

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Armenia, Azerbaijan fighting fueled by deepening regional rivalries
 — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 84/NO. 41 OCTOBER 19, 2020

‘Trump-Biden debate shows workers need our own party’

BY SUSAN LAMONT

MADISON, Tenn. — “We watched the Trump-Biden presidential debate,” Allison Kuldaeva told Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy, as she was campaigning in this Nashville suburb Oct. 3. “It was terrible! I’m so happy to find out there’s a different choice.”

Like many others the SWP candidates are meeting in the final weeks of the 2020 campaign, she is repelled by candidates of the bosses’ parties and interested in learning more about the SWP, a working-class party that starts from the capacities of working people to organize together and fight to change the worsening conditions we face.

Kuldaeva, a former truck driver, liked Kennedy’s call for workers to form their own party, a labor party. “That would be kind of like a union for everybody,” she said. “That’s what workers need.”

A labor party will grow out of the battles we fight on the job, Kennedy said. It will be built through the unions fighting for a federal government.
Continued on page 4

Laws protect cops in lack of charges over Taylor killing

BY NED MEASEL

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — After a grand jury here failed to indict the cops who killed Breonna Taylor, a Jefferson Circuit Court judge ordered the release of parts of the recording of the jury’s proceedings. Taylor, a 26-year-old African American medical worker, was shot dead by cops breaking into her apartment in a midnight raid March 13.

Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron released tapes of the grand jury Oct. 2, but the recordings did not include either the prosecutors’ recommendations to the jury about whether the cops should be charged, nor the jurors’ deliberations. The judge’s order to release the tapes, which are normally kept secret, follows numerous demands, including from Taylor’s family and a member of the grand jury.

The jury found none of the three police officers that broke into Taylor’s home had broken any law by shooting and killing her in a hail of 32 bullets. Detective Brett Hankison was charged with wanton endangerment.
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For federal public works program to provide jobs



Paul Weaver/SIPA via AP Images

Workers at Shop-Vac company demonstrate at Williamsport, Pennsylvania, plant Sept. 28 after company announced it was shutting down three plants and laying off 427 workers.

For a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to stop job cuts!

This statement was issued by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, Oct. 7.

In the hands of the Democrats and Republicans, the two parties of ruling
Continued on page 9

Bosses announce more layoffs, attacks on wages, job safety

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

“You’re in good hands at Allstate,” the familiar TV commercial says. But the bosses of this large insurance company announced this week they are eliminating 3,800 workers. All-
Continued on page 8

Fall Campaign to sell Militant subscriptions and books

Sept. 26 - Nov. 24 (week one)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	70	11	70	17
Atlanta	70	9	70	9
Chicago	110	32	110	15
Dallas	30	7	30	
Lincoln	12	5	12	5
Los Angeles	90	17	90	22
Louisville	80	19	80	4
Miami	25	10	25	5
New Jersey	70	7	70	14
New York	85	24	85	18
Oakland	85	14	85	16
Philadelphia	25	0	25	3
Pittsburgh	40	10	40	2
Seattle	85	12	85	16
Twin Cities	25	1	25	6
Washington	60	6	55	15
Total U.S.	962	184	957	167
Prisoners				
	25	10		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	40	9	40	2
Manchester	35	7	35	3
Total U.K.	75	16	75	5
Canada	70	11	70	9
New Zealand	25	7	25	3
Australia	25	7	25	3
Total	1,182	235	1,152	187
SHOULD BE	1,200	150	1,200	150

Join fall drive to expand the reach of the ‘Militant,’ SWP campaign!

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The international eight-week drive to win 1,200 new readers to the *Militant* and sell the same number of books by Socialist Workers Party leaders and other revolutionaries is off to a strong start. The drive is intertwined with expanding the reach of the Socialist Workers Party presidential campaign of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett. At the same time, the SWP is carrying out its 2020 Party-Building Fund, this year with a higher goal of \$120,000.

SWP candidates and campaign supporters are introducing the candidates and the party’s program, the paper and the books to working people on their doorsteps in cities, towns and rural areas; at protests by Amtrak workers opposing layoffs; to workers fighting boss attacks; at plant gates; at actions by independent-owner truck drivers squeezed by brokers and big freight companies and more.

Workers they meet know they face the worst capitalist economic and social crisis of their lifetimes. Many are glad
Continued on page 7

Protests continue across Belarus despite government attacks, arrests



Tut.by

Mass march in Minsk Oct. 4 demands fall of Lukashenko gov’t, free the political prisoners.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Over 100,000 protesters marched in the Belarus capital of Minsk Oct. 4, demanding the resignation of Alexander Lukashenko, the autocratic president who has ruled for 26 years. Protests have rocked the country since he claimed to have won another term in flagrantly rigged elections Aug. 9. Many more lined the streets waving opposition flags in support. A central demand was the release of political prisoners as marchers defied rows of riot cops and water cannons fired from armored vehicles.

“Let them out,” hundreds of people chanted as they succeeded in reaching the Okrestina detention center where numbers of protesters and some oppo-
Continued on page 6

—On the picket line, p. 5—
 Canada Dominion workers win solidarity in six-week-long strike
 Ky. Teamsters continue strike for contract at DSI Tunneling
 Operating Engineers enter fifth week of strike against Macy’s

Workers in UK discuss how to fight gov't, boss attacks on jobs

BY PETE CLIFFORD

MANCHESTER, England — Announcing plans he called a “jobs protection and wages subsidy scheme,” Sept. 24, U.K. Chancellor Rishi Sunak laid out a program that will actually allow bosses to continue dumping the burden of a deepening economic and social crisis onto the backs of working people.

He brought to an end a special government program under which 9.5 million workers, just below a third of the entire working population, have been furloughed since the spread of coronavirus led to government lockdowns. They received only 80% of their wages since April.

Sunak derisively declared he was ending “zombie jobs,” ones he claimed wouldn't exist without the furlough program, in effect leaving millions of workers to fend for themselves. Many will join the 2.7 million workers claiming unemployment benefits since the pandemic began. Among the hardest hit have been airline and aviation industry workers and those working in restaurants and bars. The official 4.1% unemployed rate doesn't take into account this new wave of workers chucked onto the streets.

“It's bad already even before these moves,” Natalie Fox told Communist League campaigners as she bought a subscription to the *Militant* in Altrincham, Greater Manchester. “My nephew just got made redundant along with 400 others from the Cartwright vehicle factory. I got laid off two weeks before my maternity leave ended along with my furloughed workmates at the shoe repair chain Timpson.”

“We need to mobilize millions in a union movement to fight to shorten the workweek but with no loss of take-home pay and to fight for a massive program of public works to provide jobs,” replied Communist League campaigner Anne Howie.

Sunak's decision allows bosses to decide whether or not they want to take back furloughed workers and employ them for the next six months, working for at least a third of the hours that they put in before the pandemic. These workers would then effectively have the rest of their take-home pay slashed. The lost wages would only be partly be made up, with the bosses covering a third of the pay cut, and the government another third. The final third the worker would have to do without.

“These measures are just options for companies. We are at their mercy,” meat worker Matthew O'Neill at Pilgrim's Pride in Dukinfield near Manchester told co-worker Hugo Wils.

When workers at the plant were sick, “we only got paid statutory sick pay of 90 pounds a week [\$116] instead of the 80% furlough pay.” Like many others, workers at Pilgrim's have had no pay rise this year. “That's why we need to rely on our strength and capacities to stand up to the bosses and to fight to improve our wages and conditions,” said Wils, a Communist League member.

Gov't moves hit the self-employed

The government has also slashed the amount self-employed workers can claim as benefits, from 80% of average net income prior to the pandemic, to 20%.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Striking bookstore, cafeteria workers at Tate and Tate Modern Galleries in London, Aug. 28, protest bosses' plans to cut 313 of their jobs. Claiming to end nonexistent “zombie jobs,” U.K. gov't is dumping burden of shutdowns onto millions of workers to fend for themselves.

“I tried to go back to work,” Manchester taxi driver Diyar Kamil told the *Militant*, “but it was hopeless. Few people are traveling to the airport and there are no big sport or music events. The competition among cabbies is massive.”

Kamil had been on a parallel scheme to the furlough setup along with 2.6 million other self-employed workers.

Hundreds of cab drivers in Manchester demonstrated against a further attack on their livelihoods Aug. 26, protesting a new tax on drivers imposed by the City Council in the name of protecting the environment.

“They think we are the problem,” Kamil said.

“Yes,” this worker-correspondent replied, “and the action was an important step towards overcoming the competition that cab drivers face.”

In Tottenham, north London, the combined figure for unemployed and furloughed workers is the highest in the country.

“It's going to take action by working people to change the conditions we're facing,” Tony Edwards, a roadside vehicle recovery driver who lives in the area, told CL campaigner Dag Tirsén.

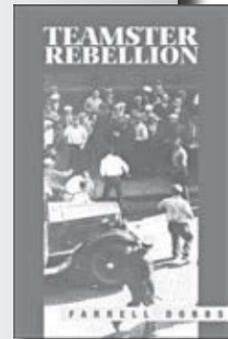
Tirsén had told him about the recent strike action to stop job cuts by workers at the Tate art galleries in London. “When the bosses move to cut jobs, the unions' response should be to organize workers to fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in take-home pay,” he said.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ruling Conservative Party is keen to retain the electoral backing it gained in the last election in many largely working-class areas where many people had previously voted for the Labour Party for decades. Sunak presented his measures only after meeting and winning the blessing of both Trades Union Congress leader Frances O'Grady and Confederation of British Industry director Carolyn Julia Fairbairn.

Labour Party spokesperson Anneliese Dodds said the government's decision to replace the furlough scheme was a “relief,” but complained that the delay in doing so had negatively affected what she called “business confidence” — that is, the bosses' willingness to invest in order to profit from our exploitation.

Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

How the men and women of Teamsters Local 574 carried out the strikes and organizing drive in Minnesota in 1934, paving the way for the continent-wide rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations as a fighting social movement.

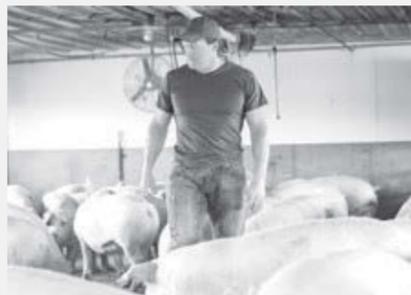


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THE MILITANT

Fight against farm bankruptcies, foreclosures

Working farmers in U.S. face rising debt levels, and threats of bankruptcies and farm foreclosures. The 'Militant' calls for end to seizures of family farms by banks and absentee landlords, and for nationalization of the land to guarantee the livelihoods of the farmers that till it.



Kenneth Ferriera/Omaha World-Herald via AP
Nebraska farmer Jim Bartling faced euthanizing his pigs as packinghouses shut down.

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

US gov't steps up executions, kills 7th prisoner in 3 months

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The U.S. government executed Christopher Vialva Sept. 24, the seventh federal inmate to be put to death since mid-July. These are the first federal executions to occur after a 17-year hiatus, and the most in a single year since before World War II. All these executions take place at the new death row at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Hours before the scheduled execution the U.S. Supreme Court denied Vialva's request to halt it. He also tried unsuccessfully to get President Donald Trump to commute his sentence to life in prison.

Vialva was convicted for the 1999 murder of two youth ministers, Todd and Stacie Bagley, who had traveled from Iowa to the Fort Hood army base in Texas for a church revival. At the time Vialva was 19 years old. He was the first federal inmate executed for crimes committed as a teenager in more than 70 years, and the first African American to be put to death since the federal government relaunched executions in July.

Vialva and another teenager, Brandon Bernard, who was 18 at the time, asked the Bagleys for a ride at a convenience store. Then Vialva and Bernard robbed and killed them. Bernard was also convicted and is currently on death row.

In a video statement released by Vialva's lawyers before his execution, he expressed regret for what he had done and said he was not that same person anymore. "I committed a grave wrong when I was a lost kid and took two precious lives from this world," he said. "Every day, I wish I could right this wrong."

Vialva's mother, Lisa Brown, spoke at an anti-death-penalty rally held across from the prison, to protest her son's execution.

Two days earlier the federal government put to death 50-year-old William LeCroy. LeCroy had been sitting on death row since 2004 after he was convicted of killing a nurse in Georgia. He said at the time he had an obsession with witchcraft.

On Aug. 28 federal authorities execut-

ed 45-year-old Keith Nelson, who was convicted for killing a 10-year-old girl in 1999. "Over the years, we have come to know Keith as someone who was different than the person who committed the horrible crime to which he admitted and pled guilty to in 2001," Nelson's attorneys Dale Baich and Jen Moreno said in a statement. "We saw his humanity, his compassion, and his sense of humor."

Of the seven federal prisoners put to death, five were Caucasian; Vialva, who was Black; and one, Lezmond Mitchell, a Navajo. He was executed for a crime committed on a Native American reservation against strong objections by Navajo leaders.

Decline in support for death penalty

While public support for capital punishment has been declining for years, continued use of the federal death penalty has been defended by Democratic and Republican administrations alike. While President Donald Trump restarted the executions this year, it was President Bill Clinton who signed the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, which added 60 federal crimes punishable by death.

The capitalist rulers keep the death



Joseph C. Garza/The Tribune-Star via AP

Lisa Brown, mother of Christopher Vialva, speaks at anti-death-penalty rally Sept. 24 at federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, hours before her son was executed. Poster shows his picture.

penalty to remind and intimidate workers with what they could face for getting involved in struggles in defense of their rights, jobs and working conditions.

To restart the executions, Attorney General William Barr replaced the deadly three-drug "cocktail" previously used, which had led to botched executions resulting in a rash of lawsuits, with a single drug, pentobarbital. This drug attacks the brain and central nervous system and is used to euthanize animals.

Anti-death-penalty proponents argue that lethal injection of pentobarbital can

also lead to unconstitutional pain and suffering.

Fifty-five of the 2,600 prisoners currently sentenced to die by execution in the U.S. are federal inmates. As working-class sentiment has grown against capital punishment, 22 states do not allow the death penalty. Three others — Pennsylvania, Oregon and California — have governor-imposed moratoriums.

The U.S. was one of only 20 countries last year that carried out executions, a list that includes China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt.

'Militant' fights yet another Florida prison impoundment

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Florida prison officials are at it again. On Oct. 3 the *Militant* received notice from Florida State Prison in Raiford that they had impounded issue no. 38. The reason? Because of the article on pages 1 and 2 titled "Join the Fight to Overturn Florida's Ban on the 'Militant' in State Prisons." Officials don't cite the same article that appears in the Spanish-language section of the same issue.

Authorities have impounded five of the last nine issues of the paper — nos. 30, 31, 33, 34 and now 38.

They claim they are "dangerously inflammatory," pointing to any article in each they say "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."

But they don't give any explanation of what it is in these articles they find objectionable.

Issue no. 30 was banned for an article reporting on a rally in California by inmates' family members and supporters urging the state government take steps to relieve dangerous overcrowding in prisons there amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Issue no. 31 was suppressed for an article that opposed violence at protests against police brutality in Portland, Oregon, by both antifa and federal cops.

Issues nos. 33 and 34, just like no. 38, were banned for articles reporting on the

impoundment of the paper and on letters sent to the Florida Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee urging them to reverse the ban.

At issue in all these cases is the constitutional right of the *Militant* to get out its political point of view and for its subscribers behind bars to be able to read it.

Militant attorney David Goldstein has filed appeals with the committee on the previous four impoundments and is preparing to do the same for issue no. 38. The committee upheld the banning of issue no. 30, without explanation, and the *Militant* has not heard any rulings on the other ones.

Issue no. 38 included an attractive collage of letters sent by prominent supporters of political rights asking that the suppression of the *Militant* be reversed. They were from the Florida Press Association, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Amnesty International USA, American Civil Liberties Union — Florida and PEN America. Others have also added their names since, including the prestigious News Leaders Association, African Diaspora Association of Canada and a number of individuals.

"With this latest impoundment, it's clear more publicity and pressure is needed to convince Florida prison officials to overturn these bans," said *Militant* editor John Studer. "This attack on freedom of the press is a serious violation of our rights, and we've been running weekly articles about the growing support for stopping these confiscations. And we will continue doing so."

"Our readers behind bars in Florida ask us to join them in this fight," he said. "And we've received more subscriptions from prisoners there since it began."

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*.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 23, 1995

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — "Cubans came to our region as doctors, teachers, soldiers, agricultural experts, but never as colonizers," said South African president Nelson Mandela at a Cuba-Southern Africa solidarity conference here. "They have shared the same trenches with us in the struggle against apartheid. Hundreds of Cubans have given their lives. We vow never to forget this unparalleled example of selfless internationalism."

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans served on internationalist missions in Angola from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s. Cuban volunteer troops helped defeat successive invasions by South Africa's apartheid regime.

The apartheid army was dealt a military defeat at Cuito Cuanavale in 1987 and was driven out of Angola. The outcome gave another impulse to the battle against apartheid inside South Africa.



October 23, 1970

President Richard Nixon's Oct. 7 "peace" proposal in no way signals a shift in Washington's military or political objectives in Southeast Asia. Nixon's proposal is designed to deceive the American people and to give the appearance of an attempt to end the war.

The near-unanimous support from Democratic and Republican party politicians emphasizes the importance of massive turnouts for the Oct. 31 demonstrations to demand immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops.

Washington's aim is to crush a popular revolution in Vietnam, to stabilize a pro-imperialist regime in Saigon, and to maintain a military foothold in South Vietnam. Twin opposition of the liberation fighters in Indochina and the anti-war forces in this country has dictated the step-by-step, "peace plan" by "peace plan" character of Washington's maneuvers throughout the war.



October 20, 1945

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 11 — Police, who yesterday morning arrested hundreds of unarmed pickets at Warner Bros. Burbank studio, retreated in confusion today when at six a.m. sharp the first contingent of a mighty wave of thousands of Lockheed workers drove up dramatically and with flags flying joined the pickets.

Some 500 police, who had previously taken up positions in the middle of the street, stepped back and retreated to the opposite curb. They made no move to stop the procession.

Lockheed machinists, after demonstratively driving past Warners' studio, parked their cars and in columns four abreast marched back to join the other pickets. The singing, militant marchers were hailed by those on the line with shouts, whistles and applause. By seven o'clock, more than 2,500 sympathizers from Lockheed had joined the pickets.

'Workers need our own party'

Continued from front page
ment-financed public workers program to put millions to work at union-scale wages, to create jobs building schools, hospitals and other things workers need.

"The only way to get there is to stand together on the job and begin to fight for higher wages and better working conditions, like the farmworkers in Washington state who I recently visited," the SWP candidate said. These workers at a half-dozen packinghouses in the Yakima Valley struck for safer working conditions in May and June, gained some improvements, and now are fighting to win union recognition.

"Workers are not pushovers even when we don't have a union yet," Kennedy, who works as a cashier at a Walmart in Dallas, said. "At many Walmart stores, workers have fought against speedup and for safety on the job. These experiences give us confidence that we can rebuild the union movement around the country."

On Oct. 4 Kennedy and campaign supporters John Benson and Lisa Potash campaigned at a truck stop in southeast

publicans, between Black and white," Ashley Lawton said.

There are two main classes, Kennedy said: the capitalist class and the working class. The bosses have their twin parties, the Democrats and Republicans, to defend them, she pointed out, and working people need our own party.

"As working people begin to organize and fight together to change our situation, we will build solidarity and unity that can overcome the divisions the bosses use to keep their system of exploitation and oppression going," Kennedy said. "By acting together, we'll gain confidence in ourselves and each other."

Tremendous advances for working people were registered through conquests won during the fight for Black rights in the 1960s and 1970s, Kennedy noted. "In many ways working people are more united than ever before. We saw that so clearly in the protests earlier this summer against police brutality, which drew people of all backgrounds into the streets in big cities and small towns."

But those protests "have been cut



Militant/Rachele Fruit

Congress keeps "arguing about the stimulus package and doesn't act because they don't go home to children who are hungry," LaTia Killingsworth, right, told SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy in Forest Park, Georgia, Oct. 1. Kennedy explained workers need to organize to fight to defend jobs, wages and job safety. Killingsworth endorsed the SWP campaign.

Fredericksburg, Virginia, Oct. 3, owner-operator truckers were preparing a cookout. The previous day they had parked their 30 rigs on the National Mall in Washington in a "Ten Four DC" action. When truckers say "10-4" — radio shorthand for OK — it's a way of saying "I've got your back."

"If you got rid of the ELD [electronic logging device] independent truckers would convoy you to the White House," Jerry Campbell, from Union, West Virginia, with 32 years truck driving, told Jarrett. The devices track drivers' movements, to aid federal agencies in imposing regulations on the number of hours drivers can operate their vehicles. The devices add to hated bureaucratic red tape that blocks owner-operators from making their own decisions about how to work safely.

This comes on top of the disastrous impact on truckers' livelihoods as brokers use heightened competition among truckers for work to cut the rates they pay drivers. This has accelerated during government lockdowns.

Many drivers also face rising indebtedness as a consequence of the way the big trucking companies force owner-operators to cover all their expenses.

"Three of my friends just had to get

rid of their rigs," Campbell said.

"The independent operators are like the small farmers. We have very little control, and we take all the risks," trucker Artie Daniels from McKenney, Virginia, told Jarrett. "If we don't stand up, they will roll over us."

Daniels described joining thousands of farmers demanding parity prices for their crops at least equal to costs of production, at a 1979 tractorcade in Washington.

"I voted for Ross Perot. I voted for Obama twice. I voted for Trump. Don't get me started on the Clintons. Now what?" Daniels said.

Unlike the capitalist candidates, who all promise to "solve" problems working people face, the SWP presents demands working people can fight for together that advance our own interests. And they present a course of action to overcome divisions the bosses foster, Jarrett said.

"The Socialist Workers Party is a voice for workers and all those exploited and oppressed by capital," Jarrett said. "We call for building a labor party. Together we can chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government."



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Trucker Artie Daniels signs up for *Militant* subscription from Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate Malcolm Jarrett at Oct. 3 truckers' cookout in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Atlanta. They met Ashley Lawton and her husband Randy, an owner-operator from Lexington, South Carolina.

"I have to bid lower to get a load, to keep busy with work," Randy Lawton said. "My combined truck mortgage and insurance is \$1,200 a week. The dispatcher owns you!"

"We have to pay everything ourselves — gas, repairs, maintenance," he said. "I only made \$30,000 in 2019, out of \$188,000 gross! The problem is, there's no unity among drivers."

"And the cost of living keeps going up and up," added Ashley Lawton.

That's why every contract should have a cost-of-living clause that raises wages whenever prices go up, SWP candidates say. Kennedy told the Lawtons that she and Jarrett went to trucker protests in Washington, D.C., earlier this year. "It's through these kinds of actions that working people can unite and begin to change things," Kennedy said.

"The problem is the divisions in the country, between Democrats and Re-

short," Kennedy said, "by antifa, Black Lives Matter and other forces that carried out looting, trashing and other anti-working-class acts that drive people away."

Lisa Potash contributed to this article.

SWP candidate joins rail worker, trucker actions

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON — Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate Malcolm Jarrett brought solidarity to Amtrak workers protesting job cuts in an action at the U.S. Capitol, and joined with independent truckers calling attention to attacks on their livelihood, during his Sept. 30-Oct. 4 campaign tour here.

"The cuts at Amtrak not only mean people lose their jobs, but the workplace stops being different generations," David McClain, a train engineer on the Virginia Railway Express commuter railroad and member of SMART-TD Local 1933, told Jarrett at the Sept. 30 Amtrak protest of 75.

"The bosses are responsible for the layoffs," Jarrett said. "That's why the unions have to lead a fight for jobs. The workweek should be cut with no cut in pay, to defend jobs. The full cost of ensuring jobs should come from their profits, not on the backs of workers and our families."

McClain signed to endorse the Socialist Workers Party 2020 ticket.

When Jarrett and campaign supporters went to the fairgrounds in

"It's both parties. It's the Democrats and the Republicans. Nothing changes for working people."

David McClain, rail engineer/conductor and member of SMART-TD union Local 1933 (right at Sept. 30 Amtrak workers protest in D.C.), on why he endorses the SWP campaign



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*.)

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SWP candidates tour schedule

Oct. 6 - 10

Kennedy - Phila.; Jarrett - Pittsburgh

Oct. 13 - 18

New York City/N. New Jersey

Oct. 20 - 24

Kennedy - Louisville; Jarrett - Albany

Oct. 27 - Nov. 1

Kennedy - Chicago; Jarrett - Twin Cities

—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

Canada Dominion workers win solidarity in six-week-long strike

"Money, money, money — that's Galen Weston. As long as he can take care of himself and his family that's all he cares about," a striking Dominion grocery store worker on the picket line in Newfoundland says in a TV video ad released by the Unifor union Sept. 29.

The strike by 1,400 members of Unifor Local 597 began Aug. 22 at 11 Dominion stores across the province. Workers are fighting for higher wages, more full-time jobs and better benefits. It is one of the most important labor battles in North America today.

Weston, the third richest person in Canada, owns Loblaw Companies Limited, the largest private employer in the country, which in turn owns Dominion Stores.

"And these are the people who want us to work for minimum wage," says another worker interviewed for the ad. A third person adds, "They want us to do the work of full timers at part-time wages." More than 80% of workers are classified part time, with limited access to benefits, and without a raise since 2018.

"During the COVID times, we were important, we were heroes, and now we're not respected anymore," explains another worker. The Dominion workers are fighting to reverse an insulting attack on their wages when Loblaw bosses cancelled a 2 Canadian dollar an hour raise (\$1.50) given to workers when the coronavirus hit. The three-year contract offered to employees would eventually restore only half that amount.

From March to September, as Dominion workers were being driven harder and had their hours and wages cut, the Weston family's net worth increased by \$1.6 billion.

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

—Beverly Bernardo

Ky. Teamsters continue strike for contract at DSI Tunneling

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Thirteen steel fabrication workers, who voted in the Teamsters union at DSI Tunneling here



Unifor Local 597

Dominion strikers, members of Unifor Local 597 in Stephenville, Newfoundland, join "Orange Shirt Day" protest to mark crimes committed against Native peoples in residential schools.

last November, have been on strike for their first contract since Aug. 4. They are hanging tough on the picket line and continue to receive solidarity from fellow workers and unionists. Truckers from fellow workers and unionists. Truckers blow their loud air horns and other motorists honk as they pass by.

"The Teamsters are standing with us," said Jimmy Kolle, who has worked at the factory both under DSI and previous owners and taken part in earlier organizing efforts. "We tried to get the union in the past, but I feel like we have a better chance this time.

"People forget what they're really worth when the bosses beat you down, until you start believing them," Kolle said. "But the owners make

their profit from the know-how and labor of the workers."

DSI bosses have been stalling on negotiating a contract to try to erode support for the union.

"DSI is all about 'take, take, take,'" striker John Street told the *Militant* on the picket line Oct. 2. "Our last raise was seven years ago. The company cut off our health insurance" when the strike started, he said. "Now I'm paying \$1,560 a month for my wife and me!"

This small but determined group of strikers needs broad support. Send contributions and messages of solidarity to Teamsters Local 89, 3813 Taylor Blvd., Louisville, KY 40215.

—Maggie Trowe

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.

Operating Engineers enter fifth week of strike against Macy's

SAN FRANCISCO — Over 70 members of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 39 are on strike against Macy's department stores throughout Northern California and in Reno, Nevada. All the strikers are concentrating their picket lines at the Union Square store here. They're fighting for parity with other engineers in the area and against attacks on their health care and other benefits. They've been without a contract since Sept. 1, and no talks are scheduled.

"Not only does Macy's want to pay 80 cents on the dollar compared to other engineers in the industry," the strikers' fact sheet says, but they are "trying to force us to take these reduced wages for the next three years."

The bosses shut down Macy's for several months in the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis, furloughing the workforce. When they reopened the Union Square store, they laid off more than a dozen engineers.

"Macy's should dig in their pockets and start paying their workers," Eric Zarco told the *Militant* on the picket line Sept. 27. "The greed really shows. They are using COVID-19 as an excuse, but we've been taking their guff for years."

Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 13th District in California, and several campaign supporters joined several hundred other strike supporters at the picket line and rally organized by the San Francisco Labor Council Sept. 17.

Britton, a longtime trade unionist, said, "It's very important to support these workers who are pushing back against Macy's attempt to take advantage of high unemployment to weaken their union. Working people need unions, fighting unions, in every workplace."

—Andrea Morell

Belarus protests continue

Continued from front page

sition figures are believed to be held. Some held pictures of prisoners inside the walls.

More than 13,000 people have been arrested, many of whom were later released as protests grew. In the regime's brutal attempt to crush the mass opposition, many were savagely beaten with at least five killed. A widespread, if short-lived, strike wave by workers at the country's largest factories and mines helped push back the regime's thugs.

The authorities "threaten us with their military vehicles and their brutality," but if the crowds are big enough "the masked men won't touch us," Julia Cimafiejeva, a poet, told the Oct. 1 *Financial Times*. "We see that it is they who are most afraid." Around the fringes of the latest mass march, up to 160 were arrested.

Cimafiejeva noted how people sing folk songs and old patriotic tunes to express their collective protest when other means are barred. "A song is a dangerous weapon against those who hate culture and arts," she said. "There is no culture or arts without freedom of thinking and speech."

In an Oct. 3 article on the Open Democracy website, Konstantin Ostrogorsky reported on earlier workers' actions at the Belarus Steel Works in Zhlobin that "spooked local government leaders and plant management." After a meeting Aug. 17, workers marched into the large plant and got the three kilns shut down, stopping production.

Their demands were purely political — for "Lukashenko's resignation, the release of all detainees, an end to violence against peaceful citizens and the withdrawal of all riot squads and all nonlocal police from the city."

There, as in numerous other big state companies, the protesting workers have been forced back to work for now. But workers' support for the protests hasn't been stifled, despite the bosses' intimidation.

Working people in Belarus also face

a deepening economic crisis. Along with greater competition from cheaper Chinese and Indian steel products, wages have fallen. The result is a steady trickle of growth in independent unions, which have sought to organize workers to resist attacks on wages and conditions.

Lukashenko, a former collective farm boss, was elected president in 1994, three years after the implosion of the Soviet Union. He steered a course clear of the "shock therapy" of rapid privatization of state-owned industry that happened elsewhere in Eastern Europe and in Russia.

Instead, his government increasingly introduced capitalist methods into the state companies, including attacks on workers' rights and conditions. Profits and state resources were increasingly siphoned off into private hands. "All the institutions of power work for one criminal family," Vitaly Dyadyuk, a member of the strike committee at Belaruskali, the giant state potash mining company, told the *Militant*, with an entire network of companies "owned and controlled by Lukashenko's organized criminal gang."

Labor contracts

One of the regime's biggest attacks was in 1999, when Lukashenko introduced short-term contracts on workers at state enterprises of from one to five years, replacing what had been permanent jobs.



For two months Belarus has been convulsed by mass protests and workers strikes after President Alexander Lukashenko declared victory in rigged election. Above, protesters defy water cannon in Minsk, Oct. 4.

"For the slightest offense," Dyadyuk said, employers "simply will not renew your contract." In addition, they increased "the bonus component of the salary to 50%," which intensified exploitation and "put a noose around the worker's neck."

Key figures in the bourgeois opposition advocate even more extensive use of capitalist measures. As a presidential candidate, Viktor Babaryka, the ex-head of Belgazprombank, one of the country's largest banks, promised to carry out a massive privatization of state property.

In an effort to win the election, Lukashenko had Babaryka and other opposition candidates imprisoned on frame-up charges.

The International Monetary Fund has demanded major state-owned enterprises in Belarus be privatized as a precondition for new credit lines.

Loans by Moscow are similarly conditional on increasing the economic hold of the capitalist rulers in Russia. They seek to bring Belarus into increasing economic and political integration with Russia, while trying to prevent another uprising like took place with the 2014 Maidan revolution in Ukraine.

The Russian rulers view the mass protests and strikes in Belarus today as a serious threat. At the same time, they are not confident in the reliability of Lukashenko. So far, they have decided not to use the troops they have based in Belarus to intervene, fearing a deeper explosion.

Adding to their problems is the turmoil in Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet republic in Central Asia, also over disputed elections. Along with the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the crisis in Belarus, instability is growing in Moscow's "near abroad."

New Hong Kong protests defy cops, repression

BY JANET POST

Despite a severe crackdown by 6,000 police, justified by authorities using harsh COVID-19 restrictions, thousands of protesters fighting for political rights and against control from

Beijing took to the streets in Hong Kong Oct. 1. The date is celebrated as National Day by the regime in China.

For the past two years workers and other fighters have mounted protests against the Chinese rulers' increasing grip in the supposedly semi-autonomous territory of Hong Kong. Immediate demands have included direct elections and a halt to repression by the cops. Many in the protests have called for the independence of Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong people are under a lot of pressure, but we need to keep fighting for freedom," one protester told Al-Jazeera News.

The Civil Human Rights Front applied for a permit for the Oct. 1 demonstration, but it was denied by the puppet government. The organization has mobilized millions in demonstrations since February 2019.

Under current Hong Kong COVID-19 restrictions, no more than four people are allowed to gather together in public. Protesters eluded the police mobilization by coming together in small groups to hold up a pro-democracy paper, chant slogans like "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times," or play "Glory to Hong Kong," the protest anthem.

"Police screened whole streets of shoppers, including young children, for evidence they were protesters and placed several mostly young people, their hands secured with cable ties, on to buses," reported the *Financial Times*.

At the end of June Beijing passed a national security law, on top of repres-

sive local Hong Kong restrictions, that makes it easier for authorities to harass and jail strikers and protesters — echoing similar laws covering mainland China. The measure makes political crimes punishable by up to life in prison.

Speaking to a National Day event, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, a hardline Beijing supporter, celebrated the new law and the crackdown. "Over the past three months, the plain truth is, and it is obvious to see, that stability has been restored to society while national security has been safeguarded," she said.

One demand of the demonstrators was to free 12 Hong Kong pro-democracy activists now being held incommunicado in the mainland. After they evaded arrest in Hong Kong, and were attempting to escape to Taiwan, they were captured by the China Coast Guard. "If you break the law, police will bring you to justice no matter what remote corner of the earth you flee to," stated Hong Kong Police Chief Chris Tang.

More than 10,000 people have been arrested in Hong Kong since protests broke out.

The Chinese rulers are determined to put down these actions, and to prevent resistance to their rule from spreading elsewhere in China.

"Of course [we are afraid] but despite the fear we should not stop what we are fighting for," a 27-year-old teacher told the *Financial Times*. "We still want democracy and we still need freedom and we still want our Hong Kong."

BOOKS WORKERS NEED TODAY...

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Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions
by V.I. Lenin, Farrell Dobbs, Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky and Jack Barnes
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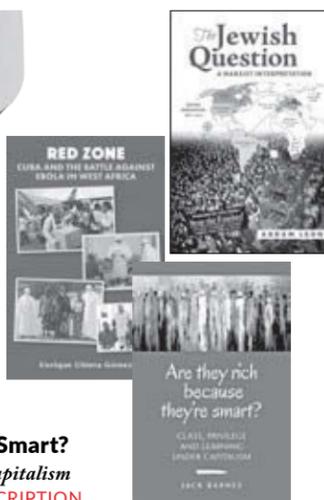
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Armenia, Azerbaijan fighting fueled by regional rivalries

BY TERRY EVANS

Bloody clashes have broken out in the Caucasus as the regimes in Azerbaijan and Armenia are battling over control of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. Their decadeslong dispute over the area is stoked by the rulers of Russia and Turkey, who seek to control the oil resources and markets of the region.

The governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan have accused one another of firing into each other's territory since Sept. 29. Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan, but has a majority-Armenian population. At least 158 people have been killed.

Some 30,000 were slaughtered in a war over control of the territory fought out in the course of the disintegration of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union in 1991. An armistice was brokered by the new government in Russia in 1994, but no peace treaty has ever been signed. Hundreds of thousands of Azeris were driven out of Nagorno-Karabakh and today it is administered by forces linked to the Armenian government. The rulers of Azerbaijan continued to insist the enclave is theirs, and repeatedly threaten to seize it.

Moscow has close ties with both countries — which are former Soviet republics — and considers the Caucasus to be part of its “near abroad” — its sphere of domination. The Turkish rulers are allies of the Azerbaijan government, and insist it is their duty to defend their fellow Turkic people.

Moscow has directly intervened in the region, and in other parts of its “near abroad,” like Crimea, when the Russian rulers felt their interests were threatened. They invaded Georgia in 2008, tightening Moscow's grip on the region.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accuses the government of Armenia of being “the greatest threat to peace and tranquility in the region,” while supplying weapons to the rulers in Azerbaijan.

Azeris are among the mostly Moslem Turkic-speaking people who live in countries across Central Asia. What today is Azerbaijan was conquered by the Russian Czarist Empire in the 18th century. Before the end of the first imperialist world war, the rulers of the Ottoman Empire in what is now Turkey invaded the area and tried to conquer the region.

Armenians are a centuries-old nationality and mostly Christian. Their land — and their national monument, the historic Mount Ararat — was conquered by the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, and by Russia in the 19th. In 1915 the Ottoman rulers carried out a bloody massacre of hundreds of thousands of Armenians.

Revolution changes Caucasus

With the end of World War I, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the workers and farmers revolution in Russia, workers and peasants in both Armenia and Azerbaijan rose up and took power.

The Soviet governments established there, as well as in Georgia, Ukraine and Belarus, joined Russia to establish the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The revolutionary government in Russia, led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, fought to guarantee the rights of nations long



oppressed by the former Czarist Empire, and took special steps to aid the development of the economy, language rights and culture of the oppressed peoples in the USSR. There was a flowering of literacy and art in both Azerbaijan and Armenia, and, along with Georgia, they united in a common Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

But the Bolsheviks' revolutionary policy on national self-determination and voluntary federation came under attack by an emerging bureaucratic layer led by Joseph Stalin in the 1920s. Before his death in 1924, Lenin's last political battle was against Stalin's efforts to reimpose Great Russian chauvinism in Georgia.

The gains made by workers and farm-

ers in the Transcaucasus were reversed by the counterrevolution engineered by Stalinism. And national rivalries that had begun to recede reemerged. Today's bloody conflicts are one consequence of that defeat.

In the immediate years after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the emerging capitalist rulers in both Azerbaijan and Armenia declared their independence.

In Azerbaijan, the rulers enriched themselves and foreign capitalist investors by expanding their exploitation of the country's vast oil and gas resources. They have routed new pipelines through Georgia and Turkey, largely avoiding Moscow's pipeline network, to sell fuel in Western Europe. A pipeline from

Azerbaijan's Caspian Sea shoreline opened last November, running near Nagorno-Karabakh.

Moscow's ties are closest to the rulers of Armenia, where it maintains a military base and deploys 5,000 troops along the country's border with Turkey.

Growing capitalist crisis

As the crisis of capitalism deepens worldwide, regimes like Moscow and Ankara are driven to heightened competition for economic exploitation and political sway. Moscow accuses Erdogan of sending mercenary forces he arms from Syria to reinforce Azerbaijani troops.

The rulers of Russia and Turkey have also faced each other in their interventions on opposing sides of civil wars in Libya and Syria. And the Turkish government is involved in territorial conflicts with the governments of Greece, Israel, Italy and Egypt over which of them will profit from the development of recently discovered gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean.

Erdogan on Oct. 3 claimed Turkey would “take its deserved place in the global world order,” as a result of his government's interventions. In reality the country's ruling capitalist families operate from mounting weakness today, driven by a spiraling economic crisis at home.

Their currency, the lira, has plummeted 150% against the dollar since 2016. Credit-rating agencies have downgrad-

Continued on page 9

Join drive to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ SWP campaign

Continued from front page

to meet the Socialist Workers Party and learn what it says working people can do to confront this crisis.

SWP campaigners joined 75 Amtrak workers in front of Union Station in Los Angeles Sept. 30 protesting bosses' threats to furlough 2,000 workers. Similar rallies took place in New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C. Like the airlines, Amtrak says a steep drop in the number of passengers as a result of the government-imposed lockdowns means they've got to put workers out on the streets.

Zenora Hicks, who has worked for Amtrak for three years, told the *Militant*, “One person deals with three cars. Triweekly service, instead of daily, with double occupancy. We don't need to be furloughed. Our co-workers need us.”

SWP campaigners have been highlighting the need for workers and our unions to fight for cutting the workweek with no cut in pay to prevent layoffs while protecting workers' income.

Hicks was one of four participants in the Los Angeles demonstration who bought subscriptions to the *Militant*. Two also bought books: *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes and *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

SWP gubernatorial candidate Henry Dennison and supporters took part in a rally of more than 80 people in front of the Twin City Foods plant in Pasco, Washington, Oct. 2. Workers at the plant, which packs frozen vegetables, are fighting to win United Food and Commercial

Workers union representation.

“There are some 560 workers, but only about 170 are ‘permanent,’” Jorge Villegas, who works on the plant floor, told Dennison. Dennison told Villegas how the *Militant* built solidarity for workers on strike in fruit packing plants in the Yakima Valley earlier in the year, and that the paper would be reporting on the fight there as an example of how workers need a union to defend themselves from boss attacks.

Villegas subscribed to the *Militant* and got a copy of *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*, which explains why it's workers and our allies who through our struggles can and will lay the foundations for a world built on solidarity among working people worldwide.

In South San Francisco, Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in the 13th District in California, knocked on the door of Richard Ortega Oct. 3. Ortega, a landscaper and gardener who works seven days a week, liked the SWP's call for workers to fight for a government-funded public works program to put millions back to work. He signed up for a *Militant* subscription.

Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in the 3rd District in Kentucky, and supporters campaigned at the plant gate of the GE Appliances complex in Louisville where 3,800 workers produce household appliances. The workers, members of IUE/CWA Local 83761, had voted down the bosses' contract offer Sept. 16. One worker bought a subscription and *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*, and four got copies of the *Militant*.

SWP members in Chicago are setting

a good example getting an early jump on the SWP Party-Building Fund. “We already have \$6,800 pledged, over half our quota of \$13,000,” Ilona Gersh told the *Militant*. “And we're reaching out to win new contributors to the party. The SWP depends on contributions large and small from workers and farmers to finance its political work.”

Starting this week the *Militant* is running weekly charts on the subscription drive and SWP Fund. Please send in reports of your progress for this column.

Tell your co-workers, friends and family about the paper, the books and the fund. To join in the effort see the directory on page 8.

Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund Sept. 26 - Nov. 24

Area	Quota
Albany	\$7,500
Atlanta	\$11,000
Chicago	\$13,000
Dallas	\$2,750
Lincoln	\$325
Los Angeles	\$12,500
Louisville	\$5,000
Miami	\$3,750
New York	\$15,500
N. New Jersey	\$6,000
Oakland	\$12,750
Philadelphia	\$3,500
Pittsburgh	\$3,000
Seattle	\$12,500
Twin Cities	\$4,250
Wash., DC	\$6,000
Total	\$119,325
Quota	\$120,000

Bosses announce more layoffs, attacks on wages, job safety

Continued from front page

state is one of a number of big capitalist outfits slashing its workforce as a deep capitalist crisis that has upended the lives of tens of millions of working people continues to unfold.

American and United Airlines said they'll be cutting a total of more than 32,000 jobs. Southwest Airlines bosses tried a different approach, saying they would limit layoffs if the union would agree to across-the-board pay cuts.

United Airlines got a \$5 billion bailout from the federal government in the spring. Now they're dumping over 20% of their workers.

U.S. Walt Disney Co. announced permanent layoffs of 28,000 workers at its theme parks in Florida and California, many of whom had already been on "temporary" furlough for months. Regal Cinemas said it's closing all of its 663 movie theaters in the U.S. and U.K., cutting 45,000 workers.

As of mid-September, there are 26.5 million workers collecting state or federal unemployment benefits. And this doesn't include millions more who haven't been able to get benefits, including immigrant workers without papers and part-time workers not eligible for government programs.

For the week ending Sept. 26, nearly 1.5 million filed for various unemployment benefits, way over the 200,000 weekly applications in February before the pandemic began. The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program set up to aid self-employed, gig and other workers not eligible for regular unemployment gave some relief to 11.8 million workers the week ending Sept. 12.

California officials were so over-



Teamsters Local 2010

Warehouse workers and truck drivers rally Sept. 24 in Burbank, California, against demand by Albertsons and Kroger grocery store chains to raise health insurance costs in new contract.

whelmed by unemployment applications, and a backlog of nearly 600,000 filed earlier, as well as about a million filings for modifications for those already getting benefits, that they stopped processing September claims for two weeks.

Now officials in some states, including Colorado, Pennsylvania and Ohio, are telling workers they were overpaid and want thousands of dollars back. In Golden, Colorado, Autumn Stull, who owns a maternity and children's consignment store, had her check cut from \$618 a week to \$223 because the state said she had been overpaid and owes \$8,972, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

Ohio government officials say over 108,000 people on the pandemic assistance program were overpaid, many because of errors by the unemployment agency.

This economic and social crisis was exacerbated by the coronavirus outbreak, but it is rooted in a long-term decline of capitalist production and trade.

The ruling capitalist families have held back from investing in new factories and capacity-expanding equipment to increase employment because it's just not profitable enough. Instead, they've speculated on stocks, bonds, derivatives and all manner of other commercial paper — bets on future activity of all kinds — seeking higher returns. Instead of hiring, many companies have bought back their own stock, seeking to boost share prices. In 2018 such buybacks hit a record \$806 billion.

Millions face utility shut-offs

Millions of people could face shut-offs of gas, water and electricity, as utility companies in 28 states ended morato-

riums on monthly payments. While suspending collections, these companies didn't waive the amounts owed, leaving workers with mounting debts.

Similar city and state moratoriums on rent payments have run out.

Also feeling the brunt of this crisis are small shopkeepers, many of whom have had to abandon their businesses, unable to cover rent and utility expenses.

In New York City, as many as half of its restaurants could close permanently over the next year, according to an audit by the state comptroller, eliminating up to 159,000 jobs. The report says that one-third of the city's restaurants and half of its bars have shut down.

There are a few sectors of the economy that are growing and reaping profits today — including online retail giant Amazon, Walmart, Target, some large grocery chains and meatpacking bosses — but they're doing so at the expense of workers' safety and health on the job. Amazon admitted Oct. 1 that more than 19,000 of its "essential" workers contracted coronavirus since March.

The government insists that inflation is averaging a meager 1.3% this year. But this has a big impact on retirees, who depend on cost-of-living adjustments to their Social Security benefits to cover rising prices. "Social Security's 2021 Hike Expected to Be Smallest in Years," the Sept. 28 *Investor's Business Daily* said. The figure, to be announced Oct. 13, may not even cover increases in Medicare insurance premiums.

The government's distorted inflation figures are an average of all prices. As workers — and retirees — know, the cost of basic necessities like food, paper goods and much more are soaring. It's cold comfort to know that the cost of luxury condos and yachts are declining, pulling the average down.

Figures from a Federal Reserve survey of family finances from 2016 to 2019 shows a widening gap in assets of the ruling capitalist families and their meritocratic professional and upper-middle-class hangers-on compared to the bank accounts of workers and farmers.

The top 1% of the U.S. population holds nearly 40% of the "wealth" today. Net worth — your so-called assets minus your debt — for the top 10% averages \$1,220,000 today.

For the bottom 25%, we're each "worth" \$12,430 total.

Should I hold my nose and vote for the 'lesser evil'?

BY TERRY EVANS

"I'd rather vote for something I want and not get it than vote for something I don't want and get it," Eugene V. Debs, the presidential candidate for the Socialist Party and supporter of the 1917 Russian Revolution, told working people over a century ago.

Debs' comments are as true today as they were then, as backers of both President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden insist workers do the opposite. Both say working people should cast a vote for them because they are the "lesser evil," despite the unbroken records both have of upholding the rule of the top capitalist families, the class that is responsible for the crisis conditions workers face.

At a rally in Canton, Ohio, in 1918, Debs called on workers to turn their backs on the Republicans and Democrats and to look to our own class and build our own party. "Be true to yourself and to the best you know," Debs urged, and back a revolutionary working-class party that "stands for a principle and fights for a cause." He was sent to federal prison for this speech and campaigned for president in 1920 from his cell.

Last month Biden told factory workers in Wisconsin that Trump looks down on them because he thinks he's "better than you." Days before, Trump said that Biden's Democrats "had waged war on the American workers for half a century." They're both right.

Whether Biden or Trump wins in November, he will use the presidency

to loyally protect the ruling capitalist families who have thrown millions of us out of work, cut wages, sent the elderly to die of coronavirus in nursing homes nationwide, and left workers defenseless against rising inflation — all measures enforced to defend *their* profits, but increasingly intolerable for working people.

Neither the Democrats nor Republicans offer any proposal aimed at what workers most need — a road to fight to reverse today's massive jobless-

ness, get millions of us back to work at union-scale pay and provide adequate unemployment relief *now* for as long as needed until everyone has a job. Instead, both start from what the bosses say is "reasonable" or "possible," with the overriding aim to defend at all costs the dog-eat-dog private profit system.

In contrast, the Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett campaigns on a program for workers and our unions

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

Shorter workweek with *no cut in pay*

ALYSON KENNEDY



MALCOLM JARRETT

Continued from front page

capitalist families, billions of dollars in government handouts have flowed into the pockets of the bosses during coronavirus-motivated lockdowns on production and trade. At the same time, all pretense of giving serious aid to the millions of workers who have lost their jobs — for now or for forever — has dried up.

If the boss class can rake in enough profits by putting us to work, they'll put us to work. If they can't, they won't, and today many aren't.

Those who are — like Amazon and Walmart — organize work and pay to maximize their profits with disdain for the conditions we have to work in. Amazon admitted Oct. 1 that 19,816 of their workers contracted COVID-19 so far this year.

For working people the rising joblessness, and the debt, insecurity, increasing addiction and other social evils that accompany it, are inexcusable and we have to fight to reverse them. Neither President Donald Trump nor Joe Biden offer proposals to do so.

Only a serious fight by workers and our unions to force the bosses and their government to provide jobs offers a way forward.

The SWP campaigns for working people in our millions to fight for a government-funded public works program to create jobs at union-scale wages to build things workers desperately need. That includes reopening hospitals, constructing schools where teachers and students can study safely and building housing and public transportation.

Some employers, like Southwest Airlines, say they are willing to limit layoffs if workers and our unions agree to deep enough pay cuts to shore up their profits.

My party says wherever layoffs are threatened, we should fight for workers' hours to be cut to spread the available work around, but *with no cut in weekly take-home pay*. Our priority is the lives and conditions of the millions of working people,

who create all the wealth, not the profits of a tiny handful of exploiters. Moreover, if the workweek was shortened to 30 hours with 40 hours pay in all jobs, it would help open up jobs for millions and reduce the sharp competition we face to get hired today — something bosses utilize to set workers against each other.

In the short run, we demand *now* that the government pay union-scale unemployment to *all* workers, with proper papers or not, for as long as they're out of work.

Fighting and getting millions of our class back to work will make us stronger and more united. It will strengthen every on-the-job struggle workers are waging today for better pay, humane schedules, against unsafe working conditions and bosses' attempts to make fewer of us do more and more work. It will put us in a better position to build unions and use union power to extend solidarity to farmers and all those exploited by capital.

To maintain the oppressive conditions their rule is based upon, the capitalists rely on their criminal "justice" system, which is marked by cop brutality, frame-ups, a system of heavy bail and plea bargains, brutal prisons and assaults on political rights. Their use of the death penalty — a weapon of terror aimed at intimidating the entire working class and its fighting vanguard — is on the rise by federal authorities. My campaign fights for its abolition.

Despite the violence the capitalist rulers inflict on working people and the misery their dog-eat-dog system imposes on our lives, workers and farmers are capable of building their own political party, a labor party, and wresting political power from the hands of the capitalist class.

Join the SWP 2020 campaign, which together with fellow working people fights for immediate protection from the effects of today's crisis and presents the only realistic course forward.

Laws protect the cops

Continued from front page

for shooting wildly into a neighboring apartment.

At a press conference after the jury's decision was announced, Cameron justified the decision not to press charges related to Taylor's killing, stating that "according to Kentucky law, the use of force by [Sgt. Jonathan] Mattingly and [Detective Myles] Cosgrove was justified to protect themselves."

Such laws, which exist all across the country, are designed to ensure cops are shielded from prosecution at all costs. Kenneth Walker, Taylor's boyfriend, had fired a single shot at the cops when they busted into the apartment, fearing that he and Taylor were in danger. He wounded Mattingly. Hankison, Mattingly and Cosgrove then blindly opened fire, killing Taylor.

"Cameron did not serve as an unbiased prosecutor in this case," wrote the Taylor family's lawyers in a letter published after the jury's decision. He "intentionally did not present charges to the grand jury that would have pursued justice for Ms. Taylor." The family is urging the case be reopened.

One of the jurors has filed a lawsuit seeking permission to speak freely about the jury's deliberations, saying Cameron used jurors "as a shield to deflect accountability and responsibility" for the decision not to indict any of the officers. The juror's lawsuit will be heard Oct. 8.

The grand jury heard taped interviews from the three officers involved in the raid, Walker, testimony from an investigator for the Attorney General's Office and other witnesses.

Its recordings show cops telling investigators that they had knocked on Taylor's apartment door for between 30 to 90 seconds before breaking in. One neighbor told authorities he heard the police announce themselves, but several others say they only heard the pounding on the door.

After shooting Taylor, the officers said they concerned themselves with arresting Walker and taking Mattingly to the hospital. The three cops never attended to Taylor, who bled to death. Charges against Walker were later dropped.

Detective Joshua Jaynes had obtained the search warrant used by cops in the deadly raid by claiming that packages of drugs were delivered to Taylor's apartment for her ex-boyfriend Jamarcus Glover. Taylor's family says the warrant was obtained dishonestly. The grand jury recordings show jurors asking whether the cops who carried out the raid had been told that other officers had already located Glover elsewhere before Taylor was killed. No answer is found on the tapes. No drugs were found in Taylor's apartment.

In a significant round of large-scale and widespread public protests that swept the country after George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis cops May 25, the name and death at the hands of cops in Louisville of Breonna Taylor has become heard everywhere. NBA stars playing for the national basketball title wear clothing with her name on it — millions know who she is.

Why didn't the authorities' decision in Louisville not to seek charges against the cops who killed her not lead to large and sustained protests?

The political course of middle-class radicals, Black Lives Matter leaders and antifa who hijacked earlier protest actions has destroyed that opportunity. These groups have led actions marked by race-baiting, violence, looting and attacks on police, pointing away from what is both possible and necessary. Groups carrying arms have been allowed to attach themselves to these actions opening the door to reprisals by the cops.

This course destroyed the possibilities for organizing disciplined, mass actions aimed at forcing authorities to charge the cops. Such actions could have drawn backing from unions, churches and other groups.

Despite the state's decision not to charge the cops, Taylor's family and others continue to press for further hearings and federal charges. And many are waiting to hear from the grand jurors who've asked to be allowed to speak out.

Vote for 'lesser evil'?

Continued from page 8

to organize to defend ourselves. To speak out and act in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capitalism. To unify working people in action. To build our own party, a labor party, to organize us in our millions to take political power into our own hands.

It's not good intentions, but through working-class struggle that we can gain self-confidence to see ourselves as a class that is capable of making history.

Join us in the final weeks of campaigning to take this perspective — along with the *Militant* and books by Socialist Workers Party leaders and other revolutionaries — to workers and farmers in cities, towns and rural areas!

Armenia-Azerbaijan

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ed the sovereign debt of Turkey and foreign capitalists are fleeing from investments there.

For working people the Erdogan regime has been a disaster. The twin scourges of unemployment and inflation have both risen into double digits in recent months. Over a quarter of all young people have no work, while the number who have given up hope of finding work altogether is at a record high — three times the level it was last year.

Moscow has its own problems, with an economy over-reliant on oil, a popular uprising in neighboring Belarus, and monthslong sizable protests in Russia's Far East.

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