

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 12 MARCH 25, 2019

## ‘Workers need to organize our own party to take power’

BY ROY LANDERSEN

In Opelika, Alabama, the next town over from tornado-devastated Beau-regard, Janice Lynn reports that she and fellow Socialist Workers Party member Dave Ferguson went door to door March 8. They introduced the party and discussed the effects of the March 3 tornado and the challenges facing working people today.

“What’s needed is for workers to organize our own party to take political power,” Ferguson told everyone they met. “Only when society is run on the basis of working-class solidarity will it be possible to begin to provide for human needs in every situation.”

Lynn and Ferguson met Jimmie Tyson, a retired English teacher. “We have jobs that don’t pay enough, rising rents, unsafe working conditions, and unending wars. We live under a system that is based on making profits for a small minority,” Ferguson said.

“I know exactly what you’re talking about,” Tyson said. “You have the poor and the rich and a working class that is not doing well. I agree we need

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## Erie UE strike ends, Wabtec bosses agree to negotiations

Fight continues against bosses’ cutback demands



Feb. 26 picket in Erie, Pa. With broad support, 1,700 members of United Electrical Workers struck against deep concessions imposed by Wabtec. Agreement suspends cuts for 90 days.

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

ERIE, Pa. — A nine-day strike at the former GE Transportation plant here ended March 6 after a 90-day deal was reached to hold contract negotiations. Bosses at Wabtec — Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies Corp. — which took over GE

Transportation Feb. 25 slashed wages for new hires and returning laid-off workers by 38 percent. It also said it would contract workers for up to 20 percent of the jobs, require forced overtime and other attacks. Locals 506 and 618 of the United Electrical Workers union, which represent the 1,700 workers at the factory, set up picket lines.

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## Nat’l blackout deepens crisis in Venezuela - US hands off!

BY RÓGER CALERO

Thousands participated in rival demonstrations in Venezuela March 9 in response to counterposed calls by President Nicolás Maduro and U.S.-groomed opposition leader Juan Guaidó amid a growing political and social crisis.

Guaidó, head of the National Assembly controlled by bourgeois opposition forces, proclaimed himself the country’s president Jan. 23, saying the re-election of Maduro last year was fraudulent.

With the support of the governments of Colombia and Brazil, on Feb. 23 Washington and Guaidó provocatively attempted to bring into Venezuela four trucks of “humanitarian aid” seeking to split the country’s armed forces and lead to Maduro’s forceful removal by the military.

The marches took place as a massive electricity blackout plunged the country’s population into darkness for days, paralyzing subways, hospitals, schools, government offices and businesses, leaving people struggling to obtain water and food.

There is a deep economic and social crisis in Venezuela today, a prod-

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## Protests continue in fight against police killing of Stephon Clark



Students in Sacramento, California, walk out to protest March 2 decision by District Attorney Anne-Marie Schubert to not bring charges against cops who killed Stephon Clark.

BY JEFF POWERS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A series of protests have taken place here almost daily since Sacramento District Attorney Anne-Marie Schubert announced March 2 that no charges would be filed against Terrence Mercadal and Jared Robinet, the cops who killed Stephon Clark on March 18, 2018. Twenty shots were fired

at Clark, 22, who was in his grandmother’s backyard. All but one of the eight bullets that hit him were in the back. The police claimed they thought Clark had a gun, but he was holding a cellphone.

To bolster her decision to let the cops off, Schubert has gone on a campaign to slander Clark, attempting, as

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## Democrats’ fractures widen in cover-up of anti-Semitic remarks

BY SETH GALINSKY

A series of anti-Semitic remarks made by new Congresswoman Ilhan Omar have widened rifts in the Democratic Party and among liberals. Some have criticized her; others made excuses for her, saying she didn’t understand what she was saying; and some, especially in the middle-class left, have defended her comments.

The controversy began in mid-February after Omar — the first Somali-American in Congress — tweeted that support for Israel in Congress was “all about the Benjamins.” When asked who she “thinks is paying American politicians to be pro-Israel,” the Minnesota congresswoman replied: “AIPAC,” that is, the Ameri-

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## Supreme Court puts limits on cops seizing property, a gain for workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

For the first time, a U.S. Supreme Court decision Feb. 20 placed limits on state and local authorities arbitrarily seizing and keeping or selling a person’s personal property, such as cars, houses and money, on grounds that they’re linked to a crime.

The fight to entirely eliminate this

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Are ‘hate crimes’ and racism on the rise in the US? 6

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Indiana teachers rally for higher pay, better work conditions

Weeklong strike in Oakland ends as teachers’ struggle continues



# Celebrate the political life of veteran communist in UK

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Jim Spaul, a leader of the Communist League, died here suddenly March 6, after battling a debilitating illness from working in the mines. A three-decades-long veteran of the communist movement, Spaul shouldered a range of leadership responsibilities, including being elected to the party’s Central Committee from the mid-90s to the early 2000s, and in the Communist League’s mass work.

Subscribers to the *Militant* in Europe, Africa and the Middle East have Spaul to thank for ensuring they receive the paper in good order. He was in charge of organizing the weekly mailing. Before that, he was responsible for the party’s national finances and shouldered efforts to pack and dispatch Pathfinder books ordered by commercial outlets.

Spaul joined the Communist League in 1989 when he was a coal miner in Yorkshire. He came in contact with members of the Socialist Workers Party from the United States who had come to the U.K. in the wake of the 1984-85 miners strike. Spaul, who had been a rank and file leader of the strike in his area, helped build Justice for Mineworkers, which campaigned for the reinstatement of miners victimized during that fight.

His long history as a working-class fighter helped him rapidly see through the 1988 cop frame-up of SWP member and packinghouse worker Mark Curtis. Spaul could tell right away that Curtis was “guilty” of being an effective union and political fighter, not the frame-up rape and burglary charges

the authorities imprisoned him for. He jumped into the defense effort and this is how he met the Communist League, campaigning for Curtis at the Yorkshire Miners Gala.

### Internationalist fighter

After joining the League, Spaul helped lead the yearslong Mark Curtis defense effort in the U.K., and the international work alongside the SWP to extend the reach of the communist movement among mineworkers.

Spaul traveled to the U.S. in 1989, speaking out in defense of Curtis and joining SWP members to bring solidarity to fellow miners on strike at the Pittston Coal Company. He visited the U.S. several times over the next decade along the same lines.

In 1992, he helped lead the international effort to defend fellow miner and Communist League member Paul Galloway, who had been physically assaulted while working underground. This was “an attack on Paul on the NUM and on the Communist League,” Spaul told the *Militant*.

Spaul became a contributor to the *Militant*, and also penned articles for the *Yorkshire Miner*, newspaper of the National Union of Mineworkers in that area. His articles included reviews of Pathfinder titles on the Cuban Revolution, of which he was a staunch supporter. In 1993 he joined a work brigade to Cuba, bringing solidarity, learning firsthand more about the revolution and introducing the Communist League to fellow brigade members.

In the mid-1990s, Spaul accepted a



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

**Jim Spaul speaking at London meeting, 2012. Spaul, who died March 6, shouldered a range of leadership responsibilities over three decades to strengthen and build the Communist League.**

proposal from the party leadership to move to London. He took major responsibility for the distribution of Pathfinder books there, while getting a job as a rail worker and becoming active in the Rail,

Maritime and Transport Union.

The Communist League is organizing a public meeting March 30 in London to celebrate Spaul’s life and contributions to building the communist movement.

## ‘Militant’ continues to receive readers’ contributions. Thanks!

BY TERRY EVANS

Since the *Militant* closed out a special financial appeal last month — which raised \$11,914 to help the paper meet its operating costs until the start of our annual spring Militant Fighting Fund drive — contributors have sent in another \$1,010. This is a big boost.

One reader in Minneapolis received a notice asking her to renew her subscription after she had already sent in a check. She mailed in another check with a note saying, “I support the *Militant* greatly. If the first check is found, please keep the money towards reporting trips.” Thanks! We’ll put it to good use.

Unlike the major dailies, whose editors are beholden to the capitalist rulers, the *Militant* speaks in the interests

of all the exploited and oppressed. And it relies on contributions from the working people who read it. You can donate anytime on the paper’s website [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com) or by mailing a check to 306 W. 37th Street, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

### In Defense of the US Working Class

by Mary-Alice Waters

A GIANT HAS BEGUN TO STIR. Hillary Clinton calls them “deplorables” who inhabit “backward” regions. But tens of thousands of teachers and school employees from West Virginia, Oklahoma, and beyond set an example in 2018 with their victorious strikes. Working people across Florida mobilized and won restoration of voting rights to more than one million former prisoners.


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# THE MILITANT

## Anti-government protests sweep Algeria

*With thousands protesting across Algeria, demanding ‘get rid of the president, and the entire regime,’ President Bouteflika has cancelled new elections, postponing them into next year. The ‘Militant’ covers these actions, and protests aimed at ousting the regime in war-ravaged Sudan.*



AP Photo/Anis Belghoul  
Protests across Algeria demand end of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika’s regime.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.



# ‘Workers need our own party’

Continued from front page to do something.”

Lynn asked if she had followed protests by teachers fighting for decent wages, showing her the book *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters. The book describes these school workers’ actions and what they show about the capacities of the working class. Tyson readily signed up for a subscription to the *Militant*. She said she had been active in the teachers’ union, serving as president for awhile, and would consider getting the book.

Jennifer Chambers, 28, told SWP campaigners she was one of those workers who has three jobs — at the U.S. Postal Service, at the Walmart Distribution Center and at Big Lots, to try to get by.

“Our party supports workers fighting to build unions and for higher wages and safe working conditions. Building solidarity is key in working people gaining confidence that we can come together in struggle and win,” Lynn said.

Chambers got a copy of the *Militant*, saying she had several friends whose children were severely injured during the tornado in Beauregard. A worker at the Walmart Distribution Center in Opelika was among those killed by the twister.

## ‘The capitalist rulers fear us’

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Dallas, reports that she campaigned in Northwest Dallas March 11, accompanied by Hannah Caricol and Joseph, an electrician and member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Joseph had previously met up with Kennedy after he read about her campaign.

They talked with Shonta Dixon, a city bus driver and a member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1338. Her neighborhood, Dixon explained, has “always been known as the Black community of Elm Thicket and is working-class.” Wealthier people have bought in across the road, building expensive houses and pushing taxes up. They “look down on us. They even had the name of this area changed to Preston Hollow.”

Kennedy showed her *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privi-*

*lege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. “This book describes why meritocratic upper middle-class layers that staff the government bureaucracy and nonprofits, and sit in big college teaching positions truly believe they are the intelligent elite, meriting their advancement over workers.

“They use schools to drum into our heads that we’re just lowly workers who must be obedient and not get out of line,” Kennedy said. “But they are afraid of us, because they see more signs today that we will rebel against this setup.” She cited examples of working people fighting to change things, like the yellow vests in France and the teachers and school workers in West Virginia who’ve gone on strike the last two years.

“My party says we must keep protesting to make sure that the cop who killed Botham Jean in his own apartment here is prosecuted and jailed,” Kennedy said. “I am not political, I’m more religious,” Dixon responded, but said she agreed on the need to win justice for Botham Jean.

“It is good that you come to this neighborhood talking to the people who live here. You have my vote,” she told Kennedy. She bought a copy of the *Militant* and told Kennedy to come back again so she could get some books and a subscription.

George Chalmers and Hannah Caricol met Melody Lawrence while they were campaigning door to door in Bedford, Texas, March 8. “The politicians don’t care about the working class. There should be somebody to voice what we need,” Lawrence said after learning about the SWP campaign in Dallas.

## Capitalism at fault in Alabama tornado catastrophe

BY JANICE LYNN

BEAUREGARD, Ala. — “People came out of nowhere to help us. It was amazing, people kept stopping by to lend a hand,” John Askew told Socialist Workers Party members lending solidarity here March 8. He was clearing the debris left by fallen trees in front of his mother-in-law’s damaged trailer.

This rural town of 10,000 in Lee County was hardest-hit by a powerful tornado March 3 packing 170 mph



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Truck driver Bill Scholl gets subscription to the *Militant* from Samantha Hamlin, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Troy, in his driveway in Waterford, New York, March 9.

Lawrence said she thought immigrant workers should be able to make a living. “Our campaign,” Caricol said, “says all workers need to fight for amnesty for undocumented workers.” By fighting for the rights of the most vulnerable, she said, the working class can unite in struggle around our common interests.

Agreeing that the rulers fear such working-class struggles, Lawrence commented, “We outnumber them. That scares the crap out of them. We have power in numbers.” She said she wanted to find out what she could do to support the campaign and got a subscription to the *Militant*.

Kennedy was met with applause when she spoke at a mayoral candidates forum of about 100 held March 4 at the African American Museum of Dallas. She explained her campaign, showing *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation and the Road to Workers Power* by Barnes to

two women who snapped it up. They pointed to a friend saying, “He’ll want this too.” He did, getting a copy and a subscription to the *Militant*. Another participant bought *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, also by Barnes.

Socialist Workers Party branches around the country, like sister Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K., take the party and its campaigns to workers in cities, large and small, as well as rural areas.

The SWP is running a national slate of candidates in 11 states and campaigning for them all across the country. They speak in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capitalist rule.

To join with the SWP in campaigning on doorsteps, at union pickets and social protests, or to find out more, contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you. See directory on page 4.

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winds that cut a deadly swathe up to a mile wide for over 20 miles. Twenty-three people were killed, ranging from 6 to 89 years old, both Caucasian and Black. Some 90 were injured.

Askew, a 41-year-old power line worker, said some of his relatives were among those who were killed. “We have several funerals to attend. We’re grateful that donations have come in to pay for all 23 of the funerals,” he said.

His family is waiting to hear from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to see if they will get any assistance.

There was no way working people there could have been prepared. Beauregard has only one storm shelter, at the Providence Baptist Church. “They need to build more community storm shelters. More lives could have been saved,” said hotel worker Judy King from nearby Opelika. Several others echoed this, saying the government had done nothing to organize transportation to help the elderly or others get to the shelter.

Some who took shelter in their bathrooms thinking they were safe didn’t survive, as they were sucked out of their home or their entire house was hurled off its foundations.

The government “failed miserably during [Hurricane] Katrina,” 55-year-old Marriott Hotel engineer Rick Murphy told us as President Donald Trump toured the area by helicopter, promising FEMA would give Alabama “the A Plus treatment.” This time, Murphy said, he hopes “they do better and it’s not just talking and nothing else happens.”

Chequeta Davis, who works at the Kia auto plant in West Point, Georgia,

and her young daughter were among those we met bringing donations. “It takes people like us to make a difference,” Davis said.

Forecasters had warned of impending tornadoes days before. But as the severe weather approached, some residents had already lost access to phones, TV or social media. Sirens were sounded giving people about 10 minutes to prepare, if they heard them, but it was already too late to get to the shelter.

The cause of the deaths and calamity here wasn’t nature. It was the workings of the dog-eat-dog for-profit capitalist system. It was a *social*, not a weather catastrophe.

Much of the destruction is a product of the poor infrastructure in this rural area. There are few structures robust enough to withstand gale-force winds. The big percentage of mobile and other weak-framed homes are extremely vulnerable. In rural Alabama, nearly 16 percent of households are factory-produced mobile homes, a source of profit for the manufacturers, as most people here can’t afford stronger site-built homes.

“There is no reason for people to die in their home during a tornado,” Timothy Marshall, an engineer and meteorologist, told the press. He pointed out that even mobile homes can be equipped with simple, safe porch shelters. But individual shelters are expensive and even the best grant from FEMA, if someone is able to navigate their bureaucracy, doesn’t cover the whole price.

Dave Ferguson contributed to this article.



# ‘In a deepgoing revolution, women want to take part’

The excerpt below is from *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution* by three leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women, Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos and Yolander Ferrer. It is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. The extract is from the chapter "It Gave Us a Sense of Worth," an interview by Mary-Alice Waters with de los Santos. This book, subtitled *From Santiago de Cuba and the Rebel Army to the Birth of the Federation of Cuban Women*, is featured here to mark both Women's History Month and the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. Copyright © 2012 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

ASELA DE LOS SANTOS: Cuban women have a tradition of struggle, from the *mambises* in the nineteenth century wars of independence to today. That tradition is an important political element in our socialist revolution.

With a historical leap, we find ourselves in 1953, the beginning of the struggle for genuine independence — I'm referring here to the attack on Moncada — and the heroic examples of Melba Hernández and Haydée Santamaría, who participated in that action.

As the struggle continued, more and more women became part of it.

Fidel's course of building a mass



Asela de los Santos, right, receiving award in 1974 from Vilma Espín, both of whom had been leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women. Also present are Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro.

revolutionary movement capable of sustaining and supporting the armed struggle enabled both men and women to be integrated.

Women joined the ranks of the Rebel Army. In the Sierra Maestra there was a platoon of women fighters known as the Marianas, named after Mariana Grajales, the mother of the eight Maceo brothers, all of whom fought for independence from Spain. She was one of the great heroes of the war for independence.

In the underground we did whatever was necessary. We sewed uniforms and armbands for the Rebel Army. We helped provide cover for moving weapons and young combatants. We found families who would house revolutionary fighters who had gone underground. We secured medicine. We served as messengers between different revolutionary fronts. We distributed subversive propaganda and collected supplies.

In short, women worked on every front in the underground struggle. ...

As the struggle deepened, women saw greater possibilities opening up. There were many important things to do. The revolution offered them this opportunity. And I'm talking about even before the victory.

When a deepgoing revolution takes place, women, who have been oppressed for centuries, for millennia,

want to take part.

You asked me if working in the underground was a liberating experience for a woman. Yes, it was. No one could stop the women.

WATERS: It gave you a sense of worth ...

DE LOS SANTOS: ... of worth as a human being, as part of the people.

WATERS: For me this is a very significant element of the Cuban Revolution. Your generation in Cuba was in the vanguard of the historic changes in women's economic and social status, as we were drawn out of the home and into social labor to a previously unprecedented degree, something that began during the Second World War.

In no other socialist revolution have there been so many leaders who were women: Vilma Espín, Celia Sánchez, Haydée Santamaría, Melba Hernández, to name but a few of the best known. Their leadership was indispensable. It's one of the elements of Cuba's revolutionary history that needs to be better known and better understood. ...

DE LOS SANTOS: In *History Will Absolve Me*, Fidel denounced the existence in Cuba of widespread illiteracy. Illiteracy is a tool in the hands of the exploiters. If you are ignorant, if you don't know how to read or write, you're not free. Not knowing even how to sign your name makes people feel inferior.

The rural population in the Second Front was poor, exploited, hungry. Many young people joined the Rebel Army, so the number of combatants who were illiterate grew. And this was a challenge.

That's how the education effort started. Raúl issued orders that we teach all these young combatants to read and write. ...

After the victory of the revolution, Raúl told all these teachers, all those young women from the Second Front, that they would be given scholarships to continue their education. And all those who wanted to remain teachers could do so.

In 1961 we launched a literacy campaign across the country. Before the revolution, 23 percent of the population was illiterate — more than 40 percent in the countryside. The goal was to eliminate this backwardness in a single year. The experience in the Second Front was a big help in the nationwide campaign. The campaign to wipe out illiteracy ended with a gigantic scholarship program that gave all young people continued access to study at higher levels. ...

There was a growing consciousness among women, as well as in the leadership of the revolution, that it was necessary to organize a women's movement. It was necessary to do political work among women, because they were at the bottom, the most exploited. We didn't speak in terms of women's equality at that time. We talked about women being housewives, confined to work in the home, overlooked and discriminated against. We talked about the need to integrate women into society and the workplace. ...

Vilma stressed the need to incorporate the revolutionary capacities of women in the work of building a new society — a source of strength that was very important.

At the same time, the unfolding revolution itself increasingly helped women grasp their place in it. It helped them develop a consciousness of the need to take part in socially useful work outside the home. It helped them develop a consciousness that they had as many rights as men.

The federation set itself the goal of defending women, without bringing on a confrontation with men.

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The Militant March 25, 2019



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to fellow workers on the picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos and letters to [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com) or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

## Indiana teachers rally for higher pay, better working conditions

INDIANAPOLIS — Over 1,000 teachers from across the state rallied at the Indiana Statehouse here March 9 for more school funding and higher pay. Sponsored by the Indiana State Teachers Association, the event was originally scheduled to be held outdoors, but rain moved it into the Statehouse where teachers and their supporters, many wearing red T-shirts, filled the rotunda and two floors of balconies.

Though Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb has said he wants a rise in teachers' pay, there aren't any bills before the legislature to guarantee one. A recent study found Indiana was behind all surrounding states in average teacher pay. A popular chant was, "What do we want? Fair pay! When do we want it? Now!"

"We want better working conditions. We need more counselors and nurses," Sandra Butts, a teacher at West Vigo Elementary School, told the *Militant*. "They ask us to stay after school and do extra work, but with no extra pay."

"You're not alone," Becky Pringle, vice president of the National Education

Association, told the crowd. She was referring to the rounds of teacher protests and strikes in West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona and elsewhere over the last year. "I bring you their support and I bring you their power."

Jacob Burton, 18, a senior at Owen Valley High School attended the rally. "My teachers' pay is too little," he said. "That's why I'm here today."

— Dan Fein

## Weeklong strike in Oakland ends as teachers' struggle continues

OAKLAND, Calif. — Teachers here voted by 58 percent to accept a new contract March 3 ending a seven-day strike that had emptied the schools. They came out stronger from the effort, but the vote reflected deep divisions over the limitations in what they got. Many who voted against the agreement thought more could have been won — better pay, smaller class sizes and the hiring of more counselors, speech pathologists and psychologists.

The 3,000 teachers, school nurses and other personnel organized by the Oakland Education Association won wide-



Militant/Ruth Harris

Over 1,000 teachers rally in Indiana Statehouse March 9. "They ask us to stay after school and do extra work but with no extra pay," elementary school teacher Sandra Butts told the *Militant*.

spread support from parents and students. They organized pickets and daily rallies that involved thousands.

Teachers won higher pay — though less than they demanded and deserve. But the crisis in the schools will continue to deepen, as will the discussions among school workers and workers throughout the city about how to continue to fight.

The situation faced by the majority of Oakland students has been deteriorat-

ing for decades. The contract doesn't mention the 24 schools in working-class neighborhoods on the chopping block.

"We need to keep working to prevent school closures," Denise Holladay, a special education teacher for 33 years and union representative, told the *Militant* while waiting to vote on the contract. "This isn't just a local issue. We need to mobilize everyone or this situation will spread to any civil service job."

Modest gains were made in winning more nurses and other support personnel. Before the new contract, 22 nurses were supposed to look after 37,000 students, a ratio of one nurse for every 1,700 students. Under the new contract it is one nurse for every 1,350 students. The contract also mandates reduction of the maximum class size by one student next year, and one the following year.

As schools reopened the school board voted on \$22 million worth of cuts planned before the strike. Hundreds of students and teachers missed class to oppose the cuts.

District officials sought to divide students from teachers, claiming that the cuts in school libraries, foster youth programs, and school maintenance and supplies were needed to pay for teachers' raises. The cuts passed in a 4-3 vote. Students have threatened to strike, underlining the fact that the struggle continues. The contract is retroactive to 2017, and will expire June 30, 2021.

— Eric Simpson

# Fight continues against Wabtec's cutback demands

Continued from front page

"This is a real education," striker Mike Sadler told me on the picket line before the deal was struck. "I've walked by burn barrels when workers were on strike before, not thinking what was going on, now I know what it means."

Under the terms of the deal, the union agrees not to strike and Wabtec agrees there will be no permanent layoff or plant closure for the next 90 days. The bosses will maintain wage rates for existing Wabtec employees, forswear forced overtime and freeze hiring over this time period so the question of a divisive two-tier wage isn't posed. Negotiations will take place with participation of a federal mediator.

The UE locals walked out to preserve wages and working conditions won in struggle over 70 years. Gains made there helped create jobs and improve conditions in area plants, and the strike won broad support from workers.

Other workers and small shopkeepers in the area brought food, wood for burn barrels and other supplies to the picket lines in solidarity with the strikers.

This correspondent works at Walmart, after having worked at Hyundai in Philadelphia building rail cars and many other industrial jobs. When I showed up on the picket line with a sign that said, "Walmart workers support UE strikers!" I received a warm welcome.

"The boss and media paint us as greedy and selfish," striker Sam Hill said when he asked me to take a picture. "But we're on strike against mandatory overtime when so many of our brothers and sisters are laid off. It's more profitable for bosses to work us overtime — they're the greedy ones — rather than hire another worker with benefits."

"We're fighting for the next generation, we don't want the two-tier," he said. "And when you organize at Walmart, we'll be there for you."

This is the kind of solidarity we all need.

This correspondent and other Socialist Workers Party members who came to show support for the fight went door to door here and in nearby towns. There were varied opinions on the walkout.

"Who makes \$35 an hour these days? Why aren't they satisfied?" asked Amanda Orsefski. I responded that the workers didn't walk out to get more money, but so others who got hired wouldn't work for less, which would drag us all down. I told her that at Walmart, they cut a lot of workers' hours after giving a pay raise.

"I shop at Walmart, but I didn't know that," she said. "They shouldn't cut your hours. It's hard enough to get by."

When we knocked on Adam Rekitt's door March 8, he told us. "I started talking to my co-workers about getting our union, the Service Employees International Union, to get a group of us to go down to the picket

line to show our support, but then the next day the strike ended."

We told Rekitt that many workers we met supported the strike, but some said that they didn't understand why they were striking when they make so much money.

"They're not just fighting for themselves, they're fighting for future generations," Rekitt said.

Things have changed for workers, he said. "My parents and my wife's parents had big families, more than 10 kids with just our fathers working. Now we have three kids and we're struggling to make ends meet," he said. "My wife works as a manager in a fast food restaurant and I have a relatively good job working in a government office, but we're just getting by."

"How do we turn this around and get people to join the unions?" he asked.

Continued on page 7

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 28, 1994

Another battle in the fight to defend a woman's right to choose abortion is unfolding in Birmingham, Alabama. Hundreds of pro-choice activists are getting ready to confront Operation Rescue and prevent the group from closing the clinics.

As the capitalist economic crisis worsens, the employers and their government seek to increase the exploitation of the working class. Restricting or denying abortion rights is part of their effort to heighten the burden on working women and undermine their self-confidence. The aim is to keep the second-class status of women intact by taking away a woman's most fundamental right — control over her own body.



March 28, 1969

The struggle to defend GIs' rights to free expression of opposition to the war in Vietnam registered a major victory when Pvt. Tommie Woodfin, a Black GI stationed at Ft. Jackson, S.C., was acquitted by a summary court-martial. He had been charged with violating regulations by circulating a petition initiated by the recently formed group of antiwar soldiers at Ft. Jackson, GIs United Against the War in Vietnam. The petition requests use of post facilities by GIs United to hold an open meeting to discuss issues raised by the Vietnam war.

On March 3, the Ft. Jackson brass refused to accept the petition, falsely claiming that its initiators were attempting to engage in "collective bargaining."



March 25, 1944

In a truly symbolic climax to the Minneapolis Labor Case, the federal judge who passed sentence upon the 18 imprisoned Trotskyist and Minneapolis Local 544-CIO leaders on March 13 ordered the destruction of the Marxist literature which the FBI had seized in June 1941 from the Twin Cities headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party and which constituted the Roosevelt prosecution's major "evidence" in the Minneapolis Smith "Gag" Act frameup.

The administration's prosecution of the most uncompromising working class opponents of fascism, which began with seizing of books and pamphlets containing their ideas, reaches a symbolic culmination with a book-burning in the traditions of Hitlerism.



# Anti-Semitism roils Democrats

Continued from front page

can Israel Public Affairs Committee, a lobbying group.

When she came under a firestorm of criticism, Omar “unequivocally” apologized. But then in early March she repeated her anti-Jewish slander, railing about “the political influence in this country that says it is OK to push for allegiance to a foreign country.” Her clear message is that those who support the U.S.-Israel alliance are traitors, bought out by rich Jews.

To say that a pro-Israel lobby group or the Israeli government — i.e. “Jews” — controls U.S. foreign policy is not only false, it is dangerous, because it feeds Jew-hatred. The U.S. capitalist class is the most powerful ruling class in the world. U.S. gross domestic product is nearly \$20 trillion — that’s some 57 times greater than Israel’s. The U.S. rulers support the government of Israel — like they do other capitalist governments — because it’s in the interest of U.S. imperialism to do so.

## Democratic Party frays

Some of Omar’s supporters were convinced they had to distance themselves from her comments. *New York Times* columnist Michelle Goldberg complained that “at a moment when activists have finally pried open space in American politics to question our relationship with Israel, it’s particularly incumbent on Israel’s legitimate critics to avoid anything that smacks of anti-Jewish bigotry. And the idea of Jews as global puppet masters, using their financial savvy to make the gen-

tiles do their bidding, clearly does.”

But Goldberg, like other liberals and leftists, defends Omar saying that “she’s the victim of a double standard.” The real reason she is under attack, Goldberg claims, is because Omar is a “black Muslim woman” and she questions the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Under pressure, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi backed presenting a motion to the House to rebuke Omar for her anti-Semitic remarks. But the Democratic left rebelled and Pelosi buckled, presenting instead a toothless condemnation of a multitude of racist, anti-gay, anti-Islamic and anti-Semitic actions by “white supremacists.”

Trying to keep together the fraying factions of Democrats, Pelosi said that Omar didn’t understand “the full weight of her words.”

Some prominent Democratic Party candidates for president didn’t feel any need to take their distance from Omar. Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish, said that what is going on is “an effort to target Congresswoman Omar as a way of stifling” the debate on U.S.-Israel relations.

Sanders conveniently leaves out that it wasn’t Omar’s criticism of policies or actions of the Israeli government that got her in hot water, but her anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

Jew-hatred has a long history in the class struggle. “I don’t think anyone has been slandered more than the Jews,” Fidel Castro said in a 2010 interview with *The Atlantic* magazine. “They have been slandered much more than the Muslims because they are blamed and slandered for everything.” Castro added that “over 2,000 years they were subjected to terrible persecution and then to the pogroms.”



Above, Militant/Lorraine Starsky

Overflow crowd at Pittsburgh vigil Oct. 27, 2018, after murder of 11 Jews at synagogue there. Inset, Rabbi Alexander Davis speaks at rally at Dar Al Farooq Islamic Center, Bloomington, Minnesota, Aug. 8, 2017, following bombing of mosque. Many Somali workers in that area say they recall the support they got from Jews there and oppose Rep. Ilhad Omar’s recent anti-Semitic slanders.



When the crisis of capitalism gets so deep that the capitalist class can no longer rule by the old means and the working-class has the chance to take political power, the capitalist rulers will finance and back fascist thugs and promote the most vile centuries-old anti-Jewish slanders and conspiracy theories. They use this to try to convince the working and middle classes that the problem isn’t capitalism — it’s Jewish capitalists and, ultimately, “evil Jews.”

We saw where that ended in Nazi Germany with the slaughter of more than 6 million Jews.

That’s not what is happening today. There is no rise in fascist groups or anti-Semitism in general.

And no one is arguing that Omar or her liberal and “socialist” allies like Al-

exandria Ocasio-Cortez are for massacring Jews. But Omar and her backers’ promotion of anti-Jewish slanders disorients anyone who falls for them.

The *New York Times* interviewed some residents of Omar’s congressional district, including some in the Somali-American community. Many Somalis said they remember the support they received from Jewish leaders in Minnesota after a nearby mosque was bombed by white supremacists in 2017 and in the face of profiling after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

“When religion is under attack, they stand by us, because they’ve been there,” Zahra Ali, told the *Times*. Ali does not plan to vote for Omar again. “For her to go out there and target, on a daily basis, Jews, is very sad.”

## Further reading



Leon traces the history of the Jewish people and explains why the propertied rulers incite renewed Jew-hatred in the epoch of capitalism’s decline. Leon was a revolutionary

fighter against the Nazi occupation of Belgium, arrested and deported to Auschwitz, where he was executed in the gas chambers.

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## Are ‘hate crimes’ and racism on the rise in the US?

BY TERRY EVANS

There are growing cries from Democrats, the liberal media and the middle-class left that “hate crimes” are soaring in the U.S. This charge — which isn’t true — is grounded in their conviction that the working class is becoming more and more bigoted, racist and reactionary and needs to be controlled. This line is also pushed by the ruling class, which increasingly fears the working class and our capacity to fight against their assaults on living standards, as yellow vest protesters have done in France.

The liberals and the left also claim

there is a growing fascist threat today encouraged by Donald Trump in the White House.

These charges are being used to call for more thought-control laws in the name of combating the alleged rise in hate crimes. The *New York Times* featured an opinion piece Feb. 22 by Thomas Cullen, U.S. attorney for the Western District of Virginia, entitled “The Grave Threats of White Supremacy and Far-Right Extremism: Hate Crimes Are on the Rise. Police and Prosecutors Need Better Tools to Fight Back.”

Cries of “rising bigotry” were taken to a new pitch at this year’s Oscars’ ceremony. When Israeli filmmaker Guy Nattiv received an award he said, “My grandparents are Holocaust survivors. The bigotry that they experienced in the Holocaust — we see that everywhere today.”

But there is no significant fascist uprising today. What working people face in the U.S. is nothing like the slaughter of 6 million Jews by the Nazi regime in Germany.

The fact is that through their experiences in struggles over decades — from the popular movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation to workers’ actions to defend co-workers and neighbors without papers from raids by Washington’s immigration police — there is less racism, less anti-immigrant sentiment and less Jew-hatred among workers than ever before.

Jew-hatred is a permanent feature of capitalist rule. Speaking out against it whenever it rears its ugly head is essential for advancing the unity of working people. Doing so does not need to be justified by false claims that it is on the rise.

So determined to give credibility to their claims of “rising bigotry,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the liberal press and others rushed to condemn a supposed racist and homophobic “attack” on actor Justin Smollett, who is Black and gay, without bothering to check the facts. The press widely repeated Smollett’s claim that two “assailants” had tied a rope around the actor’s neck and told him, “This is MAGA country [Make America Great Again],” as good coin.

But then the two people arrested for the assault told Chicago cops that Smollett had in fact paid them to stage the fake “attack,” in an effort to bolster his efforts to get a raise. Smollett now faces multiple charges of lying to the authorities.

Claims that “hate crimes” are soaring are used to bolster the push for new, stronger laws and sentences for anyone charged with one. This means you can get longer time in prison not based on what you do, but on what you think. Thought-control laws like this are dangerous. The rulers always end up using them to target working people and those who fight against exploitation and oppression.

## Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

### California

Dennis Richter, Los Angeles City Council  
Laura Garza, Los Angeles School Board

### Florida

Anthony Dutrow, Miami City Commission

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Dan Fein, Chicago Mayor

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David Rosenfeld, St. Paul City Council

### Nebraska

Joe Swanson, Lincoln Mayor

### New Jersey

Lea Sherman, State Assembly  
Candace Wagner, State Assembly

### New York

Seth Galinsky, New York City Public Advocate  
Samantha Hamlin, Mayor of Troy  
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### Pennsylvania

Osborne Hart, Philadelphia Mayor  
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### Texas

Alyson Kennedy, Dallas Mayor

### Washington

Henry Clay Dennison, Seattle City Council

See directory on page 4 to contact party campaign office nearest you.



# US hands off Venezuela!

Continued from front page

uct of the workings of capitalism and the failed course of the governments of Hugo Chávez and Maduro.

Washington has made the situation facing workers and peasants worse, imposing economic sanctions that block access by the Venezuelan government to billions of dollars in assets and revenue. The policies of the Maduro government, and of his predecessor, Chávez, seeking to “manage” capitalism, have undermined the self-confidence, political consciousness and fighting spirit of working people, who have a long history of struggle.

Communications Minister Jorge Rodríguez, Maduro and other government officials blamed the blackout on a “cyberattack” on the electronic monitoring system at the Guri hydroelectric plant. That power station supplies 80 percent of the country’s electricity.

Electricity outages are a common part of the crisis in Venezuela. In 2013 a disruption affected Caracas and 17 of the country’s 23 states for six hours, and in 2018 another outage left eight states without electricity for 10 hours. But the latest was unprecedented.

The power failure has intensified pressure on Maduro from working people, who are the most affected by the country’s deepening crisis.

## Roots of the crisis

The attempts of the Chávez and Maduro governments to “regulate” capitalist relations were doomed from the start. The inevitable result was collusion with sections of the national and international bourgeoisie that benefited from the flow of oil revenue until prices

collapsed, leading to the current crisis.

Workers and farmers in Venezuela have demonstrated a great capacity to fight. This was shown in mass upsurges in the 1980s and ’90s that preceded Chávez’s election in 1998, in the mobilizations that defeated a right-wing military coup against Chávez, and oil workers’ mobilizations to restart production when bosses paralyzed the industry in 2002.

There have also been numerous struggles for land, fishing rights, greater control of production and safety, and other social struggles. All of these were reported on and supported by the *Militant* over the years.

But instead of leading a course that would increase working-class consciousness and action against capitalist exploitation and government corruption, Chávez and Maduro have tried to act as “strong leaders” above the fray seeking to “serve the people,” providing them with welfare programs. That has blocked workers’ mobilizations and pushed them to the sidelines. The “mismanagement” and “corruption” Maduro is blamed for is a byproduct of the maintenance of capitalist relations.

This was reflected in comments made by Julio Escalona, a member of Venezuela’s National Constituent Assembly, when he spoke last December. He challenged the Food Ministry’s policy of transferring massive amounts of capital to big capitalist food monopolies, while leaving small farmers and cooperatives unable to buy supplies and actually grow food.

“[Government officials] tell us cooperatives and medium and small-sized farms don’t have the productive capacity of big enterprises, which supposedly can deliver immediate results” in increasing food availability, Escalona



Corriente Revolucionaria Bolívar Y Zamora

**Peasants from Barinas, Venezuela, march on Caracas Aug. 8, 2018, demanding Maduro government stop judges, capitalist landowners from evicting small farmers from land they won when Hugo Chávez was president. The crisis produced by the workings of capitalism and policies of the Chávez and Maduro government continues to bear down on farmers and workers.**

said. “But where are the results?”

“With all the dollars they have received and continue to receive we should be very well stocked,” he said. But everyone knows that isn’t true. He was putting a spotlight on the hoarding and speculation by these capitalist enterprises.

## Washington mounts pressure

Washington has seized on the crisis to increase economic pressure, aiming to replace the Maduro government with one more to its liking. They are betting on working people growing tired of the dead-end course maintained by the political and military forces around *Chavismo*. At least for now, they don’t see the need to bear the costs of military intervention.

At the same time, a significant number of working people deeply distrust the opposition, who have organized violent protests, supported Washington’s sanctions and have called for U.S. troops

to invade. Opposition leaders have not been able to convince Venezuelan workers and farmers that their interests are at the center of the campaign to overthrow Maduro. And they aren’t!

A common sentiment among many in Venezuela — including among former supporters of Chávez and Maduro — is captured in the view often expressed, “I would not vote for the opposition, and even less for Maduro,” if there were an election.

Despite calling their course “21st century socialism,” Chávez and Maduro consciously decided not to organize workers and farmers in Venezuela to follow the example of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution — to take power, overthrow capitalism and transform society on a socialist foundation.

Working people in the U.S. can extend solidarity by demanding Washington keep its bloody hands off Venezuela, so that working people have time and space to find the road forward.

# Wabtec fight

Continued from page 5

“Workers need to see that the union is fighting,” said Seth Galinsky, SWP candidate for New York City Public Advocate, who came to show support for the UE workers. “Over the last several decades union officials have been more interested in trying to keep up their dues base, and not organizing a real fight against the bosses. And they tie the unions to supporting one or another capitalist candidate, usually from the Democratic Party.”

“Workers have to see ourselves as the union,” he said. “And rely on our own strength in numbers.”

Rekitt said that he’s interested in socialism, “but aren’t there always going to be some people that want to be on top?”

I pointed to the example of Cuba, where workers and farmers made a revolution in 1959 and took power into their own hands. They nationalized the land to guarantee that no working farmer could lose their livelihood. They organized a mass literacy campaign so all workers and farmers could participate equally in running the country.

“What you say about what they did in Cuba makes some sense to me,” Rekitt said. “I’d like to learn more about the revolution there.”

He got a subscription to the *Militant*, and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record, In Defense of the US Working Class*, and “*It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System.*”

# Sign up for International May Day Cuba Brigade

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — More than 30 people turned out here for a March 10 film showing to build and raise funds for the 14th May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade in Solidarity with Cuba. The event was sponsored by the Chicago Cuba Coalition.

The documentary, “With Our Memory on the Future,” was produced in 2005 by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC). It examines the progress women in Cuba have made since the workers and farmers of that country took power in 1959.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. The brigade offers participants the opportunity to learn firsthand what workers and farmers there have accomplished. It is scheduled from April 21 to May 5.

The film highlights the importance placed by Fidel Castro and other revolutionary leaders in encouraging women’s participation and leadership from the beginning of the fight to bring down the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista. Through interviews in workplaces, schools and on the streets, you see the growing involvement of women in employment, social and political life, and the impact that has on the consciousness of both women and men.

“I liked the interview with the wom-

an who is a crane operator,” commented one participant, who runs a crane here. “The film shows how the revolutionary leadership worked to increase employment year after year,” noted Ilona Gersh of the Socialist Workers Party, who is going on the brigade. “Whereas here in a capitalist society the bosses count on unemployment to keep wages down.” The documentary also captures “how women and men transformed themselves and their lives through mass mobilizations,” she added. “The revolution made education and access to family planning universal, both of which are important for women to advance,” said Howard Ehrman, a leader of the Chicago Cuba Coalition.

Arewa Karen Winters introduced the video and chaired the discussion afterward. Taking part in the May Day brigade in Cuba two years ago was “awe-inspiring,” she said. Winters, whose nephew was killed by Chicago police in 2016, contrasted the conditions of working people in Cuba to the homelessness, violence and incarceration rampant here.

In addition to attending the massive May Day celebration organized by the Cuban trade unions, participants in the brigade will take part in volunteer agricultural labor, meet representatives of unions, the FMC and other mass organizations.

Six people from Chicago have registered to go so far, and supporters of the Cuban Revolution continue working to recruit more. The film showing raised \$500 to help those who need financial assistance.

The brigade is sponsored by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. The U.S. contingent is being organized by the National Network on Cuba. To get more information or to sign up, contact ICanGoToCuba@nnoc.info.

## Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

This is a book about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary — it can be made.

It’s about the class struggle in the U.S., where the potential of workers and farmers is today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. And just as wrongly. \$10

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# Join the May Day brigade to Cuba!

Is there an alternative to the “look out for number one,” profit-driven capitalist system? Do we have to accept that the bosses are constantly trying to speed our work up, cut corners on safety, push down our wages? Do we have to just grit our teeth and bear the U.S. rulers’ unending wars abroad, their police brutality, and all the indignities of life in the American capitalist “dream”?

Is this all just the result of out unalterable selfish “human nature?” That’s what the propertied rulers would like us to think. That capitalism is eternal, the best of all possible worlds.

Working people and youth have the opportunity to see that something else is possible by joining the international May Day brigade to Cuba April 21 to May 5. To see what Cuban workers and farmers have accomplished by making and defending the revolution that brought them to power in 1959, then overturned capitalist relations and offered solidarity to struggles worldwide. In the course of their revolution they became different people.

Participants will do agricultural labor with Cuban workers. They’ll visit health centers and talk with leaders of trade unions and other mass organizations. A high point will be joining the million-strong annual May Day march in Havana. Here you’ll see the self-confidence, combativity and discipline of Cuba’s workers and farmers.

A young worker in Erie, Pennsylvania, told members of the Socialist Workers Party who knocked on his door that he didn’t know much about the Cuban Revolution. But when he heard that small farmers can’t lose their land because of unpaid debts, that health care is a right not a commodity, that a goal of the revolution is for workers to take control of production, he said, “That makes sense” and started looking into the brigade.

Because of the U.S. rulers’ economic attacks on their revolution and record of colonial wars worldwide, Cubans often get the false impression that there are few working-class or social struggles in the U.S.

Brigadistas can help show the reality of what life and politics is like in class-divided North America. They can explain the struggles they have been involved in from the recent strike at Wabtec to protests demanding amnesty for immigrant workers.

“The class struggles in our countries are more strongly interconnected than ever before,” Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters told Cubans at a discussion at the Havana International Book Fair Feb. 14. “Sharing the histories and experiences of working people in our two countries and learning from each other is indispensable. Only along that road will we be able to draw honest lessons from our defeats and victories alike.”

Join this year’s brigade to be part of doing just that.

## Supreme Court limits cops seizing your property

**Continued from front page**

rapacious practice, known as civil forfeiture, is part of defending workers’ rights.

The cops and prosecutors claim that these seizures only affect big drug traffickers and crime bosses, but that’s a lie. The case before the Supreme Court, for example, involved Tyson Timbs, a 37-year-old machinist from Marion, Indiana. He was arrested in 2013 for selling four grams of heroin for \$385 to an undercover detective. After he was pressed to cop a plea bargain, Timbs was sentenced to one year of home detention followed by five years probation, and fined \$1,200.

But state officials seized his \$42,000 Land Rover, claiming — in the absence of any proof — he had used it to commit crimes. Timbs had bought the car with funds from his father’s life insurance policy after he passed away. The car was worth “more than four times the maximum \$10,000 monetary fine assessable against him for his drug conviction,” Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote for the court.

Timbs sued the state of Indiana. A state trial and appellate court blocked forfeiture of the Land Rover, saying the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution forbids cruel and unusual punishments and excessive fines. The Indiana Supreme Court reinstated the seizure, arguing “states’ rights.” The limit on fines applied only to the federal government, the judges said.

In the Feb. 20 decision the U.S. Supreme Court overturned their ruling unanimously. The high court relied on the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, won out of the overthrow of slavery in the Civil War to prevent state governments from infringing on the rights of former slaves. It applies all protections guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to state governments.

“The protection against excessive fines has been a constant shield throughout Anglo-American history,” wrote Ginsburg. “Excessive fines can be used, for example, to retaliate against or chill the speech of political enemies.”

### The fight continues

The ruling in the Timbs case is narrow. The justices sent it back to lower courts to decide whether the Land Rover’s seizure was an “excessive fine.”

#### ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. 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. Or donate online at [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

## Stephon Clark killing

**Continued from front page**

Malcolm X often said, to turn the victim into the criminal.

For over an hour she detailed personal information about Clark, including his previous arrest record and imprisonment. Schubert said that two days before he was shot, Salena Manni, the mother of Clark’s children, called police to say he had abused her. Schubert said text messages and internet searches cops took from Clark’s phone revealed he feared he would be sent back to prison. They said Clark had sent Manni text messages implying he wanted to kill himself.

Clark’s mother, SeQuette Clark, spoke out against the government’s crude attempt to smear him as an excuse for his being killed. “I don’t care if he was a criminal,” she told NPR. “What matters is how those officers came with lethal force around a corner, on a vandalism call, after my son and gunned him down — when he had nothing but a cellphone in his hand.”

Others interviewed by NPR agreed. “I feel like she was charging him with his own murder,” said Quenta Givens, who lives down the street from where Clark was killed. “Why are we judging him? He’s already been killed. We should be judging the cops — that’s who did it!”

### Workers’ response

Socialist Workers Party members Jeff Powers and Joel Britton went door to door March 8 in the working-class Meadowview neighborhood near where Clark had lived. They found people very willing to share their views with the *Militant* about the killing of Clark, as well as to discuss what workers face today. Most, but not all, strongly condemned the police killing and the fact that the cops who did it got off.

We met Mississippi Lau at one of the first doors where we knocked. She said she was Hmong Chinese and worked at a fast food restaurant as a prep chef. “The police should be punished too for taking a life of someone who wasn’t doing anything wrong,” she said.

Lau told us that a number of her young co-workers had scrapes with the law. “People shouldn’t be treated differently just because they have a record,” she said. “I know people who have been arrested and are doing good.” Lau bought a copy of the *Militant* and said she would decide about getting a subscription after she had a chance to read it.

Robert, an African-American worker who lives a few houses from Lau, wanted to tell us his opinion but didn’t want to give his last name. He said he had worked in a restaurant and has done many other jobs, but isn’t working now because of arthritis.

He didn’t think Clark was blameless. “If Clark hadn’t already been doing the things he was doing this wouldn’t have happened,” he said. “Yes, Black lives matter, all lives matter, but where was his father?”

“I raised my three children and they are doing just fine,” he continued. “All three are working and they have good jobs. My oldest spent six years in the Navy.”

We talked about the crisis facing working people today. Robert bought a copy of *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters. He got a copy of the *Militant* and gave a \$1 donation.

We spent half an hour talking with LB Robinson, who works in a small warehouse driving a forklift. “Wrong is wrong — the police killed an unarmed man in his grandmother’s backyard,” he said. “The police are trained. They wear protective vests. How can you think a cellphone is a gun? What happened to using tasers?”

Robinson bought a *Militant* subscription and a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. As we left, he said he would very much like us to come back and talk some more. We plan to.

### Correction

In the article “Women’s Right to an Abortion Faces Gov’t Attack in Missouri” in the March 18 issue, the *Militant* reports on a Feb. 22 federal district court decision upholding a state law making it illegal for doctors to perform abortions unless they have hospital admitting privileges. The article incorrectly said, “Planned Parenthood Great Plains is appealing the ruling.” It should have said, “Planned Parenthood Great Plains is continuing its fight to get the law overturned.”