

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Social crisis from West Coast wildfires
caused by capitalist greed
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 84/NO. 39 OCTOBER 5, 2020

Mass marches, work protests say: Belarus despot out now

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Mass protests across Belarus and workers' work-to-rule slowdowns are keeping pressure on President Alexander Lukashenko to step down since he claimed victory in rigged elections Aug 9. Demonstrators have taken to the streets for weeks demanding he hold new elections and halt the savage beatings his security forces have inflicted on many of the thousands they arrest.

In a procession stretching for miles, as many as 100,000 people marched in Minsk Sept. 20. Riot police barricaded the center of the capital with barbed wire and water cannon.

But demonstrators flowed "like water," around the barricades, journalist Andrei Liashchynski, told the *Militant* by email. "If they met obstacles, they turned and went to another destination."

As the demonstration wound through "residential areas, many people saw these marches" for the first time, Hanna Varsotskaya, told the *Militant* by email. This helped coun-

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Letters call on Florida prisons to end ban on the 'Militant'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Supporters of prisoners' rights and freedom of the press continue to speak urging Florida prison officials to overturn the ban on four recent issues of the *Militant*.

"The *Militant* has a right to publish factual information, and Florida prisoners have a right to access the information," wrote Fran Reilly, executive director of the News Leaders Association, in a Sept. 16 letter to prison authorities. "The impoundment infringes on the First Amendment rights of both the *Militant* and its incarcerated readers."

The association's board includes editors and other leaders of the Associated Press, *Miami Herald*, National Public Radio, CBS News, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and more.

"We urge the Literature Review Committee to reverse the decision," she wrote.

The first issue was confiscated, prison officials at the Florida State Prison said, because of the article

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For massive public works program to create jobs!



Stephanie Zollshan/Berkshire Eagle via AP

School cafeteria workers in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, joined by teachers and local residents Sept. 22, demand school administration halt plans to lay off 50 of the 70 cafeteria workers.

Join *Militant's* 8-week int'l subscription drive!

Millions of workers today have been thrown out of work as the bosses and their government shut down production and commerce as opposed to reorganizing plants and retail outlets

EDITORIAL

to make them safe during the coronavirus outbreak.

Neither the Democrats nor Republicans — the twin parties of capitalist exploitation — have any serious proposals to reverse an economic and social crisis that is taking a deepening toll on the lives of working people.

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Dominion grocery workers strike to overturn wage cuts, shorter hours

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — Standing strong on picket lines across Newfoundland, 1,400 Dominion grocery store workers are now into the second month of their strike for higher wages and the reinstatement of 60 full-time jobs bosses eliminated last year.

Part-time workers at the stores, who have limited access to benefits, haven't received a raise since 2018. The strike is one of the most important labor battles in North America today.

The workers, members of Unifor Local 597, began calling for a strike in June after Loblaw Companies Limited, which owns Dominion, ended a 2 Canadian dollar-an-hour wage increase

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Today's jobs crisis and the road forward for workers

BY TERRY EVANS

Neither President Donald Trump nor his Democratic Party challenger Joe Biden offer any respite from the widespread joblessness, the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic and the broader social crisis bearing down on

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What do the new accords in the Mideast mean for working people?

BY SETH GALINSKY

Three years ago Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes released a statement pointing to the "necessity for the Israeli and Arab governments and leaderships of Palestinian organizations to begin immediate talks to recognize both Israel

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'Workers can fight to change our conditions,' say SWP candidates



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Amanda Allen, right, talks with SWP candidates Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president in Forney, Texas, Sept. 17. Allen decided to join them in campaigning.

BY GEORGE CHALMERS

DALLAS — "I believe what the Socialist Workers Party candidates stand for, over what we have now," nurse Amanda Allen told SWP candidates Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, running for president and vice president, in Forney, a small town east of Dallas Sept. 17. She endorsed the SWP's 2020 presidential ticket.

Referring to the Democrats and Republicans, she added, "Neither party says what they will do for working people other than the promises they never keep."

SWP candidates say working people need to build their own party, a labor party based on our union struggles, that would organize workers in their mil-

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Drop charges against protesters of cop killing of Elijah McClain

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Prosecutors filed felony charges Sept. 17 against six individuals who have been involved in organizing protests in Aurora, Colorado, against the cops' killing of Elijah McClain over a year ago. Four are members of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, and one is a member of a group called Frontline Party for Revolutionary Action.

Charges range from attempt to commit first-degree kidnapping, to conspiracy to commit theft, and inciting to riot. The six protesters face a total of 33 felony counts and 34 misdemeanor charges. If convicted, each faces years in prison.

Threat to political rights

While focused on some provocative actions taken by leaders of these groups, these frame-up charges by county prosecutors pose a threat to the working class and to political rights. Conspiracy charges in particular have been a favorite tool for the cops and prosecutors to frame people up.

The *Militant* joins in calling for all the charges to be dropped.

Elijah McClain was walking home from a convenience store in Aurora last August, when three cops stopped him after they said they received a complaint about a young Black man who was acting "suspicious."

The cops put him in a chokehold, ignoring his plea that "I just can't breathe." Even though he was restrained, they had him injected with ketamine, a powerful sedative, at

a dose high enough to put down a 220-pound person. McClain weighed 140 pounds. He suffered cardiac arrest on the way to a hospital.

The killing was promptly swept under the rug, with District Attorney Dave Young announcing that no criminal charges would be filed. But in the wake of the explosion of protests across the country after cops killed George Floyd in Minneapolis May 25, demonstrations calling for prosecuting the cops who killed McClain began in Aurora, Denver and around the country.

A June 27 protest involved thousands, including violinists who came from other states to play to honor McClain, who used to play his violin to soothe the animals at local shelters. The police used pepper spray and batons to break up the gathering.

Young is one of the prosecutors bringing the charges against the six protesters. In the indictment, two of the Party for Socialism and Liberation leaders at this action are accused of ripping a sign away from a counter-protester in the area and then shoving the person backward.

Blockade 'kidnapped' cops

Charges of kidnapping and inciting a riot were also filed in relation to a protest organized July 3. It was publicized as a march that would go from the area where McClain was detained to the Aurora Municipal Center several miles away. But Party for Socialism and Liberation organizers had something else in mind. They led hundreds of protesters in an unan-

NYC taxi drivers demand 'Debt forgiveness NOW!'



Militant/Sara Lobman

NEW YORK — Dozens of yellow taxi drivers organized a cab caravan here Sept. 17, protesting through the streets of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. They blocked traffic briefly on the Brooklyn and Queensboro bridges, and rallied outside City Hall, carrying signs saying, "Debt forgiveness NOW! Let drivers LIVE." The protest was called by the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

In years past, drivers borrowed heavily to purchase medallions, city licenses to drive as owner-operators. Yellow taxis had a government-enforced monopoly in the Manhattan market until almost a decade ago, and the price of medallions soared as they were promoted by the city as an investment that would help finance home mortgages, retirement plans and college education for children.

But the medallion market has since collapsed. Competition from much larger Uber and Lyft operations sent medallion values plummeting. Taxi business ground to a halt with the onset of COVID-19. Government-imposed shutdowns of production and commerce resulted in the disappearance of millions of office workers and tourists. Yellow Cab drivers had 92% fewer riders in June than they did the year before.

Mohammed Mahbub of Queens, a driver for 25 years, purchased a medallion 20 years ago and today owes \$650,000 on the loan he took out. "We're in a terrible place," he told the *Militant*. "The governor, the mayor, federal officials turn their backs on us. Everyone ignores us." Mahbub called on working people to support the taxi drivers.

— SARA LOBMAN

nounced march to the Aurora Police Department's District One precinct station, which was then surrounded and blockaded for a number of hours while 19 officers were inside.

The prosecutors claim the blockade "kidnapped" the cops by saying they couldn't leave.

Those accused have used ultra-left language, calling the cops "lying pigs" and saying they wouldn't allow the "pigs that are inside the building" to leave. They admit there was destruction at some of the actions they called, but say they weren't responsible because they had left before it happened.

But none of this can justify the draconian prosecution — and threatened years in jail — being pursued by the authorities. They are attacking the right to protest and seeking to turn attention away from their efforts to cover up the police killing of Elijah McClain.

More than 1,000 people gathered at the Capitol in Denver Sept. 19 to oppose the charges against the Party for Socialism and Liberation and the Frontline Party for Revolutionary Action leaders. The demonstrators made a stop in front of the Denver Detention Facility where three of those arrested are detained.

THE MILITANT

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Under the leadership of Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement working people in Cuba overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship 61 years and ago and put in power a workers and farmers government that points a way forward for workers today as the capitalist crisis deepens.



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

Social crisis from West Coast fires caused by capitalist greed

BY ERIC SIMPSON

GRIDLEY, Calif. — Since early August wildfires have burned out of control across California, Oregon and Washington state. Over 2 million acres have burned in California alone as of Sept. 20. These are some of the largest fires in that state's history. Extremely hot weather, drought conditions, and violent lightning storms have all been factors. Smoke from the fires has spread smoky and unhealthy air up and down the coast.

Some 17,000 firefighters, and thousands of self-organized worker volunteers, are fighting fires across California today, sometimes working 64-hour shifts.

A team of *Militant* worker-correspondents from Oakland met Bobby Joe and Bonita Gutierrez in an RV park here. They lost their house when Berry Creek, a town of just over 1,200 people, was wiped out by the North Complex Fire Sept. 9. They left home after their insurance agent let them know that the fire had flared up and was racing toward their town.

Adjacent forestland had not been thinned, nor had firebreaks been cut to protect the town. Grant money to do so, reportedly being freed up by the state, had been caught up in bureaucratic red tape and didn't come in time to save the town. Twelve people died there.

"No government agency was willing to help us get the forest service road paved as an escape route. All they did was argue over who was responsible," Bonita Gutierrez told us. "What politicians do is blame each other."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Kamala Harris, Democratic Party candidate for vice president and former California attorney general, visited fire-damaged areas outside of Fresno. They argued that the reason for the deadly fires was "climate change," trying to turn the disaster to political advantage against President Donald Trump.

"Climate change is real. If you don't

believe in science, come to California and observe it with your own eyes," Newsom said.

But droughts have wracked California for centuries, and both state officials and the state-sponsored monopoly Pacific Gas and Electric Company have refused to allocate resources to clear brush, organize back burns and create tree-free firebreaks that would sharply limit the spread of wildfires. Nor did they muster the workforce and equipment necessary, despite the state having spent \$529 million since July 1 fighting wildfires.

The situation was made worse by PG&E's decision to cut power to the area, making it more difficult for workers to get notice of the approaching fire.

This is a stark example of a natural disaster transformed into a social catastrophe by the workings of the for-profit capitalist system. Workers were left largely on their own to try and get out.

"The Socialist Workers Party and



Reuters/Shannon Stapleton

A few of the 1,200 workers in the "Hillbilly Brigade" who volunteered to fight fires gather for a meal at Hansen family farm after battling the Riverside Fire near Molalla, Oregon, Sept. 16.

its presidential ticket of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett say working people and our unions need to fight for a massive federally funded program of public works to create millions of jobs at union scale for those thrown out on the streets today," I said. "This would include put-

ting people to work doing forestry, fighting fires, and repairing the electric transmission lines and towers that PG&E refuses to maintain. And to build housing, hospitals and other things workers need."

"PG&E never cuts down the trees

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Boeing crashes are result of bosses' disregard for safety

BY JANET POST

A report by the House Committee on Transportation belatedly confirms what was widely sensed by working people shortly after 346 people died in two airline crashes of Boeing 737 MAX planes. Both "accidents" were caused by disregard for human life by the bosses at Boeing and the Federal Aviation Administration, which is supposed to regulate the company.

In 2018 a Lion Air jet plunged into the Java Sea after takeoff from Jakarta, Indonesia, and the following year an Ethiopian Airlines flight crashed after takeoff from Addis Ababa.

The Sept. 16 report blames "grossly insufficient oversight" by the FAA and the "culture" at Boeing. It also acknowledges that regulators certified the planes as safe to fly even though FAA and Boeing officials say they did not fully understand how they were designed.

"It was an unforgivable crime, and Boeing still wants to return the aircraft to service quickly," Ababu Amha, whose wife was a flight attendant who died on the Ethiopian Airlines jet, told the *Washington Post*.

In a rush to compete with the new fuel-efficient European-based Airbus A320neo, profit-hungry bosses at Boeing refitted the 737, bypassing crucial safety measures.

When heavier engines were installed farther forward on the wings, the 737 MAX's nose would tend to tilt up and potentially put the plane in an aerodynamic stall. The company fitted automated software to take over control of the plane and force the nose down. But if there was a false sensor reading, the new system would prevent pilots from overriding it manually.

In the rush to get the planes sold and in the air many flight crews were nev-

er trained on the new system — and mention of it was removed from flight manuals. To sell more planes, Boeing told airline companies no new 737 pilot training was needed. In both crashes pilots were unable to gain control as the system pushed the planes' noses down and they plunged from the skies.

The system was not inspected by the FAA, and "optional" alert lights warning of a malfunction were not working on most planes. The crash report says Boeing bosses concealed this from both pilots and regulators.

For months the FAA ignored the real possibility of another disaster after the first crash, calling it a "one-off" accident.

Since the 737 MAX was finally grounded worldwide, over Boeing's objections, the company and the FAA have been working strenuously to get them back in the air with a software upgrade.

As demand for long-haul travel on large jets has plummeted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the company says it needs to get the midsize 737 MAX flying again.

Boeing bosses are not alone in getting the FAA to turn a blind eye to their disregard for safety. Southwest Airlines grounded 115 planes Sept. 17 because of "discrepancies" in weight reports of the planes' cargoes, which are used to determine how many passengers can be carried safely and how to distribute its load. A government audit this year found the FAA routinely allowed Southwest to fly without verified takeoff weights.

"The solution is not more government regulation, or creating a better 'culture' at Boeing," Malcolm Jarrett, Socialist Workers Party 2020 candidate for vice president, told the *Militant*. "Government agencies like the FAA are organized to protect the U.S. bosses."

"The only way to enforce safety is for workers and our unions to wrest control of production out of the bosses' hands," Jarrett said. "This is the only way decisions can be made in the interests of working people, not doing whatever maximizes profits."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 9, 1995

UNITED NATIONS — "Cuba will never give up in the face of threats, and it will survive in any case, as there are always ways out of a crisis, but not from the dishonor of living on our knees."

In his address before the UN General Assembly, [Cuban foreign minister Roberto] Robaina blasted efforts to pass legislation in the U.S. Congress that will significantly tighten Washington's economic embargo of the Caribbean nation.

Robaina was referring to legislation introduced by Rep. Dan Burton and Sen. Jesse Helms. On Sept. 21, the House of Representatives passed the bill by a bipartisan majority of 294 to 130. The legislation will be discussed next in the U.S. Senate.

As that debate continues, opponents of Washington's economic war against Cuba who support Cuba's sovereignty and independence will hold rallies and marches.



October 9, 1970

SEATTLE — The strike of migrant hop workers in the Yakima Valley is scoring victories. The ranchers attempted to use high school students as scabs, but when this supply of strike breakers ended, the Yakima Chief ranch signed a contract setting a minimum wage of \$2 and recognizing the workers right to form a union. Other ranches have also begun to capitulate.

The role of Chicana women has been very significant in this strike. With the involvement of new forces the hop strike will have far-reaching effects.

The strike has proved that people have power when they organize. The Yakima strikers accomplished in one week more than they did in years of waiting for the system to respond. Francisco Salinas summed it up: "Once the people see their power they'll want to form their own independent organization."



October 6, 1945

Thirty thousand Australian dock workers have struck in support of Indonesian Nationalists. The stoppage was called in sympathy with Indonesian crews who refused to sail ships for the Netherlands East Indies [now Indonesia] loaded with military supplies for use against the independence movement.

Sydney dock workers demonstrated in support of the Indonesian Nationalist "struggle for independence." Thirty banners were carried among a crowd of 3,000 bearing such inscriptions as "Hands Off Our Allies, the Indonesians," and "Down With Dutch Imperialism."

In Batavia [Jakarta], 10,000 Indonesian Nationalists held a mass rally demanding independence. Pamphlets distributed said, "We don't want to be ruled by the Dutch." Tramcars bore roughly painted slogans such as: "Better to Hell than Be Colonized Again."

'We can change our conditions'

Continued from front page

lions to defend their interests all year round and chart a course to take power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

Allen first met SWP members at a Juneteenth protest here against police brutality, where she subscribed to the *Militant* and bought several books by party leaders. She spoke with Kennedy and Jarrett when they came to Forney and then joined them in campaigning among other working people in the area.

As the Nov. 3 election approaches, SWP campaigners are stepping up efforts to win endorsers for the party's ticket, along with signing up subscribers to the *Militant*, getting books by party leaders and other revolutionaries into the hands of those they meet, and raising demands aimed at winning some protection for working people from the impact of the crisis and that point a way forward for the working class.

This effort will get a boost from the eight-week fall *Militant* subscription, book and SWP party-building fund drive that begins Sept. 26 and runs through Nov. 24.

Kennedy and Jarrett campaigned in Texas and Oklahoma Sept. 16-20. They spoke with workers on their doorsteps, living rooms and in Walmart parking lots.

"We were proud to host Alyson and Malcolm and thank them for explaining their platform," Camille Landry, the proprietor of Nappy Roots Books, told customers when the socialist candidates visited the store. Nappy Roots specializes in African American literature.

With tens of millions thrown out of a job, bosses are trying to speed up the pace of work, cut wages and force workers to toil in more dangerous working conditions. The SWP 2020 campaign platform puts front and center the need for a fight for jobs. It explains that as workers stand together against the bosses' attacks we can take steps toward building a union in every workplace. (See platform on facing page.)

In southwest Dallas, Kennedy and Gerardo Sánchez, the party's candidate

for U.S. Senate in Texas, met Nelson Marroquín, who was preparing to paint his porch Sept. 19. "I was out of work for two and a half months after coronavirus began," Marroquín said. "Now I only get four or five days a week."

"I have met many workers like you who are working, but with shorter hours," Sánchez said. "Unions need to demand cutting the workweek with no cut in take-home pay to spread around the available work, our platform explains.

"And working people need to fight for a massive government-funded jobs program with wages we can live on," he added.

"Everything is controlled by people in power," Marroquín said. "The rich don't have any idea what is happening to us."

"The capitalists seem like they are an all-powerful class," Kennedy told him. "But it is possible for workers to fight for better conditions. We are the ones who produce the wealth in society and can fight for a world that is not based on the profit system." Marroquín bought a copy of the *Militant*.

Next door, contractor Adrian Rangel told Jarrett he hadn't worked in months. "And I have gotten no unemployment benefits," he said.

"Our campaign doesn't just talk about joblessness and deteriorating conditions, it talks about what we can do," Jarrett said. "Working people must stand up and fight to change our conditions."

"The strike in Canada of 1,400 Dominion grocery store workers is an example of fights happening today that need our solidarity," Jarrett added. Rangel subscribed to the *Militant*.

The SWP platform calls for unemployment benefits at union scale for all those thrown out of work, whether they are considered "self-employed" or whether or not they have papers the government views as proper.

Kennedy met Falesha Joyner in Oklahoma City Sept. 18 while campaigning in a largely African American working-class neighborhood. Joyner was severely injured and her mother, niece and neph-



Courtesy of Christopher Pennock

Christopher Pennock, left, a shop steward in National Association of Letter Carriers, on picket line at GM plant in Hudson, Wisconsin, during 2019 auto strike. Pennock endorsed Socialist Workers Party ticket, "because I want to vote for a society that values workers and farmers."

ew were among the 168 people killed when right-wing terrorist Timothy McVeigh set off a bomb at the federal building there in 1995.

"Those effected were supposed to get help from the government, but a lot of us, including my family, never saw a thing," Joyner said. "Along with others I protested."

Kennedy said, "The only thing that will better the conditions of working people is standing up and fighting for our rights."

"Yes," Joyner said, "that is why I went with my daughter to a march in this neighborhood for George Floyd. Thousands of people came." She got a copy of the *Militant*.

Win new endorsers!

Campaigners in Minnesota have won several new endorsers for the

Socialist Workers Party ticket.

Christopher Pennock, a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers, said he endorsed "because I want to vote for a society that values workers and farmers."

"As a letter carrier and shop steward I see every day the damage that capitalism does to my co-workers," he said. "Workers need a political party of our own that will fight for our interests."

August Nimtze, a professor at the University of Minnesota and activist in the fight against the U.S. rulers' economic war against revolutionary Cuba, also endorsed.

See page 8 for the campaign office nearest you.

David Rosenfeld in Minneapolis contributed to this article.

'Militant' launches eight-week subscription drive Will boost book sales, SWP 2020 campaign, party-building fund

Dear readers,

The *Militant* is launching our fall subscription drive! We're asking our readers to help make it a success. The drive runs from Sept. 26 to Nov. 24.

The subscription effort will be coupled with stepping up sales of books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other working-class revolutionaries. The *Militant* and these books feature the party's program, which is winning a serious hearing from workers, farmers, small proprietors, youth and others in the face of the unfolding economic, social and moral crisis of capitalism.

The drive will be intertwined with boldly using the party's national campaign — Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president, along with 22 candidates for Congress and Senate — to reach out to working people in cities, towns and rural areas, including to farmworkers and working farmers. The SWP candidates are the only voice of the working class in the 2020 elections, raising demands to unite working people and explaining the need for a class break with the capitalist parties.

Campaigners will be talking to fellow working people on their doorsteps, in trailer parks and on farms. They will introduce the *Militant*, books, and the election campaign platform at Walmart parking lots, to taxi and Uber drivers, at plant gates. They will invite those they meet to join in solidarity with workers on strike, demonstrations against police brutality and other working-class battles.

They will encourage those they meet campaigning — as well as those they work with in support of the Cuban Revolution, at work, in unions, and other political activity — to endorse the Socialist Workers Party ticket.

All Pathfinder books will have a 20% discount during the drive. See page 6 for the six books that will be on special in combination with a subscription.

At the same time as the subscription and book drive, the *Militant* is encouraging its readers to contribute to the annual SWP Party-Building Fund. This fund makes it possible for the party to respond to political developments.

The *Militant* will run a weekly column on the SWP campaigning and the *Militant* drive, as well as scoreboards showing our progress.

Join us! Encourage your co-workers, friends and relatives to subscribe. Show them the books by party leaders and other revolutionaries. Sign and mail in the endorser card on this page. Contribute to the SWP Party-Building Fund.

Sincerely,

John Studer, *Militant* editor

"The Socialist Workers Party campaign is the only one that is putting forward concrete proposals to deal with the most pressing issue confronting working people — the job crisis."



August Nimtze, professor of Political Science and African American and African Studies at the University of Minnesota and member of the Minnesota Cuba Committee

Endorse the 2020 Socialist Workers Party campaign! Campaign for what you are for, not who you're against!

- I want to endorse the Socialist Workers Party ticket of Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president.
- I want to join in campaigning or host a house meeting for the candidates. Please contact me.
- Here is my contribution of \$_____ to help spread the word. (Make checks to Socialist Workers National Campaign)
- Send me a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly. (\$5 enclosed, checks payable to the *Militant*.)

Send in along with your name, address, phone # and e-mail address to:
Socialist Workers Party 2020 Campaign, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, NY, NY 10018. Tel: 347-871-0282 ✉ Email: socialistworkers2020@gmail.com

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about workers' struggles for a union movement in every workplace today. It gives a voice to those engaged in battle and helps build solidarity. We need your help to make it a success. If you are involved in a skirmish or strike or know other workers who are, please contact me at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story gets told.

— Roy Landersen

Hospital workers strike continues at University of Illinois

CHICAGO — Some 4,000 members of Service Employees International Union Local 73 are in the second week of their strike at the University of Illinois Hospital here and several of its other facilities around the state. Members of the Illinois Nurses Association began returning to work Sept. 19 after a week on the picket lines, while continuing to negotiate for a contract.

The nurses and SEIU members — clerical, technical, professional, service and maintenance workers — report constant staffing shortages and overwork.

News reports that the University of Illinois agreed to hire 200 more nurses are “accurate, but we want to hold them accountable and put it in the contract,” Doris Carroll, president of the Illinois Nurses Association, told the *Militant* Sept. 21. “We don’t know when they’ll be hired. There’s been very little movement in negotiations” since the return to work. More than 800 nurses took part in the strike. Another 525 were forced to work by a court injunction.

Over 1,000 members of the nurses as-

sociation, SEIU and supporters marched through downtown Chicago Sept. 18 to rally in front of Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s office, demanding he take action to support their fight. Pritzker sits on the university’s board of trustees.

SEIU strikers are demanding a minimum wage of \$15 per hour. Some make \$12 or less. The hospital claims that as a state institution it does not have to meet the Chicago minimum wage, currently \$14 and scheduled to reach \$15 next year.

— Naomi Craine

DSI Tunneling strikers in Louisville win support

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — “We’re here to support our union brothers fighting for their first contract,” UPS worker Adam Hedges said as he joined them picketing outside DSI Tunneling Sept. 18.

When the 13 DSI workers won union recognition last November, added fellow UPS worker Wendy Hersey, “these guys became part of our union, Teamsters Local 89, now we want to help them win their contract.” Several brought “pizza and solidarity” and



SEIU Local 73

Striking members of Illinois Nurses Association and SEIU Local 73 join forces at rally in Chicago, Sept. 18. Central issue for both unions is bosses’ insistence on understaffing and overwork.

stayed to picket for the rest of the day.

The strike began Aug. 4 after months of company stalling over contract negotiations. DSI, which manufactures steel beams and girders for tunneling and mining, employs over 2,000 workers at its operations in 70 countries.

“I have worked for DSI for 25 years,” Ted Franzman told the *Militant*, “with no raise in seven years. We had to go on strike. Now the company is trying to make it even tougher for us,” by cutting off strikers’ health insurance.

“We are getting support,” he added, “from union locals, bus drivers, casino workers, Walmart workers, retired workers. It’s a big help.”

Members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 369 in Louisville and Teamsters Local 20 in Toledo, Ohio, brought gift cards for the strikers.

Help the strike at DSI Tunneling. Send contributions and messages of solidarity to Teamsters Local 89, 3813 Taylor Blvd., Louisville, KY 40215.

— Jacquie Henderson

Dominion strike

Continued from front page (\$1.52) granted to “essential workers” when the coronavirus pandemic broke out and it was harder to get workers to come to work. The company’s proposed contract, which would restore only half of that CA\$2 over its entire three years, was overwhelmingly rejected.

Loblaw is owned by Galen Weston, the third richest person in Canada. Solidarity from working people across North America is needed to help the Dominion strikers in their fight.

“I worked for years for Loblaw and I know very well the way they act. I wish the workers a lot of courage and encourage them not to give up,” Louise Bouchard, a worker at the Lactantia milk processing plant in Victoriaville, Quebec, told the *Militant*.

Bouchard was among 450 workers, members of the Democratic Trade Union Federation of Quebec, locked out on July 15 after the workers had voted to strike. Workers set up pickets at the plant and on Sept. 4 voted by a 92% margin to accept a tentative agreement with the company. The new contract is retroactive to October 2019 and workers will receive wage increases totaling 19.5% over seven years.

“I will never forget that the solidarity of our members is what gives us strength,” Bouchard said.

Solidarity with Dominion strike

“We workers at the Cote-de-Neiges Walmart store in Montreal express our solidarity with your strike to win back your \$2 pandemic raise and the full-time jobs that were cut,” said a message signed by 20 workers at the store and emailed to the Dominion strikers Sept. 14. “We have gone through the same experience here on the pandemic pay raise,” adding, “It is our turn to stand together and support each other. Keep up the fight!”

Messages of support and donations to the Dominion workers strike should be sent to Unifor Local 597 at 301-55 Bond St., P.O. Box 922 Station C, St. John’s, NL A1C 5L7, Canada, and info@unifor597.ca.

Socialist Workers Party updated 2020 platform

WORKERS NEED A UNION MOVEMENT IN EVERY WORKPLACE. The Socialist Workers Party presents a fighting working-class program to build and use our unions to defend the interests of all working people. We need to fight growing employer attacks on our jobs, wages and working conditions. Build solidarity with workers’ struggles to organize and defend themselves. Use union power on our own behalf, and for all those suffering blows by the bosses and their government. One union for all drivers — taxi, Uber, Lyft and other app-based and car service drivers!

MILLIONS NEED JOBS TODAY! Our unions need to fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building hospitals, schools, housing, mass transportation and much more that workers need. Fight for a sliding scale of hours and wages to stop layoffs and the effects of runaway prices. Cut the workweek with no cut in pay! For cost-of-living clauses in every contract that raise pay and retirement benefits to offset every rise in prices!

Demand immediate national government unemployment benefits at union scale for all those thrown out of work as long as they need it.

WORKERS NEED THEIR OWN PARTY, A LABOR PARTY. For our unions to lead a class break from the parties of the bosses, the Democrats and Republicans. A labor party can organize workers in our millions to fight in our own interest and in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capital. It can chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

WORKERS CONTROL OF PRODUCTION. Workers need to fight to wrest control of production out of the hands of the bosses. Employers care about profits, not the dangerous conditions we’re forced to work under. This is the only road to take control of and enforce safety and health on the job. Demand the bosses open their books for inspection by workers and consumers. Workers control of production is a school for learning to run the economy ourselves, in the interests of all producers, a crucial step alongside building a labor party to fight to take political power.

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

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.

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.

FOR RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL & OF A CONTIGUOUS PALESTINIAN STATE. The leaders of Arab states, of Israel and Palestinian leaders need to meet and recognize both the state of Israel and an independent 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.

CUBA’S REVOLUTION — AN EXAMPLE. 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. End the US rulers’ economic war against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo.

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

FIGHT POLICE BRUTALITY! Demand that cops who kill and brutalize people be prosecuted. Fight racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system, with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,” onerous bail and “three strike” prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

WOMEN’S RIGHT TO ABORTION. Defend women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

DEFEND POLITICAL RIGHTS. Defend the right to vote, to free speech and assembly and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Defend freedom of worship. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption. No to middle-class radical “cancel culture” and their efforts to shut up people they deem “politically incorrect.”

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

Road forward for workers

Continued from front page
 working people. These conditions require an immediate, fighting response by the working class.

The number of people seeking jobless benefits for the first time each week is still five times higher than it was before the pandemic.

Some 60% of small businesses shuttered since March are now permanently closed. Growing numbers of airlines, hotels, restaurants and more are downsizing, laying off workers or shutting altogether. Farmers continue to face growing debt bondage and the threat of foreclosure and loss of their livelihoods.

Only the Socialist Workers Party campaign of Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president calls on workers and our unions to mobilize in our millions to fight for protection from this crisis. They're campaigning for a massive government-funded jobs program to put people thrown out of a job back to work, at union-scale pay, to build hospitals, homes, schools and other things working people sorely need.

By organizing a fight on the job against attacks by the bosses we defend ourselves and move toward rebuilding the kind of union movement we need. Working people coming together and standing up to the profit-driven assaults by the bosses and their government is the road forward.

The Democrats especially, but also the Trump campaign, are focused on fixing the blame on each other for an impending apocalypse. Trump says Biden is controlled by dangerous socialists and Biden insists Trump is responsible for killing hundreds of thousands by mishandling coronavirus.

In reality, both candidates back the capitalist for-profit "health care" setup in the U.S., ensuring that when the virus hit thousands would die. For years hospital bosses have run their operations on the same model as the auto, steel, and rail bosses, and on how the

Walton family runs Walmart. Cut the workforce to the bone to maximize profits. Just-on-time delivery of medical equipment without any profit-eating reserves set aside. Catering as much as possible to the rich and upper middle class, with a focus on the most profitable procedures, versus organizing to get preventive medicine to millions of working people.

This has meant the shutting down of hundreds of hospitals in cities and rural areas that couldn't compete on this level, shuttering unprofitable departments like maternity wards. When coronavirus hit, the U.S. medical industry was woefully unprepared.

Democrats and Republicans alike then turned a blind eye to a murderous cull of elderly workers left exposed to the virus in completely inadequate nursing homes. More than 40% of COVID deaths are linked to long-term care facilities.

Democrats going ballistic

As Nov. 3 nears, the Democrats are at a fever pitch of hysteria. They brag they've got the election in the bag, at the same time they're in terror that they may lose. And they're determined to get their way no matter what. Joe Biden should "not concede under any circumstances," Hillary Clinton said on Showtime's "The Circus" talk show Aug. 24.

Having spent the last four years trying to overturn the last election, Democrats are convinced that working people who Clinton called "deplorables" for helping elect Trump in 2016 can't be allowed to do the same again. Don't waste your breath trying to convince Trump voters they're wrong, Colbert King writes in the *Washington Post*. He says they're to blame for spreading coronavirus by turning up maskless at campaign rallies to lap up Trump's "racist appeals," and would literally let him get away with murder.

The Democrats' angst has gone up again following the death of liberal Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Gins-

Thousands protest military regime in Thailand



The Yomiuri Shimbun via AP Images

Six years ago Thailand's military rulers "declared war against the people by staging a coup. Now it is time to declare we are fighting back," Parit Chiwarak told the *Washington Post* Sept. 19, before joining tens of thousands protesting for greater political rights.

Months of a government-enforced state of emergency have failed to prevent student-led protests. They are demanding the ouster of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, new elections and a halt to the military-dominated regime's threats and intimidation against its opponents. Some also call for curbs on the powers of the country's king, the official head of state.

Prayuth, himself a former general, was installed as prime minister by the military-appointed upper house of parliament, despite his party losing last year's election. Prayuth had orchestrated a military-led coup to topple the elected government in 2014. Protests began after a February court ruling dissolved opposition party Future Forward and banned its leaders from political activity for 10 years.

The protests are also fed by the economic and social crush facing working people in Thailand brought on by the twin crises of the coronavirus pandemic and falloff in capitalist production and trade. They have continued to grow in size, gaining some support from the Thai labor movement, which is sharply restricted by the government.

Some 2.5 million Thais are now out of work, the highest unemployment rate since the international financial crisis in 2009.

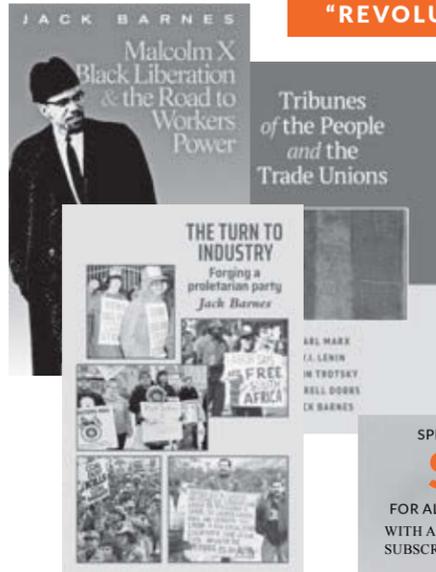
"When you gather in mobs, you are creating an enormous risk of new infections," Prime Minister Prayuth said Sept. 17, attacking the demonstrations. "Your protests delay economic recovery."

Anusorn Unno, a protester and lecturer at Bangkok's Thammasat University, told Reuters, "COVID is the government's last card, the only trick left up its sleeve, to undermine the legitimacy of the protests."

— TERRY EVANS

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burg. They say there has to be a way to stop Trump from nominating another of "his" justices to replace her. But the Supreme Court is part of the capitalist rulers' government, and, no matter who the president is, ultimately it will rule accordingly. To accommodate this fact, U.S. history is replete with "conservative" justices who suddenly turned liberal, and vice versa.

The liberals and their media outlets say all measures to stop Trump are good, no matter how damaging to democratic rights and working people.

The Democrats have been on a national drive to keep the Green Party from being on the ballot by any means necessary. The Greens are another capitalist party, but Democrats believe every vote for them is a vote that doesn't go to Biden. Compliant judges in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania — two states considered critical — kicked the Green's presidential ticket off the ballot in September.

"Two Parties Is Plenty," headlined an article by *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins, who skewered the Greens and clearly doesn't think people should be able to vote for who they choose, unless it's Biden.

The Socialist Workers Party fights for the most open ballot possible, for workers to hear a working-class program. The SWP calls for our unions to organize our own party, a labor party, to fight to defend working people under attack and to chart a course toward

taking political power and building a workers and farmers government.

Because of the massive explosion of mail-in voting, it is virtually certain the election results will not be known on election day.

Trump is campaigning as the "law and order" candidate. He hopes to attract workers who oppose the looting and destruction that have marked the diminished Black Lives Matter protests taking place today and don't think "abolish the police" is the road to end police brutality.

But there is nothing for working people in calls by Attorney General William Barr for federal prosecutors to charge Black Lives Matter leaders and others who back looting with sedition, a witch-hunt thought-crime charge. This is dangerous for working people. Regardless of who are the first targets, these kinds of frame-up charges will be used against militant workers and others organizing to fight exploitation and oppression.

Whether Biden or Trump ends up in the White House, they will rule as the chief executive officer for the ruling class, in a time of growing boss attacks on workers and farmers.

The Socialist Workers campaign "points to the capacities of working people to unite, to fight to change our conditions and in the process change ourselves," Alyson Kennedy told the *Militant*. "As we do so we'll build our own party, a labor party, and fight for a workers and farmers government."

Belarus despot out now!

Continued from front page

ter the state-run TV's claim that the actions "are very small," she said.

In many factories and mines workers staged strikes at the end of August, outraged at the regime's brutal repression of protesters who were demanding Lukashenko quit. The regime pushed back, and "the most active were fired," Yaroslav Likhachevsky, founder of the Belarusian Solidarity Fund, told Belsat TV Sept. 20.

But assembly lines across the country are now hit by what Likhachevsky called "breakdowns," as workers look for ways to continue expressing their opposition to the regime. Repairs, he said, are always done "very slowly."

Last week 10 people were dismissed from the Minsk Automotive Works. Afterward the plant's assembly line broke down, Likhachevsky said.

Workers from the Khimvolokno and Azot factories joined a Sept. 13 protest march in Hrodna, Valiantsin Tseranevich, a worker at Khimvolokno, told Radio Svaboda Sept. 15. Some led the protest column in their work uniforms — a way of publicly identifying the broad support of workers for the protests — despite bosses forbidding them from doing so. Workers at Khimvolokno continue to work to rule to protest the regime's actions, he said.

At Belaruskali, the giant potash mining and processing complex, authorities imposed 15-day prison sentences on several workers. This included Siarhei Charkasau, co-chair of the strike committee and vice president of the Belarus Independent Union, and his fellow workers, Raman Liavonchyk and Pavel Razumovskiy.

In protest, one miner chained himself to mining equipment underground, demanding an end to the state's violence against demonstrators, the resignation of Lukashenko and of the director of the Belaruskali enterprise, as well as the release of the strike committee members. Production was halted for hours until police went down the mine to cut the shackles and remove him. Other miners rallied to support him as he came out.

Tractor factory strike leader freed

The head of the strike committee at the Minsk Tractor Works, Siarhei Dyleuski, was among those released after a 25-day detention. He was welcomed by families and supporters Sept. 18. The plant employs over 15,000 workers. Dyleuski is a member of the Coordination Council set up by presidential candidate Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who is widely recognized as the real winner of the August elections. Most of the council's leading members are detained or in exile.

Lukashenko has ruled Belarus with increasing repression since winning the country's first presidential election in 1994. The country became independent when the Soviet Union broke apart three years earlier.

During much of his 26-year rule Lukashenko sought to play off the European imperialist powers seeking influence in Belarus against Russia's capitalist rulers who hold sway there. Now he has been forced to turn decisively to Russian President Vladimir Putin to help maintain his widely hated government.

Moscow's goal is to counter the expansion of the Washington-led NATO alliance in Eastern Europe. Russian

troops are deployed at two military bases in Belarus.

The Kremlin backs the Belarusian autocrat to protect the interests of Russian capital. Over a fifth of the \$1.5 billion loan recently extended by Moscow to Minsk is to cover the outstanding debt owed to Russian gas giant Gazprom.

Much of the rest of Moscow's financial support is aimed at bolstering the state apparatus Lukashenko depends on to cling to power.

Both Putin and Lukashenko allege the protests in Belarus are a result of western imperialist interference, not the persistence of hundreds of thousands determined to get the regime off their backs and defend their political rights.

What do Mideast accords mean for working people?

Continued from front page

and an independent Palestinian state."

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the governments of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Kosova, along with Tel Aviv's agreement to freeze settlements in the West Bank, confirms the necessity for working people to champion that course.

The accords register the exhaustion of policies pursued for decades by Arab governments that refused publicly to have relations of any kind with Israel and have treated it as a pariah since its founding. These agreements also increase pressure on the Israeli rulers to recognize a contiguous Palestinian state. As the SWP statement says, "It is along this road that working people of all national backgrounds, religious beliefs and political allegiances in Israel and Palestine can use and defend their space to speak, organize and begin redressing the blood-drenched legacy of imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation."

Israel was founded in 1948 in the wake of World War II and the murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis, 40% of the world's 16.6 million Jews. Imperialist governments, including in Washington, had turned away boatloads of Jews fleeing the Nazis, who then had little choice but to look to Palestine as a refuge.

In the face of the global rise in acts of Jew-hatred today, talks are needed that "must recognize the right of Jews everywhere to take refuge in Israel," the SWP statement said, "as well as the unconditional right of the dispossessed Palestinian people to a contiguous, sovereign homeland," including East Jerusalem.

The establishment of Israel was met by war. The Arab armies that attacked the nascent state were led by reactionary semifeudal and capitalist forces that whipped up Jew-hatred, while Israel's capitalist rulers sought to terrorize and expel as many Arabs as possible.

The new state emerged victorious at a tremendous cost — with massacres committed by both sides. Hundreds of



Jersey Evening Post

Weekly mass protests continue in Minsk Sept. 20, above, and all across Belarus. Alexander Lukashenko was sworn in as president in secret three days later, after stealing Aug. 9 elections.

thousands of Palestinians were driven from the land and left without a homeland. But there was no peace.

In 1967 the Israeli army seized the Sinai Peninsula, including the Gaza Strip, from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan, and Golan Heights from Syria in the Six-Day War. The bloodshed continued, including the 1973 Yom Kippur War; the Israeli invasions of Lebanon in 1982 and 2006 and fierce battles between the Israeli army and Hamas in Gaza in 2012 and 2014. Skirmishes there continue today.

The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza sparked resistance from Palestinian youth during two uprisings in 1987 and 2000, winning solidarity inside Israel.

Arab governments across the Middle East refused to accept the existence of the Jewish state and won support from within the United Nations and the European Union for their boycott of Israel.

Even in Jordan and Egypt, after governments there signed peace treaties with Tel Aviv, unions and academic and cultural groups refused to have anything to do with their Israeli counterparts.

The agreements brokered by the Donald Trump administration have deepened a behind-the-scenes shift begun over the last 15 years, with unofficial trade, security and diplomatic collaboration between the Israeli government and the Sunni-led capitalist regimes in the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Those ties were driven by their rulers' seeking room amid the deepening world capitalist economic crisis and by their common opposition to the rise of the Iranian rulers' military and political power.

Palestinian misleaderships' course

But the Palestinian misleaderships' course of refusing to recognize the existence of Israel, while enriching themselves with funds from international aid, is a dead end for the Palestinian people. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority

are more discredited then ever.

A "Day of Rage," backed by the Palestinian Authority to protest the accords between the governments of the UAE, Bahrain and Israel, fell flat, *Haaretz* reported Sept. 16.

Some 20% of Israeli citizens are Arabs. While facing discrimination in jobs, housing and education, they work side by side with Jewish citizens and join together in battles for unions and better wages and work conditions. Speaking both Hebrew and Arabic, many Palestinian citizens of Israel are positioned to play key roles as trade expands with the UAE, Bahrain and other Arab countries.

In myriad small but significant ways, Palestinians in the West Bank and in Gaza have been showing their desire for a course different from Hamas and the Palestinian Authority.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank have been crossing into Israel, bypassing checkpoints through holes in the border fence — with the tacit approval of Israeli officials. They're picked up by relatives or friends who are Israeli citizens to go to the beaches near Tel Aviv or visit the zoo and other attractions.

Currently thousands of Gaza residents have permits that allow them to travel to work in Israel every week. Despite calling for the destruction of Israel, the Islamist group Hamas, seeking to quell discontent in Gaza, is trying to convince the Israeli government to grant 100,000 more permits.

"It is incumbent on the Palestinian Authority leadership to transcend whatever feelings and to see if an opportunity has risen," Sari Nusseibeh, a professor who once served as the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative in Jerusalem, said. "Why not ask, for instance, the UAE to push for the kind of solution that the Palestinians have always asked for."

The starting point for working people, the Socialist Workers Party 2017 statement noted, must be "the class interests and solidarity of workers and toiling farmers across the Middle East — be they Palestinian, Jewish, Arab, Kurdish, Turkish, Persian or otherwise, and whatever their religious or other beliefs — as well as working people in the United States and around the world."

That's even more true today as "working people organize and act together to advance our demands and struggles against capitalist governments and ruling classes that exploit and oppress us."

For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

Socialist Workers Party statement

Download ready-to-print flyer at www.themilitant.com



Workers and oppressed peoples worldwide unite!

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September is *The Socialist Workers Party in World War II* by James P. Cannon. Cannon was a founding leader of the American Communist Party in 1919 and served on the executive committee of the Communist International. He was expelled from the CP after it was taken over by Stalinist leadership. He went on to become national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. He joined the international fight led by Leon Trotsky against the counterrevolution against Lenin's course carried through by Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union and the Communist International. The excerpt is from a 1943 article, "The End of the Comintern and the Prospects of Labor Internationalism." Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



V.I. Lenin, center, Bolshevik leader of Russian Revolution, addresses Second Congress of Communist International in St. Petersburg, 1920. First four Comintern congresses left a legacy of revolutionary working-class program and strategy still crucial for workers today.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

So far nobody has discussed the question from the point of view which brought the Communist International into existence, that is, from the point of view of organizing and furthering the worldwide struggle of the proletariat for emancipation from capitalism. But it is this point of view that I want to bring to the discussion here this evening.

Of course, the announcement of the formal dissolution of the Comintern is

simply the news account of a burial that is ten years overdue. ...

This belated burial of the corpse of the Comintern is a climax, we might say, to a long sequence of events which has extended over two decades. These events, in their highlights, can be noted: the death of Lenin; the promulgation for the first time, in 1924, of the theory of socialism in one country; the bureaucratization of the Comintern and all of its parties; the expulsion of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition, first in the Russian party and then in the other parties of the Comintern; the capitulation of the Communist Party of Germany, with its 600,000 members and its six million voters, without a struggle and without a fight, to Hitler fascism in 1933; the organized, systematic betrayal of the proletariat of the world in the interest of the diplomatic policy of the Kremlin; the murder of the Old Bolsheviks; the assassination of Trotsky; the betrayal of the proletariat in the Second World War, first to Hitler and then to Roosevelt and Churchill.

Since the beginning of the war the Comintern, the unburied Comintern, was silent as the grave. Now it is formally buried, and that, at least, is a good thing. ... By the formal burial of the Comintern, Stalin, for once on the international arena, has unconsciously performed a progressive act.

The bourgeois press and public generally, the political leaders and spokes-

men, are very well pleased with the recent pronouncement, even if they understand that it is only a formality. They have good reason to be pleased. The dissolution of the Comintern, and the cynical repudiation of internationalism and the international proletarian organization, is an ideological victory of vast importance for capitalism and reactionary nationalism. ...

They have good reason to applaud the action of Stalin, taken through his puppets in the so-called Executive Committee of the nonexistent Comintern, because the renunciation of internationalism is a renunciation of the basic premises of scientific socialism. It is a renunciation of the cardinal doctrine which has guided and inspired the struggle of the workers for generations, since Marx's day. The modern movement of international socialism began with the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, ninety-five years ago, with its battle cry: Workers of the World Unite! The *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed the doctrine that the emancipation of the workers could be achieved only by their common actions on an international scale. Against the cardinal principle and battle cry of Marx and Engels, and of all revolutionary socialists since that time — Workers of the World Unite! — Stalin has announced a motto of his own: Disband your international organization; give up all thought of international collaboration; support your own imperialists; and confine your ac-

tivities to the national framework of the country in which you are enslaved.

Internationalism was not a dogma invented by Marx and Engels, but a recognition of the reality of the modern world. It proceeds from the fact that the economy of modern society is a world unit requiring international cooperation and division of labor for the further development of the productive forces. The class struggle arising from the class division between workers and exploiters within the countries requires class unity of the workers on an international scale. From the beginning, the program of scientific socialism has called for the international collaboration of the workers and oppressed peoples in the different countries, with all their different levels of development, in order that each might contribute their strength as well as their weakness to a united world program and world cooperative action. The *Communist Manifesto* called for common efforts of the workers in all countries for the common goal of workers' emancipation.

After the downfall of feudalism, the national states played a progressive role as the arena for the development and expansion of the forces of production in the heyday of capitalism. But these very national states, whose sanctity is proclaimed by Stalin in 1943, became obsolete long ago. They have become barriers to the full operation of the productive forces and the source of inevitable wars. The whole pressure of historic necessity is for the breaking down of the artificial national barriers, not for their preservation.

Just as the petty states and principalities and arbitrarily divided sections of the old countries under feudalism had to give way to the consolidated, centralized national states in order to create a broader arena for the development of the productive forces, so, in the same way, the artificially divided national states have to give way to the federation of states. In the future course of development this must lead eventually to a world federation operating world economy as a whole without class and nationalistic divisions. From this it follows irrevocably that such an order can be created only by the international collaboration and the joint struggle of the workers in the various countries against their own bourgeoisie at home and against capitalism as a world system.

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Join int'l 'Militant' subscription drive!

Continued from front page

Both Donald Trump and Joe Biden are determined to defend the rule of the capitalist robber barons.

Only the Socialist Workers Party candidates point to the capacities of working people to act together to defend ourselves. The party's presidential ticket — Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president — advances proposals to unify and strengthen working people as we stand up to the bosses' attacks on our wages and working conditions on the job and take steps towards building the unions we need.

The SWP campaign says action is needed now by workers and our unions to demand the government fund a massive public works program to create jobs at union-scale wages, to build the hospitals, homes, schools and other things working people need.

As employers threaten to lay off millions more workers, our unions must demand bosses cut the workweek to 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to spread the work around — a shorter workweek without *any* cut to our weekly take-home pay. Don't let the bosses dump more of the burden of their crisis on our shoulders!

With this issue the *Militant* is launching an eight-week fall subscription drive to expand our readership, extend the reach of the SWP election campaign and offer at reduced rates books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries. In the midst of today's crisis the *Militant* is more valuable than ever. During government lockdowns the paper never missed an issue, providing an intransigent defense of the interests of working people and highlighting what we can do together to advance our struggles.

It is a voice for working-class fights unfolding today from the strike for higher wages and full-time work by retail workers in Newfoundland, Canada, to protests by New York yellow cab drivers against onerous debts, to actions to bring down the brutal regime and expand political space in Belarus.

The *Militant* is your paper, help get it around! Introduce the paper and the SWP campaign to your friends, co-workers and family. Use it to win endorsers for the only working-class party on the ballot!

The books — like the six on special with a subscrip-



Militant/Eric Simpson
Alyson Kennedy, right, SWP candidate for president, joins Sept. 7 labor protest in San Francisco, campaigns for unions to fight for shorter workweek with no cut in pay.

tion listed on page 6 — explain what lies behind the capitalist crisis and draw on decades of experience of the working-class movement and of revolutionary struggles to point a way forward.

The *Militant* explains why workers need our own party, a labor party, that can lead us in our millions to fight to take political power into our own hands and replace dog-eat-dog capitalist rule with our own government — a workers and farmers government.

That is only possible as “working people begin transforming ourselves and our attitudes toward life and work and each other. Only then will we learn what we're capable of becoming, as we unfold the capacities of ourselves and our allies to change society,” writes SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes in *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*, one of the titles on offer during the party's drive.

This drive to expand the circulation of the *Militant* and the books takes place concurrently with an SWP Party-Building Fund effort. Contribute as generously as you can to help the party respond to expanding political opportunities today.

Wildfire social crisis

Continued from page 3

near power lines,” Gutierrez said.

“PG&E pled guilty to 84 counts of manslaughter for the deaths in the 2018 Camp Fire that destroyed Paradise,” I said. “Former Chief Executive Bill Johnson told the court he was taking responsibility ‘on behalf of the 23,000 men and women of PG&E.’ But it wasn't PG&E workers who made the profit-driven decisions that caused the fire and deaths. It was the company's bosses, who wanted to boost profits by cutting corners.”

Berry Creek is just a few miles from Paradise.

Is Johnson going to jail for the 84 deaths? No. The company will pay a \$3.5 million fine. Johnson himself makes over \$6 million a year.

Workers form 'Hillbilly Brigade'

Residents of Molalla in Oregon were awakened in the middle of the night Sept. 7, as two fires were raging towards their town of 9,000 in the mountains south of Portland. In a matter of hours, some 1,200 people volunteered, as Oregon firefighters were overwhelmed by the huge fires across the state. They called themselves the “Hillbilly Brigade.”

Ranch hands, lumberjacks and workers of all trades brought bulldozers, chainsaws and other logging and farm equipment to cut emergency firebreaks and douse flames. “We were left on our own to stop this,” Nicole West, a 36-year-old ranch hand told Reuters. She was operating a bulldozer. “There wasn't anyone coming from the state to save us. So we had to save ourselves.”

Working-class solidarity and collaboration were successful and the town was saved.

LETTERS

Coronavirus outbreak in prison

I got COVID-19 after a massive outbreak in our prison, then in our pod. There are 36 cases in our pod alone. To top it all off, a Lancaster city police officer killed a mentally ill man and every time protesters come by the prison we get punished for it. Please help raise awareness. Thanks compañeros!

A prisoner

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Letters call on Florida prisons to end their ban on the 'Militant'

Continued from front page

“Prisoners Demand Release from Overcrowded Jails” by Jeff Powers in issue no. 30. It describes efforts by prisoners, inmates' family members and others urging the California state government to take steps to relieve the dangerous overcrowding in prisons there amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which was extensively covered by the media.

The article describes “how families of the incarcerated have peacefully called on leaders in the State to respond to the danger posed by COVID to their loved ones in prison,” wrote Dolores Piper in an Aug. 30 letter urging authorities to reverse the bans. She first became active in the fight against police brutality after her 15-year-old nephew, Derrick Gaines, was killed in 2012 by a South San Francisco, California, cop. “This article and this publication do not encourage any kind of riots or rebellion in your facilities.

“Mr. Powers points out facts that should be important concerns for your staff members and your incarcerated persons,” Piper wrote. Prisoners “who

subscribe to this publication do so to keep informed and encouraged.”

Also impounded were issues nos. 31, 33 and 34. Authorities claim that these issues are “dangerously inflammatory” and “advocates or encourages riot insurrection, rebellion, organized prison protest, disruption of the institution, or the violation of the federal law, state law, or Department rules.”

Issues nos. 33 and 34 were banned simply for reporting on efforts to reverse the impoundment of issue no. 30. Issue no. 31 was banned for an article that unambiguously opposed violence in Portland, Oregon, by both antifa and federal cops.

After the Florida Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee upheld the bans, *Militant* attorney David Goldstein filed appeals against these rulings, requesting they be overturned.

If the impoundment of an issue by one Florida prison is not reversed, the paper is then banned in all of the state's 143 prison facilities.

The *Militant* has challenged the bans on over 40 issues of the paper in Florida prisons over the last seven years, and succeeded in overturning a large majority. In impounding *Militant* issues, prison officials refuse “to identify any specific material in an article that they find objectionable,” wrote Goldstein in his recent appeal, “or to give any explanation of what is objectionable and why.”

“I am writing to strongly object to your banning of recent issues of the *Militant*,” wrote Chris Pennock, a National Association of Letter Carriers union steward in Minneapolis. “Workers who are in prison have just as much a right as you or I to read newspapers of their choice.”

The banning of the paper is “a serious attack on freedom of expression which is highly valued in

many countries around the world,” wrote the African Diaspora Association of Canada, which groups together different African organizations in Canada.

Other groups that have sent letters calling for lifting the ban include the Florida Press Association, Amnesty International USA, American Civil Liberties Foundation Florida, Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press and PEN America. A growing number of individuals have done so as well.

“These letters let prison officials know the support that exists for the rights of the paper and our inmate subscribers,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “We need more to press them to overturn their ban.”

“At stake is the constitutional right of the *Militant* to publish its point of view,” he said. “The *Militant* will not back down from defending the right of prisoners to read different views, to think for themselves and form their own opinions.

“The deepening capitalist crisis impacts workers whether behind bars or anywhere else, leading to growing interest in a paper published in the interests of working people. Our subscription list in prisons across the country is growing,” Studer said.

Send letters to Dean Peterson, Literature Review Committee, Florida Department of Corrections, 501 South Calhoun Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399 or via email at Allen.Peterson@fdc.myflorida.com, with a copy to the *Militant*.

Fight prison ban on the 'Militant'

Get letters of support from unions, churches and defenders of workers rights and free speech. Send to Dean Peterson, Literature Review Committee, Florida Department of Corrections, 501 South Calhoun Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399, or email to Allen.Peterson@fdc.myflorida.com, with copies to themilitant@mac.com

Send a check to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, earmarked “Prisoners Rights Fight.”

'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