

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Divisions wrack Democrats  
as race-baiting charges fly**  
— PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 27 JULY 29, 2019

## New stage in bakery's fight against Oberlin 'racism' smear

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The successful fight waged by Gibson's, a family-owned-and-operated bakery in Oberlin, Ohio, against a mean-spirited smear campaign by Oberlin College officials that libeled them as "racist" has entered a new stage. The college is seeking to prevent the award of legal fees ordered by the jury to the family and threatens to challenge parts of the jury's rulings.

The decision was a victory for working people everywhere and a blow to all those who try to shut down speakers, political space and inflict damage against opponents by false accusations of "racism."

The jury also awarded the Gibsons the largest monetary award for any libel case in Ohio's history June 13. Their decision reflected the widespread support for the Gibson family among working people in the area, as well as anger over the disdain of college officials for the lives and concerns of ordinary people.

Continued on page 7

## SWP campaigns among coal miners, workers in Kentucky

'We need to break with the Democrats, Republicans'



From left, Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for Kentucky lieutenant governor, and Alyson Kennedy, SWP presidential candidate in 2016 and former coal miner, talk with Lita Melton, retired union miner James Melton, and farmer Jessica Ison at Whitesburg farmers market July 13.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

HAZARD, Ky. — "The threats and sanctions against Iran and the wars the wealthy capitalist rulers carry out abroad are an extension of their ex-

ploitation and abuse of working people here in the U.S.," Socialist Workers Party leader Alyson Kennedy told 26-year-old Kendra Canada when she and a campaign supporter knocked on Canada's door here July 12.

Canada, who was caring for her 8-year-old and three-month-old sons, told Kennedy that her coal miner brother, like other employees of Blackjewel Coal Co., had several thousand dollars of wages taken back out of his bank account when the mine owners filed for bankruptcy the previous week.

Continued on page 3

## Amazon warehouse workers protest against speedup and harassment



Workers picket on "Prime Day" outside Shakopee, Minnesota, Amazon warehouse July 15.

BY HELEN MEYERS

SHAKOPEE, Minn. — "I'm standing up to make things better for my co-workers," Meg Brady told a protest outside the huge Amazon fulfillment warehouse here July 15. Dozens of Amazon workers were joined by some 300 supporters, many trade unionists from the Twin Cities area.

The rally was called after Amazon announced it will start one-day shipping. This will mean speedup and in-

creased injuries on the job, workers told Socialist Workers Party members and others who joined the action.

They also were protesting the increasing use of temporary workers, unfair write-ups and little consideration for Muslim workers fasting during Ramadan. About one-third of the workforce here are Muslims from East Africa.

Brady, who is not working due to

Continued on page 9

## Victory over ban in Kansas prisons boosts 'Militant' fight in Florida

BY SETH GALINSKY

Kansas state prison officials overturned their ban on the *Militant* July 5. This victory gives a boost to the fight against censorship in Florida, the only prison system in the country that is systematically banning the *Militant*, in violation of the constitutional rights of the paper and its subscribers behind bars.

The Florida prison system's Literature Review Committee informed the *Militant* July 10 that it has upheld the ban on five impounded issues of the paper. They gave no reason for doing so.

That same day, Union Correctional prison officials impounded yet another issue of the *Militant*, simply for

Continued on page 9

## 'Fight for amnesty for immigrants in the US!'

The following statement by Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey General Assembly, was released July 17.

The *New York Times* July 13 ran an editorial — "All Presidents Are Deporters in Chief" — admitting what the Socialist Workers Party and the *Militant* newspaper have pointed out

### SWP STATEMENT

for decades: government attacks on undocumented immigrants are a bipartisan policy.

The SWP demands amnesty for the 11 million workers without papers in the U.S. This is the only road to unite the working class, organize and build the labor movement, and fight for the interests of all those who are exploited and oppressed.

Bill Clinton deported more immigrants than any president in U.S. history — 1.8 million during his last year in office. Barack Obama deported hundreds of thousands under the

Continued on page 9

## US, British rulers step up threats against Tehran - US hands off!

BY TERRY EVANS

The capitalist rulers in Washington and their imperialist allies continue to make threats against Tehran and stoke military tensions in the Gulf. The U.S. government has sent a naval armada into the Red Sea, a B-52 bomber squadron and 1,000 additional troops, using the pretext of a series

Continued on page 2

### Inside

SWP calls for workers control of production, safety at PG&E 4

Walmart's attendance policy shows need for a union 5

Socialist Workers Party champions desegregation fight 6

—On the picket line, p. 5—

London train cleaners join 48-hour work stoppage

California grocery workers rally for wage raise, more work hours



# US, UK hands off Iran!

Continued from front page  
of attacks on ships there that Wash-  
ington blames on Tehran.

The U.S. rulers have stepped up pun-  
ishing sanctions aimed at forcing the  
Iranian government into talks to stop it  
from developing nuclear weapons and to  
constrain Tehran’s political and military  
reach in the Middle East.

The HMS Montrose, a British war-  
ship, drove off three Iranian vessels that  
London says were trying to block the  
passage of the British Heritage, an oil  
tanker sailing in the Strait of Hormuz  
July 10. U.S. aircraft monitored the con-  
frontation. The Heritage was in waters  
that are disputed by the governments of  
Iran and the United Arab Emirates, ac-  
cording to the *Daily Telegraph*.

The encounter comes days after Brit-  
ish Royal Marines stormed and seized  
the Grace 1, a tanker carrying oil from  
Iran, in an act of piracy near the Brit-  
ish colony of Gibraltar. A commander  
in Iran’s Revolutionary Guard threat-  
ened to seize a British ship in retaliation.  
London has since released the ship’s  
crew, but still holds the captured vessel,  
saying it will not release it unless the Ir-  
anian government promises not to trans-  
port the oil to Syria, which London and  
other European powers have sanctioned.

A number of British-flagged vessels  
in the Gulf now sail with naval escorts.  
Some 20% of all the world’s oil trade  
passes through the Strait of Hormuz.

Washington, which deploys 21  
warships in the Gulf, is seeking to  
establish a naval coalition to escort  
commercial vessels around the coast  
of Iran and Yemen up to the Red Sea,  
in the name of upholding “freedom  
of navigation.” So far the plan has  
received backing from the govern-

ments of Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Towards the end of the Iraq-Iran war  
in the late 1980s, the U.S. government,  
which was providing support to Sad-  
dam Hussein’s regime in Baghdad, sent  
warships to escort tankers through the  
Gulf, engaged in battles with the Iranian  
navy and accidentally shot down an Ir-  
anian commercial aircraft in 1988, killing  
290 people. Then President Ronald Rea-  
gan sent an apology to Tehran, saying  
the U.S. forces mistakenly believed the  
plane was an Iranian fighter jet.

Washington on July 10 threatened to  
“substantially” increase the sanctions  
it foists on Iran. The punitive measures  
the U.S. rulers already impose with  
bipartisan support have deepened the  
economic misery bearing down on  
working people there.

While neither the U.S. nor Iranian rul-  
ers are seeking all-out war, the escalat-  
ing tensions, U.S. deployments and mu-  
tual threats are dangerous.

“The U.S. government says ‘we’ are  
threatened by Iran. But the class in-  
terests of working people and of the  
wealthy capitalists are not the same.  
Working people need our own foreign  
policy, independent of the bosses’ par-  
ties, based on the common interests we  
share with other workers around the  
world,” Seth Galinsky, Socialist Work-  
ers Party candidate for New York City  
public advocate, said July 13. “My cam-  
paign demands the U.S. government im-  
mediately end its sanctions on Iran and  
unconditionally withdraw its military  
forces from the Middle East.”

### Moscow’s bombing devastates Syria

Washington has stepped up its sanc-  
tions on Iran to press the rulers there  
to dismantle military bases Tehran has



UK Ministry of Defense

Above, British warship HMS Montrose, which drove off three Iranian vessels London says were trying to block passage of the British Heritage, an oil tanker, in the Strait of Hormuz July 10.

established through intervention in the  
wars in Iraq and Syria, halt its backing  
for Hezbollah in Lebanon and pull back  
from the support it provides to Houthi  
forces fighting in Yemen’s civil war.

Militias organized by Tehran and ally  
Hezbollah, coupled with air power from  
Moscow, have provided the military  
clout to prop up the dictatorial Bashar  
al-Assad regime in Syria.

A popular uprising by the toilers dem-  
anding political rights and an end to  
government repression swept Syria in  
2011. No revolutionary working-class  
leadership existed that was capable of  
leading this struggle and resolving  
the conflict in the interests of the toil-  
ing majority. In this political vacuum,  
bourgeois Islamist forces, which in-  
cluded the Islamic State, were able to  
seize parts of the country.

Today IS has been destroyed, and  
many of the other Islamist groups, who  
are backed by the Recep Tayyip Erdo-  
gan government in Turkey, have been  
pushed into Idlib province. Moscow has  
led ferocious airstrikes on the popula-  
tion of 3 million there since late April.  
Some 330,000 people have fled toward  
the Turkish border and hundreds have  
been killed. Still, Assad has been unable  
to retake any part of the province.

Kurdish forces control a wide swath  
of northeastern Syria, where an auton-  
omous Kurdish region has been estab-  
lished. The Kurdish-led Syrian Demo-  
cratic Forces took control of the area,  
which contains the majority of Syria’s

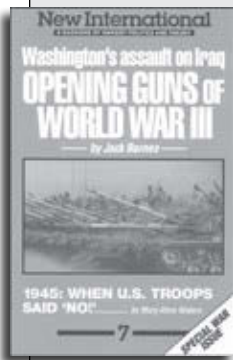
oil fields, after defeating Islamic State.

Some 30 million Kurdish people are  
divided across Iraq, Iran, Syria and Tur-  
key and have fought for their national  
rights — denied by the capitalist rul-  
ers in those countries — for decades.  
Washington maintains bases in the  
SDF-held part of Syria, part of its ef-  
forts to counter the influence of Teh-  
ran and Moscow.

Syrian Democratic Forces depends  
in part on revenue from sales of oil to  
the Assad government, which faces  
increasing fuel shortages as a result  
of Washington’s sanctions on Iran.

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

by Jack Barnes  
In *New International* no. 7



The Gulf War held a mirror to the declining capitalist world order, whether the horrors of World War III are inflicted on humanity or a road is opened by working people to a socialist future of international solidarity.

\$14. Also in Farsi, French, Spanish, Swedish  
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## THE MILITANT

### Ethiopian Israelis resist racist cop brutality

Since Ethiopian Jews won the right of return in the 1970s, they have faced discrimination in housing, jobs and education as well as police attacks and racial profiling. The ‘Militant’ is the best source of reports on such class struggle developments inside Israel.



Reuters/Corinna Kern

Ethiopian Israelis and others protest in Tel Aviv July 2 over cop killing of youth.

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# SWP campaigns in Kentucky

Continued from front page

“He’d been put on and laid off repeatedly by Blackjewel,” Canada told Kennedy. “Last Friday he and his wife deposited his \$3,000 paycheck and headed for Florida for a much needed vacation with their kids. When they tried to use their debit card, it was declined.

“They’re going to Harlan for meetings with other miners to discuss what to do,” she said. “Probably the owners will reopen as a ‘different’ company and go unpunished.”

Kennedy, a former underground coal miner who was the SWP candidate for U.S. president in 2016 and ran for mayor of Dallas earlier this year, is joining Malcolm Jarrett, SWP candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, on a national campaign tour to advance the party across the country. The first stop was Kentucky.

Kennedy and Jarrett will speak at public meetings and to the media, join local party members talking to workers on their doorsteps, and participate in labor and social protest actions, promoting the need for workers and farmers to break with the Democrats and Republicans. Amy Husk is SWP candidate for governor and Samir Hazboun for lieutenant governor in Kentucky.

Kennedy got a warm reception in eastern Kentucky coal country July 12-13, campaigning with Hazboun and two supporters. The *Hazard Herald* here and the *Mountain Eagle* in nearby Whitesburg interviewed Kennedy and Hazboun.

Ben Gish, editor of the *Mountain Eagle*, said his parents founded the paper and it backed the United Mine Workers union. They had subscribed to the *Militant* for years, he said. Local cops had burned the *Mountain Eagle*’s office down in 1974 because of its pro-union stance.

“We’re used to coal companies using bankruptcy courts to cheat workers,” Jessica Ison, 26, a farmer from a coal mining family, told Kennedy and Hazboun at a farmers market in Whitesburg. “They file bankruptcy, change owner, change the name and reopen as ‘another company,’” she said.

“I remember when South East Coal did the same thing around here in the 1990s,” James Melton, 67, a retired union miner and family friend of Ison, added.

Ison, Melton and Melton’s wife, Lita Melton, were interested in the SWP program. The Meltons subscribed to the *Militant*.

Knocking on doors in Hazard, Hazboun met Rhonda Curtis, whose husband was a nonunion strip miner for 27 years and is now bed-ridden, fighting for disability benefits. A former Republican, Curtis said she liked the SWP platform. “People really need to know your names,” she told Hazboun, “and that workers are running.” She said she’d like to organize a meeting when the candidates return to the area.

Jarrett met Tyrel Sanderson, 27, a construction worker, when he and campaign supporter Jacquie Henderson knocked on Sanderson’s door in Louisville’s West End the next day. “The SWP candidates are opposed to Washington’s wars that sacrifice workers here to kill workers in other countries,” Jarrett said. “These wars are carried out so the rich can get richer attacking working people. The same class that exploits us here doesn’t care how many soldiers come back torn apart or killed.”

“You’re right about that,” Sanderson replied. “And it’s not just the soldiers who get torn up. Their families do too. I was working 70 hours a week and still couldn’t pay the bills, so I signed up for



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

“The capitalist class that exploits us here doesn’t care how many soldiers come back torn apart or killed,” Malcolm Jarrett, right, SWP candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, told army veteran Tyrel Sanderson in Louisville, Kentucky, July 13. He replied, “You’re right about that.”

two tours of duty, in Afghanistan and Iraq. By the time that was done I didn’t have a family anymore.”

“We shouldn’t have to use all our energy just to survive,” said Jarrett. “We’re not animals! We need to work together to change this, to stand together in solidarity. That’s why we’re for using union power to defend ourselves, every worker, and not look at what the bosses’ government says about some immigrants’ papers or the age, sex or color of any of us. I think we can learn from what working people in Cuba have done since they made a revolution in 1959, showing it’s possible to begin to transform themselves as humans as they took power and uprooted capitalist exploitation.”

## Working people need to organize

Husk and Dan Fein, one of four SWP campaigners who came down from Chicago to help out, talked with five young men sitting on a porch in the West End.

prisoners and all workers behind bars.

**DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS** Defend democratic rights — the right to vote, to free speech and assembly, and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption.

**PRISONER RIGHTS** End solitary confinement. End censorship of the *Militant*, books and newspapers by prison authorities. Abolish the death penalty, an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.

**FARMERS — WORKERS ALLIES ON THE LAND** To put a halt to farm foreclosures, bankruptcies and skyrocketing rural debt, we demand nationalization of the land. This puts the soil at the service of the farmers who till it, as opposed to control by the banks and landlords. We demand the government guarantee farmers their costs of production, including their living expenses.

*Working people must organize and act independent of the ruling capitalists and break from their political parties — the Democrats and Republicans. A movement of millions can be built to fight for these demands along a course to replace the rule of the exploitative capitalist class with a workers and farmers government.*

*Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!*

Husk explained that she’s running a working-class campaign against the two parties of the rich. “What are you going to do about the cuts they’re making in social services, like here in Louisville?” Robert Gummer asked.

“We have to organize a fight to keep them from cutting our services,” said Husk. “Both the Democrats and Republicans have cut the social wage, as William Clinton did when he ‘ended welfare as we know it’ in the 1990s.”

“I know that’s right,” said Justin Bray. “I don’t like either party. I’ve never voted.”

“We’ve never gotten anything by voting,” said Husk. “We have to fight like workers did during the labor upsurge in the 1930s depression or the Civil Rights movement in the ’60s.” All five pulled out a dollar and got a *Militant*. Two gave their phone numbers so SWP members could arrange to stop back and have more discussion.

SWP campaigners also joined the picket line of Teamsters Local 215 members on strike against Irving Materials concrete company in Evansville, Indiana; and organized a campaign barbecue, a press conference on the steps of the state Capitol in Frankfort, and a July 13 evening public campaign meeting in Louisville.

“Workers live paycheck to paycheck,” Jarrett said at the Louisville meeting. “The capitalists don’t care if we have to work two or three jobs to make ends meet. They don’t care if eight or nine cab drivers in New York commit suicide when the medallions they went into debt for drop in value due to increased competition with Uber and Lyft drivers, whose rates are being cut by their bosses as well.”

He said from what he’d seen in Kentucky, the SWP has some real opportunities to pursue.

In Frankfort July 15, Kennedy hailed the victory of the Gibson family, owners of a small bakery in Oberlin, Ohio, who won an award for \$25 million in damages in a lawsuit against Oberlin College officials for their race-baiting smear campaign (see article on front page).

“The Gibsons refused to roll over and give up. They said ‘No!’ to the race-baiting attack, got widespread backing of working people in hard-hit Lorain County, and won,” she said. “The SWP candidates will be talking about the importance of the Gibsons’ victory and why it is an example for working people everywhere in defense of our rights.”

## Socialist Workers Party 2019 campaign program

*The Socialist Workers Party’s fighting program to confront the economic, social and moral crisis caused by capitalism:*

**UNIONS** Support workers’ struggles to organize and strengthen unions, to use union power to defend ourselves and all working people. *One* union for *all* drivers — taxi, Uber, Lyft, other app-based and car service drivers! Support farmworkers in their fight to organize unions and for safe working conditions.

**AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS** in the US, a life-and-death question for the unions to unite workers and cut across divisions the bosses use to drive down wages. For access to driver’s licenses for all.

**JOBS** Fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building roads, bridges, hospitals, child care centers, mass transportation and quality affordable housing workers need. Set the minimum wage to allow workers to have a home and support a family.

**OPPOSE WASHINGTON’S WARS** US hands off Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba. US troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, the Middle East. End US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

**CUBA — AN EXAMPLE** End the embargo against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in

struggle, to take political power and uproot capitalist exploitation.

**HEALTH CARE FOR ALL** Fight for universal, government-guaranteed health care and retirement income for all.

**ABORTION** Defend women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

**ISRAEL & PALESTINE** For the recognition of Israel and of a contiguous Palestinian state. For the right of Jews to return to Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jew-hatred, and murderous violence.

**LAND AND LABOR** Capitalism’s profit drive is the despoiler of nature and cause of unsafe working conditions. Workers and our unions must fight for workers control over production and safety in the factories, mines, railroads and all energy monopolies to protect those on the job and in nearby communities, and to control emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases and prevent the poisoning of the air, water and soil. Workers control over production to prevent disasters like the Boeing 737 MAX.

**“JUSTICE” SYSTEM** Fight against police brutality, racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,” onerous bail, and outrageous prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-



# SWP calls for workers control of production, safety at PG&E

BY ANDREA MORELL

SAN FRANCISCO — Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of San Francisco, was the first speaker at a public hearing here July 9 sponsored by Pacific Gas & Electric Company and the California Public Utilities Commission, the state regulatory agency that supposedly oversees the energy giant, to hear comments on company bosses' demand for a rate hike. Britton told the 80 or so people there that not only was he opposed to the rate hike, but that his party "calls for the nationalization of PG&E and running it under workers control."

PG&E supplies natural gas and electricity to 16 million people in Northern and Central California. It proposes to boost rates by nearly \$2 billion, raising charges to customers by 6.4%. They say the increase is necessary so they can "make important additional safety investments to help further reduce wildfire risk" and "to enhance gas and electric safety and reliability."

"PG&E management's sole concern is maximizing profits for its shareholders," Britton countered. Their record "demonstrates the urgency of taking the utility out of the hands of its management." He cited a number of examples, including the notorious Camp Fire last fall that destroyed 19,000 homes and other buildings and killed 85 people.

"As a longtime oil refinery worker and member of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers union, I learned firsthand the importance of union struggles for safety," he said. "The more control workers had over operations, the greater the protection against explosions, fires and other disasters affecting workers and the surrounding community."

"Workers at PG&E, many of whom are members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, need to be in control of operations of this utility. They know from their own experiences what is safe and what is dangerously unsafe. They must have the authority to organize the work and to initiate shut-downs when they are necessary."

That is the only way, Britton said, "to enforce job safety, control all technical processes to provide affordable gas and electricity, and to prevent the company from causing other disasters."

## Independent from bosses' parties

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported in its online edition that "nearly all of the 16 people who spoke at the meeting opposed the rate hike." The article

quoted two, including Britton. It identified him as a Socialist Workers Party member and former oil refinery worker. Working people must "not be forced to pay for PG&E's disregard for people's lives and property," the paper quoted Britton saying.

Britton told the hearing that the fight for workers control over production and safety "will require organizing and acting independently of the capitalist parties — the Democrats and Republicans."

"This fight can be part of a movement of millions of working people that we need to build," he said, "and chart a course out of the capitalist economic, social and moral crisis to replace capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government."



KTVU-TV  
"PG&E management's sole concern is maximizing profits for its shareholders," said SWP candidate for San Francisco mayor Joel Britton at July 9 hearing on company's demand for rate increase. He called "for nationalization of PG&E and running it under workers control."

## Telecom bosses on trial for driving workers to suicide

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A highly publicized two-month trial over charges top bosses at France's former government telephone monopoly relentlessly drove dozens of workers to suicide by "moral harassment" in their push to cut the workforce and boost profits was closely followed by working people. Testimony at the trial, including vivid descriptions of how the bosses treated workers as trash in an all-out effort to get them to quit, shines a spotlight on the brutal workings of the capitalist system. The trial proceedings concluded July 12 and a verdict isn't expected for weeks.

France Telecom, now called Orange, was privatized in 2003. Facing stiffening competition amid a shift to digital technology, the company set out to get rid of 22,000 of its 130,000 workers.

But the bosses had to confront the fact that workers in France waged labor battles earlier that won legal protections against being arbitrarily fired or laid off. State workers consider themselves to have jobs for life.

President Emmanuel Macron — dubbed the "president of the rich" by massive yellow vest protests earlier this year — and the capitalist rulers in France have moved to overhaul the country's Labor Code, replacing jobs that "last a lifetime" with increasing numbers of temporary workers at lower pay, no benefits and no union protection.

The former Telecom executives on trial included CEO Didier Lombard; second-in-command Louis-Pierre Wenes; and Olivier Barberot, head of human resources. If convicted they would each

face a year in jail and a \$16,800 fine.

At the trial the prosecution played a tape of Lombard saying they would slash jobs "one way or another, by the window or by the door." Unionists came to the trial wearing T-shirts reading, "The window or the door."

Chiming in along the same lines, Barberot said, "This isn't going to be lace-work here. We're going to put people in front of life's realities." And that's what the bosses did.

"From the capitalist point of view, they were doing what they had to," Pierre Khalfa, who worked 20 years as a line installer for France Telecom and is now retired, told the *Militant*. "When Didier became president, company policy changed to getting rid of people by any means."

The bosses ordered managers to harass targeted workers and put them in uncomfortable and unlivable conditions until they couldn't take it anymore.

Bosses abruptly eliminated some workers' jobs, sending others into new assignments — like a line technician ordered to do sales work — with no training. Others were forced to relocate, some numerous times, far from their families.

Between 2008 and 2009 at least 35 workers took their own lives. Their cases were presented in court — they had hung themselves, immolated themselves, or threw themselves out of windows, under trains, off bridges and highway overpasses. Many left notes saying the company had made

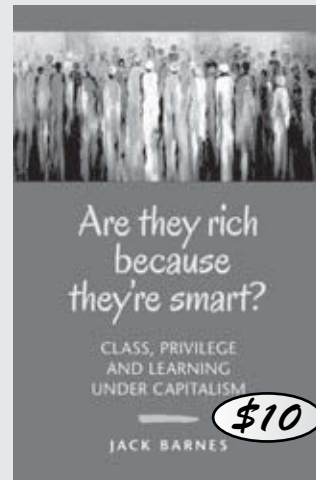
their lives unbearable.

Remy Louvradoux, a 57-year-old worker at Telecom, was told in 2006 that his job was scrapped and he had to relocate. Louvradoux changed jobs four times in three years. In 2009 he wrote a note to the bosses — "Nothing is being done to face up to it: suicide remains the only solution."

The youngest worker to kill himself was Nicolas Grenouville, 28, who hung himself in a garage. "I can't stand this job anymore, and France Telecom couldn't care less," he wrote shortly before his death in August 2009. "All they care about is money."

Derek Jeffers in Paris contributed to this article.

## Recommended reading



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## Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

### California

Dennis Richter, Los Angeles City Council  
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### Florida

Anthony Dutrow, Miami City Commission

### Georgia

Rachele Fruit, Atlanta School Board

### Kentucky

Amy Husk, Governor  
Samir Hazboun, Lieutenant Governor

### Minnesota

David Rosenfeld, U.S. Congress  
Helen Meyers, St. Paul City Council

### New Jersey

Lea Sherman, State Assembly  
Candace Wagner, State Assembly

### New York

Seth Galinsky, New York City Public Advocate  
Ved Dookhun, Mayor of Troy  
Lawrence Quinn, Troy City Council  
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### Pennsylvania

Osborne Hart, Mayor of Philadelphia  
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Malcolm Jarrett, Pittsburgh City Council

### Washington

Henry Clay Dennison, Seattle City Council

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## CUBA SOLIDARITY

### Chicago

**Celebrate Anniversary of Opening of Cuba's Socialist Revolution!** Speakers: Participants in May Day International Solidarity Brigade. Sat., July 27. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 2229 S. Halsted St. Sponsor: Chicago Cuba Coalition. Tel.: (312) 952-2618.

### New York City

**Celebrate 66th Anniversary of the Assault on Moncada — The Event that Launched the Cuban Revolution.** Speakers include representative from Cuban Mission to the U.N. Sat., July 27. Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 131 West 33rd St., 2nd floor. Sponsor: New York-New Jersey Cuba Si Coalition. Tel.: (917) 887-8710.

### Washington, D.C.

**U.S. Imperialist Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba!** Picket line, rally on north side of White House. Sat., July 27, 12 noon. Sponsor: DC Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. Tel.: (202) 503-9465.

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Alyson Kennedy, recent candidate for Dallas mayor; Malcolm Jarrett, for Pittsburgh City Council; and Joel Britton, for San Francisco mayor. Sat., July 27. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: dinner, \$6; program, \$6. Marina Community Center, 15301 Wicks Blvd., Room B. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Manchester

**UK, US and EU Hands Off Iran!** Speaker: Ogmundur Jonsson, Communist League. Sat., July 27, 6 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Unit 9, Progress Centre, Charlton Place. M12 6HS. Tel.: 0161 258 2569.

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## 17,000 workers strike Walmart in Chile over wages, job security

Some 17,000 unionized workers across Chile went on strike against Walmart July 10. It is “the largest private sector strike in decades” in the country, Telesur TV News reported.

The strike vote was organized June 25-27 by Sindicato Interempresa Líder (SIL), the trade union that organizes Walmart workers in Chile. Walmart owns some 375 stores run by supermarket chains Líder, Hiper Líder, Express de Líder, Ekono, aCuenta and Central Mayorista. The strike has closed down 130 of the stores, and 100 more are only open half days.

Walmart bosses are pushing to introduce more automation, with speedup and job cuts. For example, the installment of automatic cash registers has already forced cashiers to take on more work restocking shelves. Some 3,000 layoffs are imminent, while workers are demanding transfers to other jobs.

The workers are demanding a 4% wage increase. They voted down the company’s offer of 3% with a \$72 bonus.

“We do not agree with all the automation, with everything they want us to do,” Jimena Gabiola, a cashier, told Telesur. “Our salaries are very low, and what they offer us is very little.”

—Janet Post

## London train cleaners join 48-hour work stoppage

LONDON — Chanting, “Low pay, no way!” 40 members of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers picketed the North Pole Hitachi rail depot in northwest London July 9 and 10. Some 60 union members across two shifts had voted to hold a two-day work stoppage to protest speedup, shift schedules and pay cuts announced by ISS, the cleaning contractor employed by Hitachi. Most of the workers have been union members for just a few months.

At a picket line rally, cleaner Jacob Mensah said that he’d never been involved in anything like this before. “You stood firm,” he told the pickets.

“We’re going to defeat these people.”

“We’re fighting for our rights,” added Anwuli Ogbuaku, “standing our ground in the face of their bullying.”

Currently the cleaners work 10-hour night shifts — four-on, and four off. The company is proposing to cut workers’ pay with a schedule of five-on and two-off with 7½-hour shifts. “We get no night-shift premium, no overtime rates and no additional pay when we work public holidays,” Ogbuaku said.

Joining the picket line in solidarity over the two nights were rail workers from other companies and cleaners on the London Underground.

—Jonathan Silberman

## California grocery workers rally for wage raise, more work hours

LOS ANGELES — Over 300 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union and some supporters rallied in front of a Ralphs grocery store here July 9. “We work at different companies but we’re all fighting for better wages to take care of our families,” Fermin Rodriguez, a 14-year worker at El Super market and member of UFCW Local 770, told the *Militant*.

Grocery workers in Southern Cali-



Reuters/Rodrigo Garrido

Walmart workers picket in Santiago, Chile, July 10, part of strike by 17,000 members of SIL union for better wages, and against job cuts and speedup. Sign reads, “No more abuses.”

fornia voted overwhelmingly in June to authorize a strike against hundreds of area stores operated by major national supermarket chains, including Albertsons, Ralphs, Vons and Pavilions. Some 46,000 unionized workers organized by the UFCW are demanding higher wages, more hours, continued health care coverage and retirement benefits.

“I work hard. Every time I get my

check it gets smaller,” Michael Rogers, a deli worker at Ralphs, told protesters. “Every time I ask for more hours, they lower my hours. We can’t live on one job like this.

“What’s wrong?” he yelled to the crowd. “Greed,” the crowd roared back. “We’re not even making minimum wage. We have to stand up to corporate,” Rogers said.

—Bernie Senter

# Walmart’s attendance policy shows need for a union

BY TODD MCGIVENS

LOS ANGELES — Workers at Walmart stores across the U.S. were informed by the bosses in February that the company was implementing a new attendance policy. The giant retailer slashed from nine to five the number of days a worker can call off in any six-

## AS I SEE IT

month period. And any worker who calls off on special days the company designates around holidays now incurs two of the five allowed marks against their record, instead of just one.

Drew Holler, Walmart vice president for associate experience, told the press that more than 300,000 hourly

associates currently have spotless attendance records. “Our associates told us they wanted to be rewarded for their dedication, and we couldn’t agree more,” he claimed.

I constantly encounter the opposite reaction at the store where I work. The new policy has been met with confusion and anger as the threat of being fired and actual firings based on the onerous new restrictions came rapidly. Company bosses are constantly seeking new ways to get an edge in their cutthroat competition with Amazon and other retailers. They are cutting workers’ weekly hours, and demanding workers be available to come to work whenever Walmart beckons. Company favorites are rewarded with extra hours. This is but one more example of how workers bear the brunt

of the profit-driven competition between these giant rivals.

In an attempt to get workers to accept the new policy, the company has assigned us six days of “protected time off” during the year that we can use if we have to take off.

Instead of increasing our hourly pay — something Walmart workers across the country sorely need — at the end of every quarter the company issues what they call a “MyShare” bonus. This is really a bribe to accept low wages and poor working conditions. The size of this so-called bonus is arbitrary. It is determined based on the “performance” of each particular store. Managers use the promise of a higher bonus to try and get workers to press each other to speed up.

Walmart is using both the carrot and the stick with the bonuses to get workers to toe the line. If you’ve got “perfect” attendance, the company bumps up your bribe by 25%. This is intended to get workers to come to work even if they’re sick, have a personal emergency or whatever. Every absence above 2.5 — half of what you’re allotted — means your bribe goes down.

Class-conscious workers reject taking the bribe. I contribute whatever “MyShare” check I’m given to the Socialist Workers Party to advance its work building the working-class movement and explain to my co-workers the reason why.

As it stands now, Walmart is an “at will” employer, and can do whatever it wants whenever. If you don’t like it, you can quit, they say.

This attendance policy is just the latest example why workers at Walmart need to organize a union.

A fighting union can prevent the bosses arbitrarily imposing draconian absentee policies, shifting schedules and hours, and playing favorites in the workforce on a profit-driven whim.

Todd McGivens is a Los Angeles area Walmart worker.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 25, 1994

GOLDFIELD, Iowa — At a hearing here, working farmers from central Iowa assailed the “mega” hog confinement facilities being built. They put forth proposals that would regulate them with stringent laws protecting air, soil, and water quality.

That was the majority opinion of the 300 people, mostly farmers, at the last of three hearings held by the governor-appointed Environmental Agriculture Committee. Of central concern to working farmers voicing opposition before the task force is the odor and huge open manure lagoons.

Most farmers see economic devastation developing from being forced to compete with large hog-producing operations. Working farmers are proposing that the big hog bosses put up a cash bond so that when and if they shut down their hog facilities the burden of leaving a mess hits them in their pockets.



August 1, 1969

Yielding to the storm of protest by Japanese and Okinawans precipitated by the disclosure that the U.S. is storing nerve gas on Okinawa, the Defense Department announced that all nerve gas will be removed from Okinawa.

One strong motivating factor in the U.S. decision was their fear that the furor about the incident had added impetus to the powerful movement for an end to American occupation of Okinawa and the return of the island to Japan.

A report in the July 18 *Wall Street Journal* that 25 Americans were hospitalized by an “accident” involving nerve gas at a U.S. base on Okinawa quickly developed into an international incident. Even some leading members of Japanese Premier Sato’s notoriously pro-American Liberal Democratic Party were beginning to speak out on the issue in the face of the mounting public outcry.



July 29, 1944

Blessed and backed by a powerful section of the more far-sighted Wall Street interests, Franklin D. Roosevelt was renominated virtually automatically last week as the Democratic Party’s 1944 presidential candidate. His platform contains but one tangible plank — a pledge to prosecute to successful conclusion Wall Street’s war for world domination, and to impose a conqueror’s “peace by force.”

Roosevelt, as he himself stated in his nomination acceptance speech, stands “on the record.” That record has piled up unprecedented war profits and thrust its hands into a grab-bag containing billions worth of government-financed plants and land developments. It has fastened such government shackles on labor as compulsory arbitration, wage freezing, forced labor decrees, anti-strike legislation, extortionate taxes.



# Divisions wrack Democrats as race-baiting charges fly

BY TERRY EVANS

Divisions within the Democratic Party blew up after its leadership led the party to vote for a House bill backed by President Donald Trump to fund immigration and border cops that didn't restrict how the funds could be used.

Only four Democrats opposed the bill — Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib. All are backed by Democratic Socialists of America, which seeks to bolster the Democratic Party with a program to expand the federal government to reform capitalism.

"All these people have their public whatever and their Twitter world, but they didn't have any following," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said after the "squad," as the four representatives are called, denounced the Democratic majority vote. "They're four people and that's how many votes they got."

Ocasio-Cortez responded with race-baiting, claiming Pelosi was taking aim at them because they are "newly elected people of color." Days later, Ocasio-Cortez's chief of staff, Saikat Chakrabarti, charged the Democratic Party leadership was "hell-bent to do to black and brown people what the old Southern Democrats did in the 40s," — referring to the Democrats' leading role in running Jim Crow segregation in the South.

He singled out Rep. Sharice Davids' vote on the bill, saying she voted "to enable a racist system." Davids is Native American.

Smears of racism and race-baiting that rejects someone's opinion because of their skin color have become increasingly common on the left of capitalist politics in recent years to shut down debate. Such methods repel most working people, Black and Caucasian alike.

There was nothing "racist" in Pelosi's remarks. Pelosi herself is not above making sham charges of racism against opponents, calling Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell a "racist" in 2010 when he said he wanted Barack Obama to be a "one-term President."

Pelosi called President Trump a racist after he vilified the four congresswomen

in a sharply anti-immigrant remark. In a tweet he asked, "Why don't they go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came." This is despite the fact that three of the four were born in the U.S.

*New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman claimed Trump's slur was "a moment of truth" that proved that what motivated his "base" — the millions of workers who voted for him looking for some way out of the social, moral and economic crisis of capitalism bearing down on working people — is "not economic anxiety" but "racism."

Krugman, like many liberals and the left, considers working people bigoted and backward, and argues they should be written off by the Democratic Party.

*Times* columnist Michelle Goldberg worried that Trump's smears "momentarily smoothed over divisions" among Democrats, but the party's "fissures remain."

And the use of race-baiting to try and shut down political discussion and debate will rear its head again and again.

## Place of fight for Black rights

Liberals and those in the middle-class left frequently use the term "people of color" rather than Black or African American. This obscures the powerful accomplishments made in the fight for Black rights and the decisive role of African Americans in the class struggle.

The Black nationality in the U.S. was forged and shaped through slave revolts, the Second American Revolution to overturn slavery, Radical Reconstruc-



During Democrat candidates' debate, Kamala Harris attacked rival Joe Biden over stance on federally mandated busing to desegregate public schools in 1970s. In fact, neither candidate nor their party supported the policy. Above, Boston protesters defend busing, December 1974.

tion and the fight for the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments that expanded constitutional rights — as well as the mass movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation and transformed social views in ways that continue to impact on politics today.

Workers who are African American have been at the forefront of every struggle against oppression and in forging a vanguard of the working class that has — and will — fight against discrimination and capitalist exploitation.

The liberal media spent days praising the performance of Kamala Harris, one of 24 Democrats vying for the party's presidential nomination, during their candidates debate June 27. She pounced on front-runner Joe Biden for his refusal to support federal government mandated busing to desegregate white-only schools in the 1970s.

Harris, who is Black, described her

own experience being bused to school. But after the debate, Harris clarified that she is generally opposed to what is called "forced busing" by opponents of desegregation, explaining the busing program she was in, in Berkeley, was voluntary. Her position is virtually the same as Biden's. She was using the fact that she is Black, and that Biden opposed busing, to seek factional advantage.

Both the Democratic and Republican parties are fractured today, reflecting the political crisis of the capitalist rulers and their fear of the "deplorables," as Hillary Clinton called the working class in 2016. As Socialist Workers Party leader Steve Clark said in his introduction to *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*, "the financial capitalists and well-paid professionals who serve them sense that mounting struggle — class struggle — lies ahead."

## Socialist Workers Party champions desegregation fight

BY SETH GALINSKY

A brief, but acrimonious, exchange about busing for school desegregation between Kamala Harris and Joe Biden at the June 27 Democratic Party debate in Miami received lots of news coverage but had little substance.

Neither Harris nor Biden are interested in telling the real history of the fight to desegregate the schools — a key part of the fight to end Jim Crow segregation in the 1960s, '70s and beyond. The Democratic Party was the main actor in trying to block desegregation of schools both in the South and the North.

Harris accused Biden of opposing mandatory federally imposed busing for school desegregation in the 1970s. And that's true, as did the whole Democratic Party leadership. Really what Harris was after was race-baiting Biden. "I do not believe you are a racist," she said, which was a setup to accuse him of exactly that. Harris implied that she defends government-ordered busing to desegregate schools.

But she doesn't. Her position is almost identical to Biden's. She told reporters July 4 that she does not support federally mandated busing. Like Biden, she backs "voluntary" busing, when agreed to by local governments.

But desegregating U.S. schools was a major social struggle. It began in the South. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "separate but equal" was "inherently unequal," outlawing racially segregated schools.

Black youth were already often being bused — right past all-Caucasian schools to all-Black schools. Black schools received two-thirds or less of the funds that Caucasian schools received. Classes were overcrowded, while there were empty seats in the better-supplied Caucasian ones.

But the court ruling remained a piece of paper until Black workers and their supporters initiated what became the massive protest movement that tore down Jim Crow segregation.

Under the pressure of the mass protests, the U.S. government was forced to send in federal troops to ensure schools were desegregated, including by busing. Without this the racist forces like the Ku Klux Klan and similar groups — alongside Democratic Party-led governments — would have ensured the schools would never have been desegregated.

Schools in city after city, from grade schools to the University of Alabama, were opened to Black youth and racist prejudice was hit with a body blow.

Perhaps the biggest fight — and some of the most violent resistance by racist forces — took place in the North after federal Judge Arthur Garrity ordered widespread busing after ruling in the summer of 1974 that the Boston school board had deliberately segregated the schools.

The Democratic Party machine ran the Boston government. They whipped up racist forces, claiming they were defending "local control" of schools.

Racist organizers were invited to meet in City Hall to mobilize a fight, including a boycott of the schools. Racist mobs attacked buses carrying Black students to their schools. Supporters of busing organized a picnic at a beach, off-limits to Blacks for years. They were attacked by racists as cops looked the other way.

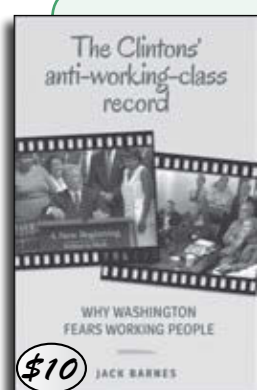
The Socialist Workers Party backed the Black rights movement in both the South and the North. SWP presidential candidate Farrell Dobbs helped organize the first station wagon driven to Montgomery, Alabama, to help strengthen the 1955-56 boycott of segregated public transportation there.

The SWP was centrally involved in defending busing — including winning Caucasian workers to support the fight — during what became known as the Battle of Boston. The party helped organize two national pro-busing marches of more than 10,000 each in Boston in December 1974 and May 1975.

The movement broke the back of the anti-busing violence and desegregation won out.

In the absence of a continuing fight, and ongoing Democratic Party opposition to busing, as exemplified by both Biden and Harris, many schools face growing imbalance. Today, half the population of Boston is Caucasian, but only 14 percent of public school students.

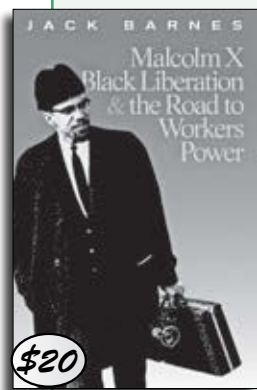
But it would take a bloody counter-revolution to reverse the gains of the Black-led working-class movement that smashed Jim Crow segregation.



### The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record

Why Washington Fears Working People

by Jack Barnes



### Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

See distributors on page 8

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# New stage in bakery's fight

Continued from front page

Judge John Miraldi denied a July 2 motion by lawyers for the college to postpone a hearing on the award of legal fees to the Gibsons for at least six weeks — one more attempt by the college to delay proceedings while they open up a fishing expedition into the small-business owner's legal costs.

At the July 10 hearing college attorneys argued against any legal fees being awarded to the Gibsons and told the judge the college plans to appeal the award of \$25 million in punitive damages.

The Gibsons' application for attorney's fees asks for between \$9.5 million and \$14.5 million, citing the length and complexity of the proceedings, and the way Oberlin College attempted to drag them out and force the family and their lawyers into "numerous unnecessary procedural and discovery motions."

The family underwent 18 months of litigation and a six-week trial. Their application for legal fees details actions by the college's lawyers. They took 32 depositions before the trial, including five days of questioning of 90-year-old Allyn Gibson Sr. And they subjected numerous other witnesses to multiday probing.

Eric Gaines, an African American from Oberlin who testified at the trial, said that claims the Gibsons were racist were "preposterous." He called the college's lawyers questioning of witnesses "a classic bullying tactic."

"I gave a video affidavit speaking to the character of the family and the legacy in the community that they've had, and instead of taking that testimony on its surface for being what it is, truthful and from the heart," Gaines said, "I get carted 30 minutes away" to "sit in a room for five hours while you dissect everything I've said."

Gibson's lawyers gave a number of other examples of this kind of bullying.

In all, "Oberlin College mounted a scorched-earth defense," the online Legal Insurrection, which followed the case closely and backed the Gibsons, wrote July 8.

## 'Pay up and apologize'

A well-known former president of Oberlin College, S. Frederick Starr, wrote in the July 6 *Wall Street Jour-*

*nal* that the Gibson's case opposing college administrators' "crusade" against the bakery was just. He urged the college not to fight the judgment, but to pay up and "apologize to the Gibson family and to the community."

But instead of following this advice, college officials have launched a public campaign to misconstrue the case as a "free speech" issue. College President Carmen Twillie Ambar held meetings with CBS News, *Wall Street Journal* and other media, insisting the college is being held liable for the free speech of its students, with frightening implications for other institutions of higher education.

But the First Amendment and the right of students to protest were never on trial — not a single student was charged in the lawsuit. The Gibsons fought back against the orchestrated race-baiting slander and boycott of the family business by the college. And, as a devastating 56-page factsheet by the Gibson's legal team explains, "The right to free speech doesn't give anyone the right to destroy reputations with false information." Overwhelming evidence presented at the trial proved that is just what the administration did.

On Nov. 9 2016, Allyn Gibson, the son of the store owner, refused to sell a bottle of wine to a student who presented an obviously fake ID. When the student tried to walk out with two bottles of wine without paying, Gibson followed to try and stop him. Instead, he was attacked by the youth and two friends. The students involved, who are Black, later pled guilty to shoplifting, and said that no racial profiling was involved.

But over the next two days college administrators and scores of students protested in front of the store. Evidence at the trial showed that Meredith Raimondo, Oberlin College vice president and dean of students, helped organize the protest. She and another staff member went and helped pass out leaflets. In a later email, Raimondo said she had the power to "unleash the students" whenever she thought necessary.

The flyers, printed for free at the college, alleged the bakery was a "racist establishment." The trial proved the opposite — there had been no prior claims of racial profiling or discrimination during over a century of relations between the



Gibson's Allyn Gibson Sr. tells stories to children outside his family-run bakery in Oberlin, Ohio. Bakery owners won lawsuit against Oberlin College after smear campaign labeling Gibson's as "racist."

family grocery store and the campus.

The trial also revealed that despite Raimondo's efforts to do so, she was unable to find a single African American town resident to back the "racism" smear. Despite this, the college intransigently refused to admit the race-baiting charge wasn't true, let alone apologize. Now Ambar is promising a "lengthy and complex legal process" to try to reverse the result.

## Victory for working people

The wealthy liberal college, with 2,800 students, has always dominated the town of Oberlin, where 8,000 people live. The jury pool was drawn from working people across Lorain County, near Cleveland, an area hit by years of

factory closures, declining living standards and a social crisis that has included rising deaths from opioid overdoses.

David Gibson undertook the legal battle because, he wrote in a widely read column in *USA Today*, his father, known as "Grandpa" Gibson, was worried that although he had always tried to "to treat all people with dignity and respect," now he was "going to die being labeled as a racist" and the Gibsons wanted to set the record straight.

They did — with broad support from working people across the region. In the days after the decision, hundreds of area workers came to the store, to congratulate the Gibsons on their victory, and, they made clear, to spend money there.

## EDITORIAL

# Ruling is gain for working class

The Lorain County jury ruling in favor of the Gibson family in their legal challenge to baseless "racism" smears by the administrators of Oberlin College is a political victory for the working class. It is a break with years of race-baiting attacks aimed at shutting down discussion and debate, orchestrated by privileged liberal meritocrats who view the working classes as bigoted and "racist."

In an attempt to undercut the political effect of the ruling, college administrators falsely claim the court decision is an attack on "free speech" for students. It places no such limits on speech, for students or anyone else. It punishes the college, the biggest business in town, for its attempt to cripple a small business with malicious slander and a boycott campaign. The Gibson family deserve the support of all working people as they press their fight forward.

The court's verdict reflected widespread support for the Gibson family among working people in the area. Oberlin is effectively a company town, where the college has a say over much of their lives.

False claims of "racism" like those leveled at the Gibsons are widely used by middle-class liberals and radicals, especially on college campuses, to demand those they don't agree with be prevented from speaking. Even as race-baiting by liberals and the left increases, the fact is there is less racism among working people than ever before in the U.S.

The victory won by the Gibsons puts working people in a better position to defend the political rights we need to fight to defend ourselves from attacks by the bosses and their government. We need the space to discuss and debate how to organize and fight effectively to defend our class interests.

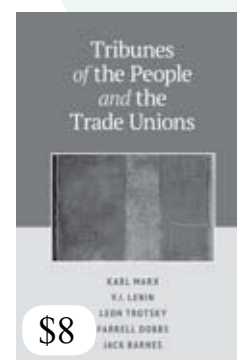
We urge our readers to continue to follow the Gibsons' fight closely, the stakes are high. Tell others about it and explain the stakes for working people. And feel free to join with hundreds of others to let the Gibsons know how you feel.



Message on Gibson's website, thanks people who supported family-run bakery in its successful lawsuit against Oberlin College. Family decided they had to stand against "racist" slander.

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# Debs: ‘Our hearts are with the Bolsheviki in Russia’

The selection below is from Eugene V. Debs Speaks, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for July. Debs was a pioneer socialist agitator, railroad union fighter and supporter of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. He was jailed by the U.S. rulers for opposing their intervention into the first imperialist world war. The excerpt is from his speech to a rally in Canton, Ohio, in June 1918. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison for this attack on imperialist war. Following a public outcry, Debs was pardoned by President Warren G. Harding in 1921. Harding insisted Debs visit him in the White House, where Harding told him, “I have heard so damned much about you.” Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### BY EUGENE V. DEBS

Yes, my comrades, my heart is attuned to yours. Aye, all our hearts now throb as one great heart responsive to the battle cry of the social revolution. Here, in this alert and inspiring assemblage [applause] our hearts are with the Bolsheviki of Russia. [Deafening and prolonged applause.]

Those heroic men and women, those unconquerable comrades have by their incomparable valor and sacrifice added fresh luster to the fame of the international movement. Those Russian com-



Courtesy of Tamiment Institute Library, New York University  
Eugene V. Debs speaks in Canton, Ohio, against imperialist war, June 1918, for which he was sentenced to prison. Inset, campaign button for Debs 1920 Socialist Party campaign for president from prison. He got almost a million votes, highest socialist vote in U.S. history.

rades of ours have made greater sacrifices, have suffered more, and have shed more heroic blood than any like number of men and women anywhere on earth; they have laid the foundation of the first real democracy that ever drew the breath of life in this world. [Applause.] And the very first act of the triumphant Russian revolution was to proclaim a state of peace with all mankind, coupled with a fervent moral appeal, not to kings, not to emperors, rulers or diplomats but to the people of all nations. [Applause.] Here we have the very breath of democracy, the quintessence of the dawning freedom. The Russian revolution proclaimed its glorious triumph in its ringing and inspiring appeal to the peoples of all the earth. In a humane and fraternal spirit new Russia, emancipated at last from the curse of the centuries, called upon all nations engaged in the frightful war, the Central Powers as well as the Allies, to send representatives to a conference to lay down terms of peace that should be just and lasting. Here was the supreme opportunity to strike the blow to make the world safe for democracy. Was there any response to that noble appeal that in some day to come will be written in letters of gold in the history of the world? [Applause.] Was there any response whatever to that appeal for universal peace? [From the crowd, “No!”] No, not the slightest attention was paid to it by the Christian nations

engaged in the terrible slaughter.

It has been charged that Lenin and Trotsky and the leaders of the revolution were treacherous, that they made a traitorous peace with Germany. Let us consider that proposition briefly. At the time of the revolution Russia had been three years in the war. Under the Czar she had lost more than four million of her ill-clad, poorly-equipped, half-starved soldiers, slain outright or disabled on the field of battle. She was absolutely bankrupt. Her soldiers were mainly without arms. This was what was bequeathed to the revolution by the Czar and his regime; and for this condition Lenin and Trotsky were not responsible, nor the Bolsheviki. For this appalling state of affairs the Czar and his rotten bureaucracy were solely responsible. When the Bolsheviki came into power and went through the archives they found and exposed the secret treaties — the treaties that were made between the Czar and the French government, the British government and the Italian government, proposing, after the victory was achieved, to dismember the German Empire and destroy the Central Powers. These treaties have never been denied nor repudiated. Very little has been said about them in the American press. I have a copy of these treaties, showing that the purpose of the Allies is exactly the purpose of the Central Powers, and that is the conquest and

spoliation of the weaker nations that has always been the purpose of war.

Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder. In the Middle Ages when the feudal lords who inhabited the castles whose towers may still be seen along the Rhine concluded to enlarge their domains, to increase their power, their prestige and their wealth they declared war upon one another. But they themselves did not go to war any more than the modern feudal lords, the barons of Wall Street go to war. [Applause.] The feudal barons of the Middle Ages, the economic predecessors of the capitalists of our day, declared all wars. And their miserable serfs fought all the battles. The poor, ignorant serfs had been taught to revere their masters; to believe that when their masters declared war upon one another, it was their patriotic duty to fall upon one another and to cut one another’s throats for the profit and glory of the lords and barons who held them in contempt. And that is war in a nutshell. The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose — especially their lives.

They have always taught and trained you to believe it to be your patriotic duty to go to war and to have yourselves slaughtered at their command. But in all the history of the world you, the people, have never had a voice in declaring war, and strange as it certainly appears, no war by any nation in any age has ever been declared by the people.

And here let me emphasize the fact — and it cannot be repeated too often — that the working class who fight all the battles, the working class who make the supreme sacrifices, the working class who freely shed their blood and furnish the corpses, have never yet had a voice in either declaring war or making peace. It is the ruling class that invariably does both. They alone declare war and they alone make peace.

“Yours not to reason why; Yours but to do and die.” That is their motto and we object on the part of the awakening workers of this nation.

If war is right let it be declared by the people. You who have your lives to lose, you certainly above all others have the right to decide the momentous issue of war or peace. [Applause.]

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8 The Militant July 29, 2019



# Fight for amnesty for immigrants in US!

## Continued from front page

harsher form of deportation known as “removal,” which makes returning to the U.S. a felony. Donald Trump continues more of the same, while stepping up demagogic rhetoric scapegoating immigrants.

U.S. capitalists depend on undocumented workers to push down wages, to boost their profits, to compete against their rivals around the world. They *want* immigrants, but they want them to fear deportation. They hope that will keep them from joining unions, from demanding higher wages and better work conditions.

Working people need a road forward to unite to meet the effects of today’s crisis of capitalism placed on our backs. We need to reject the two-party shell game of the rulers’ Democrats and Republicans. The wealthy rulers press us to be “realistic” and back the “lesser evil.” But all this means is we’re condemned to continuing capitalist oppression.

It doesn’t matter which capitalist politician is in the White House. What matters is what *we* do to organize and fight in our own interests, including building an

independent working-class political party to fight to take power into our own hands.

This is not an “immigrant question” — it’s a life and death question for the unions. Fighting for amnesty for undocumented immigrants is key to fighting together for better wages and working conditions for all. We can’t let the bosses divide us!

Our fellow workers and farmers in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and elsewhere in the region face the same crisis and challenges we do — building a working-class leadership capable of fighting to overthrow imperialist exploitation and capitalist rule. Workers in the U.S. can extend the hand of internationalist solidarity.

The revolution made by Cuban workers and farmers in 1959, led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, a revolution that lives today, stands as an example for all to emulate.

To strengthen the fight of working people from Latin America to North America we say — Cancel the Third World debt! Organize the unorganized! Amnesty for immigrants now!

# Amazon warehouse workers protest speedup

## Continued from front page

an on-the-job injury, said that less than two years ago she hired in with a group of 70 people. Only five are still working at Amazon. “People say if you don’t like it just go,” she said. “I’m an army veteran, and I say if you want change it’s important to stay and fight.”

The rally was called to coincide with Amazon’s “Prime Day” special sale for those who plunk down \$119 a year to join the program. The demonstration was organized by the Awood Center, a community organization that advocates for East African workers. Awood means “power” in Somali. The organization is backed by the Service Employees International Union, the Teamsters union and the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

## ‘They think workers can be robots’

“We expected more workers to come out but there were managers, supervisors and police standing at the front doors, and some workers were scared,” warehouse worker Mohamed Hassan told those at the protest through an interpreter. “They think humans can be robots, but we are human, and we are not afraid to stand up for our rights.”

Amazon warehouses are notorious for their use of robots to speed up the work.

Atlas Air pilot Michael Russo from Chicago, a

member of the Airline Professionals Association Teamsters Local 1224, represented his local at the protest. Atlas Air carries freight for Amazon. “These stepped-up shipping times come with a price — to the warehouse workers, the pilots, the truckers and the last-mile-delivery guys,” Russo told the *Militant*.

Prime Day has “become an opportunity for our critics, including unions, to raise awareness for their cause, in this case, increased membership dues,” an Amazon spokesman told Reuters. “These groups are conjuring misinformation to work in their favor, when in fact we already offer the things they purport to be their cause — industry leading pay of \$15 an hour, benefits, and a safe workplace for our employees.”

Guled Mohamed, who has worked at Amazon as a picker for a year and a half, said he joined the protest “because of the pressure on us to always work fast.” He added, “Amazon needs to treat us better.”

Over 2,000 workers at seven Amazon warehouses in Germany went on strike as Prime Day got underway in a similar protest over pay and working conditions. The strike was organized by the Verdi trade union, under the slogan “No more discount on our incomes.”

Verdi has led other strikes and protests demanding higher pay and that Amazon negotiate a union contract for its 13,000 workers in Germany. The company has refused.

## — **LETTERS** —

### Gary Washington

Some 100 people gathered July 12 at the Martin Street Church of God in Atlanta to honor the life of longtime Atlanta union and political activist Gary Washington, who died here July 3 at age 69.

Washington, a former member of the Black Panther Party, went to work in 1968 for Mead Packaging company, a cardboard manufacturing plant in Atlanta. He played a prominent role in the 1972 wildcat strike in which 700 of the plant’s 1,100 workers, primarily African American, walked off the job, demanding safer conditions and an end to racial discrimination in hiring and promotions. Less than two months later the strike ended when Mead conceded to several demands.

Washington served as a union steward until his retirement in 2016, and was active in many union and civil rights battles. For many years

he co-hosted The Labor Forum, a weekly radio show on Atlanta’s WRFG-FM. During this time he interviewed Socialist Workers Party candidates, Cuba solidarity activists and others.

In the early 1990s Washington joined the international campaign to defend Mark Curtis, a union and political activist and member of the Socialist Workers Party beaten and framed up on bogus rape charges by police in Des Moines, Iowa, for his political activity on behalf of immigrant co-workers. He spoke to win support for Curtis at schools,

churches and community groups.

He also was a subscriber to the *Militant* and reader of Pathfinder books.

Washington’s family acknowledged his many friends and supporters with these words: “Gary would encourage each of you to continue to fight against racism and injustice wherever you find it. Instead of flowers and cards, he would want you to donate to a cause or organization that is at the forefront of the fight against injustice.” *Militant* readers can make a contribution in his name to the paper online at themilitant.com.

Marla Puziss

Rachele Fruit

Atlanta, Georgia

### ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the ‘Militant’, earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at themilitant.com

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

# Prison ‘Militant’ ban

## Continued from front page

having an article about the fight against censorship. The warden checked the box on their impoundment form claiming the article “depicts, describes or encourages activities which may lead to the use of physical violence or group disruption.”

“Prisoners want to be able to read material of their own choosing, to think for themselves, to be part of the world, to educate themselves. Most working people support this right, it strengthens the unity of the working class,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “The absolutely false allegation that reading about the prison’s decision to censor news about their ongoing censorship could lead to violence is just an excuse the prison officials use to try to isolate and break the spirit of our brothers and sisters behind bars.”

The *Militant* will appeal the latest ban and fight all efforts to censor the paper.

The Prison Ministry of Riverside Church in New York City sent a letter to the Florida Department of Corrections July 16. It said the bans were “part of a troubling pattern by Florida prison officials to silence the *Militant*. Each confiscation represents an assault on the United States Constitution and on all those who care about freedom of thought, inquiry and expression.”

The letter notes that censorship of issues of the paper gives the impression that “Florida prison officials were offended by criticisms of the prison system.”

## Kansas victory

The *Militant* hadn’t known its subscribers in Kansas prisons were being denied the paper until the end of May, when *Newsweek* magazine reported that Books to Prisoners and the Human Rights Defense Center had obtained and made public a list of 7,000 books and periodicals banned there. Eight issues of the *Militant* were on the list, but Kansas officials had never informed the paper.

The *Militant* wrote to one of its Kansas prisoner subscribers to find out if he had received any issues. Soon after, Kansas officials sent the *Militant* official notification it had banned three issues.

The socialist newsweekly’s lawyer, David Goldstein, sent a letter informing Kansas officials that the paper would appeal all the bans. Douglas Burris, corrections manager, Risk Management of the Kansas Department of Corrections, replied that the central office reviewed and has “determined that these issues did not present a direct threat to KDOC operation. The censorships have been overturned.”

The *Militant* is calling on its readers to use the victory in Kansas to win more support for overturning Florida prison officials’ ongoing censorship.

The National Coalition Against Censorship, Amnesty International USA, the National Lawyers Guild, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, as well as Riverside Church Prison Ministry have sent letters to the Literature Review Committee calling on it to overturn the bans.

Many *Militant* readers in Florida prisons are following the fight closely. “Thanks for the effort you are making to try to make sure we receive your newspaper which brings us a lot of important information about what is happening in the world,” one Florida prisoner-subscriber wrote July 11.

Readers of the *Militant* can help. Get co-workers to sign a letter or petition. Talk to your church group, your local union officials. The more letters that are sent to Florida prison officials, the greater the possibility of winning.

## Fight prison censorship!

**Get out the word:** Download, print and distribute *Militant* articles on this fight.

**Get support statements** from co-workers, unions, churches and defenders of political rights. Email to: Dean Peterson, Literature Review Committee, Allen.Peterson@fdc.myflorida.com. Send copies to themilitant@mac.com

**Send checks** to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, for “Prisoners Rights Fight.” **Or contribute online at themilitant.com**