‘The working class needs a class-struggle newspaper’

BY SETH GALINSKY

Branches of the Socialist Workers Party across the U.S. are stepping up campaigning among working people as they begin the fall seven-week drive to sell 1,300 subscriptions to the Militant, 1,300 books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders, and to raise $350,000 to finance the work of the party. The Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are also participating. The drive ends Nov. 23.

In the face of the worldwide capitalist economic and social crisis today there is increased interest in the Militant, which explains all political questions from the point of view of the working class and champions labor and social struggles being waged today. Lessons from previous union and revolutionary movements, in books by authors like Fidel Castro, Malcolm X, Thomas Sankara, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and SWP.

How unions rose in the 1930s, why we need a movement like that today

As US, Chinese rulers face off, rivalries among imperialists rise

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The AUKUS military pact signed by the governments of the U.S., Australia and the U.K. has thrown into sharp relief conflicts with other imperialist powers, especially Paris. The deal is aimed at curbing Beijing’s growing economic clout and military ambitions in the Pacific. The U.S. rulers have long considered the region their “prize” to exploit for coming out on top in the imperialist slaughter of World War II.

A week after signing the AUKUS pact, President Joseph Biden hosted the first in-person meeting of the prime ministers of key capitalist allies Australia, India and Japan. They attended the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in Washington Sept. 24. “The challenges of the 21st century will largely play out in the Indo-Pacific,” a senior White House official said.

Beijing denounced the partnership.

Cuba speaks at UN, demands: ‘End US economic, political war on our country’

BY SETH GALINSKY

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the existing “global structural inequities and crisis,” Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel told the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly Sept. 23. “The most vulnerable have been left unprotected,” while pharmaceutical compa-

AS I SEE IT

Kentucky distillery strike wins widespread support

Workers fight shifts that wreck havoc with family life

BY KAITLIN ESTILL

BARDSTOWN, Ky. — Some 400 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 23D have been on strike fighting contract attacks by the bosses at bourbon maker Heaven Hill distillery here since Sept. 11. Strikers’ picket signs saying, “Family-owned not family oriented towards our families!” reflect the major issue in the fight. The company demands workers accept “nontraditional” work schedules, especially for new hires, who would be forced to work weekends at straight-time pay. Overtime pay would only kick in after 40 hours, instead of eight. Bosses also want to get rid of limits on workers’ health care premiums. “We’ll picket day and night, sun, rain, snow. We’re going be out here as long as it takes to win,” Larry Newton, the plant continued on page 3

INSIDE

The murder of Thomas Sankara: a popular revolution overturned

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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

Vol. 89 No. 37 October 11, 2021

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Back women's right to abortion

Continued from front page

and erosion of women's right to choose has had an impact on the consciousness of working people. Millions are convinced that life begins at conception or soon after, even if they do not support restricting all abortions. This has occurred in the absence of any answer from the union movement clearly explaining that winning support for the right to choose is a working-class issue. This is a political debate within the working class that must be taken on.

The latest attack is the Texas “heartbeat” law, which prohibits abortion after “cardiac activity” is detected, usually after six weeks of pregnancy. It went into effect Sept. 1. Three months later the Supreme Court will hear the Texas case to overturn lower court decisions that ruled its 2018 law that outlawed abortion after 15 weeks unconstitutional.

After World War II growing numbers of women entered the workforce and solidarity between working men and women grew. More women got jobs in what were traditionally men-only occupations.

Standing on the shoulders of the fight for Black rights, which overthrew Jim Crow segregation and inspired the mass movement against the U.S. war on Vietnam, thousands of women began organizing to advance the fight for women's rights, including the right to abortion.

In response to recent attacks on women's right to choose abortion, the American Civil Liberties Union Sept. 18 tweeted out a 1993 quote by former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who said that the “decision whether or not to bear a child is central to women’s lives.” Ginsburg said “woman,” the ACLU replaced it with “person” and every reference to “she” does not have anything resembling a human heart.

When abortion was illegal hundreds of women died in the U.S. from unsanitary abortions every year. In 1965 17% of all maternal deaths occurred because ofbotched abortions. The deadly consequences fell overwhelmingly on working-class women, who were far less able to pay for safe procedures. Like men, women must have the right to make their own decisions about their own bodies, including all medical decisions. Fighting for this is a precondition to winning women's full emancipation.

Voices of the Militant

ACLU rewrites history, undermines fight for women's rights under banner of 'gender'

Under the banner of opposing “gender oppression,” middle-class left and liberal groups are dealing blows to the fight for women's emancipation.

In response to recent attacks on women’s right to choose abortion, the American Civil Liberties Union Sept. 18 tweeted out a 1993 quote by former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who said that “the decision whether or not to bear a child is central to women’s lives.” Ginsburg said “woman,” the ACLU replaced it with “person” and every reference to “she” was replaced with “they.”

To most working people that’s just absurd. Only women get pregnant. Regardless of how you dress, what surgeries you have had, or how you “self-identify,” it’s a scientific fact that there are just two sexes — male and female. Under capitalism women remain an oppressed sex, despite important advances won over the last several decades, with more women working in all kinds of jobs. But today women still earn less money on average than men and the bulk of child-rearing and domestic chores falls on their backs.

But the ACLU falsification of the Ginsburg quote is not a joke. It’s part and parcel of the anti-scientific views being promoted in middle-class and liberal circles blaming “women” for the right to abortion, and “identifying” like those made by the ACLU, are part of a deadly counterrevolution against the fight for women’s rights and an attack on the interests of the working class, men and women alike.

Seth Galinsky
Continued from front page
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Continued from front page

U.S. carrier leads Pacific Ocean naval exercises. Since victory in second imperialist world war, Washington has viewed Pacific as its prize. U.S. rulers are determined to meet Beijing threat.

Beijing claims self-ruling Taiwan as part of its territory. And has threatened military action to back up its claim. Some governments fear economic reprisals by Beijing if it is refused entry or if Taiwan is allowed to join.

But Beijing now clings to its own foreign policy," Roger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor, told the Militant. "The capitalist rulers’ foreign policy defends their class interests — their exploitation of workers and farmers, here and overseas. Our foreign policy starts with solidarity with working people in their struggles for better conditions — from China to Mexico and around the world."

BY SUSAN LAMONT

atlanta — We are going to do whatever it takes to win this strike," United Mine Workers of America union member and Warrior Met Coal striker Steven Smith told the Militant Sept. 23. “We’re not going to give up the picket line, no matter what.”

Smith is one of some 1,100 UMWA members who have been on strike at the mine complex in Brookwood, Alabama, since April 1. He was working day shift when the picketing started on the first day of the strike.

Strikers staff picket lines 24/7 at the No. 4 and No. 7 mines, the central shops, preparation plant, and several railroad crossings. Brookwood is in central Alabama, near Tuscaloosa.

Like many other strikers, Smith is working another job now, as well as picketing every week. “Some strikers who had enough time in have retired and won’t go back,” Smith told me by phone. When he can, he also attends the union’s weekly solidarity rallies at nearby Tannehill Parkway, McCalla, AL 35111. Email: umwa2021strike@bellsouth.net.

“The rally last night, UMWA Pres- ident Cecil Roberts told us the company wants to keep the scabs on the job ahead of the union members and start calling us back, ‘as needed’ when the strike is ended,” Smith said. “We can’t accept that.” Roberts reported that the com- pany management is planning to cut 12 co-ops and 13 an- 

gas. That dependency is likely to rise as coal and nuclear power are phased out by the German government.

Only days after the AUKUS announcement, both the Chinese and Taiwanese rulers made rival bids to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The administration of Donald Trump with- drew Washington from that Pacific-rim trade deal set up by the Barack Obama administration to try to hinder Beijing’s growing influence in the region.

Then since the 11-state pact has been revived at the initiative of the Japanese government. It includes the governments of Australia and Canada. Under its rules existing members have veto power over new members.

strike fund, which continues to receive contributions from other unions, com- munity organizations and individuals.

Strikers can pick up their checks at the Tannehill rallies, as well as food and oth- er necessities collected by the UMWA Auxiliary, led by miners’ wives. They gather food, diapers, sanitary and other items, as well as cash donations, to dis- tribute to strikers and their families.

The Alabama miners are fighting to regain ground lost in 2016 when they were forced to take major concessions after the mines’ previous owner, Jim Walter Resources, went bankrupt. The company’s biggest creditors, hedge funds like BlackRock from New York, organized Warrior Met Coal to take over the mines and told union members they would close operations unless the min- ers agreed to big cuts. They also prom- ised to restore the workers’ losses when the company regained profitability.

The miners agreed to a 56-hour pay cut, and health care costs increased from $2 to about $15, making health insurance unaffordable. 

Extra overtime pay for Sundays and holidays was ended, along with no limit on forced overtime but with no overtime pay until after 40 hours; 13 an- nual paid holidays were cut to three; a draconian attendance policy was imple- mented; and other concessions.

The union estimates that these con- cessions cost workers $1.1 billion over the last five years — money that went straight into the bosses’ coffers.

This is the first UMWA contract strike in Alabama since the early 1980s. “It’s now the longest UMWA strike in Alabama’s history,” Smith said.

Smith and other miners follow recent strikes around the country, including at Nabisco, Frito-Lay and Volvo Truck. Workers there were able to push back against some of the bosses’ takeback demands by sticking together and fight- ing. This shows “why our strike is so important for everyone,” Smith said.

Pickets face boss attacks, state cops

On several occasions, Warrior Met management personnel have purposefully struck with their cars mines or family members peacefully picketing at No. 7 mine entrances. Local, county and state police have refused to take any action. The union filed charges against these company attacks with the National La- bor Relations Board, but the board dis- missed the union’s charges Aug. 25, despite the union submitting unmistak- able film footage showing strikers being hit and eyewitness reports. (Videos are posted on the Mine Workers Facebook page) Several assaults resulted in in- jured strikers being sent to the hospital.

Meanwhile, Alabama state troopers have been assigned to escort scabs past the UMWA picket line into Warrior Met Coal, 7 mine. “It looks like they’re working for the company,” UMWA spokesman Phil Smith told the media Sept. 17. “There hasn’t been any reason to be concerned about the bases [of scabs] going back and forth. It just looks like the company doesn’t need to hire its own security guards.”

The company hopes the scabs will keep No. 7 mine operating to meet out- standing coal orders and demoralize strikers and weaken their resolve.

Help spread the word about the strike! Donations should be sent to UMWA 2021 Strike Fund at P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, Va. 22026. Messages of support can also be sent to District 20, 2922 Hwy. 216, (Miners’ Memorial Parkway), McCalla, AL 35111. Email: umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net.

Alabama miners: “Whatever it takes to win this strike’’

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Quebec hotel workers strike, rally in fight for new contracts

MONTREAL — Some 2,000 workers at a score of hotels organized by the CSN (Federation of National Trade Unions) held an early strike in Quebec Sept. 17. Three big rallies took place here, in Quebec City and in Sherbrooke.

"On the one hand the hotel owners tell us they have a drastic shortage of workers, and on the other they do everything to lengthen the conflict, present us with insulting offers that attack the dignity of our members," said CSN President Caroline Senneville at the Montreal rally.

Faced with deadlocks at the negotiation table, workers at a dozen hotels organized by the CSN-organized workers.

The series of strikes was adopted by a vote of over 97% in union meetings in Montreal. "Out of respect for the parents, who support us in large numbers, we are committed to informing them in advance so they can make the adjustments that are needed," CSN representative Stephanie Vauchon told the media.

Several days earlier, 13,000 additional child care workers, organized by the Confederation of Quebec Unions (CSQ), voted by 95% to hold six days of strikes. They also have been without a contract for 15 years, with similar demands to those of the CSN-organized workers.

Kaiser Operating Engineers strike 24 hospitals in California

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — The 700 members of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 39 are on strike at 24 Kaiser hospitals across Northern California.

"We have been on the front lines in these hospitals throughout the pandemic," striker Jose Banta told the Militant as he picketed here Sept. 21. "Kaiser is offering us less than is being paid at other hospitals, and it's unfair.

"Kaiser rejected the union's wage and benefit proposals and did not make a counteroffer until the last day of the contract, Sept. 17. Workers rejected it and went on strike the next day.

Among their responsibilities, stationary engineers maintain cooling, heating and water systems and ventilation in the rooms where COVID patients are treated to ensure those treating them are safe. Stationary engineers at Eden and Sutter hospitals, who are not on strike, joined the picket lines in San Leandro. "Whatever is decided in this strike will affect workers at the other hospital systems," Sutter worker Rick Fiery said. "This strike is bringing in our crew together. No matter what we are able to win we will go back more united," striker Michael Salas said. "I used to talk about Kaiser being 'us.' Now it's clear it's the workers against Kaiser. It's a battle."

Military barbers strike after bosses raise prices but not pay

Since July 4, workers at four barbershops, Ft. Lee U.S. Army Garrison and Ft. Pickett Army National Guard Maneuver Training Center in central Virginia have been picketing outside Ft. Lee. The 20 barbers, members of Laborers International Union Local 575, are on strike against Sheffield Barbers, a contractor hired by the Army & Air Force Exchange Service.

"The contractor is not paying us the posted price. That's not what our contract intended. That's not fair. But that's what we are up against," Eugene Harris, a Korean American. Sheffield has hired union barbers.

"They're combining jobs. You have Doorman Karim Dahmani said, "And we have had [the contractor] pay us less than what we are owed."

"The contractor is not paying us the price to $13.25. And he's only paying us $11.25. In the current negotiations, Sheffield offered a 6 cents increase per haircut, even though it has raised the price to $13.25.

"We don't like the way they're treating these guys. But the U.S. military only pays us three times the minimum wage," Matt Macklin, retired from the Ft. Lee barbershop after 48 years, said in an article in Stars and Stripes, a U.S. military daily. When he heard about the issues, he headed out to the picket line. "I said, 'That's it, I'm going to be there.'"

"Some soldiers on the base and army veterans are honoring the picket line. For more information or to contribute to the strike fund, go to www.liunalo.ca572.org."

— Arlene Rubinstein

Quebec: thousands of child care workers begin series of strikes

MONTREAL — Eleven thousand workers at 7,000 child care centers (CPEs) across Quebec carried out the first of 10 one-day strikes Sept. 24. The government's recognition of a collective bargain-

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MSM: Organize to defend the rights of workers

As the first U.S. workers began their struggle to organize in the mid-1800s, the Militant noted: "The militia of the working class" would struggle to end "exploitation and miseries of all kinds." Today, the Militant calls for an organized protest movements of workers culminating in mass demonstrations and a general strike in this city.

During the second week in September, the soldiers at the Hanford weapons camp were informed that they were to embark for Indonesia. The soldiers bluntly refused to go. They formed a committee and issued two leaflets. The first called on the soldiers for action against shipment to Indonesia. The second called on the dock workers and the unions in general to demonstrate their disapproval of the imperialist aims of the government by striking against embarkation orders.

Both leaflets created a tremendous impression. Soldiers and workers responded with a mass sentiment of sympathy.
The murder of Thomas Sankara: a popular revolution overturned

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Blaise Compaoré, the iron-fisted leader of a country whose capital was once world-famous as the fief of the bankerandnutritionist for the British Empire, now stands accused of being complicit in the 1987 massacre of Sankara.

In 1983 Sankara led a mass uprising that established a populist and democratic revolutionary government. The revolutionary government of Burkina Faso was called the People's National Revolutionary Assembly and it was led by Sankara.

Sankara's government denounced the war in Afghanistan and targeted imperialist projects, and when this caused difficulties with the United States, he was forced to resign.

Sankara was a 33-year-old leader who became president of the Democratic People's Republic of the Congo.

He was a former student of the University of Paris and he was known for his radical views on political revolution and social justice.

In 1987, during his tenure as president, Sankara was assassinated by a military coup led by Compaoré.

The coup was led by a group of soldiers loyal to Compaoré, and it was carried out in secret.

The coup leaders then went on to install Compaoré as the new president of the country.

The coup was widely condemned by the international community, and it marked the end of Sankara's revolutionary government.

The popular uprising that brought Sankara to power was met with brutal repression by the government, and many of his supporters were arrested, tortured, and killed.

However, Sankara's legacy lives on, and his work continues to inspire social justice movements around the world. His ideas and principles of democratic socialism and popular participation remain relevant today.
Myth of women’s inferiority was born with class society

Problems of Women’s Liberation by Evelyn Reed is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for October. Reed was a member and leader of the Socialist Workers Party from 1940 until her death in 1979. She wrote about the economic and social roots of women’s oppression from prehistoric society to modern capitalism. She explained why the fight for women’s emancipation is an essential part of the working class struggle for a socialist revolution. The excerpt below is from her 1954 article, “The Myth of Women’s Inferiority.” Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

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IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY EVELYN REED
One of the misconceptions of capitalism, and of class society in general, is the idea that women are weaker, less intelligent, and have fewer qualities. Just as in prehistory, women have played a subordinate and even submissive role. Only in recent years have women been able to lift the chains of ignorance and slavery that have been put on them. The essential inequality still remains.

Main stages: chattel slavery, feudalism, and capitalism. For this reason class society is aptly characterized as male dominated. This domination has been upheld and perpetuated by the system of private property, the state, the church and the form of family that served men’s interests.

In the course of this historical situation, certain false claims regarding the social superiority of the male sex have been propagated. It is often set forth as an immutable axiom that men are socially superior because they are naturally superior to men. And what is the proof? They are the mothers! Nature, it is claimed, has condemned the female sex to an inferior status.

However, it was not the superiority of natural and social history. It is not nature but class society which lowered women and elevated men. Men won their social superiority because they had the means of natural and social history. It is not natural but class society which lowered women and elevated men. Men won their social superiority because they had the means of natural and social history. It is not nature but class society which lowered women and elevated men. Men won their social superiority because they had the means of natural and social history.

To console women for their status as second-class citizens, mothers are sanctified, endowed with halos and blessed with special “instincts,” feelings and knowledge forever beyond the comprehension of men. Sanction and degradation are simply two sides of the same coin of the social robbery of women under class society.

But class society did not always exist; it is only a few thousand years old. Men were not always the superior sex, and women the second-class citizens, mothers are sanctified, endowed with halos and blessed with special “instincts,” feelings and knowledge forever beyond the comprehension of men. Sanction and degradation are simply two sides of the same coin of the social robbery of women under class society.

If we use the same yardstick for the women of today — social leadership — then we must say that women are the leaders in society long before men, and for a far longer stretch of time.

We do not draw the conclusion from this that women are naturally superior to men, for the fact that a species is the fact that maternity led to labor — and it was in the fusion of labor — and it was in the fusion of maternity and labor that the first human social system was founded. It was the mothers who first took the road of labor, and by the same token blazed the trail toward humanity. It was the mothers who became the chief producers; the workers and farmers; the leaders in scientific, intellectual and cultural life. And they became all this precisely because they were the mother- ers. But the distinction between the two sexes is not natural but social, and there were very good reasons for this.

However, as Marx and Engels have demonstrated, all the social aspects of past and present are founded upon labor. Thus, it was not the simple capacity of women to give birth that played the decisive role. The species only female animals give birth. What was decisive was this fact that it was the species that the fact that maternity led to labor — and it was in the fusion of maternity and labor that the first human social system was founded. It was the mothers who first took the road of labor, and by the same token blazed the trail toward humanity. It was the mothers who became the chief producers; the workers and farmers; the leaders in scientific, intellectual and cultural life. And they became all this precisely because they were the mother- ers. But the distinction between the two sexes is not natural but social, and there were very good reasons for this.

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How unions exploded in 1930s, why we need a movement like that today

Continued from front page
two different parts of the economy and impose changes making working conditions more dangerous. Nearly 1,000 members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union at Nabisco are fighting for a contract that will not just ensure safety at work after making gains in a hard-fought five-week strike. Meatpackers in Quebec, members of the Union of Olymf神情 workers at Vallee-Jonction, ended their four-month strike Aug. 5. In both Quebec and Alabama, Baptists and other unions’ support rally and got messages of support and contributions from her co-workers to their strike fund.

Unions, the most important defense organizations of the working class, must take the initiative to lead workers to get vaccinated and get back to work, putting us in the best position to fight bosses’ attacks and build solidarity with union struggles, fights against the bosses and their power.

With millions unemployed and rising inflation, unions need to fight for a federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building hospitals, schools, housing that workers need. Shorten the workweek with no cut in pay to stop bosses’ profit hunger and legal requirements to cut conditions. Workmen’s compensation laws were imposed to cut costs of injuries.

Workers must break from the bosses’ Democratic and Republican parties and build a political party of our own, a labor party, based on our unions. The SWP aims to be part of building the leadership we need to unify all those exploited by the capitalist class and replace their rule with a workers and farmers government.

The bosses and their divisions bosses promote to try to stop us from fighting an “economic” battle, which is a battle for class power. To defeat that requires a new movement to defend and expand the unions’ gains.

Workers and farmers confront these deadly forces of nature with “natural” disaster into a social catastrophe. The lack of preparedness and belated government response turned a catastrophic storm into a social catastrophe.

In the future, will we learn from this experience or rely on ourselves and our allies to fight for what we need. They doubted down on tying our unions to the two parties of the capitalist rulers.

The fact is, social relations under capitalism depend entirely upon the exploitation of workers by the ruling property. The dog-eat-dog drive for profit, and the wars for markets, ensure workers will increasingly look for ways to combine together to defend ourselves.

The worsening impact of the economic, political and moral crisis of capitalism is creating a greater willingness to organize and use unions, to overcome divisions bosses promote to try to stop us from fighting back effectively. More workers are acting together and taking initiatives of collective solidarity that is crucial to those walking picket lines.

And they are discussing why we need to break from the bosses’ Democratic and Republican parties and build our own political party, a labor party.

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