

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**Grenada Day participants hunger for revolutionary books**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 82/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

## SWP: We need independent working-class political action

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and sister Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K. build their political activity

### SWP SPEAKS WITH, FOR WORKING PEOPLE

around reaching out to working people on their doorsteps in cities, towns and rural areas. They find real interest in discussing the historic changes and imperialist decay worldwide and how to chart a way forward for the working class and the labor movement.

The party is stepping up campaigning, speaking out as tribunes for the oppressed and exploited. It stresses the need to unite working people across all the divisions the capitalist rulers foist on us.

The heart of these conversations is that workers must chart a course of independent political action to gain the confidence and experience to overturn the capitalist system.

“Working people must be independent.”  
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## Veterans fight delays in gov’t disability benefits

Thousands die while appeals drag on and on



Wounded war veterans who get physical therapy wait at Brook Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas, in 2007. Veterans Administration has denied benefits to half a million veterans.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Hundreds of thousands of veterans filing disability claim appeals wait years, and sometimes a lifetime, for the Department of Veterans Affairs to rule on their cases. One in 14 veterans dies before getting a decision — or any badly needed help, according to the Government Accountability Office.

With improvements in surgical techniques and body armor, a much

higher number of soldiers deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan are surviving improvised bomb attacks that in the past would have been fatal.

“They’re being kept alive at un-  
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## ‘Advance the revolutionary mobilization of workers’

The following statement was issued Sept. 3 by Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York.

Ceaseless competition for markets, financial exploitation and profits among the bosses compels them to assault our wages, rights and work-

### SWP STATEMENT

ing conditions, whether the capitalist economy grows or, as it inevitably will, contracts. Workers need to build unions, forge ever greater unity and strength, and chart a course independent of the bosses’ state, its political parties of all stripes, and organize to fight for power ourselves.

Our unions are weak and continue to weaken today, but millions of workers are open to discussion — and action — on what can be done to halt  
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## Steelworkers at ArcelorMittal, US Steel protest concession demands



Steelworkers rally in Fairfield, Alabama, Aug. 30 against U.S. Steel demands for increase in health care costs and other concessions. Contract for over 30,000 ran out two days later.

BY SUSAN LAMONT  
 AND DAVE FERGUSON

FAIRFIELD, Ala. — “We don’t want this contract and we aren’t going to have it,” Lewis Parsons, who has worked at U.S. Steel’s Fairfield Works here for 28 years, told the *Militant*. “They have to come up with something better. They just can’t do the

retirees like that.”

Parsons was one of some 200 United Steelworkers Local 1013 members and supporters who rallied outside their union hall Aug. 30 to protest the company’s demands for yet another round of concessions from union members, both working and retired,  
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## Liberals disrupt Senate hearing in furor over Trump nomination

BY TERRY EVANS

Liberal Democrats and media, and middle-class left groups seeking to bring down the administration of President Donald Trump are on a hysterical campaign to prevent his nominee for the Supreme Court, Brett Kavanaugh, from being confirmed in Senate hearings that opened Sept. 4.

## Protest ‘Militant’ censorship by Florida, federal prison officials!

BY SETH GALINSKY

Florida prison officials have impounded issues of the *Militant* at least 18 times in the past 16 months, four times more than in prisons in the rest of the country in the last 10 years.

All except a handful of the Florida bans were overturned by the state Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee, but prison officials there keep impounding more issues, most recently six in a row — issues 24 through 29. The committee overturned the ban on issues 24, 26, 27 and 28, but, without a word of explanation, upheld the impoundment  
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Acting like antifa thugs seeking to shut down speakers they disagree with, Democratic senators interrupted speakers, screaming and yelling, trying to break up the meeting. Through such actions they perpetuate the illusion that changing who sits on the high court can positively alter the relationship of forces between the working class and those who exploit us.

The liberals’ campaign poses serious challenges to political rights crucial for the working class and its struggles.

Kamala Harris and Cory Booker, both Democratic senators jockey-  
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# Indonesia: Teen jailed for abortion wins her freedom

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Women’s rights advocates in Indonesia have spearheaded a successful campaign to overturn the July 19 conviction and six-month jail term of a 15-year-old girl under that country’s highly restrictive abortion laws. The girl, known as Wa, had become pregnant after being raped by her brother.

Abortion in Indonesia is legal in the case of rape, but only if the procedure is performed within the first 40 days of the pregnancy. Wa’s pregnancy was terminated after six months.

The only other exception to the Indonesian rulers’ ban on abortion is “medical emergency,” i.e., to save the woman’s life.

On Aug. 27 the Jambi High Court granted the girl’s appeal and acquitted her of all charges. According to the *Jakarta Post*, her lawyer, Damai Idianto, cited a section of the Health Law stating that “a woman who aborts a pregnancy caused by rape that resulted in psychological trauma is exempt from criminal punishment.” A court spokesperson said the abortion had been carried out “under forced circumstances.”

The decision was welcomed by those who had fought to publicize the case and oppose the original verdict. “We appreciate the solidarity and support in this case and that the judges have responded to that by giving justice to the victim,” Ida Zubaidah, who is active with Save Our Sisters, told the press. The group organized a protest as part of the campaign to win Wa’s freedom. Placards on the July 26 picket demanded, “Protect the victim, don’t punish her.”

Amnesty International in Indonesia called for Wa’s release. The *Post* editorialized July 24, “A jail sentence is the last thing a rape victim needs. Release the girl.”

Zubaidah said that their efforts would now turn to fighting for the release of Wa’s mother, a rubber farmer and single parent, awaiting trial on charges of assisting with the termination.

The family lives in Pulau, an isolated village of 1,800 people in Jambi province in east Sumatra.

In spite of Wa’s brother’s confession that he raped her, the Muara Bulian District Court found them both guilty of carrying out an illegal abortion under the Child Protection Law. Convicted also of sexual assault of a minor, the brother received a jail sentence of two years.

“She was raped and now jailed, it is a double injustice,” Budi Wahyuni, vice chairwoman of the National Commission on Violence Against Women, said Aug. 1. “All women must be given the right to decide on abortion [without being] subjected to any punishments.”

“We have collected over 18,000 signatures on a petition calling for Wa’s release,” Helfi Rahmawati told the *Militant* Aug. 10, about 10 days after the campaign had won Wa’s interim transfer from jail into a “safe house,” the first victory in the campaign for her freedom. Rahmawati is the director of the Indonesian Association of Family Planning in Jambi city, capital of Jambi province.

The narrow 40-day period allowed to rape victims under the law was a particular target of the campaign.



Jakarta Post/Jon Afrizal

Protest at Jambi, Indonesia, prosecutor’s office July 26 demanding release of Wa, teenager imprisoned for having an abortion. Signs says, “The victim needs protection, not punishment.”

“Many women only discover they are pregnant after 40 days,” said Anggara from the Institute for Criminal Justice Reform. “The state should help these victims recover from their trauma instead of punishing them, especially if they are children.”

### Fight for political space

Rahmawati first spoke to the *Militant* in May after two women who underwent abortions at Jambi’s Puri Medika birth clinic were convicted and jailed for 10 months. A clinic doctor and midwife were jailed for one year, and another staff member for 10 months.

The National Family Planning Bureau has estimated that there are 2 million abortions in Indonesia every year, about one-third of which involve teenagers. Indonesia is home to more than 260 million people.

A 2004 study by the Indonesian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology found half of all abortions in Indonesia are performed in unsafe conditions, contributing to high maternal death rates.

In spite of the restrictive law, prosecutions for illegal abortions are very rare in Rahmawati’s experience. “Abortions are being performed everywhere in Indonesia because they are needed,” she said. “Doctors and midwives should be protected, as they are performing a

medical service. It’s the women’s right to choose as it’s her body, it’s just the law in Indonesia that is denying it.”

Fighters for abortion rights and the rights of women face challenges in common with others pressing for rights for national minorities and the working class. They have to contend with open hostility from forces — both in and out of government — pushing to close down political space that was won by working people during and after the mass struggles that brought down the three-decades-long dictatorship of Suharto, who resigned in 1998.

Suharto, an army general, came to power after the 1965 murderous destruction of the mass Maoist Communist Party of Indonesia and slaughter of workers and peasants carried out with the aid and support of the U.S. rulers in Washington. It was the most devastating defeat for the working class since the fascist victory in Germany in 1933.

The political space won by working people with the fall of Suharto remains contested ground today.

“Every time some protest or demonstration is carried out by fundamentalists, especially in one of our centers, we will get a visit by the authorities here in Jambi center too,” Rahmawati said.

*Baskaran Appu contributed to this article.*

# THE MILITANT

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***Workers welcome negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang. Permanently ending provocative U.S. war games and sanctions on North Korea, eliminating nuclear weapons in region would open space for working people, North and South, to defend their own interests.***



Families from North and South Korea reunite at Aug. 20 meeting. They had not seen each other since 1950-53 Korean War.

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# SWP speaks with, for workers

Continued from front page

dent of the capitalist rulers, their parties and their state. We must build a revolutionary movement capable of taking power and organize a society that is not based on profits,” Alyson Kennedy, an SWP member in Dallas and the party’s candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, told Jesus Alvarado as they met Aug. 20 on his doorstep in Grand Prairie, west of Dallas.

Alvarado told Kennedy he lost his job at a fabrication company in the 2008 capitalist economic crisis.

“I almost ended up homeless,” he said. “Now I’ve been an Uber driver for two years.”

“Yes, the economy is growing now,” Kennedy responded. “You see hiring signs everywhere. But to improve stagnant wages and increasingly dangerous conditions, we need to build a movement of working people. Nothing will be given to us.”

Alvarado decided to get *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, one of five books on special, saying he liked the title. (See ad below.)

Marysol Ipinia, who lives across the street from Alvarado, signed up for the *Militant* after hearing what the SWP stands for. She told Kennedy she has worked 15 years as a maintenance worker. Now the company told them that with a new president coming in

there will be more pressure to check papers, targeting immigrants.

“The Trump administration represents the wealthy capitalists who want to keep immigrant workers in fear of fighting for their rights,” Kennedy said. “But this is nothing new. William Clinton signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996, which has underpinned the anti-working-class raids and deportations every president since then has carried out, Democrats and Republicans alike.

“There is no sweeping ‘swing to the right’ by Trump, much less by the workers who voted for him, seeking change,” said Kennedy. “His foreign policy moves in Korea, the Mideast and elsewhere, no matter what his intention, can open up space for working people to gain confidence to fight and build the labor movement.”

Kennedy got a chance to come back to this theme when she met Jose Contreras in Irving, Texas, Sept. 3. They talked about Korea and the summit between President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

“They hide a lot of stuff,” Contreras said. “There’s a war between North and South Korea that’s hidden. There was no South Korea or North Korea, it used to be one country.”

“Yes, they hide that Korea was forcibly divided by the U.S. and the Soviet

Union after World War II and why the U.S. brutally invaded North Korea during the Korean War,” Kennedy said. “Today there are tens of thousands of U.S. troops there to enforce that division. Just think what it will mean if the threat of war is gone, the threat of nuclear missiles gone in that part of the world.”

## Amnesty for unity

On Aug. 28, more than 300 immigration cops raided trailer manufacturer Load Tail in Sumner, 100 miles northeast of Dallas, arresting 160 workers,



Militant/George Chalmers

Alyson Kennedy, left, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, met Uber driver Jesus Alvarado on his doorstep in Grand Prairie, Aug. 20. He said he almost became homeless after losing his job in 2008. “Working people need to unify to fight bosses’ attacks,” Kennedy said.

charging they didn’t have papers the rulers’ consider proper.

“They came and raided from every entrance there was,” Dennis Perry, a Load Tail worker, explained in the Aug. 28 *Dallas Morning News*. “They drew their guns and told everyone to hit the ground. Some workers went running. They were tackled. A few workers hid by shelves but were quickly discovered.

Perry watched as dozens of his co-workers were taken away in buses. “They are trying to support their families,” he said. “I couldn’t call anyone on them. In my work, you get to know a lot of these guys.”

Kennedy and other SWP supporters traveled to Paris, 12 miles east of Sumner, the day after the raid to talk with workers there.

“My brother was picked up by ICE,” Raciell Mozo told them. He’s in a detention center in Oklahoma. They told us we’d have to come up with \$7,500 to get him out on bond.” Mozo said that a local church is organizing support for the families.

The following day Kennedy spoke at a protest against the raid in front of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters in Dallas.

“The bosses use attacks on immigrant workers to exploit their labor and drive down wages and working conditions for the whole working class. And the bosses and their parties, the Democrats and Republicans,

blame the ‘Mexicans’ for stealing jobs and lowering wages,” she said. “Fighting for amnesty for all workers without papers in the U.S. is a life-and-death question for the labor movement and our fight for unity and solidarity.”

## ‘Is the Labour Party the answer?’

“The government doesn’t care for working-class people,” Colin Johnson, a retired care worker, told Communist League member Pamela Holmes when they met Sept. 1 on his doorstep in Harlow, near London. “I’ve always voted Labour as the lesser of two evils. But they seem much of the same. It looks like they want to make us vote on Brexit again and again, until we vote the way they want.”

“The Labour-Tories shell game is a trap, it gives the appearance that workers have a choice,” said Holmes, a production line worker at a nearby pharmaceutical plant. “Labour is also a capitalist party. It pushes the line that workers should be looking to the capitalist rulers’ state for care and protection. But we need a political course completely independent of the capitalist state, and a party that can lead a revolutionary movement of millions to overthrow capitalist rule and establish a workers and farmers government.”

Holmes explained that the Communist League is comprised of and led

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Militant/Jonathan Silberman

“The Labour-Tories shell game is a trap,” Communist League member Pamela Holmes told care worker Colin Johnson in Harlow, U.K., Sept. 1. “We need a revolutionary workers party.”

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# California protest demands ‘End solitary confinement!’

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO — Supporters of the fight to end solitary confinement of inmates in California state prisons rallied outside the federal courthouse here Aug. 21. Their action was in solidarity with four prisoners — Todd Ashker, Arturo Castellanos, George Franco and Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa — who have helped lead the ongoing struggle against the barbaric policy. They were in a court-ordered meeting with representatives of the California Department of Corrections inside the building.

The four were central leaders of hunger strikes and protests that grew to include 30,000 prisoners at the high point in 2013. These actions put a national spotlight on the abuse of thousands of prisoners held, some for decades, with little human contact in 8- by 10-foot windowless Security Housing Unit cells known as the SHU.

The four were also plaintiffs in a suit — Ashker vs. Governor of California — that won an end to indeterminate-length sentences to solitary confinement in California and the release of over 1,400 prisoners from the SHU.

Despite the success of moving some to general population units, the fight is far from over. Many of those released from the SHU have been transferred to extremely restrictive conditions in Level IV prisons or in Restricted Custody General Population Units, which have conditions markedly similar to that in the SHU.

“Our fight is against solitary confinement, no matter what they call it or what forms it takes,” Marie Levin, sister of Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, told rally participants. She pointed to a giant banner held by protesters saying, “END ALL FORMS OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.”

Letters from prisoners held in Level IV and Restricted Custody Units were read aloud, describing the denial of social interaction with fellow prisoners and lack of educational and job-training programs.

Anne Weills, an attorney in the lawsuit, said the prisoner representatives are demanding Todd Ashker, who was thrown back in isolation after being held for over three decades in solitary in the SHU at Pelican Bay, be released to the general population.

Jamaa and other veterans of the struggle have also experienced retaliation, including being returned to solitary on trumped-up charges. These frame-ups and isolation are aimed at “our peaceful efforts to effect genuine changes,” Jamaa wrote in an article run March 26 in the *San Francisco Bay View*.

Ashker v. Governor of California was filed in 2012 by the inmates with attorneys from the Center for Con-

stitutional Rights. After the hunger strikes, state prison officials settled on Sept. 1, 2015. The results are monitored by Judge Claudia Wilken of the Northern District Court.

In July, Wilken ruled that California prison authorities were not complying with the settlement and ordered the meeting held Aug. 21.

Any gains won in this fight are due to the conduct of the prisoners themselves, said Laura Magnani, an activist with the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition, which organized the protest “to their vision, courage, and persistence.”

Fundamental to this has been the unity between prisoners of different races and origins forged in the struggle. “Our current collective movement began in the bowels of Pelican Bay State Prison — SHU — Short Corridor, wherein prisoners of all races and various geographical areas became openly conscious of what we had in common — rather than what was different (divisive),” Ashker wrote last year.

In 2012, the Short Corridor Collective released an “Agreement to End



Militant photos by Betsey Stone

Rally outside federal courthouse in San Francisco Aug. 21. Inside, four prisoners — Todd Ashker, Arturo Castellanos, George Franco and Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa — leaders of statewide fight against solitary confinement, attended meeting with prison authorities. Court had ordered prison officials to attend meeting to discuss more serious steps to dismantle abusive solitary conditions. Inset, Marie Levin, sister of Jamaa, speaks at rally.



Race-Based Hostilities” that called for an end to violence among prisoners. Ashker said the prison authorities’ efforts to pit prisoners against each other was “the source of our mutual adversary’s manipulation tactics — centered on keeping us divided

and violent towards one another.”

“We must stand together not only for ourselves, but for future generations of prisoners,” the four prisoners said in a joint statement in 2017 reaffirming the agreement, “so that they don’t have to go through the years of torture we had to.”

## Prison censorship of ‘Militant’ in Florida, Illinois

Continued from front page

of issue no. 25. It will soon decide on issue 29.

It would appear the prison wardens hope to bury the paper and its attorneys in time-consuming and expensive fights to overcome censorship.

Officials at the federal prison in Greenville, Illinois, have banned every issue of the *Militant* to a subscriber there. That subscriber was released Aug. 15, but the *Militant* is continuing efforts to reverse the unconstitutional ban.

“There are well over 2 million workers behind bars in the U.S., a significant section of the working class,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “They have a right to read literature of their choosing, to think for themselves, learn about working-class struggles and to speak out in support of working-class protests around the world.

“And the *Militant* has the right to reach its subscribers — freedom of the press and free speech inscribed in struggle in the U.S. Constitution,” Studer said.

In Aug. 21 letters to the Florida Literature Review Committee, appealing the impoundments of issue no. 25 and 29, *Militant* attorney David Goldstein details the flagrant violations by prison officials. Goldstein’s firm — Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman — is well-known for its defense of civil liberties.

The *Militant* never received official notice of several of the impoundments, a violation of Florida law. It was a prisoner who informed the *Militant* of the ban on issue no. 25. This alone should have been “sufficient grounds to overturn this latest attempt at censorship,” Goldstein notes.

The Department of Corrections bans are “arbitrary, irrational, inconsistent, unlawful, and unconstitutional,” Goldstein adds.

All of the impoundments cite a generic pretext, falsely claiming that

the paper “presents a threat to the security, good order, or discipline” of the prison. Everything about the bans indicate the real reason is because the *Militant* “covers political issues, rallies or protests from a viewpoint with which prison officials may disagree,” the appeal notes.

A special target of prison authorities has been the *Militant*’s coverage of its fight against their censorship. The impoundment notice for issue no. 26 cited the article in that issue titled “Militant Challenges Ongoing Prison Censorship in Florida.” The Literature Review Committee overturned that ban. The notice for issue 25 cited a similar article, “Militant Fights New Round of Censorship in Florida Prisons.” Inexplicably, that ban was upheld.

The Literature Review Committee has declined to give any explanation of what its decisions are based on.

Meanwhile, Sara Revell, Federal Bureau of Prisons director of its North Central Regional Office, said in an Aug. 14 letter to Goldstein that she had recommended that Greenville prison officials conduct an “additional review” of the paper. At the same time she claimed that, in general, the warden’s discretion to ban the *Militant* “in order to maintain a safe and secure facility is supported.”

But the next day Revell responded somewhat differently to a letter from a supporter of the rights of the *Militant* asking her to overturn the ban. Pointing to federal rules that say a warden “may not reject a publication solely because its contents is religious, philosophical, political, social or sexual, or because its content is unpopular or repugnant,” she says she has asked the warden at Greenville to reconsider his ban.

Amnesty International USA, PEN America, Florida Civil Liberties Union, National Lawyers Guild, New York’s Riverside Church Prison Ministry and many other organizations and individuals have backed the *Mili-*

*tant*’s ongoing fight against censorship.

Join the fight!

“We can push back these attempts to censor the *Militant*,” Studer said, “and our subscribers and other supporters of political rights can help.

“Ask labor unions, church groups, community organizations, defenders of civil rights, prominent individuals and groups of co-workers to send letters protesting the bans,” he said. “Letters from individuals can also have an impact.”

Letters protesting the Florida prison censorship should be sent to Dean Peterson, Library Services Administrator, Florida Department of Corrections, Att: Literature Review Committee, 501 South Calhoun St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500 or emailed to: Allen.Peterson@fdc.myflorida.com

Letters protesting the censorship at Greenville should be sent to Sara Revell, North Central Regional Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Gateway Complex Tower II, 8th Floor, 400 State Ave., Kansas City, KS 66101-2492.

Send copies to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., New York, NY 10018 or to themilitant@mac.com.

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### Join fight against prison censorship!

**Get out the word.** Distribute copies of *Militant* articles on this fight.

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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today — from teachers and school workers across the country, to miners, rail and factory and retail workers looking to stand and fight. Send in articles, photos and letters on picket lines and other labor protests to [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com), post them directly on our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

## New Zealand bus drivers walk out over low pay, safety

HAMILTON, New Zealand — Sixty bus drivers, members of FIRST Union, picketed the central city transport center here Aug. 14 as part of a daylong strike against Go Bus. The workers are demanding 20 New Zealand dollars and 55 cents per hour “living wage” (US\$13.60), and that the company fix electrical and mechanical faults on the buses that are safety risks.

Union members who operate school buses in the nearby towns of Te Awamutu and Otorohanga joined the picket line.

Drivers also object to variations in pay for the same work and that some who transferred to Go Bus when it took over Pavlovich Coachlines earlier this year don’t get overtime rates for Sunday work.

“I have to work 47 hours a week just to pay the bills, and often work 55,” driver Michael Low told the *Militant*. “You shouldn’t have to work so many hours to do that.”

Go Bus is owned by the billion-dollar holding companies of two major Maori tribes, Ngai Tahu and Tainui. It is New Zealand’s largest bus company, operating urban, intercity and school services throughout the country.

Go Bus kept some buses on the road during the strike with nonunion drivers and supervisory staff.

The union and company have been trying to negotiate a contract for over 18 months. School bus drivers went on strike May 8 and city bus drivers here struck May 14 over the same issues. “The company came back with a lowball offer that the union rejected,” Low said.

The condition of many buses is also a sore point. “I’ve ‘defected’ many

buses recently and had to refuse to take them out when they’re not fixed,” said driver John Schaeffer. Recently, a small child got stuck in the doors on the bus he was driving when the doors failed to automatically reopen.

“The only way to get the bus warm on a cold morning is to run the wind-screen demisters,” because the air conditioning is permanently set on cold, he said. Drivers held a further strike Aug. 29.

—Felicity Coggan



Militant/Baskaran Appu

Bus drivers, members of FIRST Union, carried out one-day strike against Go Bus. They picketed transport center in Hamilton, New Zealand, Aug. 14, demanding equal pay for same work.

## Veterans fight delays in gov’t disability benefits

Continued from front page

precedented rates,” David Cifu, a VA rehabilitation doctor, told Associated Press. “More than 95 percent of troops wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan have survived.”

These veterans return from multiple tours of duty with a much greater number of injuries than in previous wars and find a bureaucratic Veterans Affairs system placing all kinds of obstacles in the way of getting medical care and benefits. Some 45 percent of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan have filed for disability benefits, double the rate from the Gulf War in the early 1990s.

The Department of Veterans Affairs pays out more than \$78 billion each year to nearly 5 million people. But nearly 500,000 have been denied benefits.

The disability filing process is complex. Veterans with multiple injuries — those injured in Iraq and Afghanistan each have an average of about eight — must get a separate investigation and ruling on each one. Do they really exist, were they caused by military service? And as rulings on claims stall for years, or sometimes decades, medical conditions may worsen and then a new round of documentation has to be presented.

In 2017, more than 90,000 cases were appealed to the VA board and 57 percent

of them not approved, according to VA statistics. Given this cumbersome process “a lot of veterans don’t appeal,” or get discouraged through this process, Bart Stichman, executive director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program, told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Errors made by the VA have led to hundreds of thousands of appeals. This has resulted in nearly half of cases being sent back by the Board of Veterans Appeals for “fixes,” and more waiting time with no benefits.

In April, a federal Court of Appeals overturned a 19-year-old decision that said veterans had to have a discrete and clear medical diagnosis connected to any pain they are suffering to be eligible for disability payments. This decision was the basis for rejecting at least 11,000 VA claims, the *Military Times* reported.

The case was brought by National Veterans Legal Services Program on behalf of Army veteran Melba Saunders, who served in the first Gulf War. She injured her knees during seven years of service. When she applied for disability benefits her claim was denied, with the Board of Veterans Appeals citing this previous court case that held that “pain alone is not a disability for the purpose of VA disability compensation.”

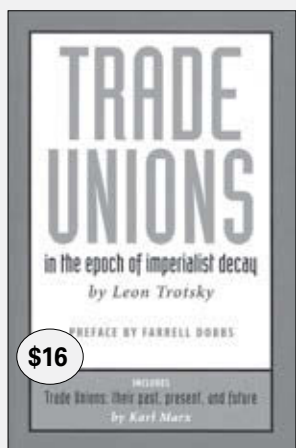
“The new court ruling erases that

precedent, at least for now,” noted the *Times*. “Veterans still need to show a clear connection between their pain and their military service to be eligible, but would no longer have to have a specific medical reason for the pain to apply for benefits.” As of August there were some 238,000 appeals caught up in the system, the VA admits. The department projects processing about 80,000 this year.

The same horrendous situation exists for civilians applying for Social Security disability from disease or old injuries. Here the bureaucratic red tape is stretched even longer. First you file your application. Recent Social Security Administration statistics show only 21 percent of applications are approved. This figure has been falling for a decade or so. If you are denied and don’t give up, then you have to file for reconsideration. The approval rate on reconsideration has fallen to 2 percent.

If you’re still kicking, and still haven’t given up, then you can file for a disability hearing, usually a 20-minute affair. The approval rate at these hearings improved by a mere 11 percent. You do a lot better if you can hire an attorney. The average time to go through these three stages is two to three years. All in all, no matter how you try, the overall approval rate is just 34 percent.

## Recommended reading . . .



Food for thought—and action—from leaders of three generations of the revolutionary workers movement — Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky and Farrell Dobbs. Invaluable for workers relearning today what a strike is, how it can be fought and won, and are interested in ideas about how the entire system of capitalist exploitation can be ended.

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

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 20, 1993

NEW YORK — Cargo handlers and ticket, passenger, and reservation agents at Alitalia Airlines went on strike September 5 in response to a brutal company assault.

On September 2, Alitalia broke off negotiations with the 308 workers who are represented by the International Association of Machinists in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and other cities.

The company then moved to impose its final offer, which included 40 percent pay cuts for all IAM workers except reservations agents, whose pay was frozen.

In New York the company locked out all its IAM employees at Kennedy Airport. The company moved quickly to contract out work done by the strikers.

Grover Walraven, a passenger service agent, said the new contract included a “farming out” clause requiring workers to agree that their jobs could be contracted out at any time.



September 20, 1968

OAKLAND — Only two days after the city of Oakland succeeded in securing a “voluntary manslaughter” conviction in its attempts to frame Black Panther Party minister of defense Huey P. Newton on a phony murder charge, two Oakland cops shot up the national headquarters of the Black Panther Party here.

About 12 bullets were fired through the large front window of the Panther headquarters. Many of the shots were aimed at a large poster picture of Huey Newton that hung in the center of the window. An eyewitness to the action said that the shots were fired from a police car in the street in front of the headquarters.

Oakland police chief Charles Gain, acting under heavy pressure, fired officers Richard Williams and Robert Farrell for their part in the attack, which occurred at 1:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 10.



September 18, 1943

Court-martial, four months in the guardhouse at hard labor and demotion to the rank of private — that was the punishment meted out to Sergeant Alton Levy for expressing disapproval of the Army’s treatment of Negro troops stationed at the Lincoln Air Base in Nebraska.

Levy, a former organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers, was assigned to work with Negro troops. He protested repeatedly against the rude and discriminatory treatment practiced against them by officers.

Levy was questioned by Army intelligence officers on alleged statements he had made, primarily his protests against military Jim Crow. Levy admitted that he had spoken out against race discrimination, but denied the other charges. He was then brought up for court-martial on grounds of conduct unbecoming a soldier.



# Yelling liberals disrupt hearing

**Continued from front page**

ing for presidential runs in 2020, and prominent members of the anti-Trump “resistance,” took turns interrupting the hearing’s chair, while their allies in the audience tried to shout down Republican speakers before being removed by cops. Democrats disrupted the hearing 44 times during the first hour in an unsuccessful effort to shut it down.

Dianne Feinstein, the panel’s leading Democrat, claimed the investigation of Trump by special counsel and former FBI boss Robert Mueller creates “very unique circumstances” that justify efforts to halt the hearing. The administration should be prevented from ruling while the anti-Trump investigation is underway, she claimed.

This is a far cry from the stance of the Democrats when President Bill Clinton was impeached by the House of Representatives in 1998. They insisted he would continue to rule until he was thrown out of office.

In addition to their claim that Trump is not the legitimate president, so he shouldn’t be permitted to appoint members of the Supreme Court, the liberals allege Kavanaugh’s appointment would lead to unprecedented attacks on abortion and other rights. They say it would undercut their efforts to impose restrictions on access to guns and block the adoption of campaign finance laws they champion that place obstacles in front of independent working-class political action. Regardless of what you think of the Democratic candidates in 2018, they say, you have to vote for them to keep Trump from packing the Supreme Court.

Citing a 2009 law review article

where Kavanaugh argued that investigations of a sitting president may be unconstitutional, the editors of the *Washington Post* say his confirmation would provide Trump with protection from Mueller’s special counsel. They fervently hope the former top spy, who in well over a year of trying has failed to present any evidence of Trump’s “collusion” with Moscow, can come up with something they can use to overturn the 2016 election.

Mueller goes after the small fry, digging for dirt, then dangling a plea bargain deal. He and his backers hope some of the dirt can be hurled at the White House. That’s what they hoped for with the prosecution of Michael Cohen, the president’s former lawyer, and the charges against long-dismissed Trump campaign operative Paul Manafort. Cohen copped a plea, taking a maximum of five years and three months in jail over a trial that could lead to 65 years in prison.

Workers rightly hate plea-bargaining, a mainstay of the capitalist “justice” system. It’s a death knell to the presumption of innocence and the right to a jury of your peers. The vast majority of those convicted and languishing in jails — overwhelmingly workers and disproportionately Black — never get to defend themselves in a trial.

Liberal meritocrats falsely say workers are becoming more racist, anti-immigrant and reactionary. This, they say, is why they voted for Trump. They must be controlled, or fascism is inevitable.

So they have called for infringement of political rights. Some claim workers are too ignorant to have the unrestricted right to vote. Others act



AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin

**Democratic senators and allied protesters shriek and disrupt first session of confirmation hearings for President Trump’s Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, September 4.**

to curtail free speech of opponents. And they defend the rulers’ political police and spy agencies — the FBI and CIA — as arms of the liberal crusade against Trump.

But workers keenly need our political rights, won in bloody class battles over centuries, and will need them even more with sharper working-class struggles to come.

As for the Supreme Court, the working class has no interest in who wears the long black robes. Liberals’ arguments obscure how rights we need can be defended — by workers relying on our own class and its allies. Changes to the court’s composition will not create better or worse conditions for our struggles. The Supreme Court was set up after the American Revolution to enforce the Constitution and is used by the propertied owners as an arbiter of

conflicts among them. Unable to win majorities in Congress, liberals have sought to change the court’s role, to use it to legislate “progressive” changes they promote but have been unable to adopt.

## Liberals boost war party

Constant media coverage of the three-day military ceremony at the funeral of John McCain — a Republican opponent of Trump — was aimed at lauding McCain as a “war hero,” denouncing the president and bolstering those who advocate more robust U.S. military intervention abroad.

McCain’s daughter, Meghan McCain, used her eulogy at the ceremony to deride Trump as unpatriotic, alluding to his draft deferment exempting him from fighting in the Vietnam War.

That 15-year imperialist slaughter aimed at thwarting the Vietnamese peoples right to self-determination, cost the lives of 2 million Indochinese people and nearly 60,000 U.S. workers in uniform. It ended only when Washington’s forces were driven out of the country. McCain, a Navy lieutenant commander, remained a staunch supporter of the U.S. rulers’ war in Southeast Asia, a war that growing numbers of GIs came to oppose and speak out against. Veterans of that war, and thousands of others returning from Washington’s military interventions since, continue to face criminal neglect from the Veterans Administration — a part of the carnage Trump talked about during his 2016 campaign.

Both McCain, a former presidential candidate, and Trump sought office to act on behalf of the U.S. propertied owners and to use Washington’s massive military might when they thought it was needed. Today Trump is seeking to end some of the ongoing wars the rulers have been unable to win, like in the Mideast and Afghanistan. McCain was a fervent member of the capitalist war party, like Hillary Clinton and growing numbers of Democrats today who criticize Trump’s efforts to tamp down conflicts in Korea and elsewhere.

Though it certainly isn’t Trump’s intention, these foreign policy moves are good for the working class, opening political space for working people to discuss, debate and act in our own class interests.

## Free Ukraine director on hunger strike from Siberia jail!

**BY EMMA JOHNSON**

Oleg Sentsov, an internationally known Ukrainian filmmaker imprisoned in Siberia for his defense of Ukrainian Crimea, has been on a hunger strike for more than 110 days in the Russian penal colony Polar Bear. In a letter to his cousin Natalia Kaplan he wrote that he feels the end is near.

On Aug. 9, Sentsov’s mother asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to pardon her son. His office acknowledged receipt of the letter, but made no further comment. Dmitry Dinze, Sentsov’s lawyer, says he has been told that Russian authorities have no plans to release Sentsov because they believe his death will intimidate other prisoners from similar protests.

Sentsov launched his open-ended hunger strike May 14, demanding the release of over 70 Ukrainian political prisoners held in Russian jails. He consciously chose the date to coincide with the upcoming soccer World Cup in Russia, which started June 14. His goal was to use the media attention around one of the largest sports events in the world to call attention to Russia’s annexation of Crimea and politically motivated frame-ups of Ukrainians.

Sentsov took part in the popular Maidan mass movement that ousted the pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014. When Moscow seized his native Crimea a month

later, taking advantage of the presence of some 20,000 Russian troops posted there along with the Russian military’s Black Sea fleet, he actively opposed the occupation. He joined others in delivering supplies to Ukrainian army soldiers trapped in their barracks.

He was arrested in May of that year, along with Alexander Kolchenko, Gennady Afanasiev and Oleksiy Chirniy, also opponents of Moscow’s seizure of Crimea. They were tortured, beaten and framed up on false terrorism charges. Sentsov denounced the frame-up in his 2015 trial. “A court of occupiers by definition cannot be just,” he said.

The state’s frame-up case was based on confessions by Afanasiev and Chirniy obtained under torture. Sentsov and Kolchenko have maintained their innocence all along, as well as their support for Ukraine. “I don’t know what your beliefs can possibly be worth if you are not ready to suffer or die for them,” Sentsov told the court. He was sentenced to 20 years and Kolchenko to 10 years in prison.

When Afanasiev was dragged into court for his sentencing, he denounced his “confession,” saying it was a lie extracted by torture.

Mustafa Dzhemilev, leader of the indigenous Tatar people of Crimea, spent a total of 15 years in Soviet prisons and labor camps between 1966 and 1986 for his struggle for the rights of the Tatars.

In 1975 he started a 303-day hunger strike, surviving because he was forced. He was convinced to end it, he says, by the argument, “Your death will only benefit our enemies.”

On May 25, Dzhemilev asked Sentsov to end his hunger strike. “There are not that many courageous people. It’s very important to save their lives. After the invaders leave the Crimea, such people will be needed in Crimea,” he said.

Dzhemilev succeeded with the goal he had for his hunger strike — to put the spotlight on the situation for the Crimean Tatars.

“In this regard we can say Sentsov has achieved certain results,” Dzhemilev told the media July 4. “A lot of information is now in the press around Sentsov and around the illegal repression of the invaders.”

Sentsov’s case has gotten publicity worldwide and he has received substantial support. “Worldwide Day of Action” events have been organized in cities around the world, including in Russia. The European Film Academy, PEN America and Amnesty International have called for his release. Directors Pedro Almodovar, Mike Leigh and Wim Wenders, authors Margaret Atwood, Stephen King and Salman Rushdie, Pussy Riot and dozens of other prominent filmmakers, actors and writers have expressed support for him.



# Grenada Day participants hunger for revolutionary books

BY TAMAR ROSENFELD

NEW YORK — Many of the hundreds of participants at the annual Grenada Day festival in Brooklyn here were hungry for books by revolutionary leaders Maurice Bishop, Thomas Sankara, Malcolm X and others.

Socialist Workers Party members and supporters fanned out from a booth they set up as part of the daylong event Aug. 26, holding up *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, a book of speeches by the central leader of the 1979 revolution in Grenada, and “The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop” by Steve Clark, in *New International* no. 6, which explains how the revolution was overthrown in a 1983 counter-revolutionary coup. A combined total of 57 of those books were grabbed up by festival participants.

Celebrating its 10th year, the festival featured a wide array of cultural presentations, including performances by musicians who traveled from the Caribbean island for the event. A similar festival took place in Toronto.

Thousands of Grenadians who participated in the revolutionary struggle there led by Bishop and the New Jewel Movement now live in New York and the region. Their revolution overthrew U.S.-backed dictator Eric Gairy and established a workers and farmers government.

Notable were the young people who stopped in their tracks when they saw *Maurice Bishop Speaks*. One woman said, “My mother loves him!” Getting the book was her first chance to read Bishop’s words for herself.

“In a revolution things operate differently than in the normal situation,” Bishop said in a talk reprinted in the book. “We are able to mobilize and organize people to cut out waste, to cut corruption, to stamp out inefficiency, to move to planning, to look out for production.”

After coming to power in March 1979, Grenada’s workers and farmers took control of governing their own country. Mass organizations were formed to organize the involvement of women and youth.

Grenadian toilers were joined by workers and peasants in Nicaragua who took power in July 1979, sending brutal dictator Anastasio Somoza fleeing to Miami. As Fidel Castro put it, Grenada, Nicaragua and Cuba were “three giants rising up to defend their right to independence, sovereignty, and justice on the very threshold of imperialism.”

“The Grenada Revolution is in one sense even worse — I’m using their



Above, Grenada Day Facebook  
Hundreds attend Grenada Day in Brooklyn, N.Y., Aug. 26. Inset, Socialist Workers Party supporter Gale Shangold, right, shows fairgoers *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, with speeches by central leader of 1979-83 revolution in Grenada.

language — than the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions because the people of Grenada and the leadership of Grenada speak English,” Bishop told hundreds at Hunter College in New York in 1983, “and therefore can communicate directly with the people of the United States.”

In his article Clark describes Bishop’s efforts to defend the revolution and resist a coup secretly organized by a counter-revolutionary faction led by Bernard Coard. On Oct. 19, 1983, a massive

uprising of some 30,000 Grenadians — close to one-third of the island’s population — poured into the streets and freed Bishop from house arrest. Troops loyal to Coard turned their guns on the demonstrators, killing and wounding many.

Bishop and five other leaders of Grenada’s revolutionary government and the New Jewel Movement were murdered in cold blood. Coard and his faction’s conspirators imposed a four-day, round-the-clock, shoot-to-kill curfew on

the Grenadian people.

One week later, the U.S. rulers took advantage of the destruction of the revolution and invaded, capturing a disarmed and demoralized people. Many who stopped by the booth described what they had experienced during those final days of the revolution.

Some participants said they already owned a copy of *Bishop Speaks*, but stopped by to get the *New International* with “The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop” article. Four people picked up copies of *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, which reprints speeches of the leader of the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso.

Five people subscribed to the *Militant*, and four got copies of *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, in combination with one of the books on Grenada’s revolution or a subscription.

Thirty-three people signed up to receive information on a Militant Labor Forum being organized to discuss the legacy of Bishop and the Grenada Revolution.

This is the second time the SWP has had a table with revolutionary literature at Grenada Day. The first was in 2014. One fairgoer said that he has come to the event every year since, looking for these books. We told him we would be back next year. For anyone interested in finding books on lessons from revolutions and other working-class battles, visit the SWP office nearest you (see list on page 8).

## Washington state teachers strike over pay, conditions

BY EDWIN FRUIT

LONGVIEW, Wash. — Members of the Longview Education Association went on strike Aug. 23 as the school board here has refused to grant the wage increases teachers are demanding.

“This is a union town. We have had firefighters, longshore workers and paper workers all come to the picket lines,” Kris Lambert, who has taught math for 15 years, told the *Militant* Aug. 29 as she was picketing outside Mark Morris High School.

Some 200 school districts across the state are still negotiating contracts with the Washington Education Association as the new school year opens.

In June the state Supreme Court handed down the McCleary Decision, a ruling that mandates the state legislature to allocate \$2 billion for teachers’ salaries statewide. The funding must be negotiated by Washington Education Association affiliates with each of the state’s school districts.

The Longview Education Association demands an 11 percent increase while the school board offers 6.9 percent. The court “allocated the money for salaries but the school board is not giving what it should,” Annette Bradshaw, a

school secretary for 14 years, told the *Militant*.

“Teachers are underpaid and they teach the future of this country,” said Lannon Ruiz, a senior at Mark Morris High School, who joined the picket line along with other students.

Erin Moon and Saskia Rivera, teachers at St. Helens Elementary School, walked the picket line near R.A. Long High School that day. Moon has been teaching for 10 years and is still paying off a \$25,000 student loan.

“I pay \$400 a month just for that,” she said. “I am glad to see that all three unions are in this together. We decided that we will not settle until all of them get their fair share.”

The other unions are Service Employees International Union Local 925, representing maintenance and food service workers, para educators and school bus drivers, and the Longview Public Employees Association, representing school secretaries.

“I have four kids and have to live with my parents,” Rivera said. “I have \$80,000 in student loans to pay. I buy school supplies and sometimes bring in breakfast for some kids I know have not had any at home.” She added that she is proud that teachers, the majority women, have stood up for what they believe.

Socialist Workers Party members went

door to door here to discuss the school workers’ fight and help win solidarity. We met Shelly Porter, a member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21. Porter was active in the longshore workers’ victorious fight against union-busting attacks by EGT Development, which attempted to use nonunion labor on their job site in 2011 and 2012.

Porter said she and her daughter, who is entering high school, had joined the rallies and marched on the picket line. “The teachers deserve their raises. Look at all the money they spend on school supplies,” she said. “This is a union town and we all have to stick together.”

Seattle teachers reached a tentative one-year agreement giving school personnel there a 10.5 percent increase, averting a strike. Tukwila and Puyallap teachers hit the picket lines Sept. 5 and Tacoma teachers Sept. 6. Teachers in Clark County in southwest Washington walked out in the Evergreen, Washougal, Vancouver, Battle Ground, Hockinson and Ridgefield districts.

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# The history of the belated, bloody birth of US imperialism

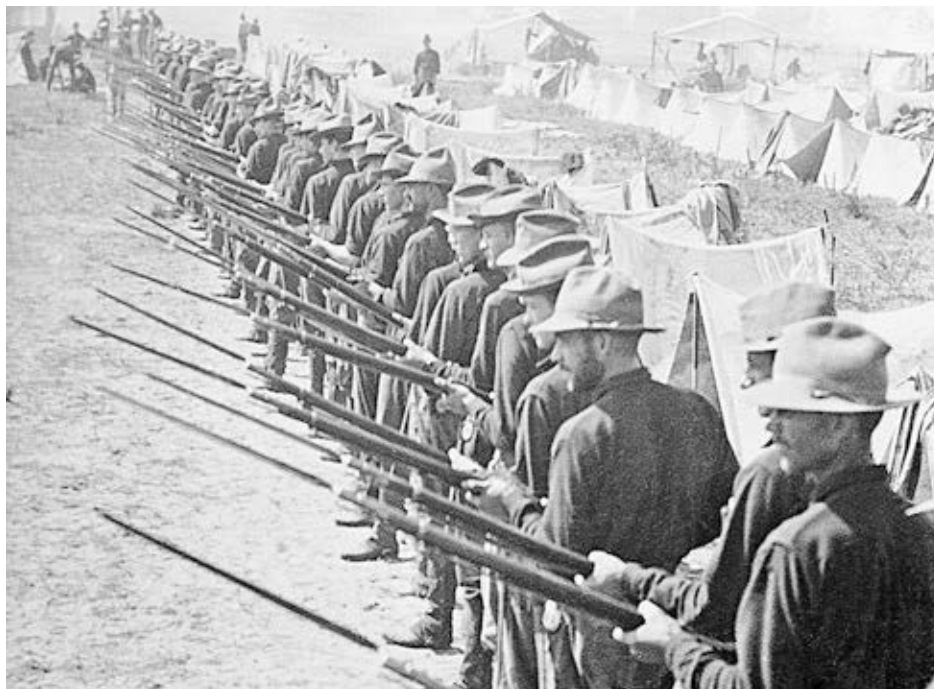
The excerpt below is taken from a 1935 essay by George Novack that appears in America's Revolutionary Heritage, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. Novack explains why U.S. financial capital came late to rule the roost in the development of capitalism here and describes how U.S. imperialism emerged at the end of the 19th century. Copyright © 1976 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

In reality, the special peculiarities of American capitalism were a product of the given constellation of economic forces constituting the world market, in which the economic forces of the United States were throughout this period a subordinate factor. American capitalism has always been an organic part of world capitalism. The peculiarities of its economic development were not spontaneously generated from within itself alone, but were the outcome of the interactions between the national and the international productive forces and relations. This we hope to make clear when we consider the peculiarities of American imperialism. ...

The United States entered upon its imperialist career later than the



In 1898 Washington seized Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippines and Guam from Spanish rulers, becoming the victor in world's first imperialist war. Above, U.S. invasion force with bayonets drawn are ready to defend their camp in Puerto Rico, which remains a U.S. colony to this day.

European powers because industrial capitalism held the center of the stage much longer here than in England, France, or Germany. Although the concentration of industry began relatively earlier and proceeded at a more rapid rate in the United States than in Europe, and trustification was more highly developed, finance capital did not begin to shoulder aside industrial capital in the sphere of monopolized industry until the close of the century, and did not completely control the strategic centers of national economy and the state until the World War. Since imperialist policies are an outgrowth of the domination of finance capital, the key to the relatively slow development of American imperialism is to be found in the late blooming of finance capital. ...

Industry, then, was trustified after the Civil War under the supervision of industrial, rather than financial, capital. The giant monopolies of the period, Standard Oil, Carnegie Steel, Armour & Company, the American Sugar Refining Company, were organized and controlled by industrial capitalists like Rockefeller, Carnegie, Armour, and Havemeyer, and the new capital poured into them came from reinvested profits or from foreign capital directly invested in the industry, rather than from the flotation of bond and stock issues by banks and investment houses. The outstanding exception to this rule

was the railroads, because of their greater capital requirements.

Finance capital began to supersede industrial capital and take the initiative in forming monopolies about the beginning of the century. The organization of the Steel Trust in 1900 by the House of Morgan was the first large-scale operation in this field by finance capital. When Carnegie sold his steel companies to the banking syndicate headed by Morgan and retired to his philanthropies, he symbolized the retreat of the industrial capitalist before the invasion of the financier. It is equally significant that Carnegie was, politically, an outspoken anti-imperialist and one of the chief financial backers of the Anti-Imperialist League, which organized the opposition to the Republican Party's imperialist policies—until the Morgan partners forced him to withdraw by pointing out that such propaganda was jeopardizing McKinley's reelection and the tariff essential to the Steel Trust.

While Morgan and Company were preparing to launch the Steel Trust in 1899, they floated the first important foreign loan issued in this country, the bonds of the Mexican Republic. This was followed two years later by a fifty-million-dollar loan to Great Britain to help pay the costs of the Boer War, the father of the Morgan war loans to England that helped suck the United States into the World War.

But although financial capital began to get a foothold before the 1914–18 war, it did not become the absolute governor of American economic and political life until the war. The transformation of American capitalism from the commercial-industrial (colonial) stage to the industrial-financial (imperialist) stage was accomplished in two separate steps. The period from the Civil War to the turn of the century completed the transfer of the American economy from a predominantly agricultural to an industrial basis. The period preceding the World War marked the beginning of its transformation from an industrial capitalist into a financial capitalist, imperialist nation.

Economically speaking, the United States did not shed all its colonial characteristics until the World War. It was a debtor nation and imported tremendous quantities of capital from Europe. Throughout the nineteenth century, foreign capital poured in an unending stream into the United States and was one of the most potent factors in its rapid economic development. Canals and railroads, extractive and manufacturing industries, southern plantations and western ranches as big as baronial domains sprang into being at the touch of the magic wand of foreign capital, and English capital in particular. The New York money market was but a satellite of the London and continental money markets.

Before the World War the United States was an industrial rather than a financial competitor of the European powers. This can be seen in the comparatively small part played by American capital in the transformation of Japan from a tiny feudal island empire into a world power, although the guns of the United States Navy first battered down the gates of Japan and opened them to foreign trade. The United States remained in the ranks of the second-rate powers until it appeared on the scene of military operations in Europe to save the Allies—and its own investments. ...

The decisive qualitative change in the character of American capitalism occurred during the war, which reversed the political and financial relationships between America and Europe and transformed the United States from a provincial parvenu in the society of the Great Powers into the colossus of the capitalist world.

September

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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# ‘Advance the revolutionary mobilization of workers’

**Continued from front page**

the impact of the biggest economic, social and moral crisis of capitalism on our lives. In these conditions there are openings to join together to respond to union fights and social struggles that break out today. Workers can utilize our capacities for solidarity, going together to picket lines and build the labor movement.

We need a new course. Whether it’s sending messages of support to workers battling the bosses, like the work stoppages organized by Uber taxi drivers in Australia last month, or going to rallies and marches of Steelworkers at U.S. Steel and ArcelorMittal where workers are resisting the bosses concession demands, there are opportunities to advance the working-class movement. Workers at Walmart can take advantage of a court ruling in May forcing the company to allow workers to wear union insignia at work, to promote workers’ solidarity and deepen discussion about the need to unionize the country’s largest employer.

Confronting the challenges facing working people, including organizing to build the unions, requires above all charting a political way forward for *all* workers, as well as the unemployed and working farmers, fighting for and drawing in all the oppressed and exploited.

For decades union officials refused to build on the courage and tenacity workers demonstrated in union battles. Instead, they tied workers’ wages and benefits to the capitalists’ profits. They urge workers to elect “pro-labor friends” in the Democratic and Republican parties and to side with “our” capitalist state against competitors abroad and to adopt regulations and government agencies to “protect” us. Union officials say we should rely on these politicians to regulate relations between workers and bosses, a recipe to bolster the state’s power at our expense and weaken our capacity for struggle. This course has led to shrinking union membership, attacks on rights and growing discontent among workers. Workers’ strength lies in relying on our own forces, in our independent mobilization and proven capacity to overcome the divisions the rulers try to use to weaken us.

The Socialist Workers Party demands an amnesty for undocumented workers in the U.S. to undercut the bosses efforts to push a layer of the working class into second-class status, forced to live in fear of deportation. This is the road to forge unity between native- and foreign-born, to create better conditions for organizing the growing numbers of workers who are unorganized today, and to defend the wages and jobs of all.

We fight to break down the walls between workers outside and the millions of fellow workers in prison who fight for contact with the class struggle and political discussion.

As workers struggle independently of the bosses, their parties and their state, we gain experience, greater resilience and self-confidence. As we fight together to change our conditions we also change ourselves, a precondition for taking power and running society in the interests of the vast majority.

We see ourselves as citizens of the world, as part of an international working class with common interests. We fight to stop the capitalist rulers’ wars and colonial oppression. We offer the hand of international solidarity.

Along such a course it *is* possible to build a party that can lead workers and farmers to take political power into our own hands and end the rule of the exploiting classes.

That is the perspective the SWP discusses with fellow workers on their doorsteps. The party speaks out against every indignity and attack heaped on workers and the oppressed. Join the Socialist Workers Party in its efforts to win workers in their millions to replace capitalist rule as we participate in discussions and struggles of today.

## SWP speaks with, for working people

**Continued from page 3**

by workers themselves. This struck a chord with Johnson.

“Sometimes you get a ‘leader’ who says popular things and gets into government only to then act like those before him — and for himself!” he said. “You see that in other countries too.”

He signed up for a *Militant* subscription and got a copy of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*

While knocking on doors Aug. 22 in North Long Beach, California, Dennis Richter, SWP member and the party’s candidate for U.S. Senate from California, met 26-year-old Jessica Herrera. She told him that she works at a 7-Eleven store that was raided by immigration cops. She said one of her co-workers was arrested and others fled.

“We can win most workers to the fight for amnesty,” Richter said. “They don’t like factories being raided and their friends, neighbors and co-workers being picked up by immigration cops.”

Herrera got *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* and her sister, a student at a local community college, chose another book on special, “*It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System”: The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class*. She said she is interested in conditions working people face in



Militant/Deborah Liatos

**Knocking on doors in North Long Beach, California, SWP members Dennis Richter, left, and Bill Arth met Jessica Herrera, who spoke about ICE raid at 7-Eleven she works in.**

prison. They also kicked in a contribution towards the party’s work.

To join in the SWP’s door-to-door discussions with fellow workers, or learn more about the party, contact the nearest branch in the directory on page 8.

## Steelworkers protest

**Continued from front page**

as the current contract expires.

Similar rallies and marches took place in cities where U.S. Steel and ArcelorMittal have mills and mines. USW contracts with both giant steel companies expired Sept. 1. Some 31,000 union workers are involved — 16,000 in 24 union locals at U.S. Steel and 15,000 in 13 locals at ArcelorMittal. The steel bosses and the USW announced the current contract would be extended and contract negotiations continue day to day. The union announced locals at U.S. Steel plants would take strike authorization votes Sept. 4.

Members of the United Mine Workers, American Federation of Teachers, Communications Workers of America, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and several other unions joined USW members at the rally, as did members of Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.

According to an update sent out by the United Steelworkers leadership, the U.S. Steel bosses’ proposed contract includes small wage increases for the first three years of the contract, then only lump-sum annual bonus payments tied to annual company income; increased out-of-pocket costs for medical insurance resulting in an actual wage decrease for many union members; cuts in benefits for retired members; establishment of a two-tier setup for new hires; and many other cuts in benefits and changes in work rules and conditions. USW members who work for U.S. Steel haven’t had a raise for six years.

ArcelorMittal bosses are demanding new concessions in health care, vacation pay and bonuses.

Union officials agreed to concessions and a pay freeze in the last round of contract negotiations, saying the steel bosses faced competitive pressures. This time, however, they say the bosses are making profits — \$2.1 billion in the second quarter of 2018 alone — rewarding themselves with generous bonuses, and should provide workers with a sizable pay raise and drop new concession demands around health care.

Workers are angry about the bosses’ push for more. “What they’re trying to do is wrong, to the retirees, to us, to everyone,” said Doug Robinson, who has worked at the Fairfield pipe mill 18 years, the first 10 as a contract worker. Many USW members expressed the view that it’s time for workers to see improvements.

Steelworker marches and rallies took place across the country, including in Burns Harbor, Gary, Indiana Harbor and elsewhere in Indiana. Steelworkers from three plants in western Pennsylvania came together to rally in Clairton. Over 1,000 iron ore miners from U.S. Steel’s Minntac and Keetac operations and ArcelorMittal’s Minorca mine rallied in Minnesota’s northern Mesabi Iron Range.

## LETTERS

### Need cultural revolution!

The more I read the *Militant* and get a greater understanding of its motives, political agenda, etc., the more I value those who have sacrificed, died or gone to prison to further the cause of the socialist principle. I truly love reading about the Cuban Revolution and all of those comrades who made Cuba the universal example it has become. Thanks to the Socialist Workers Party I am now able to revolutionize minds that have been poisoned by the Amerikan apparatus. The *Militant* is preparing the people and informing them of a cultural revolution that must take place in order for the new reality or new government to take root and wipe out the old. Education is the spirit of the revolution. And thanks to the SWP, we

are getting plenty of that.

In the spirit of Che!

*A prisoner,  
Marienville, Pennsylvania*

### News that really matters

Thank you for printing the news that really matters. Thank you also for unending support of workers across the nation and world. You are truly appreciated.

*A prisoner  
Bellefonte, Pennsylvania*

### ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

### Can I submit artwork?

Could I submit artwork for the paper?

*A prisoner  
Raiford, Florida*

*Editor’s note:* Of course you can. We just ask what you send fits with the themes of our articles and our editorial views. We can’t guarantee in advance we’ll use what you send — we have real space limitations.

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