

Gag orders by ‘social media’ bosses attack political rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Growing restrictions and monitoring of political views by censorship officials at Facebook, Twitter and other “social media” are a danger to political rights. Liberal thought-control overseers have interfered with or blocked comments and sites that run the gamut from tweets by President Donald Trump to a Facebook page about a conference on solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

“Social media,” which is supposed to be a neutral location where anyone can express an opinion or start a conversation group, already poses a serious threat to working people. It facilitates police and government spying on individuals and groups. As the class struggle heats up, workers fighting to build and strengthen unions and for Black and women’s rights can be targeted.

Under the pressure of liberal and middle-class radical organizations, the bosses at Twitter, Facebook and other sites — who make millions from running them — have put po-

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Brutal gov’t killing spurs new protests in Belarus

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Thousands gathered at Minsk’s Square of Change and elsewhere across Belarus Nov. 15 to demonstrate against the cop killing of Roman Bondarenko. He had been one of the hundreds of thousands protesting the regime of President Alexander Lukashenko and his Aug. 9 rigged presidential elections.

Bondarenko, a children’s art teacher and former soldier, was beaten to death four days earlier after he tried to prevent plainclothes cops from removing the red-and-white emblems of anti-government protests put up in a playground.

“We will not forget. We will not forgive!” chanted protesters. Many held placards that read, “I’m going out,” the last words Bondarenko wrote on an internet chat line before going to the playground. Riot police using tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades attacked crowds of people protesting the killing. Over 1,200 demonstrators were arrested, as well as 23 journalists.

“Before, the deaths of protesters were made to appear like accidents,” Maryna Arabei, originally from Belarus and now a graduate student at the New School in New York City, told the *Militant* Nov. 14. She was par-

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Fight for gov’t public works program to create jobs now!



Some 8,500 families, 17 times more than last year, waited up to 12 hours in huge lines to get turkey, canned goods and other food for Thanksgiving at North Texas Food Bank in Dallas.

Working people need our own party, a labor party

Working people need our own political party, a labor party, that we can use to defend our interests, independent from and politically opposed to the Democrats and Republicans, the

EDITORIAL

twin parties of the capitalist rulers.

Alternating in office for decades, whoever is “out” claims to be the party of “change.” Each exists to protect the interests of the exploiting ruling

Continued on page 9

Gov’t lockdowns deepen jobs, wages, health crisis

BY TERRY EVANS

Nine months into a deadly pandemic, workers, farmers and small proprietors of all kinds face a deep and intertwined crisis of jobs, wages, safety and health.

Millions are without jobs. Food banks are overrun, especially heading into Thanksgiving. The few remaining supplemental government aid programs are

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Fall Campaign to sell Militant subscriptions and books

Sept. 26 - Nov. 24 (week seven)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	70	62	70	48
Atlanta	70	68	70	73
Chicago	110	93	110	99
Dallas	30	25	30	24
Lincoln	12	10	12	10
Los Angeles	90	81	90	83
Louisville	80	78	80	76
Miami	25	20	25	15
New Jersey	70	66	70	63
New York	85	85	85	80
Oakland *	85	73	95	90
Philadelphia	25	27	25	22
Pittsburgh	40	33	40	36
Seattle	85	64	85	60
Twin Cities *	30	30	25	22
Washington *	60	50	60	53
Total U.S.	967	865	972	854
Prisoners	25	33		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	40	38	40	36
Manchester	35	36	35	34
Total U.K.	75	74	75	70
Canada	85	78	85	91
New Zealand	25	24	25	16
Australia	25	22	25	17
Total	1,202	1,096	1,182	1,048
SHOULD BE	1,200	1,050	1,200	1,050
*Raised goal				

Join push to go over quotas for new readers of ‘Militant,’ books

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are in the final stretch of the fall 2020 international drive to expand the circulation of the *Militant*. They are organizing to go over their goals of selling 1,200 subscriptions and the same number of books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries by the time the drive ends Nov. 24.

The interest among working people in the *Militant* and books — as well as contributions to the SWP’s \$120,000 Party-Building Fund, which is organized simultaneously with the drive — reflects the growing desire to learn more about the roots of the capitalist economic and social crisis and what can be done to defend our interests. Because of



Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, talks with Quinton Goolsby in Macon, Georgia, Oct. 10.

this, quotas are higher than during the party’s spring drive.

With a week to go, the international

Continued on page 3

‘Militant’ calls on Indiana officials to overturn ban at Wabash prison

BY SETH GALINSKY

For the second time in a year, Indiana prison officials are preventing Kevin “Rashid” Johnson from getting his subscription to the *Militant*. Johnson, who is incarcerated at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, informed the *Militant* he was given a notice that a recent issue

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Cliff Joseph, fighter for Black artists, Pathfinder Mural 7

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Pennsylvania nurses strike over patient safety, wages

Dominion strikers in Canada ratify pact, end 12-week strike

Teachers union supports SWP disclosure fight in Washington

BY JOHN STUDER

The Socialist Workers Party’s recent success in preventing disclosure of the names and addresses of its presidential electors in Washington state continues to hold. And additional support for the fight to prevent disclosure keeps coming in.

On Nov. 9 Annette Stofer, president of American Federation of Teachers Seattle Community Colleges Local 1789, wrote the SWP campaign extending the union’s support.

“The Executive Board of AFT Seattle Local 1789 wishes to express our support for your efforts to get an exemption from disclosure of personal contact information for your 2020 candidates and campaign personnel,” Stofer wrote. “We agree wholeheartedly that you have a right to protect the names and addresses of your members from those who may wish to cause harm. We also understand the necessity of upholding freedom of association and the right to privacy in those choices.

“We wish you success in your legal case. That success is important to all of us who might become the target of attacks on personal freedoms. We must defend the voice of a wide variety of political opinions. It is intolerable that some seek to shut down political participation by threats and intimidation,” she said. “Please reach out if there is more that we can do to support you.”

Members of this AFT local are familiar with what is at issue. They’ve been fighting for years efforts by the notoriously anti-union Freedom Foundation to use the state’s disclosure laws to force

college authorities to turn over names, addresses, ages and other personal information of campus employees. They say they want the information to try and get workers to quit the union.

Government officials in Washington state and in Seattle have a long history of enacting and using campaign and other disclosure laws against the Socialist Workers Party, other third parties and political groups, as well as public unions like the AFT.

The SWP has fought to win exemption from having to disclose the names and personal information of its campaign supporters on the city, state and federal level. Through political and legal efforts, the party has amassed thousands of pages of evidence of threats and attacks against those who’ve signed petitions, made contributions, campaigned for or otherwise aided its candidates.

During the SWP’s successful lawsuit against the FBI in the 1970s and ’80s, the spy agency was forced to admit to having used some 1,300 informers against the party, placing wiretaps and carrying out more than 200 burglaries into its offices, and organizing Cointelpro disruption efforts against the SWP and its members.

The SWP’s Seattle office was fire-bombed in 1984. While petitioning and campaigning for the party’s 2020 presidential ticket of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, SWP supporters received death threats, both in person and on the phone. One caller said he would burn their headquarters to the ground and kill everyone in it.

Still, authorities in Seattle and



Members of AFT Local 1789 organized a walkout in 2016 during contract negotiations at Seattle Central Colleges. The local’s executive board wrote to support Socialist Workers Party’s fight to stop Washington state officials from publicly disclosing names and addresses of SWP electors. The union has been fighting its own battle against attempts by a notorious anti-labor group to use state disclosure laws to gain access to personal information on campus workers.

Washington state, long dominated by liberal Democrats, have fought relentlessly against having to grant the party exemption from disclosure, claiming it is necessary for “transparency,” regardless of the attacks it might lead to against the SWP or others.

Even when the Seattle Ethics and Election Commission in 2005 finally granted the SWP an exemption from filing the names and other information on their campaign contributors after an eight-year fight, commission members complained that they were forced to do so by court rulings that “set the bar so low.”

The Socialist Workers Party is the *only* party to ever win exemption from the Federal Election Commission. In a defeat for political rights, the commission voted to revoke that exemption in 2017, claiming attacks against the party were now largely a thing of the past.

‘Gov’t has no right to disclose this’

“I find it unbelievable to think that the names and addresses of Socialist Workers Party presidential electors would ever be disclosed!” wrote Dan Coffman, the retired ex-president of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21, Nov. 11. Coffman was ILWU presi-

dent in Longview, Washington, during the union’s bitter struggle against a union-busting drive by megagrain exporter EGT Development.

“The government has no right to disclose this information of these people,” he said. “This Republic we live in gives US freedom from tyrannical overreach. To even suggest disclosure is shameful.”

Support has also come from other political groups. The Green Party affiliate in Oakland, California, wrote Nov. 16 to say it “wishes to inform the Socialist Workers Party that it has our organization’s full support in its legal battle to prevent the State of Washington from disclosing publicly the names and addresses of its presidential electors.”

Writing to the SWP, the Green’s Dale Baum noted his organization is “in complete agreement with its Seattle fight to win political space for the working class to debate, organize, and campaign.”

“The fight here has been an important contribution to winning political space for the working class,” Seattle SWP leader Mary Martin told the *Militant*. “It helps expose these ‘disclosure’ laws for what they are — an attack on political rights aimed at making it more difficult for unions and working-class parties like the SWP to fight effectively.”

THE MILITANT

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Militant/Catharina Tirsén
“Hands off Cuba!” actions took place in London, above, and Manchester, Nov. 7.

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Join push to go over quotas

Continued from front page
effort is at 1,096 subscriptions, 1,048 books and \$83,564 received for the fund.

The Socialist Workers Party 2020 ticket, headed by Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president along with a couple dozen local candidates, set an example of what is possible when working people organize independently of the capitalist parties. They won respect while campaigning on doorsteps, at taxi lines, Walmart parking lots, factory gates and labor actions, even in the first weeks of the pandemic lockdowns, telling the truth about what workers face and explaining what we are capable of fighting for.

“The party’s 2020 election platform remains a powerful tool,” SWP Los Angeles branch organizer Norton Sandler told the *Militant*. It’s not a set of ideas to win votes, but an action program with demands that workers and our unions can fight for today. From a public works program to put the unemployed back to work at union-scale wages, to cutting the workweek with no cut in pay to prevent layoffs, its proposals are aimed at preventing the bosses from putting their crisis on our backs.

“We’re using back issues of the *Militant* with the action program in it, to good effect,” Sandler said. He and Freddy Huinil used those issues to talk to working people at a Walmart parking lot last week and sold two subscriptions and three books.

In New York City’s Lower East Side, SWP member Tamar Rosenfeld spoke with a health care worker who belongs to 1199SEIU union. He described how bosses at the health facility where he works have been laying off workers despite the desperate need for more health care facilities during the pandemic.

How do we get to a labor party?

“I told him we need a labor party based on fighting unions,” Rosenfeld said. “Not a vote-catching machine, but an instrument of the working class that we can use to debate, decide and organize year-round to fight for things we need.”

When he asked how that can be accomplished, Rosenfeld said it would come out of labor battles as more workers come to realize from those experiences that they need a party of their own.

Rosenfeld reports he subscribed to the *Militant*, got a copy of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes and gave \$5 “for the movement.” Then, just before she left he contributed a further \$5.

In Georgia, U.S. Senate races are going to a Jan. 5 runoff election. Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate there, will keep campaigning, distributing the party’s platform and encouraging working people to break from the Democrats and Republicans and build a movement capable of taking political power into our own hands.

“We’re continuing to get a great reception,” Fruit told the *Militant* Nov. 17.

Around the country Socialist Workers Party branches are looking toward running candidates for mayor, governor and other offices that come up for election in 2021, efforts that will strengthen the party’s year-round work.

First-time fund contributors

Many of the workers subscribing to the *Militant* and getting books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries want to contribute to the Party-Building Fund when they hear about it.

In Georgia, party members are “becoming more alert to the opportunities to win contributions when campaigning at workers’ doorsteps,” Lisa Potash, Atlanta fund organizer, told the *Militant*. “We decided to ask more workers to contribute when we knock on their doors and set a goal of raising \$100 this



Alyson Kennedy, SWP 2020 presidential candidate, talks with Shawn Washington at Ford Motor plant gate Oct. 28 in Chicago, about why workers need to break with voting for Democrats or Republicans as the “lesser evil.” “You’re damned if you do, and damned if you don’t,” he said.

way. We have about \$80 in hand so far.”

From Louisville, Kentucky, Ned Measel reports, “The number of first-time contributors is up to 19, including four Walmart co-workers and 10 people who kicked in after we discussed politics with them on their doorsteps.”

Measel said the “second wave” of COVID cases in Kentucky and across the country makes many workers receptive to the party’s call for workers to fight to take control of production, including all aspects of health and safety, out of the bosses’ hands and for mass production of the latest medications to be administered at no cost to those afflicted with the virus.

Members of the IUE-CWA at the large GE appliance complex in Louisville bought 13 copies of the *Militant* from SWP members distributing the paper at a shift change Nov. 13. The union members have voted down the company’s contract offers twice in the last two months. (See article on page 5.)

After the drive ends, party branches will continue bringing the *Militant* and books by revolutionaries to workers, farmers and small proprietors across the country and building solidarity with strikes and social struggles. To join the efforts or to make a fund contribution, see page 8 to contact an SWP branch near you.

Thousands in Indonesia protest new anti-labor law

BY BASKARAN APPU AND LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY — Hundreds of thousands of workers and students took to the streets across Indonesia Oct. 5 to protest the passage of anti-labor legislation that day. Dubbed the “Omnibus Law,” it amends more than 70 existing laws, including ones that protect wage workers.

“It is clear it is anti-worker legislation. It will replace the current labor law, which was won through struggle,” Listyowati from Kalyanamitra, a Jakarta-based women’s organization, told the *Militant* by phone. She pointed out the example of the removal of limits on how long workers can be employed as contract workers. “We fear that some workers may end up being casual workers for life,” she said.

The bill was pushed through by the administration of President Joko Widodo, who claims the law is aimed at creating jobs by cutting red tape, easing restrictions on foreign investment and improving labor “competitiveness” — a code word for eliminating labor protections. Indonesia is in the midst of its worst economic downturn in two decades.

There were 7 million unemployed even before big pandemic layoffs of 2.8 million workers, especially affecting the tourist industry. Government-ordered lockdowns have hit street vendors, domestic workers and day laborers particularly hard. Over half of the workforce in Indonesia is estimated to work in this “informal” sector, which had few legal protections even before passage of the new law.

The main Indonesian trade union federations called a three-day national strike Oct. 5 to protest the bill. Contingents of workers marched in provinces across the country and were met with water cannons and tear gas. Over 3,800 protesters, including strikers, were arrested.

Actions against the law have continued. The unions are demanding parliament revoke the law and at the same time called for an 8% increase in the minimum wage.

“What workers hate the most is that the wages will be set by hourly rate instead of a monthly rate and that employers will not be required to pay severance pay,” Surya Anta, a human rights activist and former political prisoner, told the *Militant* from Jakarta. Switching to an hourly rate will mean

workers will lose holiday pay and other benefits, he said, adding that under the new law bosses will more easily be able to fire workers.

“Women,” Listyowati told the *Militant*, “get laid off first because they are not treated as the main wage earner.” Under the new law maternity leave for wage workers will no longer be guaranteed, she said. The overwhelming majority of women in Indonesia are contract or “informal” workers.

A solidarity rally was held outside the Indonesian Consulate in the Maroubra suburb of Sydney Oct. 9. Members of the Maritime Union of Australia joined the action to show their support for workers in Indonesia resisting the Omnibus Law.



Hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Indonesia to protest new anti-labor law passed Oct. 5. Sign at left reads, “Reject the Omnibus Law,” which makes it easier for bosses to fire workers, avoid paying holiday pay.

Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive		
Sept. 26-Nov. 24 (Week 7)		
Area	Quota	Collected
Albany*	\$7,700	\$4,850
Atlanta	\$11,000	\$8,368
Chicago	\$13,000	\$5,282
Dallas	\$2,750	\$1,850
Lincoln	\$325	\$210
Los Angeles	\$12,500	\$6,544
Louisville*	\$5,400	\$5,201
Miami	\$3,750	\$1,920
New York	\$15,500	\$12,103
N. New Jersey	\$6,000	\$4,840
Oakland	\$12,750	\$10,115
Philadelphia	\$3,500	\$3,335
Pittsburgh	\$3,000	\$2,100
Seattle	\$12,500	\$8,193
Twin Cities	\$4,250	\$3,559
Wash., D.C.	\$6,000	\$4,595
Other		\$500
Total	\$119,925	\$83,564
Should Be	\$120,000	\$105,000
*raised quota		

Ethiopia war threatens wider conflict in the Horn of Africa

BY ROY LANDERSEN

After two weeks of bloody military conflict that has already displaced thousands of civilian refugees, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced a “final” offensive Nov. 17 against the Tigray People’s Liberation Front that rules in the country’s northern Tigray state. The fighting threatens a broader civil war, which could fuel instabilities across Ethiopia and in other countries of the strategically important Horn of Africa at the mouth of the Red Sea.

The war comes after two years of mounting tensions as the TPLF, based among a small minority of Ethiopia’s people but long dominant in the country’s politics, clashed with the Abiy government’s drive to unify Ethiopia and exploit the impoverished country’s developing capitalist economy. In particular, the TPLF leaders refused to go along with Abiy’s efforts to forge a centralized party out of the ethnic-based coalition that has governed Ethiopia for the past three decades.

Airstrikes and a ground offensive were launched by the Ethiopian military against the TPLF after Abiy claimed it had “crossed the last red line” by attacking a federal military base and seizing heavy weapons Nov. 4. Federal forces claim to have made significant inroads into Tigray.

The Ethiopian military said it carried out “surgical air operations” Nov. 17 on military targets outside the Tigray capital Mekelle. The TPLF said a dam and a sugar plant had been hit and there had been civilian casualties. Tigray TV showed damage in residential areas of the city.

The Tigray rulers announced a state of emergency and retaliated with rocket attacks, including across the border hitting the airport in Asmara, the Eritrean capital.

The TPLF claims Eritrean tanks and soldiers have crossed the border, which runs through disputed territory. Abiy had won the Nobel Peace Prize last year for negotiating the end to decades of fighting and tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea, largely along the Tigray-Eritrea border.

Hundreds of fighters have been killed in the current battles. Civilian casualties are disputed, but over 30,000 refugees have already fled to

neighboring Sudan. “Scores, likely hundreds” of day laborers resident in southwestern Tigray, mainly ethnically Amhara, were “stabbed or hacked to death” with machetes Nov. 12, Amnesty International reported. Abiy claimed the massacre was carried out by TPLF forces, but this was denied by the Tigray rulers.

The Ethiopian government says the TPLF is “endangering the country’s existence,” and appointed its own new head of the Tigray region Nov. 13. It issued arrest warrants for the current officials there.

Colonial intervention in the region

Ethiopia was one of only two African countries that successfully resisted colonization by the British, French, Italian and other European powers when they carved up the continent. But as one of the most diverse countries in Africa, it has numerous tribal divisions and over 100 languages.

The TPLF led an insurgent coalition of ethnically based liberation fronts to take power in 1991. The broad front ousted the military regime that had ruled Ethiopia since 1974 when it overthrew the Washington-backed Emperor Haile Selassie.

Alarmed at the revolutionary overthrow of Selassie, and its impact on U.S. imperialism’s growing sway over the region, Washington pressured the neighboring Somali regime to invade Ethiopia’s Ogaden region in 1977-78. They hoped to topple the new regime, which sought and received help from revolutionary Cuba. With this aid, Ethiopia defeated the invasion.

As part of the coalition that overthrew the military regime in 1991, the Eritrean Peoples’ Liberation Front won Eritrea’s independence from Ethiopia.

Over time, layers of landlords and capitalists in Ethiopia used the ethnic divisions of different language groupings as distinct bases of support while profiting from exploiting the peasants and workers. The federated state of Ethiopia is based on nine self-governing ethnic territories reflecting these divisions.

Despite Tigray only having about 5 million of the country’s 116 million people, the Tigray front leadership dominated the coalition, as well as the government and the military, for

Atlanta solidarity vigil with protests in Nigeria



Militant/Susan LaMont

ATLANTA — “We’re here to honor the lives lost in Nigeria,” Victor Bomi told a protest outside the Nigerian Consulate here Oct. 30. “Even one Nigerian life lost is too many — too many killed by SARS, by the police, by government forces.” Thousands have marched in Nigeria in recent weeks demanding the dismantling of SARS, the acronym for the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad, hated for its use of torture, murder and illegal arrests.

Some 70 workers, students and professionals from Atlanta’s large Nigerian community attended the candlelight vigil, above, called in response to the Oct. 20 army and police attack on a protest against SARS at Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos, Nigeria, that killed at least 12 people and injured others. Though Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari announced Oct. 11 that he was disbanding the squad, few believe that will be more than a change in name.

At an open mic at the vigil, participants stressed the importance of overcoming regional, religious and tribal divisions and forging unity to build solidarity with the protests in Nigeria.

Sam Manuel brought greetings from Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate. “The courageous demonstrations in Nigeria and those here are part of a worldwide struggle of working people to change the conditions of oppression and exploitation we face,” said Manuel.

The Nigerian government claims it is investigating the Oct. 20 massacre, but on Nov. 6 the country’s central bank froze the accounts of 20 protesters. Immigration officials have confiscated the passport of at least one protest activist to prevent her from leaving the country.

— SUSAN LAMONT

almost three decades.

In 2018 a monthslong popular revolt targeting the dominance of the TPLF forced the resignation of the government. Abiy, from the Oromo, the country’s largest ethnic group, promised to unify and develop the country. He led the new ruling coalition.

He freed political prisoners, lifted the ban on opposition political parties and ended the longstanding state of emergency.

Abiy moves to centralize power

After having purged many Tigray officials, Abiy dissolved the governing coalition last year. His goal was a top-down merger into a single national nonethnic party, the Prosperity Party, which the TPLF refused to join. He has increasingly cracked down on political rights.

While Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in Africa with a yearly per capita income of \$850, it is today one of the fastest growing. Abiy sought to accelerate this development by opening up to foreign capitalist investment. Billions of dollars of financing in ports, rail, airports, agri-

culture and education poured in from the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, China, Turkey and the U.S.

In particular, significant natural gas resources have been discovered in the Ogaden, and both Beijing and Ankara have invested heavily in their development.

Beijing’s investment and loans in Ethiopia have reached more than double that of the U.S. rulers, in what has been one of Washington’s main allies in the area. These rivalries play a role in the country’s political divisions.

The prospect of the war spiraling out of control has raised alarm throughout the region among the competing capitalist investors. Attempts to intervene with offers of “mediation” by various imperialist and other African powers have been resisted by both sides.



Militant/Mike Shur

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles
The Fight of a Small Ohio Bakery Against the Wealth, Power and Class Privilege of Oberlin College. Speaker: Bill Arth, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Nov. 29, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2826 S. Vermont Ave., Suite 1. Tel.: (323) 643-4968.

ILLINOIS

Chicago
The Conflict Over Nagorno-Karabakh: The Bolshevik Revolution Showed Road Forward in Transcaucasus. Fri., Nov. 27, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1858 W. Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Tel.: (312) 792-6160.

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Dominion strikers in Canada ratify pact, end 12-week strike

The over 1,400 workers at Dominion grocery stores in Newfoundland, who belong to Unifor Local 597, voted to end their spirited 12-week-long strike.

Voting on what Loblaw, Dominion's parent company, called its "final" contract proposal was conducted on the picket lines Nov. 9-13. After approving the pact, the unionists returned to work. The strike had shut down all 11 Dominion stores in the province.

Workers struck after overwhelmingly rejecting the company's offer of a 1 Canadian dollar an hour wage increase (76 cents) over three years, after Dominion ended the CA\$2 hourly wage increase it had earlier instituted as pandemic pay. Strikers fought to reverse the cut and to increase the number of full-time workers, 60 of whom had been cut by the company in 2019.

The striking workers "had an employer who refused to budge and gave them a final offer, essentially threatening many more months back on the picket line, without moving on their offer," Chris MacDonald, Unifor's head negotiator, told the media. "Ultimately, members decided they were ready to go back to work." Loblaw is the largest private employer in Canada.

The new four-year contract is backdated to October 2019. According to CBC News, the offer included pay increases starting at 35 cents an hour and going up to an extra CA\$1.35 an hour by the end of the contract. On a one-time basis, any part-time clerk who has more than two, but less than three years of service and has not worked 2,001 hours will move up to minimum wage (now CA\$12.15) plus 40 cents. More than half the workers at Dominion now earn the minimum wage.

Loblaw will also add 22 new full-time positions, with those who had lost their full-time jobs given priority. That means 80% of the workforce will remain part time. Workers will also receive a company gift card of between \$50 and \$500.

The vote totals weren't announced. From the Local 597's Facebook page postings, it's clear some workers are frustrated with the result. It's also clear they appreciated the public support they got, and look forward to future battles.

— Beverly Bernardo

Unionists at GE in Louisville reject company's contract offer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Members of International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America Local 83761 at GE Appliances here voted down the bosses' second contract offer by 57% on Oct. 29. They had rejected their first offer Sept. 16 by 87%. Many told the *Militant* they needed and deserved more. The plant employs 4,100 workers.

"We are extremely disappointed that employees did not vote to accept the most recent proposed contract," the company, which is owned by Haier, said in response to the rejection. "For the second time, the proposal was unanimously endorsed by the IUE-CWA negotiating team at the local and national levels."

"With this latest contract, I'm worried about the new workers. The workers coming in are going to get slaughtered," Aaron Little, a GE Appliances production worker since 2012, told this worker-correspondent during a shift change Nov. 13. "We used to have pen-

sions. Now all we have is a 401(k). And with this latest contract it wouldn't start for new hires until they've already been working for the company for a year."

Starting pay at GE is \$14 an hour. Workers got an additional \$1.50 of "appreciation pay" starting Aug. 24, but this has since ended.

Dino Driskell, president of Local 83761, told WDRB-TV he was "kind of at a loss" about why the members rejected the contract.

In the proposed contract, production workers hired before October 2005 and maintenance workers hired before June 1, 2009, would receive a one-time hourly raise of 50 cents this year and a \$1,500 bonus in December, with only a \$1,000 cash payout for each of the last two years of a three-year contract. Production workers hired between 2005 and 2017 would receive a \$1 raise, the \$1,500 December bonus, and 50-cent raises the next two years.

"When an employee has worked at the plant five years, he should be able to pay his bills," Anil Khadka, a Building 3 technician, told the Louisville *Courier-Journal*. "Gas, food, insurance — it's still going up. The pay's not going up" enough to cover it.

Many workers are also dissatisfied with the high cost and low coverage of the health insurance plan. "We voted down the contract twice because we want better medical insurance and more pay," José González told *Militant* worker-correspondent Maggie Trowe Nov. 11. "The owners are trying to make more profits by holding us down."

"Maybe they think on \$14 an hour we can pay the \$4,000 medical insurance deductible," Heather Blair told Trowe at the plant gate. "We're fired up about the insurance!"

The GE plant has seen record demand for home appliances during the government-imposed lockdowns.

— Kaitlin Estill

Rolls-Royce jet engine workers strike to stop job cuts

BARNOLDSWICK, England — After being furloughed, prescribed a 10% wage cut and now facing 350 job losses, workers at jet engine maker Rolls-Royce

Pennsylvania nurses strike over patient safety, wages



Militant/John Staggs

Nearly 800 nurses, members of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals union, began a two-day strike Nov. 17 at St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, over inadequate staffing levels, patient safety and low wages. The union has been in negotiations over a year for their first contract. A strike has also been authorized at two major Philadelphia hospitals organized by the union, Einstein Medical Center and St. Christopher's Hospital for Children.

— JANET POST

here have had enough. Ninety-four percent voted for a strike called by their union, Unite, to oppose the job cuts.

Up to a dozen workers joined two picket lines Nov. 6, the first day of the action.

The union's fight takes place as workers across the country face mounting job losses and the impact of the government's new lockdown. The extension of a furlough scheme, which provided government funds to bosses to cover 80% of furloughed workers' wages, has masked some of the effects of this crisis.

Bosses at Rolls-Royce aim to cut 9,000 jobs out of a workforce of 52,000 worldwide. In August they announced the Barnoldswick site will cease making wide-chord fan blades for jet engines by the fall of 2023.

"They are saying 350 jobs are to go," union convener Mark Porter told the *Militant*. "We're not sure about the long-term viability for the rest." Bosses "made the announcement under the cover of the coronavirus pandemic, expecting us not to take action," he added.

The strike, initially called for three weeks, is now extended until Christmas Eve.

"Eighty-one workers are initially on strike, then a further 11, with more joining the strike as days go by," said Porter. "It's already having an impact on production."

Many of those on strike are not hit by the immediate job cuts, but join the action nevertheless, recognizing that an injury to one is an injury to all.

Union banners opposing the job cuts are displayed throughout this town of 11,000, and motorists frequently honk in support of the strike as they pass pickets.

The impact of the job cuts "on the town is immense," Porter said, "from how it will affect several manufacturers that supply this plant to local shops and businesses."

Messages of support can be emailed to ross.quinn@unitetheunion.org; or sent to Mark Porter, Unite Union Office, Rolls-Royce, Skipton Road, Barnoldswick, BB18 5RV, England.

— Hugo Wils and Pete Clifford

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 4, 1995

FORT MADISON, Iowa — "This is a tremendous victory," said Mark Curtis following the decision by the Iowa Board of Parole to release him from prison. "I always knew this day would come, but it wouldn't have happened without all the people who wrote letters, showed up for parole hearings, sold pamphlets about my case, and campaigned for my release."

The frame-up of Curtis began in March 1988. In the midst of a fight against the arrest of 17 immigrant workers at the meatpacking plant where he worked, Curtis was arrested by the Des Moines, Iowa, police. A longtime union activist and member of the Socialist Workers Party, Curtis was beaten and falsely accused of attempting to rape a Black teenager. He was railroaded to jail in a September 1988 trial. Curtis has won broad support among unionists, farmers, fighters for social justice.



December 4, 1970

The renewed bombing of North Vietnam adds to the long list of barbaric crimes committed by U.S. imperialism against the Vietnamese people and confirms that Washington has been guilty of perpetrating one more cruel hoax on the American people.

The escalation was being mapped at the very time all the preelection talk about "peace," "phased withdrawal" and "Vietnamization" was going on. The very notion that Washington has any other perspective than to try to wrest some kind of military victory constitutes the essential feature of the hoax.

What is involved is a course of action determined by the imperialist character of the U.S. that drives its efforts to crush the Vietnamese liberation forces, to seek to contain and roll back the revolutionary process throughout Southeast Asia.

Now more than ever: Bring the GIs home!



December 1, 1945

DETROIT, Nov. 21 — The biggest industrial strike in the nation's history started at 11 o'clock this morning when 225,000 members of the CIO United Automobile Workers poured out of 102 General Motors plants to fight for a 30 percent wage increase.

Angered by the refusal of the corporation to negotiate in good faith and goaded beyond endurance by company provocations, the GM workers have met the corporation's union-busting tactics with the grim determination to fight it out on the picket lines.

Beneath the strikers' determination to win their wage increase and settle accounts on grievances, lies the moral general concern for preservation of their union. The GM workers feel that they are banner-bearers for all labor, that their strike is a gigantic test of strength which both Big Business and organized labor everywhere are watching carefully.

Gov't lockdowns deepen crisis

Continued from front page
set to run out by the end of the year. And state and city governments are moving to impose new lockdowns on production, trade, restaurants, retail and jobs.

Governments at all levels and the owners of the nation's hospitals, drug monopolies, nursing homes and the rest of the for-profit health industry are little better prepared for the current surge in coronavirus infections than they were in the spring. While a special treatment helped President Donald Trump when he got infected, no effort has been made to mass produce the doses needed, and hospitals are seeking to restrict its use. Eli Lilly, the manufacturer of a similar antibody drug that Trump received, is charging the government \$1,250 for each dose. Washington bought 300,000 doses, enough for only one week of new infections.

One thing is clear, working people will get as little protection from the pandemic, unemployment and rising prices from a Joe Biden administration as we do today from that of President Trump. This week Biden appointed oncologist Ezekiel Emanuel to his coronavirus task force. Emanuel expressed his callous disregard for health care for the elderly in an October 2014 article in *The Atlantic* magazine, where he wrote that they are "feeble, ineffectual, even pathetic," and urged everyone over 75 to refuse medical treatment to prolong their life.

Workers and farmers need to join together to organize and fight to defend ourselves. The action program presented by the Socialist Workers Party candidates during the 2020 campaign remains as timely and necessary as ever.

The SWP says workers and our unions need to fight for a government-funded public works program to put millions back to work at union-scale wages to build the hospitals, schools, housing and other things we need. And for universal government-guaranteed health care for all from cradle to grave.

To carry this fight through to the end, we need our own party, a labor party, to speak out for all those exploited and oppressed by capitalism and to fight to take political power into our own hands.

Medical workers are inundated in

El Paso, Texas, as hospitalization rates there soar. Nurses report COVID-19 patients are being left to die with minimal efforts to resuscitate the worst affected. "There's not enough nurses to take care of all the patients that are coming in," Idali Cooper, a nurse at Hospitals of Providence Memorial, told KFOX-TV.

'Health care' crisis under capitalism

After years of hospital closures, especially in rural areas, and the refusal of management to sacrifice profits to store equipment and medicine for a second wave, hospitals in many states are already close to capacity. The closest intensive care unit for anyone with COVID in Kearny County, Kansas, is now a six-hour drive to Kansas City.

In Idaho, patients who need joint replacements, hysterectomies and any elective surgery requiring an overnight stay are being turned away from hospitals. Patients suffering heart attacks have had to wait hours to get necessary treatments at hospitals in Utah.

Given the failure of hospital bosses to train and hire sufficient numbers of medical workers, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum has instructed medical personnel infected with COVID-19, but who are asymptomatic, to keep working, even though they are carrying the contagious disease and can spread it in hospital rooms, as well as in restrooms and cafeterias.

In Langhorne, Pennsylvania, some 800 nurses at St. Mary Medical Center went on strike Nov. 17, in an ongoing fight over inadequate staffing levels combined with inadequate pay.

Elderly residents, who are packed into some 15,000 nursing homes across the country, face the highest COVID infection rates since August, especially with the virus spreading to more rural areas where there are fewer medical services.

The capitalist rulers have long considered the elderly disposable, since they can no longer profit by exploiting them. In some states governments ordered nursing homes to take in COVID-19 patients.

Georgia state officials finally acknowledged this month that residents stricken with COVID in July at the Riverside Health Care Center in Covington



Reuters/Ivan Pierre Aguirre

Hospital workers move bodies into refrigerated trailer in El Paso, Texas, Nov. 16. Shortage of beds, staff, equipment in for-profit hospital system increases toll of coronavirus pandemic.

had no hand soap, which was on "back-order for over a month." And the bosses at the nursing facility failed to separate those infected from those who weren't.

Workers face lockdowns, job cuts

For the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of unemployed workers who have been permanently laid off exceeded those who are on temporary layoff.

Retail chains have shut down 47,000 stores and more closures are threatened.

At the same time, new lockdown restrictions are being imposed by many state governments. In Philadelphia, Democratic Mayor Jim Kenney's health department announced Nov. 16 the barring of *any* indoor gathering or event, public or private. All libraries, museums, colleges, high schools and gyms have been ordered to shut their doors.

Nurses at Einstein Medical Center and St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia are planning a strike vote over conditions similar to those facing fellow union members in Langhorne. Will city authorities try to shut down their picket lines?

In response to new lockdowns, bosses

everywhere are cutting workers or slashing their hours and pay. More working people face plummeting incomes at the same time prices of gasoline, meat, eggs and other necessities are rising.

In Dallas, 8,500 families — 17 times that of previous years — waited for up to 12 hours on line to a city food bank to get a Thanksgiving food basket.

The capitalist media is full of news about Biden, Trump and what the 2020 elections mean. The liberal media, like the *New York Times*, are flabbergasted that larger numbers of workers — Caucasian, Black, Hispanic and Asian — voted for Trump than in 2016. They say it shows working people, as Hillary Clinton said, are "deplorable." The capitalist rulers see us as a dangerous class.

The Socialist Workers Party explains that workers and farmers are the only productive classes. We make *everything* we consume and use. We are the future.

Workers need to fight for jobs, to be working side by side with fellow workers, to be able to fight together as a class. This is the only road forward to solve today's economic, social and health crises — all products of the workings of the dog-eat-dog capitalist system.

'Militant': End Indiana prison ban

Continued from front page

had been "disallowed due to safety and security of facility." The notice did not even say which issue of the *Militant* had been banned.

Johnson later learned it was issue no. 44, with a banner headline, "Vote Socialist Workers Party." In violation of the prison system's own regulations, the notice does not say what officials object to.

The *Militant* is challenging the suppression of the paper and demanding the ban be overturned, as it does whenever prison authorities impound an issue.

At the end of last year, when Johnson, a leader of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, was held at the Pendleton Correctional Facility, officials impounded four issues of the paper. Johnson has been transferred repeatedly, from Virginia to Oregon, Texas, Florida, back to Virginia and to Indiana, and faced harassment from prison authorities.

Those earlier impoundments were reversed after the *Militant's* lawyer, David Goldstein, contacted the Indiana Department of Correction and letters protesting the ban were sent by Bishop Dennis Lyons from the Gospel Missionary Church in Louisville, Kentucky; Walmart workers in Illinois and Kentucky; and others.

Jon Ferguson, chief legal officer for

the Indiana Department of Correction, had told Goldstein that the impoundment at Pendleton "was determined to be in error. Staff have been retrained in the matter."

"Seems Wabash Valley staff never got the memo," Johnson wrote the *Militant* Nov. 5. They "are using the exact same vague and invalid basis for banning your paper that was previously overturned." Officials are also suppressing his subscriptions to the *San Francisco Bay View* and *Socialist Viewpoint*.

These bans come after Johnson filed a number of complaints with prison staff.

"The *Militant* will not stop defending its rights nor those of prisoners to read literature of their own choosing, and to form their own opinions about what can be done about the deepening crisis working people confront today," said *Militant* editor John Studer. "Prisoners can count on the paper to defend constitutional rights."

Back the fight to overturn suppression of the *Militant* and support Johnson's right to read whatever he chooses. Write to Chief Counsel Jon Ferguson, Indiana Department of Correction, 302 W. Washington St., Room E-334, Indianapolis, IN 46204, or via email at JFerguson1@idoc.IN.gov. Send a copy to themilitant@mac.com

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Killing spurs Belarus protests

Continued from front page

ticipating in a march of 80 people that ended with a vigil for Bondarenko outside the Belarus Consulate in New York. “This one everyone saw [on video clips]. It was outrageous.”

Masked men were photographed beating Bondarenko as he lay on the ground and then dragging him into a police van. He was taken into police custody before being sent to a hospital in a coma. He died from brain injuries the next day.

The interior ministry denies responsibility for Bondarenko’s death, alleging he was killed in scuffles with civilians. His sister, Volga Kucharenka, posted the video refuting authorities’ claims.

When news broke of the killing, thousands attended vigils around the country to honor his memory. Motorists stopped traffic. Many hundreds formed “solidarity chains” on streets outside universities and hospitals with red-and-white Belarusian flags and portraits of the murdered protester.

Workers walked out at a number of plants to join a minute of silence for

Bondarenko, including miners and other workers at the huge Belaruskali potash complex.

“All the guys from our company... were shocked by what had happened,” said Aleh Strelchyk, who served with Bondarenko when they were conscripts in a special forces army unit. “The authorities are to blame for everything that happened to him.”

Over 17,000 have been detained for periods of time, and more than 500 tortured since demonstrations demanding Lukashenko’s resignation spread across the country from August on. Workers joined strike actions in many factories in September, outraged at the regime’s brutal efforts to repress the demonstrators. The numbers participating in protest actions has recently declined, but anti-government actions continue.

Lukashenko has jailed or exiled prominent leaders of the opposition to his 26-year rule, from rival bourgeois politicians to workers strike leaders.

But actions to end to his rule “will continue until the changes we have



Belsat

Thousands in Belarus lined streets of Minsk, above, and across country Nov. 13, forming solidarity chains in memory of Roman Bondarenko, art teacher and former soldier, who died after brutal beating by government cops. Workers organized minute of silence outside factories.

been long waiting for take place, until people feel free,” Mariya Shakuro told Al-Jazeera Nov. 16. The 29-year-old worker in a furniture manufacturing plant had been detained for 10 days after an Oct. 11 demonstration. She said her detention “is a small price to pay for freedom.”

Public displays of the red-and-white opposition colors continue. Some managers at state factories and other institutions refuse to implement government edicts to dismiss or discipline workers who took actions that slowed down production or delayed rail service in protest against the regime.

Cliff Joseph, fighter for Black artists and champion of Pathfinder Mural

BY SAM MANUEL

ATLANTA — “The Pathfinder Mural proudly stood as a beacon of hope for all who had the good fortune to see its light,” artist Cliff Joseph said at a June 1996 meeting marking the nearly 10-year history of the mural. Joseph was part of an international team of artists who painted the six-story celebration of working-class struggles around the world on the walls of the New York City building where Pathfinder’s offices and print shop were located.

Joseph died in Chicago Nov. 8. He was 98.

His keen sense of the injustices of capitalist rule began early in his life, an obituary from the Aaron Galleries in Glenview, Illinois, which handles his works, makes clear. After witnessing the horrors of war while in the army, he concluded that soldiers on the other side are “more like us than different.” That observation greatly influenced the anti-war subject matter of his artwork.

From 1987 to 1989 some 80 artists from 20 countries worked on what was popularly known as the Pathfinder Mural Project. The finished mural depicted a large printing press turning out literature surrounded by paintings of revolutionary fighters and historical working-class battles. The paper coming out of the press quoted Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, “The truth must not only be the truth, it must also be told.”

Pathfinder publishes the speeches



Militant/Osborne Hart

Cliff Joseph at 1988 meeting on the mural.



Mural painted on wall of Pathfinder Press offices and print shop in New York in the late 1980s.

and writings of Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionary working-class leaders, including Castro, Che Guevara and Vilma Espin, leaders of the Cuban Revolution; Nelson Mandela, the central leader of the fight that overthrew apartheid in South Africa; Black rights fighter and working-class revolutionary leader Malcolm X; Thomas Sankara and Maurice Bishop, who led popular revolutionary governments in Burkina Faso and Grenada; Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, founders of the modern communist movement; U.S. working-class and Socialist Workers Party leaders James P. Cannon, Farrell Dobbs and Jack Barnes; and V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky and other leaders of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Finishing military service after the second imperialist world war, Joseph studied art at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, graduating in 1953. He was the first African American member of the American Art Therapy Association.

Joseph was a co-founder of the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, which worked to promote works by African American artists. The group

was formed in 1969 in response to a Metropolitan Museum of Art showing entitled “Harlem on My Mind,” which disregarded the work of several prominent Harlem artists.

In 1963 Joseph and his wife, Ann, attended the March on Washington, where Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the featured speakers. Joseph painted a portrait of the civil rights leader in the mural, and another of Steve Biko, a leader of the fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Among Joseph’s many works is a 1972 painting “The Attica Crucifixion,” which depicts a prisoner behind bars of crosses. On Sept. 9, 1971, prisoners took control of part of Attica prison in upstate New York and held several hostages in order to negotiate for better conditions. Their slogan was, “We are men. We are not beasts, and we will not be driven as such.” Four days later, on orders from the governor and prison officials, hundreds of heavily armed state cops and prison guards assaulted the prisoners, killing at least 29 of them and 10 hostages.

Joseph was an early and steadfast supporter of the Mural Project. In January 1988 he secured the gallery of West-

beth Artists Housing in Manhattan’s Greenwich Village, just a few blocks from the mural site, for a meeting of 100 to protest an attack on the project by city authorities.

‘Power of art belongs to the people’

“We’re involved in a fight, but I believe the mural is going to be completed. We’re not going to let anyone prevent that from happening,” Joseph said at the meeting. “The power of art belongs to the people. I think the establishment knows the power of art and what it can mean to a people in their struggle against oppression.”

In the high-tempo final weeks of its completion, artists from Cuba, Canada, Argentina, South Africa, Iran, New Zealand and other countries were plying their skills on the wall. When I expressed my concern about completing everything on time, Joseph replied that all those people working together showed the power of this project. “We’ll get done,” he said.

By 1996 the mural and the wall it was painted on had irreversibly deteriorated from sun and weather damage. The mural had to be removed in order to repair the building.

Many in Greenwich Village and beyond remember the mural. A Sept. 24 article posted at VillagePreservation.org concludes, “Despite the controversy, many supported and admired the mural, including workers and neighborhood residents.”

Joseph recalled the time when the mural was attacked by the editors of the *New York Post* and right-wing columnist Patrick Buchanan in 1989, and later vandalized with paint bombs. “There are those who opposed its message,” Joseph said. “Today, Pathfinder is organizing its honorable removal with the carefulness and love in which it was created.” Those of us who shared in that work will always remember his example.

Sam Manuel was the director of the Pathfinder Mural Project.

Workers need fighting program for jobs, protection from inflation

The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution by Leon Trotsky is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. The excerpt below is from the document "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International." In drafting the document in 1938, Trotsky drew on the program and strategy of the first four congresses of the Communist International, led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in Russia. He also collaborated with the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party in preparing the resolution, which became the basic programmatic document of both the SWP and the world movement it helped lead. Copyright © 1977 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. However, the achievement of this strategic task is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial, questions of tactics. All sections of the proletariat — all its layers, occupations, and groups —



1937 sit-down strike at GM in Flint, Michigan, won union recognition and pay raise. The 1930s labor upsurge posed fight against twin scourges of unemployment and high prices. "The right to employment is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based on exploitation."

should be drawn into the revolutionary movement. The present epoch is distinguished not because it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the actual tasks of the revolution.

The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old "minimal" demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary, perspective. Insofar as the old partial, "minimal" demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism — and this occurs at each step — the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very foundations of the bourgeois regime. The old "minimal program" is superseded by the *transitional program*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution.

Under the conditions of disintegrating capitalism, the masses continue to live the impoverished life of the oppressed, threatened now more than at

any other time with the danger of being cast into the pit of pauperism. They must defend their mouthful of bread, if they cannot increase or better it.

There is neither the need nor the opportunity to enumerate here those separate, partial demands which time and again arise on the basis of concrete circumstances — national, local, trade union. But two basic economic afflictions, in which is summarized the increasing absurdity of the capitalist system — that is, *unemployment and high prices* — demand generalized slogans and methods of struggle.

The Fourth International declares uncompromising war on the politics of the capitalists, which to a considerable degree, like the politics of their agents, the reformists, aims to place the whole burden of militarism, the crises, the disorganization of the monetary system, and all other scourges stemming from capitalism's death agony upon the backs of the toilers. The Fourth International demands *employment and decent living conditions* for all.

Neither monetary inflation nor stabilization can serve as slogans for the proletariat, because these are but two ends of the same stick. Against a bounding rise in prices, which with the approach of war will assume an ever more unbridled character, one can fight only under the slogan of a *sliding scale of wages*. This means

that collective agreements should assure an automatic rise in wages in relation to the increase in price of consumer goods.

Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the crumbs of a disintegrating society. *The right to employment* is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, "structural" as well as "conjunctural," the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a *sliding scale of working hours*. Trade unions and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined. The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week. Wages, with a strictly guaranteed *minimum*, would follow the movement of prices. It is impossible to accept any other program for the present catastrophic period.

Property owners and their lawyers will prove the "unrealizability" of these demands. Smaller, especially ruined capitalists in addition will refer to their account ledgers.

The workers categorically denounce such conclusions and references. The question is not one of a "normal" collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. "Realizability" or "unrealizability" is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.

November

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Workers need a labor party

Continued from front page

families against those of workers and farmers. Neither of them can be turned into a political force for working-class interests.

It is indispensable for workers to build our own party — not one that runs for office every few years, but a party that organizes and champions our struggles for jobs, higher wages, union rights and safer working conditions, 365 days a year. One that builds working-class solidarity and points to the interests workers across the world hold in common. A party that fights against the bosses' efforts to turn our youth into cannon fodder for their imperialist wars abroad.

Such a party would attract all those outraged by the devastating impact of the unfolding crisis, repulsed by the indifference of the capitalist rulers to the conditions workers face, and attracted to finding ways to stand up to and push back the bosses' assaults.

The Socialist Workers Party 2020 candidates offered an example of what a labor party would do. They told the truth about the crisis the capitalist rulers have wrought and the brutal conditions workers face. They advanced an action program of resolute working-class struggle to change them. They joined picket lines of striking fruit packers, protests by truck drivers, strikes by shipbuilders in Maine, demonstrations against cop brutality and many other actions, on and off the job, and built solidarity with those battles in the interests of the working class.

The SWP campaign said workers need to organize to fight growing employer attacks today on our jobs, wages, working conditions and our health. On this course we can build and use union power on our own behalf, and for all workers, farmers and others suffering blows from the employing class.

Millions need jobs today! We need to fight for a government-funded public works program to put millions to work at union scale, building hospitals,

housing, schools and other things workers and farmers need.

Our unions need to fight for a sliding scale of hours and wages to stop any further 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 federal unemployment benefits at union scale for *all* those thrown out of work.

SWP campaigners joined other workers finding ways to stand up to bosses' moves to force workers to work in unsafe conditions. They explained that to protect our health and safety, workers need to wrest more and more control of production out of the bosses' hands.

As workers exercise increasing control of production we'll learn more about our capacities and come to recognize that it is possible for our class to run the entire economy in the interests of the great majority.

Through these struggles we will gain self-confidence and increasing class consciousness. We'll become, as Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara put it, new men and women, capable of taking our destiny into our hands.

These battles are the road to building and using a labor party to chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

Doing so would open the door to a different class alliance holding power, one that would use the power of its own state to make cradle-to-grave health care for all a reality.



Militant photos: Above, Ved Dookhun; inset, Tony Lane
Socialist Workers Party 2020 candidates set example for working people, joining labor struggles, including, above, striking shipyard workers in Bath, Maine. Inset, SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy, left, talks with dispatcher Janet Sanchez at D.C. truckers' protest against low rates, onerous regulations May 13. Workers need to build a labor party to advance our struggles.

It would place the protection of the natural environment in the hands of those whose labor produces all wealth, not those who live by the plunder of resources and the exploitation of others. It would give working people the most powerful weapon possible to lead forward the struggle to eradicate racism, the subjugation of women and all other oppressive relations inherited from class society, once and for all.

Changing administrations in Washington will not halt the debilitating effect of mass unemployment, nor the deadly effects of a for-profit, class-divided health industry. But united, disciplined and determined action by workers and farmers — something the bosses and their two parties always tell us is impossible — can do so.

That's what we need to fight for.

Gag orders by 'social media' bosses are attack on political rights

Continued from front page

litical censors and "fact checkers" to work deciding what's politically correct and what should be flagged or shut down.

What Facebook administrators did to the "Stop the Steal" Facebook group is a good example of how the right to freedom of speech is being attacked. The "Stop the Steal" Facebook page was created at 3 p.m. Nov. 4 by 30-year-old Kylie Jane Kremer, who runs an organization called Women for America First. The presidential election had taken place the day before in a very tight race between Trump and Joe Biden with inconclusive results in several states.

The group uploaded a video showing a crowd outside a polling station in Detroit, charging that "Biden is stealing the vote." Within 22 hours, the group had amassed over 320,000 users, making it "one of the fastest-growing groups in Facebook's history," according to the *New York Times*.

Facebook then promptly deleted the group from its system, just 23 hours after it had begun. This group was organized around "delegitimization of the election process," charged Facebook spokesman Tom Reynolds, attempting to explain its disappearance.

"They were flagging our posts," Kremer told the *Times*. "This is what they do, they censor."

These self-appointed online political censors have joined in the four-years-long effort to oust the Trump administration, something they hope the election has accomplished. Biden himself said he favored Facebook censoring Trump's "threatening behavior and lies."

Both Facebook and Twitter officials have begun "fact checking" and placing disclaimers on comments they don't agree with. They did so for Trump's tweets where he called mail-in ballots "fraudulent."

Twitter banned all political advertising leading up to the election. In August, Facebook bosses announced the removal of 14,200 online groups, claim-

ing they were "militarized social movements."

Yoel Roth, who has been designated as "head of site integrity" at Twitter, said in a blog that his goal is "to limit the spread of potentially harmful and misleading content." But he doesn't say a word about his own political record of railing against Trump's presidency.

Twitter officials went so far as to shut down the *New York Post's* account Oct. 14 for a story the paper ran on business dealings in Ukraine by Hunter Biden, Joe Biden's son. Also closed were the accounts of White House spokesperson Kayleigh McEnany, the "Team Trump" campaign account, and that of Politico journalist Jake Sherman. This attack on freedom of the press was reversed two weeks later when, under pressure, Twitter restored the *Post's* account.

The point here is not whether Trump, his supporters, or anyone else is right or wrong. The Constitution gives everyone the right to express their opinion, and this is important for the working class. Instead, liberal "do-gooders" like those on social media have anointed themselves to determine what is "politically correct."

But, as the experiences of the Socialist Workers Party and other proletarian fighters has proven, whenever censorship like this starts up, it inevitably ends up being aimed at the working class. It is the working class that needs free expression to discuss and debate a fighting way forward.

Just like pro-Trump forces, Cheryl LaBash, who

writes for *Struggle for Socialism* and is a national co-chair of the National Network on Cuba, had her personal Facebook page deactivated Oct. 28. Unlike "Stop the Steal" groups, LaBash had joined in calls for liberals and radicals to "Occupy the streets" if it looks like Trump is trying to steal the election. "This is no idle threat," *Struggle for Socialism* wrote, "Trump has his own paramilitary police, Homeland Security, the support of the most virulent and reactionary police departments, and a myriad of violent, racist, vigilante-type groups."

LaBash said other groups that had joined with her to call for a protest on Nov. 4 in Baltimore along these lines had been shut down as well.

Censoring Cuba solidarity event

Facebook political censorship has also been extended to include supporters of the Cuban Revolution. On Oct. 29 Facebook deleted the National Network on Cuba's events page for a Nov. 14-15 online solidarity with Cuba conference. The page reported on panels being held on "After the U.S. Elections: For Normalization! Why We Must End the Blockade on Cuba!" and "Saving Lives Campaign — Bringing Cuba's Example to the U.S. and Canada During the Global Pandemic."

And it listed speakers, including José Ramón Cabañas and Josefina Vidal, Cuba's ambassadors to the U.S. and Canada; Fernando González, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples; and doctors, elected officials, and labor and religious figures.

To justify this decision, Facebook censors said, "We don't allow symbols, praise or support of dangerous individuals or organizations on Facebook."

The idea that public forums that extend a platform to Cuba's ambassador to the U.S. should be arbitrarily shut down is a dagger in the heart of freedom of speech.

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