Solidarity beats back Facebook

Community and women’s groups were banned by social media monopoly

By Greg Butterfield

Social media network Facebook is relied upon by millions of people around the globe for communication. But under billionaire CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his fellow owners, Facebook serves the interests of profit, not people. Facebook launched its latest attack on leftists and people’s organizations shortly after the inauguration of President Joe Biden.

Pages of several left organizations in the U.S. and Britain were summarily removed on Jan. 21-22. Hundreds of activists affiliated with those pages had their Facebook profiles “disabled” — that is, banned. When activists tried to appeal the decision, they were all notified that the ban was permanent and could not be appealed due to alleged, unspecified “violations of community standards.”

In the U.S., the pages of the Peoples Power Assembly, a leading anti-police brutality group based in Baltimore, and Women In Struggle/Mujeres En Lucha, a nationwide women’s organization affiliated with the Women’s International Democratic Federation, were removed by Facebook. Sixteen activists who perform administrative duties on those pages — many of them contributors to Struggle-La Lucha newspaper and members of the Socialist Unity Party across the U.S. — were banned. As a result, several other pages administered by these activists were silenced, including the Atlanta Peoples Power Assembly, Prisoners Solidarity Committee, Solidarity with Antifascists in Novorossiya and Ukraine, and Youth Against War & Racism.

The Socialist Workers Party of Britain, one of that country’s largest left parties, was similarly hit. Not only the party’s main page but many of its local branch pages were removed, along with activists’ profiles. This was just days before the Jan. 25 International Day of Solidarity with Yemen, an effort against the U.S.-Saudi war in which the British SWP had a significant organizational role. Also banned were anti-fascist networks and individuals targeted as “antifa,” and pages affiliated with the World Socialist Web Site in the U.S. and in Britain, where the group has been a vocal part of the movement to prevent the extradition of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange.

These organizations quickly took legal actions to challenge the Facebook bans, carried out media campaigns, and urged supporters and movement allies to bombard Facebook with protests. As a result, by Jan. 27 most of the disabled pages had been restored. Many of the affected activists learned of the reversal only by word-of-mouth — Facebook offered no explanation for the bans or notification of the sudden reversal.

According to a report in the Financial Times — the British equivalent of the Wall Street Journal — “Facebook said it had mistakenly removed a number of far-left political accounts, citing an ‘automation error,’ triggering uproar from socialists who accused the social media platform of censorship.

“Facebook did not respond to requests to clarify how the error had occurred and why it had affected the personal accounts of socialist figures.”

Power concedes nothing without demand

“It was solidarity that won the reversal,” said Sharon Black of the Peoples Power Assembly. She pointed out that there was no avenue to restore the pages until the targeted groups alerted supporters and media and threatened legal action. “We began to hear from many other activists about unfair censorship and arbitrary Facebook decisions, without a clear appeals process. Most of those impacted have been Black, Latinx, Palestinian, BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and People of Color], women and other communities whose voices have too often been marginalized.”

For years, Facebook and other U.S.-based social media monopolies have frequently silenced left organizations and activists fighting for national liberation and opposing U.S. wars and racism, while ultraright groups allied with U.S. imperialism and police agencies were given free rein. Only in the wake of mass outrage following the Jan. 6 coup attempt at the Capitol have hatemongering Donald Trump and some of his racist allies faced restrictions.

Media outlets based in other countries that present critical views of U.S. actions are also frequently silenced. Latin America-based teleSUR, Iran’s Press TV and the Korean Central News Agency are among those routinely suppressed. While Facebook was shutting down activists’ accounts in the U.S. and Britain, its counterpart Twitter was targeting Latin American socialists.

The official Twitter account of the Venezuelan National Assembly, which recently elected a pro-socialist majority, was shut down Jan. 22. But the account of the previous National Assembly headed by U.S.-backed coup leader Juan Guaidó is still active. “Double standards,” declared Venezuela’s democratically elected president, Nicolás Maduro.

Meanwhile, the Twitter accounts of the Bolivarian Movement for a New Colombia and the

Continued on page 5
The labor of Amazon workers during the COVID-19 disaster has been absolutely essential. At least 20,000 of them have caught the coronavirus while working through the pandemic. Without any labor of his own, Amazon boss Jeff Bezos added another $13 billion to his fortune on the single day of July 20, 2020, the month before Bezos took away his employees’ $2 per hour hazard pay. Meanwhile, the Bezos fortune has swelled to $191.8 billion as of this Feb. 4.

Amazon workers are fighting back. Over 2,000 Amazon workers have signed union cards at the company’s huge Bessemer, Ala., fulfillment center, just outside Birmingham. They want to be represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union. It’s part of the 1.3 million member strong United Food and Commercial Workers International union.

The warehouse workers are sick of being constantly monitored like they are machines. Even going to the bathroom can be cause for being harassed by management. They want the $2 pay cut restored.

Amazon is spending millions of dollars to fight the organizing drive. Bezos knows that if the Bessemer workers win a union contract, a million other Amazon workers will want one too. Mail-in ballots for the union representation election begin Feb. 8.

The union drive is moving forward in the spirit of Rosa Parks. The Black seamstress sparked the 382-day-long Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott by refusing to give up her seat to a white man on Dec. 1, 1955.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King starred in the Montgomery campaign for justice with the bus boycott. It would take him to Memphis, Tenn., where he would be assassinated on April 4, 1968. He was there supporting the city’s striking sanitation workers.

Birmingham

Birmingham, Ala., area was the steel center of the South. Tens of thousands were employed by U.S. Steel in the company’s steel mills and coal mines there.

In 1930, 13,000 Black miners accounted for the majority of the workers in the local mines. Not all of them were paid.

Until June 1, 1928, U.S. Steel operated the Flat Top mine with the slave labor of 800 Black workers. Reparations are still owed for this atroc- ity. ("Slavery by Another Name," by Douglas A. Blackmon)

Dr. Angela Davis — who California Gov. Ronald Reagan tried to send to the gas chamber in 1971 on frame-up charges — grew up in Birmingham. It was known in those days as "Bombingham."

Four Black girls were murdered when Birmingham’s 16th Street Baptist Church was bombed on Sept. 15, 1963. They were Addie Mae Collins, aged 14; Carol Denise McNair, aged 11; Cynthia Wesley, aged 14; and Carole Robertson, aged 14. Wagner's Black sheriff Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Connor used attack dogs to bite Black people protesting segregation. Forty years later, U.S. troops occupying Iraq for Big Oil used dogs against demonstrators in Baghdad.

Behind Bull Connor was U.S. Steel, which dominated the local economy. The blue chip corporation was put together by Wall Street banker J.P. Morgan. Today’s JPMorgan Chase bank has $3.37 trillion in assets. U.S. Steel committed more crimes by closing and downsizing its Alabama mills. In 1982, it fired 3,500 workers at its Fairfield, Ala., works, the largest steel mill in the South. And just as in the Midwest and North- east, a tidal wave of factory closings struck the Birmingham area. Many of the jobs destroyed were in unionized plants with union pay and benefits.

Four hundred workers in Bessemer lost their jobs when Stockham Pipe and Fittings closed in the late 1990s. The commuter leader and union or- ganizer Hosaue Hudson worked there in the early 1930s.

The Senate says no to $15

By Stephen Millies

The United States Senate voted unanimously against raising the federal minimum wage from $7.25 to $15 per hour. Not a single senator voted for a $15 per hour minimum wage would be devastat- ing for our hardest-hit small busi- nesses at a time when they can least afford it.

This is the same old argument that claims a small business “can’t af- ford safety equipment.” It’s too bad a worker had their hand cut off. At least they had a job.

The labor movement’s answer is that if a capitalist can’t afford to operate their business safely, they shouldn’t be in business. The same applies to poverty wages.

The state Senate narrowly approved by Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst prevents raising the wage during the COVID-19 pandemic. It’s a slap in the face to millions of essential workers, many of whom earn poverty wages but deserve much more.

Ernst claims that “a $15 federal minimum wage would be devastat- ing for our hardest-hit small business- nesses at a time when they can least afford it.”

This is the same old argument that claims a small business “can’t af- ford safety equipment.” It’s too bad a worker had their hand cut off. At least they had a job.

The labor movement’s answer is that if a capitalist can’t afford to operate their business safely, they shouldn’t be in business. The same applies to poverty wages.

The current $7.25 federal mini- mum wage is actually a 40% cut from what it could buy in 1968. To match the buying power of the 1968 wage, $12.19 would be required, ac- cording to the Bureau of Labor Sta- tistics’ inflation calculator.

The wage cut of nearly $5 per hour amounts to over $10,000 stolen from workers over an entire year of 40- hour workweeks. The tens of billions of additional profits are supersized wage theft. Millions of workers who may get tips don’t even qualify for $7.25.

$15 will be won on the streets

In a surprising move, Sen. Bernie Sanders also supported the Ernst amendment. His excuse was that this would prevent an immediate vote on a bill to increase the minimum wage, which would probably lose.

Several Democratic senators, in- cluding Manchin from West Virginia and Teeter from Montana, oppose a $15 wage. That’s what the AFL-CIO leadership gets in return for endors- ing these politicians. Sanders’ action will be confusing and probably demoralizing to millions of people who consider the Vermont senator as their champion. What difference does it make if rais- ing the minimum wage is shot down by an amendment or by a losing vote on an actual bill?

Here’s how Sanders explained his position: “It was never my intention to increase the minimum wage to $15 immediately and during the pan- demic. My legislation gradually in- creases the minimum wage to $15 an hour over a five-year period and that is what I believe we have got to do.”

Well, millions of workers need that $15 and more right now. Land- lords are exacting five years to col- lect their rent.

One of the demands of the 1963 March for Jobs and Freedom — when Dr. King gave his “I Have a Dream” speech — was a $2 mini- mum wage. Its biggest advocate was A. Philip Randolph, the protest’s or- ganizer. His slogan “Union First, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.”

According to the inflation calcula- tor, a minimum wage of $16.97 would be required to match the $2 per hour that was demanded in August 1963.

The only way we can overcome a bought-and-paid-for Congress is for millions of people to take to the streets.
**GameStop mania: The real losers in Wall Street gambling**

By Gary Wilson

How crazy is the stock market? The stock of the video game seller GameStop is in mid-November, causing a sharp increase in its price and making it the deepest plunge in history. The bubble will burst sooner or later. Wall Street might reflect that heavy burden. Instead the stock market has closed altogether, you'd think Wall Street could somehow be run. But the stock market has long been described as a speculative bubble, where price is determined by the expectations of investors, not by the underlying value of the security. As with previous speculative bubbles, the share prices in GameStop went up because many were buying and many were selling because prices were going up. That is, until it reaches a point where traders start to sell, thinking it won't go up any more, leading share prices down and then up again before the bubble bursts. The bubble will burst and many will lose.

A Washington Post report is headlined: “As GameStop stock crumbles, millions lose their life savings.” The Redditor that helped kick off the frenzy has given way to anxiety, financial bloodstream and inactivity. GameStop stock has gone up to a record high. A speculation frenzy has preceded every major financial disaster in the past. Prior to the Wall Street crash of 1929, hundreds of thousands of small investors piled into the stock market hoping they might get out of their precarious situations. In 2008, it was another speculation frenzy, only with houses: everyone was urged to take on bad mortgages they could not afford. The stock market has long been described as a speculative bubble, where price is determined by the expectations of investors, not by the underlying value of the security. As with previous speculative bubbles, the share prices in GameStop went up because many were buying and many were selling because prices were going up. That is, until it reaches a point where traders start to sell, thinking it won't go up any more, leading share prices down and then up again before the bubble bursts. The bubble will burst and many will lose.

A Washington Post report is headlined: “As GameStop stock crumbles, millions lose their life savings.”

**Cuba’s Nasalferon protects against COVID-19**

By Cheryl LaBash

As early as April 24, 2020, information that nebulizer interferon prevented COVID-19 infection and also produced better outcomes if administered early in COVID-19 infection was known and available in the U.S. According to Prensa Latina, as of Jan. 7, 2021, Nasalferon interferon for nebulization was being used in Cuba’s pandemic, with some 60,000 patients being treated. The news accounts have played up the success of GameStop versus a handful of banks — among them, including many former bankers now on Wall Street — which allow small investors to trade stocks without overhead fees, often using funds lent to them by the trading services. But it was not until early in COVID-19 infection that interferon was administered, and the outcome reports by that time had been favorable. The real winners in Wall Street gambling are the Federal Reserve and other major banks who have injected more than $1 trillion in net worth in the market indexes fall some 40%, making it the deepest plunge in history. Despite the crash, the stock market ended the year of 2020 up more than 75%, an all-time high. Despite the crash, the stock market ended the year of 2020 up more than 75%, an all-time high. There’s no hidden surprise in that. The bubble will burst sooner or later. Wall Street might reflect that heavy burden. Instead the stock market has closed altogether, you’d think Wall Street could somehow be run. But the stock market has long been described as a speculative bubble, where price is determined by the expectations of investors, not by the underlying value of the security. As with previous speculative bubbles, the share prices in GameStop went up because many were buying and many were selling because prices were going up. That is, until it reaches a point where traders start to sell, thinking it won’t go up any more, leading share prices down and then up again before the bubble bursts. The bubble will burst and many will lose.

A Washington Post report is headlined: “As GameStop stock crumbles, millions lose their life savings.” The Redditor that helped kick off the frenzy has given way to anxiety, financial bloodstream and inactivity. GameStop stock has gone up to a record high. A speculation frenzy has preceded every major financial disaster in history. Prior to the Wall Street crash of 1929, hundreds of thousands of small investors piled into the stock market hoping they might get out of their precarious situations. In 2008, it was another speculation frenzy, only with houses: everyone was urged to take on bad mortgages they could not afford. The stock market has long been described as a speculative bubble, where price is determined by the expectations of investors, not by the underlying value of the security. As with previous speculative bubbles, the share prices in GameStop went up because many were buying and many were selling because prices were going up. That is, until it reaches a point where traders start to sell, thinking it won’t go up any more, leading share prices down and then up again before the bubble bursts. The bubble will burst and many will lose.

A Washington Post report is headlined: “As GameStop stock crumbles, millions lose their life savings.” The Redditor that helped kick off the frenzy has given way to anxiety, financial bloodstream and inactivity. GameStop stock has gone up to a record high. A speculation frenzy has preceded every major financial disaster in history. Prior to the Wall Street crash of 1929, hundreds of thousands of small investors piled into the stock market hoping they might get out of their precarious situations. In 2008, it was another speculation frenzy, only with houses: everyone was urged to take on bad mortgages they could not afford. The stock market has long been described as a speculative bubble, where price is determined by the expectations of investors, not by the underlying value of the security. As with previous speculative bubbles, the share prices in GameStop went up because many were buying and many were selling because prices were going up. That is, until it reaches a point where traders start to sell, thinking it won’t go up any more, leading share prices down and then up again before the bubble bursts. The bubble will burst and many will lose.

A Washington Post report is headlined: “As GameStop stock crumbles, millions lose their life savings.” The Redditor that helped kick off the frenzy has given way to anxiety, financial bloodstream and inactivity. GameStop stock has gone up to a record high. A speculation frenzy has preceded every major financial disaster in history. Prior to the Wall Street crash of 1929, hundreds of thousands of small investors piled into the stock market hoping they might get out of their precarious situations. In 2008, it was another speculation frenzy, only with houses: everyone was urged to take on bad mortgages they could not afford. The stock market has long been described as a speculative bubble, where price is determined by the expectations of investors, not by the underlying value of the security. As with previous speculative bubbles, the share prices in GameStop went up because many were buying and many were selling because prices were going up. That is, until it reaches a point where traders start to sell, thinking it won’t go up any more, leading share prices down and then up again before the bubble bursts. The bubble will burst and many will lose.

A Washington Post report is headlined: “As GameStop stock crumbles, millions lose their life savings.” The Redditor that helped kick off the frenzy has given way to anxiety, financial bloodstream and inactivity. GameStop stock has gone up to a record high. A speculation frenzy has preceded every major financial disaster in history. Prior to the Wall Street crash of 1929, hundreds of thousands of small investors piled into the stock market hoping they might get out of their precarious situations. In 2008, it was another speculation frenzy, only with houses: everyone was urged to take on bad mortgages they could not afford. The stock market has long been described as a speculative bubble, where price is determined by the expectations of investors, not by the underlying value of the security. As with previous speculative bubbles, the share prices in GameStop went up because many were buying and many were selling because prices were going up. That is, until it reaches a point where traders start to sell, thinking it won’t go up any more, leading share prices down and then up again before the bubble bursts. The bubble will burst and many will lose.
UKRAINE: Workers protest utility price hikes demanded by U.S., IMF

By Greg Butterfield

On New Year’s Day, the price of electricity, gas and oil for heating, and other utilities doubled for most households in Ukraine. The surprise price hike was announced by President Volodymyr Zelensky’s government under orders of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The IMF, dominated by U.S. and Western banks, demanded these harsh measures in exchange for loans to bail out the government.

Throughout January, thousands of people took to the streets in protest across this country of 44 million people in Eastern Europe, in large cities, small towns and rural areas. They blocked highways, occupied government buildings and took other measures to demand immediate relief from the unbearable price hikes.

For many, it was the last straw after seven years of austerity, war, fascist violence and sped-up privatization of the country’s industry and natural resources.

Since Ukraine’s democratically elected government was overthrown with U.S. support in early 2014, the price of utilities has risen by approximately 900%. Pensioners and many workers now receive bills for these basic necessities equal to or greater than their monthly income. Their only choice has been to go into debt until they are dragged into court, or sit home in the cold and dark.

Today, people have decided they have another choice: to resist.

“The ‘tariff gift’ for the holidays was a real shock to the people,” says Andriy Manchuk, editor of Liva.com.ua. “This inhuman policy is a direct result of pressure from Western creditors.”

He explained: “The Ukrainian authorities signed a memorandum with the IMF, pledging to raise tariffs, force accumulated utility debts from non-payers, and end controls on pricing in the gas market so that residents in Europe’s poorest country buy gas at the price paid by consumers in the European Union — even if this gas is produced on Ukraine’s territory.”

On Jan. 28, protesters in Kiev, the capital city, marched on the U.S. and EU embassies to demand a repeal of the price hike increases for small businesses struggling during the pandemic, and against restrictive language laws.

Why did they go there?

Activist and journalist Dmitri Kovalevich writes: “They used to protest in front of Ukraine’s parliament and presidential office with no result. Then they realized who the real masters of Ukraine are and who is responsible for everything in our country.”

The group Chevorni (Red), which participated in the Kiev march, reported: “The demands of the protesters already go much further than just demands for lower gas prices. … Protesters noted that the Ukrainian government is a servant of the oligarchs and the IMF. And it was at the request of the IMF, contrary to the Constitution, that the sale of land, medical, educational, labor and pension reforms were introduced in Ukraine.”

Mass action, real dangers

In 2014, Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. and the NATO military alliance shared a goal with neo-Nazis in Ukraine: to establish a military beachhead to threaten the neighboring Russian Federation.

After the coup installed a new government under Washington’s thumb, the fascist gangs took over the local authorities. They attacked communists and socialists, union activists and Jewish people, feminists and LGBTIQ2S people, and anyone else perceived as a threat to the new regime.

The ultra-right groups were recruited into the ranks of the police and military. They also formed their own military battalions to wage war against the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine, where there was mass opposition to the coup. Military attacks on residents of Donetsk and Lugansk began in April 2014, and a month later people in those areas voted overwhelmingly for independence.

Most progressive political expression in Ukraine has been suppressed since 2014. At least 48 persons were massacred or disappeared by neo-Nazis on May 2, 2014, in the city of Odessa. Thousands of leftists were forced into exile under threat of death or imprisonment, and thousands more were jailed.

Today, fascist groups scour the internet and social media looking for individuals to target with threats and violence. Those singled out can also count on being “investigated” by the government security services. Recent victims include a young woman from Kiev who posted on TikTok that she would like to visit Russia as a tourist, and a visiting African medical student in Zaporizhzhya who objected to the government’s suppression of Russian and other languages.

This Jan. 1, as they do every year, far-right groups held their annual torchlight parade in Kiev commemorating their hero, Ukrainian Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera.

So it was no small thing for working people and pensioners to take action publicly against the utility hikes. Both the government and the fascist movement denounced the protesters as “unpatriotic,” “pro-Russia,” and “anti-communists.” Ukraine, and one of those changes can mean being fired, beaten, jailed — or worse.

‘No tariff genocide’

On Jan. 10, 100 residents of Nikolai blocked the Ingul Bridge, while in the village of Vysoky, 50 people blocked the Kharkov-Simferopol highway. Holding posters reading “No tariff genocide” and “People are not cattle,” they allowed emergency vehicles to pass and let traffic through every 15 minutes.

These tactics inspired others. On Jan. 14, a coordinated action by protesters in five regional cities blocked three major highways connecting the eastern and western parts of Ukraine.

Then, on Jan. 15, 300 protesters in Zhytomyr stormed the regional council building (similar to a state capitol), demanding to meet with local officials to discuss ways to roll back the price of utilities.

In many cities, the protesters have been supported by local officials.

On Jan. 16-17, a new left-wing group, Livytsya, joined protests in Dnipropetrovsk: “Dnipro doesn’t give up! Despite the raging frosts, the left came out to protest against tariff genocide.”

On Jan. 19, young people affiliated with the Party of Shariya, a political party founded by an opposition blogger, held actions in six cities, wearing only T-shirts in the frigid cold to draw attention to the plight of protesters suffering without heat.

“While the authorities are basking in warm offices or relaxing in the Maldives, Ukrainians are forced to turn off the heat in order to pay the bills,” the group said.

This is just a small sample of the creative, courageous protests people are undertaking in Ukraine.

End U.S. intervention!

What about the new U.S. administration? Where does it stand?

Joe Biden, in his previous position as vice president, served as the Obama administration’s point person on Ukraine after the 2014 coup. Biden’s job was to keep the new government in line, to make sure that austerity was being imposed on the people and privatization was being carried out to please Wall Street, who were keeping up military pressure on the independent republics of Donbass and Russia. This was carried out under the signpost of “fighting corruption.”

Now President Biden and his new Secretary of State Anthony Blinken signalled that they would continue this “anti-corruption” focus at the expense of Ukraine’s workers and poor.

“Demanding the results of the fight against corruption from Ukraine’s anti-corruption agencies, created with the help of the United States, is like demanding results from the treatment of a disease by an agent who simply pretends to be a doctor,” Dmitri Kovalevich wrote in his January update for the website New Cold War.

“Ukraine’s corrupt officials are held accountable only if they dare to deviate from the pro-American course. Evidence is collected by the anti-corruption agencies, but nothing is investigated while they are loyal to the U.S. and they are allowed to continue stealing,” Kovalevich said.

In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. warned, “The bombs in Vietnam also explode at home; they destroy the hopes and possibilities for a decent America.” Working people in the U.S. saw how Washington’s support for fascist movements abroad boomeranged with the white-supremacist attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6.

When our class sisters and brothers in Ukraine are facing danger unleashed upon them by the U.S. government, we have a responsibility to support them and demand: Stop the IMF’s killer austerity measures! End U.S. intervention in Ukraine!”

Vysky protesters block Kharkov-Simferopol highway, Jan. 10.

Zhytomyr residents occupy regional council building, Jan. 15.
Solidarity beats back Facebook

Continued from page 1

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People’s Army (FARC–EP Second Marquetalia) were also shut down, along with the groups' pages on a Facebook-owned platform.

Berta Jourbet-Ceci, organizer of the International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes in Puerto Rico, said Facebook had no legitimacy to organize the next electoral calendar.

The next day, the two principal wings of Haiti’s constantly uniting and then fracturing opposition — the Political Direction of the Democratic Opposition (DIRPD) and the Dessalines Children Platform (PPD) of the Political Opposition (POP) — along with a smaller, newer coalition known as the National Front for Democratic Change (FNC), approved the Terrace Garden Final Accord, which created the “National Commission for the Establishment of the Transitions” (CNT) and which named its members as follows: Seven members of civil society; [and] eight members from the political parties, groups, and groupings of the opposition.

The normally thronged streets of Port-au-Prince were eerily empty during the anti-Moise general strike of Feb. 1 and 2.

The groups’ statement in English and Spanish spread across email and social networks like wildfire. It was reprinted by numerous websites, including FightBack News in the U.S., Insisto-Resisto in Venezuela and the French anarchist site Info Libertaire.

In Puerto Rico, the Union of Electrical Industry and Irrigation Workers (UTIER) took up the case. A union representative went on the radio to read the statement and denounced Facebook’s actions.

Staff at the Philadelphia Free Press reached out to their contacts at Facebook and urged workers there to demand a reversal of the company’s decision. Labor Against Racism

terror shared the statement with its network of union activists, urging them to call, email and tweet Facebook executives.

“We want to thank everyone who took time to lend their support,” said PPA’s Sharon Black. She recalled that the PPA’s page and many of the same activists were similarly banned in late October 2020, just days before the presidential election.

Then, too, they had to fight to get the pages and profiles restored. At the time, Facebook collaborated with the Department of Homeland Security and fascists in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C., area to try to sabotage a protest the group was organizing against Donald Trump’s threat to overturn the election.

“We’re still unsatisfied” with Facebook’s response, added Rasika

Soldier turns to the tide

Within hours of Facebook removing the pages of the PPA, Women In Struggle and affiliated activists, the groups had issued a statement alerting the progressive movement and the media to the attack. People’s attorney Alec Summerfield wrote a letter to Facebook threatening legal action.

The groups’ statement in English and Spanish spread across email and social networks like wildfire. It was reprinted by numerous websites, including FightBack News in the U.S., Insisto-Resisto in Venezuela and the French anarchist site Info Libertaire.

In Puerto Rico, the Union of Electrical Industry and Irrigation Workers (UTIER) took up the case. A union representative went on the radio to read the statement and denounced Facebook’s actions.

Staff at the Philadelphia Free Press reached out to their contacts at Facebook and urged workers there to demand a reversal of the company’s decision. Labor Against Racism
The negative repercussions of ‘sanctions’

By Pasqualina Curcio

At the invitation of President Nicolás Maduro, Dr. Alena Douhan will visit our nation. Dr. Douhan is the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Commission covering the negative impact that unilateral coercive measures have on the enjoyment of human rights. She is coming to gather information related to the effects of the so-called sanctions imposed by the United States against the Venezuelan people. With regard to her visit, we consider it pertinent to make some clarifications.

The timing. The unilateral coercive measures began in 2013 and not in 2017 as some claim. With covert practices, the U.S. government has hindered, since 2013, Venezuela’s transactions with the international financial system, including access to credit. The manipulation of the country’s financial risk index was one of the actions they undertook. It suddenly went from 768 in 2012 to 2,625 in 2016. It varied, inexplicably 24.1% in a context in which our country had US$ 30 billion in international reserves, around US$ 88 billion a year in exports and we were punctually meeting our foreign debt commitments; between 2013 and 2015 alone we paid some US$ 60 billion.

In 2016, Germany’s Commerzbank closed PDVSA’s accounts. Citibank did the same and Portugal’s Novo Banco reported the impossibility of carrying out dollar transactions with Venezuela. These are just a few examples.

The financial blockade began long before Obama issued the Executive Order in 2015 declaring us an “unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States”. It is not just “sanctions.” U.S. aggressions against Venezuelans are not limited to “sanctions.” Between 2013 and 2016, Venezuelans suffered programmed and induced shortages of essential products that led to long lines and rationing as a result of the disruption of distribution channels by transnational monopolies. An inexplicable shortage in a country that, for that period, registered the highest GDP in 30 years and 70% higher than that of 2020.

Silently in 2013, the U.S. government began to attack our currency by inducing an escalation in prices. Between 2013 and 2020 the U.S. has induced a depreciation of the bolivar in the order of 241,009,360,274%, resulting in a variation of 30,900,127,469% in prices. At first, they did it covertly until, in December 2019, Republican State Senator Richard Black confessed that it was they who had demonetized the bolivar.

They are not just numbers, they are faces, names and surnames. The economic and financial blockade has not only hindered the import of essential goods, it has also affected oil production and therefore the domestic supply of fuel, as well as the export of hydrocarbons that generate 90% of our foreign exchange earnings. Oil production has fallen from 2.3 million barrels to 1.2 million barrels per day. This has meant suffering for months or years. The pandemic has been no different; on the contrary, they have intensified the “sanctions” and blocked the fuel needed to transport food, medicines and patients. An 18-year-old girl in labor died in Maturín because the ambulance had no petrol. A young man also died in Táchira due to lack of petrol. There are many testimonies like these.

By confession... these are crimes against humanity. What began covert in 2013 has gradually been formalized through laws and executive orders by consecutive U.S. governments. It has also been brazenly confessed by White House spokespersons who have not only stated that they have been blockading us, attacking our currency and that the main target is PDVSA, but have also publicly acknowledged the suffering that these actions entail for all the Venezuelan people. Former U.S. Ambassador William Brownfield said that the US would “be the policemen of the world, unilaterally and in violation of international humanitarian law, the U.S. has tried to justify the coercive measures with the discourse of the alleged dictatorship and narco-state in Venezuela.

In the last 8 years, 8 elections have been held in Venezuela with an automated electoral system that in less than 24 hours produces irreversible results and has been audited by all parties involved in the electoral contest.

With any proof, as they have tended to do to justify interference (remember the war in Iraq), they have accused us of being a narco-state. It is the case that, in the reports published by the United Nations, Venezuela does not even appear as a producer, consumer or distributor of drugs.

The real reason behind the U.S. aggression against the Venezuelan people was stated by Elliot Abrams before the U.S. House of Representatives: “We, who are the champions of democracy in the world, have always proven that socialism has been a failure everywhere it has tried to impose itself, and therefore we cannot allow Venezuela to be the exception”.

How the Venezuelan people, the government, and the armed forces have resisted democratically and peacefully for eight years in the face of such an onslaught is invaluable information, Dr. Douhan should gather during her visit. Perhaps scheduling meetings with ordinary people could contribute to this important task that was entrusted to her.

Source: Ultimas Noticias, translation

The long shadow of the 1919 Chicago race riot

by Stephen Millies

SLL articles include:
• Bombings greet the Great Migration
• What did the unions do?
• Communists fight racism and evictions
• Chicago Mayor Daley’s racist machine
• Never forget Fred Hampton
• The people put Harold Washington in City Hall
• A city of struggle

Socialist Unity Party - Partido de Socialismo Unido

Twitter: @StruggleLaLucha
Facebook.com/strugglalafrica
email: info@struggle-la-lucha.org

struggle-la-lucha.org
Stop Facebook from adding Zionist as a protected category under hate speech

Following is an open letter to Facebook:

Just yesterday, emails from an employee in the Facebook content policy team regarding the company’s position on the term “Zionist” were leaked widely online. The emails revealed that Facebook is “looking at the question of how we should interpret attacks on ‘Zionists’ to determine whether the term is used as a proxy for attacking Jewish or Israeli people.” The email also stated that this evaluation was taking place in the context of Facebook’s policy of prohibiting hate speech.

To draw a parallel between critiques of racist Israeli apartheid and racist hate speech is insulting and inaccurate. Every single Palestinian, Jewish, and American people’s rights to self-determination are trampled. The racist Zionist state of Israel constantly wages war upon Palestinian communities in a land where the Israeli government is the real trespasser. A week ago, Israeli tanks carpet bombed multiple neighborhoods in Gaza City in the middle of the night. Brutally awoken from sleep, families were forced to flee from their burning homes. This is normal in occupied Palestine. Human rights violations of this level require strong public condemnation. When Palestinian organizations and freedom fighters attack Zionism online, they aren’t attacking Judaism. They’re attacking a brutal, racist system of oppression on the expat and the violent murder of the Palestinian people.

On that note, it is crucial that Zionism is not confused with Judaism. There is a common misconception that Zionism came about as a popular movement in the Jewish community. Quite the opposite is true. Zionism is an ideology of the few and the wealthy. After the heroes of the holocaust, opportunist Jewish and non-Jewish capitalists and fascists took advantage of a people feeling from Nazi persecution, to establish an imperialist satellite in Palestine. Since that time, Israel, has diligently served the United States and its imperialist allies. The distinction between Zionism and Judaism is further shown by the growing anti-Zionist consciousness among the younger Jewish community. For many young people, it is impossible to rationalize the values taught in the Holocaust or the crimes perpetrated in the name of a “Jewish homeland.”

In reality, Zionism is bad for all Palestinians and all working-class Jewish people. This toxic ideology divides the global working-class community and creates a false mythology of inherent hatred between Jews and Arabs. The anti-Zionist Jewish authors of this letter and the entire Socialist Unity Party stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people in their battle against Zionist apartheid. We wholeheartedly condemn Facebook’s attempt to thwart the discourse of that struggle.

Signed,
Lev Kofax, Miranda Etes and Ian Shlakman
Support the “Facebook, We Need You” campaign at http://tinyurl.com/zdfh6gx

Hamburg protest: Free Ahmad Sa’adat, free Palestine!

By No Pasarán Hamburg

On Jan. 23, we took part in a rally in Hamburg, Germany, to call for the release of Palestinian prisoner Ahmad Sa’adat, who is general secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), one of more than 4,500 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails.

The rally took place as part of the International Week of Action, which was called by Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.

During his tenure as senator, current U.S. President Joseph Biden said, “It’s about time we stop apologizing for our support for Israel, there’s no apology to be made. It is the best 53 billion investment we make. If there weren’t an Israel, the rest of America would have to invent an Israel to protect her interests in the region.”

The stringing together of oppression, exploitation and genocide—these are the results of the U.S. settement policy and that is precisely the goal and practice of the Israeli government. Just as the “headquarters of global democracy” in Washington, D.C., exterminated 95% of the North American Indigenous peoples, so does the so-called “only democracy of the Middle East” want to implement this policy towards the Palestinians.

Given Joe Biden’s honesty and his promise that nothing fundamental will change, we can give an equally sober reply, that there is still only one word to describe such a system and state: apartheid.

Translated by Greg Butterfield

Repercusiones negativas de las ‘sanciones’

Continúa de página 8

rostros, nombres y apellidos. En 2019 y como consecuencia de las “sanciones” 12 niños con leucemia no pudieron recibir el trasplante de médula ósea porque los bancos se negaron a hacer las transferencias. Lotes de medicamentos han sido retenidos por el bloqueo económico, así como estos hay muchos. La ambulancia no tenía gasolina.

Una joven de 18 años en pleno trabajo de parto falleció en Maturín porque los campeones de la democracia en el país, dijo que las “sanciones” contra Pdvsa tendrían un impacto en el pueblo venezolano. William Brownfield confesó por los voceros de la Casa Blanca quienes no solo han manifestado que nos han estado bloqueando, atacando nuestra moneda y que el principal culpable es Pdvsa, sino que también este sistema ilícito implica brutalmente el sufrimiento que estas acciones implicarán para todo el pueblo venezolano. William Brownfield dijo que las “sanciones” contra Pdvsa tendrían un impacto en el pueblo entero y que era necesario acelerar el pozo aunque ello implicara sufrimiento de meses o años.

Los crímenes de lesa humanidad son, según el Estatuto de Roma, “aquéllos que se cometen como parte de un ataque generalizado y sistemático contra una población civil y con conocimiento de dicho ataque.” Las excusas. Creyéndose los políticos del mundo, de manera unilateral y violando el derecho internacional, la democracia y la paz, ha sido el fracaso en esos lugares donde ha tratado de imponerse, y por lo tanto no podemos permitir que en Venezuela eso sea la excepción.

La verdadera razón detrás de las agresiones de EEUU contra el pueblo venezolano no en contra de lo que quiera figura como país pro US, sino que este gobierno bolivariano y su única política en el mundo, siempre hemos probado que el socialismo ha sido un fracaso en todos los lugares en donde ha tratado de imponerse, y por lo tanto no podemos permitir que en Venezuela eso sea la excepción.

El gobierno bolivariano, el de nuestro pueblo y su Fuerza Armada Nacional, ha sido contraproducente durante 8 años ante tamaña embestida con el socialismo venezolano y suirón figura como país pro US, en su lucha por el poder,

Resposta del gobierno bolivariano...
Las medidas coerentes algunas precisiones.

En los últimos días de pandemia, cuando las restricciones no impiden reuniarnos físicamente, las redes sociales han cobrado enorme importancia. La izquierda internacional ha utilizado estas plataformas en un intento por superar el aislamiento y poder continuar nuestro trabajo. AUNQUE antes hemos sido objeto de censuras por Facebook y Twitter, estos últimos días han aumentado los ataques. Es un error que, por el contrario, tenga la intención de atacar las redes sociales en las redes sociales mismas las que crearon. Pero de todos es sabido que Facebook y Twitter, especialmente las dos últimas, han sido muy demasiado un instrumento de censura.

Coercitivas Unilaterales en el discurso de Douhan por el presidente Nicolás Maduro, nuestra Nación. La doctora Douhan nos declaró como una “amenaza inminente”. Esta amenaza enunciada en la Orden Ejecutiva mediante la cual se ha derogado de manera inmediata, Luma, que pretende desmantelar la compañía nacional y destruir el sindicato.

Para defender este patrimonio, se están formando alianzas que desarrollan campañas para impedir este anhelo al pueblo. Los mantenemos informados compañeras y compañeros.

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Buenos días audiencia,

En Puerto Rico, mientras logramos un consenso en el Movimiento de Liberación Nacional que nos conduzca más efectivamente a la descolonización, tenemos que lidiar con el neoliberalismo que empuja por un lado la privatización de los servicios esenciales y por otro, la destrucción de los sindicatos y organizaciones de defensores de los intereses del pueblo.