sentences for "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred."

They were sent to separate penal colonies in the Siberian Gulag. While in prison they organized with fellow prisoners to fight horrendous work and living conditions. They both went on hunger strikes several times and won release

in December 2013.

"My brigade in the sewing shop works 16 to 17 hours a day from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.," Tolokonnikova wrote in a five-page open letter from prison. "At best we get four hours of sleep a night. I demand we be treated like human beings. I will not remain silent, resigned to watch as my fellow prisoners collapse under the strain of slavery-like conditions."

In a lengthy interview with the *Financial Times* printed Jan. 5, Alyokhina explained why the fight against prison conditions in Russia has been

Continued on page 4

## THE MILITANT

### Celebrate ranchers victory over gov't frame-up

The frame-up of Nevada ranchers collapsed Jan. 8 when a judge threw out the government's case against the Bundys, saying prosecution was guilty of "flagrant misconduct."

The 'Militant' explains this is a victory for all working people.



K.M. Cannon/Las Vegas Review-Journal via AP Rancher Cliven Bundy walks free Jan. 8.

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# Victories scored against NY, NJ prison book bans

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Authorities have been implementing a pilot program at several state prisons in New York that severely limits access to books prisoners or their friends and families can order for them to read. As more facts about it have come to light and condemnations mounted, Gov. Andrew Cuomo tweeted Jan. 12, "I am directing the Dept. of Corrections to rescind its flawed pilot program that restricted shipment of books & care packages to inmates."

At the same time, after protests by the American Civil Liberties Union and others, New Jersey state officials were forced Jan. 8 to revoke a ban they had placed on *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. The title had been banned at New Jersey State Prison in Trenton and Southern State Correctional Facility in Delmont.

In New York, a test Secure Vendors Program was put in place Dec. 4 at the Greene, Green Haven, and Taconic prisons that severely restricts the availability of books. Anyone who wants to order a book for a prisoner has to choose from only six vendors — E-Ford Commissary, Access Securepak, Union Supply Group, Jack L. Marcus Company, Walkenhorst, and Music by Mail. Shipments of new and used books from other mail catalogs or online retailers are barred. Officials planned to expand the program statewide in September.

The approved vendors offer a combined selection of just 77 books: "five romance novels, 14 religious texts, 24 drawing or coloring books, 21 puzzle books, 11 how-to books, one dictionary and one thesaurus," reports Addy Baird of the ThinkProgress news website.

The Department of Correctional and Community Services claims the measure will "enhance the safety and security of correctional facilities."

Supporters of prisoners' rights fought to overturn the decision. Gov. Cuomo's announcement "is welcome news not only for incarcerated individuals in New York State and their families," PEN America, which advocates for writers and readers worldwide, said in a Jan. 12 press release, "but for all those who are concerned about the right to read."

"This draconian restriction closes off so much of the world to thousands of people," NYC Books Through Bars, which sends free books to prisoners in dozens of states, said in a letter to Gov. Cuomo.

In New Jersey Jan. 8 state prison authorities said they were lifting the ban on *The New Jim Crow* at all state institutions. They also said they would review their overall policy under which other books are still prohibited.

"The ban on *The New Jim Crow* violates the right to free speech enshrined in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution," the ACLU said in a letter delivered to Department of Corrections Commissioner Gary Lanigan earlier that day.

Noting that African-Americans disproportionately fill New Jersey prisons, the ACLU wrote, "For the state burdened with this systemic injustice to prohibit prisoners from reading a book about race and mass incarceration is grossly ironic, misguided and harmful."

The victories in New York and New Jersey — as well as the *Militant's* victory overturning the impoundment of an issue in Florida state prisons (see article on front page) — are good precedents for the ongoing fight to allow prisoners to join in today's political discussions and debates.

## 'Militant' wins overturn of Fla. prison ban — again

Continued from front page

in Florida that whenever one prison impounds a publication or book, it's taken away from the inmates in all of the state's 148 prison facilities. The *Militant* has dozens of subscribers in Florida prisons.

When David Goldstein, the *Militant's* attorney, contacted the Literature Review Committee to find out the deadline to file an appeal against the ban, Dean Peterson, head of the committee, told him they had reviewed it the day before and overturned it.

This new ban came just a couple weeks after the committee overturned the impoundment of two previous issues of the paper. Overall, prison officials impounded nine issues in 2017, seven of which were overturned after the *Militant* and some prisoners appealed.

The *Militant's* ongoing fight for the right of workers behind bars to read the paper has won broad support. Letters protesting impoundments in Florida prisons have come from Amnesty International USA, PEN America, New York's Riverside Church Prison



After protests began against moves by New York state officials to severely restrict the ability of prisoners to order books, Gov. Andrew Cuomo backed down and rescinded the so-called pilot program. Under the new program, titles had to be ordered from just six approved vendors, who offered a combined total of 77 books, including those shown above, mostly puzzles, drawing or coloring books, self-help, religious and a few romance novel titles.

Ministry, the Alianza Martiana in Florida and others.

"Whenever the *Militant* is censored, we organize to win support for our right to reach our readers behind bars and for their constitutional right to read literature of their choosing," said John Studer, editor of the *Militant*. "We want more workers behind bars to subscribe, and to order books we promote from Pathfinder Press that are written by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionaries from Fidel Castro to

Malcolm X. These books point the way forward for the working class in the face of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

"Workers behind bars are that part of the working class the propertied rulers have run through their criminal 'justice' system and put in prison for a time," he said. "They share common interests with workers on the outside, and they need the revolutionary working-class perspective we present."

### — CALENDAR —

#### CALIFORNIA

**Los Angeles**  
**Decolonization, Hurricanes and Solidarity.** Speaker: Oscar López, Puerto Rican independence fighter, released from prison last year after being incarcerated on frame-up charges in U.S. jails for 36 years. Tues., Feb. 6, 7 p.m. *Maya Angelou High School, 300 E. 53rd St. Tel.: (310) 460-8586. Hosted by MECHA. For more information on López's Southern California tour, email: oscarlopezsocialtour@gmail.com.*

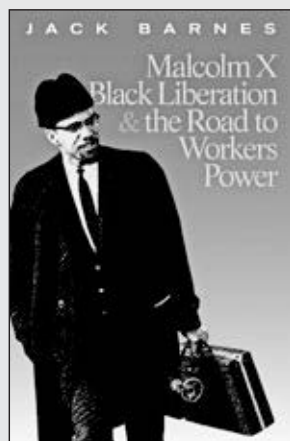
### — MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

#### ILLINOIS

**Chicago**  
**Working-Class Discontent Spreads in Iran. Prospects for Building Proletarian Parties in the Mideast.** Speaker: Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 20, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. *University Church Library, 5655 University Ave. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.*

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# Mudslide social catastrophe

Continued from front page

Montecito, California, themselves for the deaths and disaster visited on the town by widespread mudslides and flooding Jan. 9. He said they simply didn't heed evacuation orders given prior to the rain and mudslides, claiming there was "no way anybody who was watching the news or paying attention didn't get it."

He also said the rain was beyond anything they could have handled. "It was a 200-year storm, and we had half an inch of rain in five minutes," Lewin told the media. The mudslides killed at least 20 people, destroyed 100 homes and shut down drinking water, electricity and natural gas in the region.

But government officials did little to warn the towns' less than 9,000 residents, and nothing to organize to get them out of harm's way. The deaths, destruction and social crisis are a man-made disaster, not a natural one — the direct result of the workings of capitalism. It's "every man for himself" moral values, and the callousness of the capitalist government at every level.

The way the Cuban people and their revolutionary government mobilized to meet Hurricane Irma stands in sharp contrast.

The mudslides are a direct result of the Thomas Fire, which ravaged nearly 240,000 acres in the area in the first two weeks of December, and of the way the propertied rulers responded. The fire burned so destructively because years of drought were followed by a year of heavy rains that gave a spurt to combustible grasses, shrubs and trees, followed by another drought. Though officials knew this provided fuel for fires, they did nothing to thin it out.

Besides the damage and destruction, the fires also destroyed the top soil, creating prime ground for flooding and mudslides. This has happened many times in California. In the fall of 2003 after a fire ravaged the San Bernadino Mountains, mudflows killed 14 people. After the 2010 Station Fire, a mudslide damaged more than 40 homes in La Cañada Flintridge.

The increasing destruction from wildfires is not a "natural" disaster either. Seeking to maximize profits, real estate developers are building more homes near fire-prone vegetation and forests. Local governments fail to adopt policies that would prevent the accumulation of dry vegetation, creating the threat of large, uncontrollable fires.

Local officials issued mandatory evacuation orders Jan. 6 for some 7,000 people closest to areas burned by the Thomas Fire, and sheriff deputies the

next night went door to door in that area. In addition, some 23,000 people were in "voluntary evacuation zones."

Reports make it sound like the cops had talked to everyone. But Santa Barbara County officials admitted that only 1,200 residents in the mandatory zone had been contacted in person.

Government officials had a detailed map that showed in advance where they expected mudslides to hit the hardest. But many of those areas were labeled for "voluntary" evacuation. Voluntary warnings don't actually advise residents to leave, but to be on "high alert, and ready to evacuate at a moment's notice," the *Santa Barbara Independent* explained.

Most importantly, no government authorities did anything to organize a collective evacuation, alternative housing, food and other necessities, or to mobilize crews to battle any flooding to come.

That's the capitalist way. You're on your own, and what you can do depends on how wealthy you are.

## Warnings sent after mudslide starts

After the National Weather Service texted a flash-flood warning about 2:30 a.m., Jan. 9, county officials waited until 3:50 a.m. to send out a text-message warning to people in the area. By that time it was too late — a wall of mud moving at 20 mph or faster was already sweeping down the hillsides.

Montecito resident Cia Monroe told the Associated Press that her family had to evacuate three times during the wildfire and then was told they should evacuate a fourth time as the heavy rains hit.

"Where do you go when you're a family of four and you don't have a second home?" she asked, noting that a one-week stay in a hotel could cost them \$3,000.

Now — after the deaths and destruction — people are being ordered to leave the area. "It's martial law here, basically," Sarah Ettman told AP.

Water and power have been turned off. When will water be restored? "We're not days away, but certainly sometime before the next two months," Nick Turner, general manager of the Montecito Water District, told the *Los Angeles Times* Jan. 15. Shades of Puerto Rico.

## How Cuba responds to storms

It doesn't have to be this way. The way the revolutionary government of Cuba responds to natural disasters is the exact opposite.

In a speech to Cuba's National As-

sembly Dec. 21, President Raúl Castro

recounted how the Cuban government worked with mass organizations, from unions to neighborhood committees, to evacuate nearly 1.8 million people prior to the arrival of Hurricane Irma, to get them out of harm's way.

After the storm, brigades of electrical workers organized before the hurricane hit went into action. "In just 20 days the flow of electricity and water was re-established in the entire

## Jury deliberates in frame-up of Quebec rail workers



Militant/John Steele

MONTREAL — After six full days, jury deliberations continue in the Canadian government's frame-up trial of locomotive engineer Tom Harding and train traffic controller Richard Labrie, both members of United Steelworkers Local 1976. Along with Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway low-level former official Jean Demaitre, the unionists are charged with criminal negligence causing death in the July 2013 Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, oil train derailment, explosion and fire that killed 47 people.

Above, activists with the Citizens and Groups Coalition for Rail Safety in Lac-Mégantic attend closing sessions of trial. From left, Gilles Fluet, Gilbert Carette, Robert Bellefleur and Richard Poirier.

The only time the 12 jurors have come out was to ask the judge for clarification of the meaning of "reasonable doubt."

Since the trial began Oct. 2 in Sherbrooke, it has been clear that Harding is the main target of the rail bosses and the government. Thomas Walsh, one of Harding's two attorneys, told the Sherbrooke daily *La Tribune* Jan. 11 that the trial should never have taken place. "The goal was never to understand the accident," he said, "but to blame someone."

In his final arguments, lawyer Charles Shearson, also representing Harding, told the jury that Harding was being framed up. "As the driver of the train," Shearson said, "he was an easy target to shift responsibility to."

Shearson described how Harding, a safety-conscious rail worker with decades of experience was, like the people of Lac-Mégantic, a victim of company policies that placed profits before safety. And he explained how officials of Ottawa's Transport Canada agency were complicit with the company bosses.

A number of people from Lac-Mégantic attended Shearson's presentation in solidarity with Harding. They believe the rail bosses and government officials should be in the dock, not rail workers.

If convicted, the three defendants could face life in prison. If the jury cannot come to a unanimous decision on the criminal negligence charges against Harding, it has the option of convicting him of lesser charges of "dangerous operation of railway equipment" or "dangerous operation of railway equipment causing death," with maximum penalties of five and 14 years respectively.

— JOHN STEELE

# Pussy Riot speaks on conditions in Russian prisons

Continued from page 2

at the center of what they do since getting out of jail.

"People came up to me and Nadya and said, 'Girls, if you don't change this, if you don't tell people about it, then no one will,'" she said. "I've got five huge cardboard boxes in my attic with all the letters that people sent me for the two years I was in prison. They told their own stories. And for many people our story became the reason for changes in their life."

Alyokhina and Tolokonnikova helped set up Zona Prava, a human rights group, and Mediazona, a news site that focuses on the injustices of Russia's court and

prison system.

Alyokhina explains she refuses to stop speaking out or to be driven out of Russia.

Over the past two years Alyokhina has performed her play "Burning Doors" with the Belarus Free Theatre, including in the U.S., United Kingdom, Australia and Italy. It tells her own story and that of two other targets of Moscow's repression — Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian nationalist and filmmaker from Crimea, and Russian performance artist Petr Pavlensky, who sewed his lips together to protest the jailing of the Pussy Riot members.

In August, Alyokhina was arrested

in Yakutia, Siberia, where Sentsov is

detained. Along with another Pussy Riot member she hung a large banner saying "Free Sentsov" across a bridge near the prison.

Sentsov was framed up on charges of being part of a "terrorist conspiracy" and sentenced to 20 years. He had helped to deliver food to Ukrainian soldiers trapped on their bases following Moscow's occupation of Crimea in February 2014.

"It's important to be consistent," Alyokhina says. "Don't quit what you've started, don't give up, don't walk away. It's important that those aren't just words."

national territory," Castro said. "Nobody was left on their own."

It showed "the spirit of resistance and victory of our people, who confronted the event and the recovery period with organization, unity, discipline, and solidarity," Castro said.

While rebuilding tens of thousands of homes still lies ahead, it's being taken on in the same spirit.

Unlike in the United States, where the government's priority is to protect the wealth of the capitalist class and dog-eat-dog prevails, in Cuba the government is run by working people and organizes to meet the challenges ahead.

A team of members of the Socialist Workers Party went door to door in Ventura, California, Jan. 13, an area hard hit by the December fire but spared the mudslides, so far. *Militant* subscriber Katherine Necessary said that during the Thomas Fire, "we were told it was up to us whether to evacuate or not."

"There is no reason that people in Santa Barbara should have died," she said, pointing to similar government inaction in the face of the mudslides.

*Dennis Richter from Los Angeles contributed to this article.*

# Russian auto union fights gov't move to shut it down

BY EMMA JOHNSON

“The very existence of trade unions in the Russian Federation will be called into question,” the Interregional Labor Union of Automobile Workers (MPRA) — one of the largest unions in Russia — said after the City Court of St. Petersburg ruled to disband the organization Jan. 10.

Government prosecutors claimed the MPRA is a “foreign agent,” getting gobs of money from the IndustriALL Global Union federation, over half a million dollars. The MPRA says the total was \$6,000, received for training programs.

Unions belonging to IndustriALL have millions of members in more than 100 countries. In Russia, 10 major unions are members. The logic of this ruling is that they will also face being disbanded.

This is the second time a trade union in Russia has been targeted for “foreign” connections. In December the Justice Ministry declared the long-haul truckers’ Carriers Union, which has organized strikes and protests against onerous fees levied against them since 2015, a “foreign agent.” The decision was announced two weeks before the union organized a nationwide 10-day strike.

And it’s the first time a union organization that has not been registered as a foreign agent has been disbanded by the government for “performing the functions” of one.

“The trade unions in Russia are part of the international trade union movement,” the autoworkers’ union said. “No court decision can abolish international trade union solidarity as the basis of the labor movement.”

Their statement also rejects the court’s allegations that union members took part in illegal activities when they participated in a rally of fast-food workers and a protest of doctors against cuts in medical personnel. It defends its support for the truckers’ 2015 strike.

The court is saying that “the MPRA had the right to protect the interests of only its own members, but not members of other, fraternal trade unions,” the union says. “It outlaws

the idea of ‘solidarity.’”

The autoworkers union became well known nationally when it conducted a 25-day strike at the Ford assembly plant outside St. Petersburg in 2007, where workers won 11 percent pay raises, indexing of wages to inflation, and a contract that registered gains in working conditions and social protections. The independent union’s militant strike attracted workers to its ranks and its membership grew. It now has 4,000 members across the country in auto and other manufacturing plants.

Union Chair Alexei Etmanov, who led the 2007 strike, says the union will fight this attack, including appealing to the Supreme Court if necessary.

“Hundreds of people, both trade union activists and ordinary citizens, have already expressed support for our union and condemnation of the judicial



ITAR-TASS

Autoworkers strike Ford plant in St. Petersburg, February 2007. Russian government got court to label Interregional Labor Union of Automobile Workers “foreign agent” and disband it Jan. 10.

iniquity,” the union reported Jan. 12.

The Executive Committee of the Russian Confederation of Labor, Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions, Confederation of Free Trade Unions of

Ukraine, and Trade Union of Workers in the Metallurgical, Mining and Chemical Industry of Georgia are among those who have already made statements protesting the ruling.

## Red Fawn faces trial in government frame-up Jan. 29

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

Federal prosecutors will put Red Fawn Fallis on trial Jan. 29 in Fargo, North Dakota, seeking to victimize her for being among the thousands who poured into the state in 2016 to protest the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline near the sovereign land of the Standing Rock Sioux. The construction threatened to disrupt ground sacred to the tribe and to pollute the tribe’s main source of water.

Protests grew to involve members of more than 300 Native American tribes and 3,000 to 4,000 supporters. They set up encampments on or near tribal treaty land out of which they organized their battle to halt the pipeline.

As the fight grew, North Dakota authorities got reinforcement from state troopers and cops from at least 76 local, county and state law enforcement agencies from 10 states.

On Oct. 27, 2016, hundreds of cops used pepper spray, rubber bullets, bean bag projectiles, Tasers and smoke grenades in an attempt to forcibly remove protesters from a camp set up directly in

the path of the construction.

Fallis, who was volunteering as a medic, was one of 141 people arrested that day. Cops obviously knew who she was and targeted Fallis, throwing her to the ground. Cops and federal prosecutors claim that while they were piling on top of her, putting her in handcuffs, she somehow got a gun and fired three shots at police, none of which hit anything.

The state of North Dakota charged her with attempted murder, but dismissed it when the U.S. government filed federal charges of Civil Disorder, Discharge of a Firearm in Relation to a Felony Crime of Violence, and Possession of a Firearm and Ammunition by a Convicted Felon. Jailed without bond for a year, Fallis is currently confined to a halfway house preparing for her trial. She is the first of seven protesters facing federal charges to go to trial, and could be sentenced to 10 years to life in prison.

More than 300 Standing Rock protesters await trial on state criminal charges.

Fallis appeared in Federal District Court in Bismarck, North Dakota, Dec. 8 and 11. Her attorneys argued that she

was targeted, tackled and arrested solely because of her participation in a legal political protest against the pipeline and its interference with the sovereign rights of the Standing Rock Sioux.

But Judge Daniel Hovland ruled that he would not permit any mention at trial about U.S.-Native American treaty agreements or protests against the pipeline.

He also denied a defense motion for a postponement to pursue more discovery

Continued on page 9

## IG Metall workers strike in Germany, demand pay raise

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Members of IG Metall, Germany’s biggest union, started a round of strike protests Jan. 8, part of pressing for a 6 percent wage increase, as negotiations begin for a new contract covering 3.9 million workers. The old contract expired Dec. 31.

Over the next few days some 160,000 workers at more than 80 companies staged brief walkouts and organized demonstrations and rallies. Affected companies include Volkswagen, Porsche, Mercedes Benz, Siemens, Airbus, Honeywell and Bombardier.

The union is also demanding workers have the option to cut their workweek in order to care for children and aging relatives.

The bosses have offered a 2 percent wage raise plus a one-off \$240 bonus, but have so far rejected demands for workweek flexibility.

IG Metall has warned that the protest actions will expand if no progress is made in negotiations. “We have the tool of 24-hour warning strikes at our disposal, and of course we always have the option to ballot for open-ended industrial action,” union head Joerg Hofmann told Reuters Jan. 10.

Contract negotiations are coming up for a number of other unions, including for mine, chemical, postal and rail workers.

The strikes take place in the context of an economic uptick in Germany, where many bosses face labor shortages.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 29, 1993

The cowardly bombing of Iraq by U.S. military forces, with some help from Britain and France, is a brutal violation of that nation’s sovereignty.

Washington is asserting it has the right to lash out at will against Iraq, and by extension anywhere in the world where it feels its interests are being threatened. Through naked force the U.S. rulers hope to maintain their domination over this oil-rich region and get an upper hand against their imperialist rivals headquartered in Paris, London, Bonn, and Tokyo.

Massive bombing and other military assaults during the U.S.-led war against Iraq in 1991 left much of the country in ruins and took as many as 150,000 lives. The economic embargo against the people of Iraq, which remains in effect to this day, has produced great hardship and thousands more deaths.



January 29, 1968

The announcement that the People’s Republic of Korea had seized a U.S. spy ship off its coast, and Washington’s reaction to that announcement, both point to the danger created by U.S. imperialism in this section of the world.

A special correspondent of the *New York Times* said Jan. 23 that there is “no doubt” that the U.S. ship was “trying to pinpoint the sites of key radio and radar stations in North Korea,” to help American engineers “design jamming devices and other electronic countermeasures.”

Members of Congress said it was an “act of war” for the Koreans to do what they did — as if the U.S. has the right to send spy ships into the waters of any country any time it wishes.

Those opposed to the war in Vietnam should demand that the U.S. stop all provocative spy raids on North Korea and get its troops out of South Korea.



January 30, 1943

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21 — Post Office Attorney William C. O’Brien, demanding suppression of the mailing rights of *The Militant* at a hearing in the Postmaster General’s office here today, summed up the government’s case when he flatly stated: “We are not concerned here with questions of truth or falsity. It does not make any difference if everything *The Militant* said is true.”

The attempt to suppress *The Militant* was instigated directly by Attorney General Francis Biddle, when a letter from Biddle, urging the postal authorities to initiate this proceeding, was read into the record. The letter showed that the attack on *The Militant* represents a continuation of the government’s attack on the militant labor movement initiated by Biddle in the Minneapolis trial of 28 Socialist Workers Party and Local 544-CIO members in 1941.

# Immigrant teen wins over gov't move to deny right to abortion

BY LEA SHERMAN

A 17-year-old immigrant, known as Jane Moe, who had been detained by U.S. immigration officials, has won her fight to have an abortion. Since October, she is the fourth young woman to stand down efforts by the Office of Refugee Resettlement to stop them from getting the procedure. The agency is responsible for unaccompanied immigrant youth in U.S. custody.

The government backed off and released Moe from custody and she can now obtain the abortion she has requested.

“The government blocked her for more than two weeks, before deliberately moving her out of their custody only when we filed to take them to court,” American Civil Liberties Union attorney Brigitte Amiri said in a Jan. 11 statement. Amiri filed the suit against the government that led to Moe’s victory.

“We continue to pursue all avenues to ensure that no other young woman like her is forced to continue a pregnancy against her will for purely political reasons,” Amiri said.

Since October Jane Doe, Jane Roe, Jane Poe and now Jane Moe were each barred from obtaining abortions until they went to court.

Even though the government’s regulations don’t contain such strict rules, the Office of Refugee Resettlement has a blanket policy prohibiting abortion unless the young woman’s life is in danger. The *New York Times* has described Scott Lloyd, the head of the office, as a longtime “anti-abortion crusader.”

Texas authorities back the federal agency, saying the courts are just inviting “abortion tourism.”

Lloyd had written a memorandum arguing Jane Poe should be refused the abortion even though she was eligible under the regulations because her pregnancy was the result of being raped before fleeing to the U.S.

In the first three cases, the U. S. District court in Washington, D.C., ruled in the women’s favor.

Moe got the judicial waiver required by Texas law of all women who seek abortions, had private funds available

to pay for the expenses, and staff in the shelter willing to accompany her to the clinic. She was forced to go to “counseling” at an anti-abortion “Crisis Pregnancy Center” and have a sonogram.

But it took the ACLU suit to get the government agency to back off. Scott decided not to wait for a court ruling and released Moe.

## Fight continues

After the Oct. 25 court decision clearing the way for Jane Doe’s abortion, government lawyers appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court asking it to dismiss all claims and wipe out the Washington district court ruling because it might be used by other women.

The ACLU in turn filed a lawsuit, *Garza v. Hagan*, asking the court to issue an order preventing the government from enforcing its “no abortion” policy against other young women in custody.

Both cases await decision.



Justice for Jane

Oct. 20 rally outside U.S. Health and Human Services office in Washington, D.C., supporting successful fight of immigrant teen Jane Doe for right to have an abortion. Since then government has lost three more attempts to keep immigrant youth from getting abortions.

The rights of immigrants and women are intertwined in this important fight for the unity of the working class. Women in the U.S. — particularly working-class, rural and young women — continue to face growing restrictions on their right to choose abortion.

There is no abortion provider in some 90 percent of U.S. counties. Hundreds of state laws have been enacted in recent years that further restrict abortion rights, including waiting periods, unnecessary sonograms and draconian regulations on clinics.

# Bosses’ parties have disdain for immigrant workers

Continued from front page

ing Trinidadian Ravi Ragbir, a leader of the New Sanctuary Coalition here; Haitian Jean Montrevil, also an activist in the coalition; and Eliseo Jurado, the companion of Ingrid Encalada Latorre, a Peruvian immigrant who has taken refuge in a church in Boulder, Colorado, that offered her sanctuary to fight her deportation. Hundreds protested Ragbir’s detention outside an ICE jail here Jan. 10.

At the same time, President Trump has explained he thought it was possible to reach a broader bipartisan deal on immigration “reform” that would reverse some of the above measures. The “deal” he floated was to exchange new steps to open the door to DACA youth, some TPS participants and legalization of other immigrants in exchange for stronger controls on the border, restrictions on visa “lotteries” and visas for family members, and, of course, funds for a wall.

When his administration announced the moves to cancel the DACA program and TPS, Trump

said explicitly his goal was to force Congress to come up with a replacement immigration plan.

“If we do this properly, DACA, you’re not so far away from comprehensive immigration reform,” Trump told Democrat Richard Durbin, senator from Illinois in a Jan. 11 meeting with members of Congress. “And if you want to take it that further step, I’ll take the heat, I don’t care.”

Some liberals urged the Democrats to make the deal. “Take a Deal for the Dreamers,” headlined the *Washington Post* editorial Jan. 10. “Build the Wall.”

A number of conservative anti-immigrant groups and individuals were outraged at Trump’s negotiations. “It’s shaping up to be a disaster, a calamity,” complained Steve King, an infamous anti-immigrant congressman from Iowa.

Then, after a second closed-door meeting the next day, things blew up. Democrats claimed Trump called Haiti and African nations “s-thole countries.” Durbin said Trump’s comments were “hate-filled, vile and racist.” Some Republicans who attended the meeting say Trump never said the phrase attributed to him.

“The language used by me at the DACA meeting was tough,” he tweeted. “But this was not the language used.”

“Never said anything derogatory about Haitians other than Haiti is, obviously, a very poor and troubled country,” he also tweeted. “Probably should record future meetings — unfortunately, no trust!”

The dispute was grabbed by most liberals, the middle-class left and Democrats in the self-proclaimed Resistance, who claim Trump is somehow qualitatively different than other Democratic and Republican spokespeople for the capitalist ruling families.

Despite their feigned indignation, every wing of the capitalist political spectrum bears similar sentiments toward the peoples of the colonial and semicolonial world, and, for that matter, toward the working class in the U.S.

For the ruling class, immigration

“reform” means increased control over the flow of immigrants to ensure a sufficient pool of cheap labor. The rulers all want greater flexibility to turn immigration on and off as the hiring needs of the employing class shift.

This includes a steady supply of workers without papers, who they expect to be able to exploit more cheaply and intimidate from fighting back against exploitation and dangerous working conditions.

And they seek to scapegoat these workers in an effort to divide the working class and lower the wages and conditions for all.

## ‘Guest’ worker visas rise

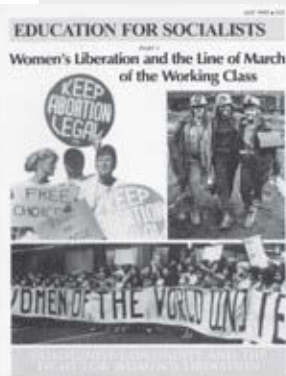
With a decreasing number of newly arrived immigrants, agribusiness has sought to increase the number of so-called guest workers, who receive temporary work permits.

According to the *Miami Herald*, the use of workers with temporary guest worker visas has increased sevenfold in California since 2011. Many landscaping, construction, cleaning and other business also came to rely on Salvadoran, Haitian and other workers who had Temporary Protected Status.

Mark Drury, an executive with Shapiro & Duncan, a plumbing, heating and cooling firm in Rockville, Maryland, told *Inc.* magazine that workers with TPS “are the best as far as immigrants, because they’ve had to stay crystal clean in order to renew their status.”

The question for the working class and others who are in solidarity with immigrants is how to unite the working class and end the deportations of all workers in the U.S. today. Demand amnesty for all immigrants now!

## Further reading...



## Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women’s Liberation

*Documents of the Socialist Workers Party, 1971-86*

This three-part series helps politically equip the generation of women and men joining battles in defense of women’s rights today.

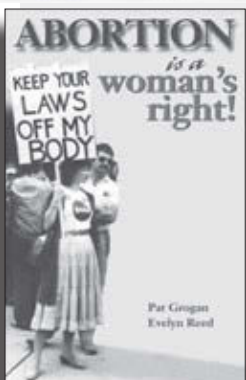
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- Vol. 2: Women, Leadership, and the Proletarian Norms of the Communist Movement
- Vol. 3: Abortion Rights, the ERA, and the Rebirth of a Feminist Movement

## Abortion Is a Woman’s Right!

by Pat Grogan, Evelyn Reed

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. \$6



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# Iran workers discontent

Continued from front page

be heard and responded to.” But apart from reversing some anti-working-class budget measures the government recently imposed, neither Khamenei nor Rouhani have anything to offer working people apart from false sympathy.

“Rouhani failed us. I felt hurt by seeing clerics get their budget as usual but the poor will get poorer by day,” Maryam, a 32-year-old housewife told the *Financial Times*. “Protesters are right. There is no hope in any reforms. They [the Iranian leaders] are all the same.”

After reaching a deal with Washington to freeze Tehran’s nuclear program in exchange for an easing of sanctions by the U.S. government and its allies, Iran’s rulers anticipated a new rise in foreign investment and trade. But hesitancy by capitalist investors abroad has meant Iran got less than \$3.4 billion in 2016. At the same time, the price of Tehran’s increased oil exports slumped from \$100 a barrel to \$30.

## Tehran’s role in Mideast wars

One of the demands prominently featured in protests in 80 cities across the country has been calls for an end to Tehran’s widening military operations in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere and to its financing of Hezbollah and Hamas.

Tehran’s capitalist rulers have made a series of moves over the last decade to expand its political and military sway in the region. In the midst of deepening civil war in Syria, sectarian conflicts in Iraq and moves by the reactionary Islamic State to seize territory in the midst of the fighting, Tehran sent troops and worked with Hezbollah and pro-Tehran militias to advance its position.

All the capitalist rulers in the region did the same, including the Recep Tayyip Erdogan government in Turkey and the monarchy in Saudi Arabia. And Washington, the strongest imperialist power, intervened, seeking to back allies and defend its imperialist interests. As Syrian rebels made gains against the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship, Moscow sent in bombers and Tehran increased its forces on the ground.

Tehran has made significant advances there, in Iraq and elsewhere. It now controls territory running from the Afghan border on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west.

## Anger at unemployment, regime fuels protests in Tunisia

BY TERRY EVANS

Extensive working-class discontent with rising prices, unemployment and both major factions of the government led to protest actions over several days in some 20 cities and towns across Tunisia beginning Jan. 7.

The government increased the price of fuel and some food items, raised workers’ social security contributions and hiked taxes on phone cards, internet usage and cars Jan. 1. For wide layers of the working class, already fighting to make ends meet, the onerous measures impose even greater difficulties.

Tunisia is touted in the bourgeois press as the one country to emerge with a degree of “stability” from the Arab Spring uprisings that swept parts of the Middle East and North Africa. But Tunisia has, in fact, had nine governments since the 2011 mass uprising that overthrew the hated Ben Ali dictatorship, and depression conditions continue to stalk working people. While inflation

But the results in Iran itself have been class-divided, with an enormous cost for working people. They have made up the troops who have died in the fighting and seen the wars eat up government funds taken away from social programs and subsidies for workers.

Even though Islamic State has been pushed out of almost all the territory it conquered, Washington, Moscow and capitalist rivals in the region continue to fight and jockey for turf and influence.

In October, troops from the Shiite-dominated government in Iraq, alongside 150,000-strong Tehran-backed Shiite militias, moved to drive the Kurdistan Regional Government out of Kirkuk, nearby oil fields and other territories. Since then, under pressure from Washington and Paris, the Iraqi government is seeking to assert a measure of independence from Tehran. It has called on Iran’s rulers to disband half of its militias in Iraq.

Iranian forces, Hezbollah and other Tehran-backed militias in Syria are engaged in an assault by the Assad regime and Moscow in Idlib province. Rebel forces from across the country moved there under terms of a “de-escalation” deal reached between the governments of Russia, Iran and Turkey. The rebels were promised they would not be attacked, a promise that now lies in tatters.

Since November 100,000 Syrians have fled their homes as a consequence of attacks by Assad’s forces and Moscow’s air and artillery assaults. Over 150 people have been killed since Jan. 1.

## Pro-independence parties win Catalonia election

BY EMMA JOHNSON

When Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who ousted the pro-independence parliament and seized control of the government of Catalonia last fall, called snap elections there for Dec. 21, he hoped a slate of candidates pledged to unity with Madrid would win. But the vote dashed his hopes.

While the Citizens, a party that opposes breaking away from Spain, got the largest vote, the parties advocating independence got more votes overall and won a majority of the seats in parliament.

currently runs at 6 percent, food prices have gone up 50 percent since then.

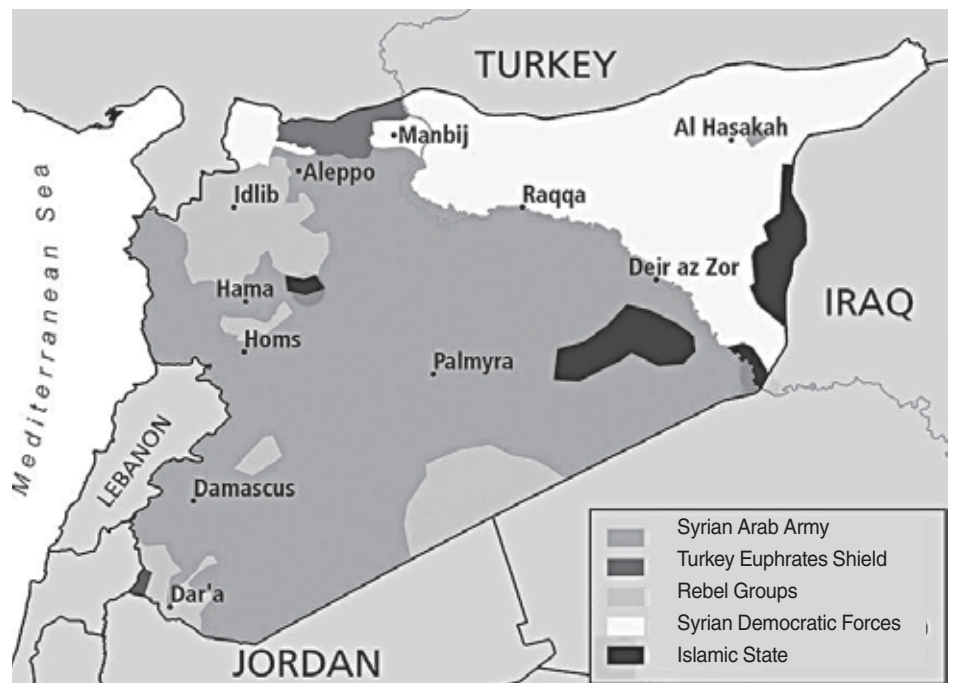
Youth unemployment remains at 25 percent. And young people are a large component of the rising proportion of workers — estimated at over one-third of the workforce — employed in what is called the informal economy, with no contract, no assurance of work, nor access to health care or social security.

Toilers who live in the country’s less-populated interior face far fewer jobs and the worst conditions.

“It is impossible for people to live with dignity today,” Wael Naouar, a protester, told the *New York Times* Jan. 9.

“This government, like every government after Ben Ali, only gives promises and has done nothing. People are angry and poverty is rising,” Imen Mhamdi, a factory worker, told Al-Jazeera at a demonstration in Sousse.

In response to the protests, Finance Minister Ridha Chalhoun extolled “the achievements of democracy,” and



Map shows who controls different areas of Syria, January 2018. Moscow and Tehran-backed forces seek to bolster Assad regime in drive today against rebel-held areas in Idlib province.

The assaults alarmed the Turkish government, which called on Moscow and Tehran to halt the offensive. Ankara has inserted troops in Idlib as part of the “de-escalation” deal, near areas held by Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) forces in Syria, threatening to wipe them out.

The Kurds are a 30-million strong oppressed nationality within Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. Ankara fears that gains made by Kurds in Syria will stir determination among Kurds in Turkey to resist Ankara’s efforts to deny them national rights.

Washington collaborated with the YPG in combating Islamic State, over fierce objection from Ankara. In the course of this, the Kurds were able to expand control over the Kurdish areas

in the country, and, in collaboration with some Arab forces, along a sizable swath of territory along the Euphrates River to the Iraq border.

Assad threatens to attack the Kurds, saying he intends to take back the entire country.

Tehran is also involved in deadly clashes in Yemen, backing Houthi rebels there who are fighting a U.S.-backed coalition led by Saudi Arabia.

From Syria to Iraq to Lebanon to Yemen, Washington seeks to bar Iran’s rulers from making further gains.

In the midst of the wars and social crises throughout the region, no capitalist regimes there were anxious to back the working-class unrest in Iran. They are all too afraid of working people in their own countries to do so.

national rights for the past decade.

Rajoy then sacked the Catalan president, government, members of parliament and numerous civil servants. Leaders of parties and organizations favoring independence were imprisoned and slapped with charges carrying decades-long prison sentences. Catalan President Carles Puigdemont fled to Belgium, to avoid arrest.

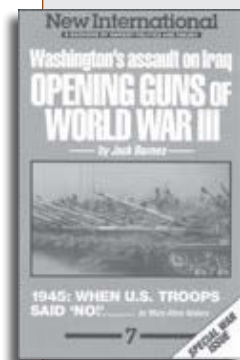
Hundreds of thousands hit the streets of Barcelona protesting the crackdown and demanding Madrid free the arrested leaders. Sizable demonstrations took place both in favor of and opposing independence.

Of the pro-independence parties, Puigdemont’s Together for Catalonia got the highest vote. Parliament convened Jan. 17 and will vote in the next couple

Continued on page 11

### 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.”

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# San Juan paper under fire for promoting anti-Semitic article

BY SETH GALINSKY

The owners and editors of *El Nuevo Día* — the largest circulation daily in Puerto Rico — came under fire for printing an anti-Semitic article by columnist Wilda Rodríguez Jan. 8 titled, “What Does the ‘Jew’ Want with the Colony?”

Rodríguez claims there is a “secret structure that rules the United States” and “a parallel government organized by the forces of wealth and violence (the war machine) from Wall Street.”

“Congress in the end will do whatever ‘the Jew’ wants, as the prototype of the real power is crudely called,” she says.

Jews “don’t see life like we do,” Rodríguez wrote. And their main concern is not collecting Puerto Rico’s \$70 billion debt to bondholders, but to make sure that “the world of debtors understands that Wall Street can’t be manipulated” — as if the bondholders and Wall Street were all Jewish.

The editors responded to the criticism by running a “disclaimer” of sorts next to the article, which “asks for forgiveness from the Jewish community in Puerto Rico and the rest of our readers who feel offended.” Despite the clear anti-Semitic content of the article, they claimed that they don’t promote content “that can be interpreted as anti-Semitic.”

They also posted a comment from Rodríguez, saying that “the mere use of the word Jew” was not “intended to cause offense” but was “a contribution to the public discussion.” Public discus-

sion of what, she doesn’t say.

Rodríguez is well-known as a supporter of independence for Puerto Rico.

But her scapegoating of Jews poisons the fight for independence and is a deadly danger to the working class. The problem with Washington is not the anti-Semitic charge that it’s run by a secret Jewish conspiracy, but capitalist rule and colonial domination. This is what’s behind the outrageous neglect and negligence by the colonial rulers in the wake of Hurricane Maria.

On Jan. 12 *El Nuevo Día* printed several letters denouncing the column. “It’s pure anti-Semitism,” wrote Diana Berezdivin. “Using the Jews as scapegoats once again, this time for the problems of Puerto Rico.”

The column “is an insult to all our people, including Puerto Ricans,” wrote Lina Goldberg.

*El Nuevo Día* also ran a guest column by Monica Bauer from the Anti-Defamation League in California that takes up the editor’s supposed “disclaimer.” What the editors published “leave a lot to be desired,” Bauer writes, “since publishing an article that accuses the Jewish people of controlling governments in detriment of the future of Puerto Rico is practically the definition of anti-Semitism.”

“This isn’t the first time that in the face of an economic crisis Jews are accused of controlling the power and money,” she adds.

It’s no accident that Rodríguez re-packages Jew-hatred in the midst of the deepest economic and social crisis



Dec. 30 San Juan protest demands electricity three months after hurricanes. Social crisis there is result of U.S. colonial rule and capitalist exploitation. As crisis continues, there is growing discussion on what is road forward for workers there. Article promoting Jew-hatred by independence supporter is deadly poison for worker and independence struggles.

there since U.S. imperialism wrested control of Puerto Rico from Spain in 1898 and made it a U.S. colony.

The rulers push Jew-hatred when the crisis of their capitalist system deepens and working people begin to look for ways to fight for their own interests, opening the door to a revolutionary course of action to take power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers.

More and more working people in Puerto Rico today are coming to the conclusion that Puerto Rico is a colony of Washington and that U.S. corporations and bondholders are bleeding the island dry. There is widespread discussion and debate on what to do about it.

Jew-hatred attempts to divert workers into believing that the problem is a conspiracy of evil Jews who control the banks, media and government, to take workers’ eyes off the real enemy — the system of capitalist exploitation and

imperialism. The capitalist rulers are a social class, not a religious cabal.

To swallow the Jew-hatred poison would be death for the fight for independent working-class political action and independence in Puerto Rico.

## Trump policies

**Continued from front page** measures that will assist the bosses in exploitation of immigrant labor, and, at the same time, scapegoat foreign-born workers.

The economic carnage and deepening competition the working class has confronted for several years continues to bear down. The number of workers who’ve given up looking for work and the number employed part time who can’t find full-time work stands in the millions. Current capitalist expansion has only begun to affect this. And more workers are looking for a way to respond to what has been done to them.

### Trump pushes rulers’ foreign policy

The administration is advancing the capitalist rulers’ interests in the Middle East, bolstering Washington’s military and political weight against its competitors — Moscow, Tehran, Damascus and Ankara.

It has carried through the war against Islamic State begun by former President Barack Obama, but gave U.S. commanders greater freedom in carrying out operations and expanded weapons supplies to the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, which drove Islamic State from its capital, Raqqa, in October.

Washington announced Jan. 14 it would set up a 30,000-strong Border Security Force based on the cadres of SDF. They will be deployed along the border with Turkey and along the Euphrates River, the line dividing U.S.-backed SDF forces from Syrian government and Hezbollah troops, backed by Moscow and Tehran.

Washington also announced the deployment of 1,000 more combat “advisers” to join the 14,000 troops it has stationed in Afghanistan, while maintaining over 5,000 troops in Syria and Iraq, according to Pentagon figures. Both of these decisions aim to stem the rising influence of Tehran in the region. And unlike Obama, Trump imposed no timetable for U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The consequences of these ongoing conflicts continue to devastate work-

**Continued on page 11**

## Washington eases off on Cuba travel advisory

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. State Department announced Jan. 10 that it had downgraded its warning on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens. After alleging last September that its diplomats in Havana had been the victims of mysterious covert “sonic attacks,” the U.S. government slashed its embassy personnel in half, ordered the expulsion of 15 Cuban officials from the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C. and issued a “do not travel” advisory for those planning

to visit the island. Now they just say you might “reconsider” going.

The travel advisory had little impact on trips to Cuba. Josefina Vidal, head of U.S. Affairs for the Cuban Foreign Ministry, reported in early January that the number of U.S. travelers visiting the island doubled in 2017 — more than 1.1 million compared to just under 620,000 the year before. A record 4.7 million people visited from all over the world.

The State Department says 24 embassy personnel had suffered symptoms

including “ear complaints, hearing loss, dizziness, headache, fatigue, cognitive issues and difficulty sleeping.” There’s just one problem with their description of the mystery attacks. No weapon exists that could covertly cause the symptoms described, except possibly in science fiction books.

On Jan. 4, after four trips to Havana under a special agreement with the Cuban government, the FBI’s Operational Technology Division issued a report they had no evidence that sound waves could have damaged the diplomat’s health. The announcement was widely covered in the U.S. press.

Less than a week later the State Department muted the travel warning. The Associated Press reports U.S. officials have stopped referring to the incidents as “sonic attacks.”

The biggest impact of Washington’s measures is on Cubans wishing to move to or visit the United States. Under a 1994 agreement, the U.S. government was supposed to grant visas to at least 20,000 Cubans a year. With the U.S. Embassy down to just “emergency personnel,” Washington closed the visa office and said Cubans would have to get to Colombia to apply at the U.S. Embassy there.

“Cuba is a safe, peaceful and healthy country for Cubans, for foreigners, for accredited diplomats and for the millions of people who visit us every year, including those from the U.S.,” Vidal said Jan. 9.

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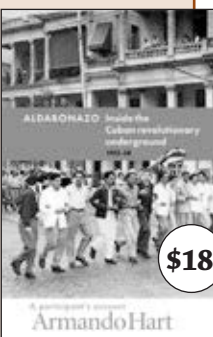
“What was the principal measure to uproot discrimination against Chinese and blacks? Cuba’s socialist revolution itself.”

#### **Aldabonazo**

#### **Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground 1952-58, a Participant’s Account**

by Armando Hart

Meet men and women who led the urban underground in the fight against the Batista dictatorship. Along with their comrades-in-arms in the Rebel Army, their revolutionary actions and example changed the history of the 20th century — and the century to come.



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# See revolutionary Cuba for yourself! Join May Day Brigade

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) has issued a call for the 13th annual May Day International Brigade to Cuba for April 23-May 6. The National Network on Cuba is coordinating the effort to sign up U.S. participants.

The brigade will offer participants a unique opportunity to learn firsthand the truth about the Cuban Revolution and strengthen efforts on their return to organize activities to demand Washington end its economic blockade of Cuba now; U.S. out of Guantánamo now; and a halt to U.S. government subversive programs against Cuba.

Registration is open until March 16, ICAP says.

"I'm planning to go," Samir Hazboun, who works on the education team at Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee, told the *Militant* in a phone interview Jan. 15. "There's a group of about nine of us organizing to go. They're Central Appalachian youth from Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina. We're planning some fundraising to help cover expenses.

"I urge people to go and see the truth of the Cuban Revolution for themselves," Hazboun said. He participated in the "In the Footsteps of Che" brigade to Cuba last October. "It helped me understand that the Cubans had a true workers revolution that laid the foundation that made possible in Cuba powerful accomplishments like quality health care," he said.

One of the highlights of the trip will be participating in the massive May 1 International Workers Day mobilization in Revolution Square in Havana and the International Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba the following day.

Brigade members will be based at the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp in Artemisa province, an agricultural area about an hour outside Havana.

They'll learn about Mella, who was a leader of student protests at the University of Havana in the 1920s and founder of the Cuban Communist Party, seeking to emulate the example of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. After



Above, Juvenal Balán; inset, Militant/Dan Fein  
Inset, U.S. delegation on International May Day Brigade to Cuba joins hundreds of thousands of Cubans, above, defending revolution, May 1, 2017.

being expelled from school and arrested by the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado, Mella escaped Cuba and made his way to Mexico. Organizing there to return and overthrow the Machado regime, he was assassinated in 1929.

Brigade members will also visit the provinces of Villa Clara and Camagüey. For several days, they'll participate in voluntary agricultural work along with meetings with members of Cuban groups, workers and farmers.

They'll visit the Che Guevara Museum, Memorial and Mausoleum; go to factories to exchange experiences with union workers there; and meet with members of the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution. They'll visit a municipality affected by Hurricane Irma and see firsthand how working people and their revolutionary government organized to deal with the hurricane's impact and moved quickly to repair and rebuild damaged structures.

In Havana events will include a workshop on the history of the Cuban Revolution with talks by combatants of the revolution, members of the Federation of Cuban Women and other

working-class fighters.

The brigade is a special opportunity for workers and farmers from the U.S. who face the unrelenting effects of the capitalists' drive to make us pay for their crisis of production, trade and jobs to-

## Red Fawn fights gov't frame-up

Continued from page 5

against the government, including on information it got from undercover informers about the protests and Fallis in particular. Hovland denied this motion, saying, "The reality is that the heart of this case rests upon less than five minutes of chaotic activity," meaning he intends to limit the case to the gunshots the prosecution claims Fallis fired.

A solidarity benefit has been organized for Jan. 20 in Denver to raise funds for Fallis' legal defense and to make it possible for her family to be with her during the trial.

"She grew up here, where she is known and respected as an Ameri-

can Indian Movement member and a member of an Oglala Lakota activist family from way back," Nancy Peters, a member of the Red Fawn Fallis Legal Support Team and one of the organizers of the event, told the *Militant*. "She could be facing life in prison if the government succeeds in getting a jury to believe its lies."

To contribute toward Fallis' legal defense, go to <https://www.generosity.com/fundraising/red-fawn-legal-fund>. You can send your support directly to her at [tingleskalutawi@gmail.com](mailto:tingleskalutawi@gmail.com) or Residential Transition Re-entry Center, 3501 Westrac Dr., Fargo, ND 58103. Attn: Red Fawn Fallis.

day. The Cuban Revolution is an example of what can be accomplished when our class fights to take power, to take control of our own destiny.

The cost of the package, which includes meals and lodging in Cuba, is \$675 plus airfare. The Julio Antonio Mella camp can accommodate up to 220 people, so it's important for those interested to confirm their participation as soon as possible. After the camp reaches its capacity, all late applicants who can be accommodated will have alternative lodging at a higher cost, the letter says.

The National Network on Cuba is "encouraging people across the country to participate, particularly young people who have not been to Cuba," Gail Walker, one of the network's co-chairs and executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, told the *Militant* Jan. 15. "There's no better way to be informed about Cuba's reality."

"I encourage anyone interested to see what's possible when you have working people in power," said Hazboun. "There's a lot of learning to do and it will be a very inspiring trip."

For more information on the brigade and to download an application, go to [NNOC.info](http://NNOC.info) and click on May-Day brigade.

## Workers donate 'blood money' bonuses to help build the SWP

BY TERRY EVANS

Twenty-three members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party have contributed a total of \$4,648.11 to the party from bosses' "blood money" bribes in December and January so far.

Many workers get "bonuses" doled out at the end of the year for the holiday. They're aimed at winning workers to identify with the employer and discourage them from fighting the bosses' exploitation and indignities. They're called "blood money" because one of the bosses' goals is to convince workers not to take on or report injuries from unsafe working conditions. SWP members tell co-workers that they put these bribes to the use of the working-class movement by turning them over to the party's Capital Fund to strengthen its long-term work.

Among the contributions was a \$130 check from Larry Warham, a worker at a meatpacking plant in Chicago. Work-

ers there were given a \$100 visa card as a bonus after signing a four-year contract and a spiral ham for Christmas. The agreement limited pay raises to a stingy 25 cents per hour, and increased the workday from eight to 10 hours.

"Rather than hire more people, the bosses have been putting heavy pressure on co-workers to work extra hours," Clarice Watson wrote when she sent in a check for \$802 from a year-end bonus handed to workers at the New York electronics factory where she works. Watson said she was pleased to put the money "to work furthering the end of the bosses' system."

Bella Warren in Seattle sent in \$100 that was given to temp workers. She said the bosses at that workplace don't provide any "safety or other training."

If you'd like to join in turning a bonus or other bribe from the bosses to the SWP, contact the branch in your area listed in the directory on page 10.

### East Coast tour of Cuban literacy campaign volunteer Griselda Aguilera

Hear Griselda Aguilera, a participant in 1961 mass campaign that taught Cuban workers and farmers to read and write, and transformed the volunteers, so they could build the revolution.

Screenings of "Maestra," film by Catherine Murphy documenting literacy drive will be shown during tour.



#### Tour dates:

Hartford, Connecticut: Jan. 31; Boston: Feb. 2-3  
Albany: Feb. 5-6; New York / New Jersey: Feb. 8-12  
Washington, D.C. / Baltimore: Feb. 13-17;  
Knoxville, Tennessee: Feb. 20-21

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# How Russian communists led 1950s strikes in Stalin's camps

Below is an excerpt from "Vorkuta (1950-53): Oppositional currents and the mine strikes" from Samizdat: Voices of the Soviet Opposition, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January. The author, Brigitte Gerland, an East German communist, spent some eight years in Stalin's prisons and camps.

After Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, a powerful strike wave swept the regime's deadly prison camps in the early 1950s. The key challenge that faced workers there was the deep divisions that existed among prisoners from Russia on the one hand and those from Ukraine and the Baltic States on the other. In some of



A series of strikes and protests exploded in forced labor camps in Soviet Union after Joseph Stalin died in March 1953. In Vorkuta, with 250,000 inmates, a powerful strike took place after communists fought to overcome divisions between Russians and Ukrainians. Above, Ukrainian nationalist prisoners in quarry at Norilsk camp, where June-August uprising began strike wave.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

the camps in Vorkuta, Ukrainians comprised half of the prisoners.

Communists — who were followers of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky and imprisoned for their work opposing the Stalinist regime — led the strikes. It took three years of persistent work to overcome the divisions among the prisoners, which were bolstered by the guards, and forge a common political program to fight the brutal conditions in the camp. Copyright © 1974 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

### BY BRIGITTE GERLAND

Many who had opposed the movement until then, particularly among the *zapadniki* [Ukrainians and Balts], now

realized that the hour for action was at hand. They started joining the strike committees, as yet, to be sure, only in the camps under the leadership of the Marxists and the *monashki* [religious groups]. So tense became the atmosphere that everyone was electrified. Committees of Pits No. 1 and No. 7, where the Leninists and the anarchists exercised the strongest influence, decided — with the unanimous support of forced laborers at these camps, totaling some 6,000 — to strike until the government agreed to dissolve the camps and grant to all prisoners the status of free colonists. That is to say, to treat them as free laborers, and to sign three-to-five year contracts with them.

This compromise program of action was needed to win over those prisoners who still hesitated and who would have never accepted the slogan of a strike for unconditional liberation. Work was to stop on the evening of July 20, but that same morning the Pit No. 1 strike committee, recognized by the forced laborers of Vorkuta region as the central leadership of the strike, was arrested. This was done by deploying large contingents of troops who surrounded the pit suddenly and who withdrew just as suddenly two hours later, taking their prisoners along to the Vorkuta penitentiary. They were kept there for a few days and then removed to Moscow. The prisoners of Pit No. 1, however, quickly overcame their

initial consternation; they elected a new strike committee. The military operation carried out by the authorities merely postponed the strike for a space of twelve hours.

In the early hours of July 21 the escorting guards stood waiting with their watch-dogs alongside the high fence gates, but there was no movement of any kind, absolutely nothing, inside the concentration city. The prisoners sat silently in their barracks, without the remotest intention of starting work. At first, the sentries on duty made their appearance to urge the recalcitrants to line up at the camp gates. And in their wake came a few officers of the camp administration and, finally, the camp chief himself. But their efforts availed nothing, except a declaration to the effect that the strikers would not present their demands to any person other than the commandant of all the Vorkuta camps, General Derevyanko.

This dignitary put in his appearance two days later, only after ten pits inside the city and on the outskirts joined the strike (involving by then some 30,000). After the strike committee delegates put forward their demands, the general made a long speech, larded with vague promises and threats which were not so vague. But he was butting his head against a wall of hostile silence. ...

In the first days of August, when the strike reached its peak and when even some among the MVD [Minis-

try of Internal Affairs] officers were sure the prisoners had carried the day, the state prosecutor, with his retinue of generals, landed at the tiny Vorkuta airfield. He set up his headquarters in the city for several days, in order, he declared, to negotiate and reach a worthwhile agreement.

In an imposing briefcase he had brought with him a number of concessions which were promptly broadcast through all the camps:

1) Every prisoner in special "government camps" is granted permission, effective immediately, to write letters home twice a month, instead of twice a year;

2) each prisoner may receive, once a year, a visit from his family;

3) identification numbers shall be removed at once from trousers and jackets;

4) iron bars shall be removed from barracks windows.

These concessions, however, left the strikers cold. In an open letter to the state prosecutor, the strike leadership gave its answer:

"We are proud of our identification numbers, because they publicly distinguish us from common criminals and thieves; and that is why we have no desire to do away with them.

"Our families will not be able to visit us, not even with the kind permission of the MVD, because they haven't enough money to buy railroad tickets for trips of 4,000 miles and more.

"Writing letters is a superfluous occupation for those who are dead, and that's what we are, condemned to stay here for twenty-five years. We can do without writing letters unless we are granted through revised regulations, the possibility of returning to our families in the not too distant future." ...

[T]he material improvements to which the MVD was forced to agree under the strike pressure proved to be considerable. And more important by far: although there were many signs of exhaustion, there was not a hint of discouragement or demoralization.

The forced laborers were worn down, but they did not succumb in despair. Their aim was to rally new forces; they wished to draw carefully the lessons from their experiences in order to make better use of them in the future — and they were resolved to continue the struggle.

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# Cuban Revolution: Example for workers

Continued from front page

nerable land. Millions can be evacuated before a storm hits. But the normal workings of capitalism block every move that impinges on the profits of the property-owning class.

The morality of capitalism is grounded in these class divisions. Dog-eat-dog, look-out-for-number-one, step on who you need to to get what you want — these are the virtues worshipped by the profit-driven ruling families.

Real estate developers build homes near fire-prone terrain. No government body is tasked with responsibility to make sure there is not a dangerous accumulation of flammable vegetation that can act like kindling. When huge fires do break out, as they wreak havoc, they also severely damage the natural water-absorbing capacity of vegetation and top soil. If it rains, mudslides are inevitable. Government officials in Santa Barbara County, Sacramento and Washington all knew this, but did virtually nothing to prepare. Instead, they blame the victims, saying they ignored evacuation orders.

The propertied owners don't sit in a room and say, "Let's promote fires and mudslides." But they gamble with the lives of working people. To the capitalist class, our lives are just a tiny item in their ledgers. They figure the odds. Is the chance of catastrophe small enough to make the risks worthwhile? Can we get away with saying it was a "200-year" storm, nothing could be done?

We see it in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico where

more than three months after Hurricane Maria devastated the island, over a million people are still without electricity. The U.S. rulers — the wealthiest ruling class on earth — are dispensing aid with an eyedropper there, while demanding the colonial government turn its meager resources over to pay the wealthy bondholders who own the island's debt.

What a difference a revolution makes! In Cuba, as Hurricane Irma approached, the revolutionary people and their government mobilized to evacuate 1.8 million people.

Unlike the "everyone for themselves" morality of capitalism, in revolutionary Cuba everything is based on human solidarity, on the belief that human life is more important than money. In the words of Raúl Castro, "no one is left on their own."

The Cuban people made a deep-going revolution, transforming themselves in the process. They overthrew the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in 1959 and have stood up to the attacks and indignities of Washington ever since. Under the leadership of Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, they used the government — their government — to put human life and dignity ahead of all else and to offer whatever they had to working-class fighters worldwide to open the road to a socialist future.

Working people in the U.S. and around the world can, and will, do the same. If the fight for this kind of future sounds like a good life to you, get in touch with the nearest branch of the Socialist Workers Party.

# U.S. rulers give high marks to Trump policies

Continued from page 8

ing people. Over half the Syrian population has been forced to flee their homes since 2011, many in recent months. The Syrian regime's bloody war against rebel forces and civilians in Idlib province and around Damascus continues.

The administration has advanced Washington's imperialist interests in pushing through the U.N. Security Council's ever-stiffer sanctions against North Korea, which hit working people the hardest. At the same time, as the governments of North and South Korea have begun discussing common participation in upcoming winter Olympic games, Washington keeps open prospects for negotiations with Pyongyang to press it to end its nuclear and intercontinental missile programs.

Washington remains far and away the most powerful imperialist power in the world, but its strength has declined relative to Beijing and Moscow. Trump combines pressure on these regimes with efforts to build relations that can open doors to advance the political and economic interests of the U.S. rulers.

The Trump administration has pressed European NATO members to take more financial and military responsibility. Washington announced Dec. 22 it would supply weapons to the Ukrainian government in its fight with Moscow-backed forces operating in the east of the country.

## Liberals continue cry to oust president

Liberals, middle-class radicals and some Republicans seeking to build support for efforts to drive Trump from office seized Democrats' allegations that Trump used language they claim was racist and derogatory to African nations in a private meeting at the White House Jan. 11.

*New York Times* columnist Charles Blow said the problem was the millions of workers that voted for him are "part of his racism."

In reality, because of victories won by the proletarian mass movement that overthrew Jim Crow and

workers' decades of common experience working and living with immigrant workers, there is less racism and anti-immigrant chauvinism among working people than ever before. This is a source of strength as workers seek ways to stand up to the bosses' attacks on jobs, wages, conditions and to cop assaults.

Michael Wolff's recently published book on the Trump White House, *Fire and Fury*, an instant best-seller, includes the author's acknowledgement that he couldn't verify anything he alleges in the book and that he provides only what he calls "notional truth."

While the self-righteous calls of these middle-class layers to get rid of Trump grow shriller, their actual prospects of driving him from office are diminishing.

At the center of their witch hunt is the open-ended special counsel investigation, headed by former FBI chief Robert Mueller. It has failed so far to come up with evidence of collusion between Trump's 2016 campaign and Moscow that could be used to impeach the president. In December Mueller revealed he had fired FBI agent Peter Strzok from the investigation after finding out Strzok had called for the FBI to get an "insurance policy" against Trump winning the election.

## What next?

How long the economic uptick will last, and how far it will grow, have yet to be seen. Also unknown is when the balloons in the propertied rulers' financial speculations from Wall Street stocks to Bitcoin futures will burst.

The capitalist rulers have no solutions to the long-term crisis of production and trade, rooted in declining profit rates, other than continuing to make workers pay. And today's depression conditions are driving more workers to look for ways to stand up to assaults by employers and their government.

The uptick gives us more confidence. Recognizing this, Walmart bosses announced they were raising workers' minimum wage.

Socialist Workers Party members — whose party-building efforts are built on knocking on doors in working-class neighborhoods in big cities and small towns — find interest in discussing how workers can organize to defend ourselves and build a party that can lead the fight to overturn capitalist rule.

A look at the upsurge in working-class discontent and protest in Iran indicates this is true elsewhere in the world.

# Catalonia election

Continued from page 7

weeks to elect its president. Puigdemont is seeking re-election and says he will preside from Brussels, via Skype or some other electronic setup.

But Rajoy said Jan. 15 that if parliament elects Puigdemont, Madrid will void the whole election and continue direct rule.

Under the pressure, some of those elected as independence delegates have begun to back off. Marta Rovira, general secretary of the Republican Left, a large pro-independence party, said Jan. 13 that forces who favor a Catalan state need to "face all difficulties with absolute realism."

In a Jan. 12 hearing at the Supreme Court, Joaquim Forn and Jordi Sánchez, two pro-independence leaders who are being held by the government on charges from last fall's vote, said they would give up their seats in the new parliament if it continued pushing for a break with Spain. Forn, who had been interior minister, and Sanchez both ran on Puigdemont's ticket.

## Polarization reflects social class

The polarization around independence in Catalonia is part of the differentiated responses of social classes to the conditions generated by capitalism's worldwide crisis. The steep 2007-2008 downturn increased economic and class divisions throughout the imperialist world, and more so in Spain, including Catalonia, than in many other countries.

Substantial sections of urban professionals and middle-class layers, university students and many farmers press for independence with the anti-working-class argument that Catalonia shouldn't be saddled with having to "subsidize" the central government budget and its preferential treatment for regions in Spain where workers have lower wages and worse working and social conditions.

Because of Catalonia's large industrial base, workers over decades have moved there from the rest of Spain, from Europe and beyond, searching for jobs and improved working conditions. Some don't speak Catalan and see unemployment, wages, health care and other social protections as far more burning issues than self-rule.

And all too often, Catalan pro-independence governments have joined forces with the federal rulers in attacks on workers' living conditions. This had weakened support for independence in some layers of the working class.

The elections reflected these different class responses. Puigdemont's party won the vast majority of the rural areas across the region. The pro-Spain Citizens party won the vote in the urban areas around Barcelona, Tarragona and Lleida. It also got the highest vote in many of the working-class districts around Barcelona. Puigdemont's party got a substantially lower vote there than in the region as a whole.

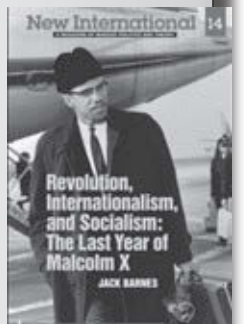
Albert Rivera, leader of the Citizens, told *El País* Jan. 15 that the two most important issues for the party are unemployment and Spanish unity.

## The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor

by Jack Barnes

"Under capitalist social relations, human hardship from natural occurrences falls in starkly different ways on different social classes." — Socialist Workers Party statement in *New International* no. 14.

\$14. Also in Spanish, French, and Swedish  
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## Correction

The article titled 'I Urge You, Go See for Yourself the Truth of Cuba's Revolution' in the Jan. 1 *Militant* says that influenza, a viral illness, is treated with antibiotics and steroids in the U.S. This is incorrect. Antibiotics are only used for bacterial illnesses.

## 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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