

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Maoism: An anti-working-class record of defeats around the world**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 40 NOVEMBER 1, 2021

## Join in special election week SWP drive to win support

BY SETH GALINSKY

"I wish I had a union at my workplace," Stephen Hammond told Róger Calero when the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York City knocked on his door in Middletown, New York, Oct. 17. "The little man has the same problem everywhere. They are pushing to get more productivity out of fewer workers."

Calero had showed Hammond the headlines in the *Militant* calling for solidarity with workers on strike at Kellogg's and other union battles. He described how three days earlier more than 10,000 John Deere workers went on strike across the country. Calero described how the *Militant* and Socialist Workers Party candidates around the country are building solidarity with these battles.

Hammond, a software engineer, subscribed to the *Militant* and contributed \$5 to the SWP Party-Building Fund. Party campaigners from Albany and

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## Iraqi election boycott shows anger with gov't, Tehran

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The outcome of parliamentary elections in Iraq on Oct. 10 and the exceptionally low turnout reflect the mounting hatred toward the Iraqi rulers and toward Tehran, which has consolidated its military, economic and political intervention in the country. Working people joined massive protests that swept southern Iraq and Baghdad in late 2019, demanding jobs, services, and a halt to interference by both Tehran and Washington.

The bloc led by Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr gained seats at the expense of candidates in the Fatah Alliance, the group most closely aligned with Tehran.

Washington and Tehran have been engaged in a fight over their rival interests not only in Iraq but also in Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East, alongside the governments of Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and other regional capitalist powers.

The Iranian rulers have increased

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## Build solidarity for John Deere, Kellogg strikers!



Quad City Times via AP/Meg McLaughlin

Picket at John Deere Davenport, Iowa, factory first day of strike Oct. 14 by 10,000 members of United Auto Workers. "We're not going to sell new hires down the river," said strikers.

### Kellogg strikers 'strong, getting lots of solidarity'

BY SUSAN LAMONT

ATLANTA — "We're strong and we're getting a lot of support from other unions," Kevin Bradshaw, vice president of Local 252G of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union in Memphis, Tennessee, told the *Militant* by phone Oct. 18.

Bradshaw is one of 1,400 workers on strike nationwide at Kellogg's cereal plants in Battle Creek, Michigan;

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### John Deere workers fight against divisive two-tier

BY NAOMI CRAINE

EAST MOLINE, Ill. — Members of the United Auto Workers at John Deere have joined the ranks of workers taking strike action to fight against boss attacks on pay, benefits and working conditions. More than 10,000 workers walked out Oct. 14 at the farm and construction equipment manufacturer's 14 plants, most of them in Iowa and Illinois.

Four days earlier the workers vot-

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## As inflation batters working people, how can we unite to defend ourselves



IBEW Local 304

Workers at Frito-Lay in Kansas protest against conditions in March, prior to contract vote. Signs say their wages have not kept up with inflation. Workers pushed company back in July strike.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Rising prices, especially on food, energy, rent and other basic necessities, are eating away at the living standards of working people, hitting those with the lowest income the hardest. As more unionists strike for higher wages and better conditions and for cost-of-living increase clauses in contracts, they're setting an example about what can be done to combat inflation.

The Labor Department reported that through September the consumer

price index has risen 5.4% over the past 12 months, the largest increase since 2008. This means real wages have fallen.

The official inflation rate deliberately undercounts price hikes. For example, it calculates "substitutions between similar goods." If steak is too pricey, you'll buy hamburger. Voila! Less inflation.

Even according to the official figures, beef prices are up 17.6% over the past 12 months. But anyone who

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## Forum: Rise of today's industrial union struggles, prospects for the working class

BY ANDREA MORELL

OAKLAND, Calif. — Over 30 people came to an Oct. 15 Militant Labor Forum here on "The Rise of Industrial Union Struggles: Prospects for the Working Class and Building the Socialist Workers Party Today," featuring John Studer, SWP National Committee member and editor of the *Militant*. SWP leader Dave Prince gave a similar talk at a forum of some 40 participants in New York the same night.

"The SWP is in the midst of a bold communist propaganda campaign to expand readership of the *Militant* and books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries," Studer said, "while also raising \$130,000 to finance the party's work. The only place the party gets financial support is from the working class."

"Wherever SWP campaigners go they explain there are only two questions that are critical to the future of humanity. One, is the working class capable of making a socialist revolution in this country? And two, can we build a vanguard leadership, a party that can or-

ganize and lead our class to take power and establish a workers and farmers government? If your answer is yes, then the SWP is the party for you.

"The objective situation in the United States has changed for the better," Studer said. "For decades unions were beaten back by a relentless employ-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Stationary engineers strike 24 Kaiser hospitals in California

Scaffolders strike giant steel works in United Kingdom



# Meeting celebrates political life of SWP supporter Tim Craine

BY JACOB PERASSO  
AND KATHIE FITZGERALD

ALBANY, N.Y. — A meeting here celebrated the life and political contributions of Tim Craine, a supporter of the Socialist Workers Party. Craine died Sept. 25 from leukemia at age 77.

Fifty people from around the region attended the Oct. 10 meeting. They included those he worked with in the Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba, as well as others from Windsor, Connecticut, where Tim and Leslie, his wife and lifelong companion, lived. Participants also came from Canada. Messages were sent by people Craine worked with over 50 years.

Alex Huinil, organizer of the Albany SWP, explained that Tim and Leslie regularly came to Albany after the SWP established a branch here in 2017. The branch, he said, was formed to respond to developments in the labor movement, “like the 2016-17 strike by 700 workers at Momentive Performance Materials in Waterford and lockout of Honeywell workers in Green Island, and to politically collaborate more closely with the Communist League in Canada.”

Huinil pointed to the growing number of trade union battles taking place today. SWP members, he said, are deeply involved in building solidarity with these fights, which open new opportunities to forge the proletarian party workers need. Huinil highlighted the party campaigns underway this fall.

Also speaking was Dave Prince, a member of the SWP’s National Committee responsible for leading the party’s work with supporters. Craine was won to a party that was deeply involved in

class battles in the late ’60s, Prince said. At the center of these struggles was the smashing of Jim Crow segregation and terror, the closest phenomena to fascism in the U.S. thus far. This fight was led by a courageous and disciplined cadre. Tim was impacted by leaders of the international stature of Malcolm X, Prince said.

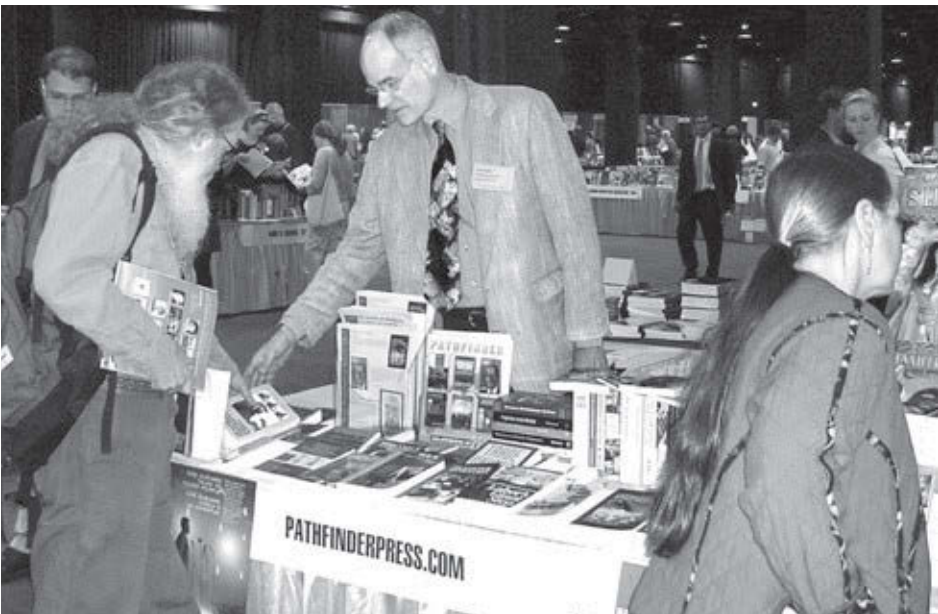
Just years before, at the opening of the ’60s, workers and farmers in Cuba, led by Fidel Castro, had made a socialist revolution. Like others of his generation Craine joined the SWP to emulate that example in the U.S.

Craine had been president of the Young Democrats at Oberlin College in Ohio in 1964. He campaigned for Democratic President Lyndon Johnson who ran against Republican Barry Goldwater that year. Democrats and others said a Goldwater victory would lead to an escalation of the U.S. war in Vietnam and to nuclear war.

“Tim was deeply affected by Johnson’s escalation of the war against the Vietnamese revolution after his reelection,” Prince said, “and the rise of the anti-war movement. Tim’s subsequent experiences teaching geometry in Ghana, as a Peace Corp volunteer, gave him a firsthand look at the devastating consequences of imperialist exploitation in Africa.”

Craine was a teacher of math throughout his life, and wrote and spoke on geometry.

“His decision to join the SWP was a deepgoing one,” Prince said, “as was his later work as a party supporter.” Tim made “a definitive break from hopes and illusions he had strongly held in bourgeois democracy,” Prince



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party organize production and distribution of Pathfinder books by party leaders and other revolutionary fighters. Above, Tim Craine staffs Pathfinder Press table at New England Booksellers Association trade show in Boston in 2004.

said. “He became convinced there can be no compromise with imperialism, or work to reform it though the Democrats, Republicans or other parties of the exploiting classes. That the stakes are the future of humanity.”

Following a renewal of union struggles in the 1990s, the party took steps to strengthen the work of its members in industrial unions in coal mining, garment and meatpacking.

At the same time, around 2000, Tim and Leslie, along with more than 200 other supporters of the SWP, responded to the party’s initiative to organize their activity. Supporters responded to what the party was doing by volunteering to help get out books that contain hard-won lessons of revolutionary struggles; and win financial support.

These books are a product of work carried out internationally to build parties that are proletarian in composition and program. Efforts by SWP supporters help make the party’s programmatic conquests more accessible to working people. This activity provides highly leveraged, decisive support to party work.

“Tim was a stalwart of that effort, and he took on many responsibilities,” said Pat Nixon, an organizer of the party’s supporters. “I had the privilege of working with Tim over many years. He wasn’t a ‘formatter’ or whatever assignment he had, he was a communist — although he was an excellent formatter. He organized that team and trained many comrades. He

was capable, competent and patient. “Tim was one of many supporters who shoulder more and more responsibilities, because that’s what the party needs. That kind of attitude, that was Tim.”

Craine walked the picket lines of Stop & Shop workers on strike in Connecticut in 2019.

For over 30 years, he helped organize the Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba. Milly Guzmán-Young, who had met Craine as a student at Central Connecticut State University, attended the meeting. In 2017 she joined him on “In the Footsteps of Che” International Brigade to Cuba.

“Hurricane Maria had just hit Cuba and Puerto Rico,” she wrote in a message to the meeting, “and I realized the U.S. was letting people die in Puerto Rico, while Cuba has a system which places human lives first.”

Participants contributed \$2,600 to boost the fall SWP Party-Building fund.

# THE MILITANT

**Defend, emulate Cuba’s socialist revolution!**

*The ‘Militant’ explains why Cuba’s socialist revolution sets an example for working people everywhere fighting against capitalist exploitation and oppression. It calls for action to oppose the over 60-year-long U.S. economic and political war against the people of Cuba.*



Granma/Miguel Febles Hernández  
Volunteers knock on doors in Cuba to see if people are sick. No one is left on their own.

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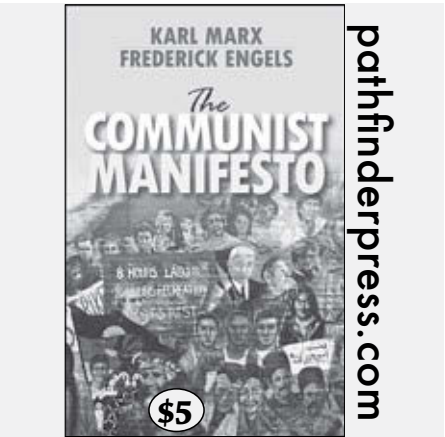
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Join in special election week SWP drive

Continued from front page  
New York City sold five subscriptions and got \$34 in contributions in just a couple hours going door to door in Mid- dleton and nearby Florida, New York.

The workers they met wanted to discuss a wide range of questions, from President Joseph Biden’s imposi- tion of vaccine mandates to how to combat rising inflation.

SWP campaigners are finding simi- lar interest everywhere they go as part of the international seven-week drive to sell 1,300 subscriptions and 1,300 books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders and raise \$130,000 for the annual Party- Building Fund. When they learn that the *Militant* and the Socialist Workers Party are funded entirely by working people, many want to contribute to the fund.

The *Militant* is unique. It provides regular reports firsthand from today’s labor struggles. Last week’s issue car- ried an interview with Carlos Fernán- dez de Cossío, head of the Cuban for- eign ministry’s department for U.S. affairs. He explains why “the most en- ducing and successful challenge to im- perialism in the Western Hemisphere has been the Cuban Revolution.”

Target effort for SWP campaign

The international drive will get a boost from a 12-day special target ef- fort starting Oct. 22 to introduce the Socialist Workers Party program and its working-class candidates to as many working people as possible in the last week before the Nov. 2 elections.

SWP candidates are walking picket lines, building strike solidarity rallies, talking to workers on their doorsteps and joining protests to defend women’s rights, including the right to choose to have an abortion. As they do so, they present a revolutionary road forward.

Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for Atlanta City Council president, spoke at an Oct. 12 candidates debate hosted by the Atlanta Press Club. “Young people and workers can change their lives, the way Malcolm X did, when they find a cause worth living and fighting for,” Manuel said. “That’s what we offer — the fight to replace the rule of the capitalist class with a workers and farmers government.”

Need to combat bosses’ speedup

“The bosses don’t want you to have a life,” Armil Scott told Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Manhattan Borough president, and campaign supporter Brian Williams when they knocked on his door in the Castle Hill neighborhood of the Bronx Oct. 17. “We work too many hours and are underpaid,” he said. Scott, who delivers car parts, is work- ing 55 hours a week or more. “The driving is brutal.”

Speedup, forced overtime and two- tier wages and benefits are at the heart of many of today’s strike battles, Lob- man said. Scott subscribed and bought a copy of *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. It explains the kind of working-class party and pro- gram that is needed to wrest power from the capitalist exploiters. It’s one of dozens of books on special as part of the drive. (See ad on page 6.)

Certified Nursing Assistant Mil- dred Regalado was interested to hear about the strike for higher wages and better staff/patient ratios by nurses in Worcester, Massachusetts, and other labor battles when Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for New Jersey gover- nor, and campaign supporter Terry Ev- ans knocked on her door in Union City, New Jersey, Oct. 14.

“We had to work so hard for so little during the pan- demic,” she said. “But I don’t agree with unions. All they do is take your money. If you come to work and do your job you shouldn’t get managers bothering you.”

“Bosses can only raise their profits by driv- ing down our wages and making our conditions worse,” Kuniansky said. “And we can’t resist them on our own.”

“The union is workers joining together to fight for what we need,” Evans add- ed, pointing to some impor- tant gains won by unions during recent strikes.

“They don’t want you to see unions like that,” Reg- alado said. She subscribed to the *Militant*. When Ku- niansky invited her to a campaign forum on the fight for women’s emanci- pation Regalado said she didn’t agree with abortion.

“Access to family plan- ning, including the right to choose whether to have on abortion is a private mat- ter for a woman, not for the courts, government or any- one else,” Kuniansky said.

Regalado said she would think about what Kuniansky raised.

In New Zealand, Com- munist League campaign- ers spoke with Rakesh Prasad. He described the impact of severe lockdown restrictions on the small contracting business he has with his wife. “Neither the Labour Party or Na- tional Party look after the little people,” Prasad said. “We’ve seen many small businesses shut down be- cause they cannot pay the rent when there is no trade. And we’ve seen more homelessness, even young children out on the streets or living in cars.”

The problem is the government defends the interests of the capitalist class, Annalucia Vermunt told him. When he asked who CL cam- paigners voted for, Vermunt said that the Communist League ran its own candidates. “The working class needs to build its own party, with a program to fight for power.”

Prasad subscribed to the *Militant* and picked up a copy of *Are They*



Militant/Abby Tilsner  
Róger Calero, right, SWP candidate for NYC mayor, talks with Stephen Hammond. “I wish I had a union,” Hammond said.

*Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capi- talism* by Barnes.

Help win new readers to the *Militant* and Pathfinder books and new contribu- tors to the SWP Party-Building Fund! To find the branch of the party nearest you see the directory on page 8.

Vote Socialist Workers Party in 2021!

Albany

Ved Dookhun, mayor  
Kathie Fitzgerald, Common Council president

Atlanta

Rachele Fruit, mayor  
Sam Manuel, City Council president

Minneapolis

Doug Nelson, mayor  
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Joanne Kuniansky, governor  
Vivian Sahner, lieutenant governor

Miami

Anthony Dutrow, mayor

New York City

Róger Calero, mayor  
Willie Cotton, public advocate  
Sara Lobman, Manhattan Borough president

Philadelphia

Osborne Hart, district attorney

Pittsburgh

Malcolm Jarrett, mayor

Seattle

Henry Dennison, mayor  
Rebecca Williamson, City Council at-Large

ExxonMobil strikers reject contract, boss attacks on seniority and safety

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

DALLAS — The 650 members of Unit- ed Steelworkers Local 13-243 locked out by ExxonMobil in Beaumont, Texas, overwhelmingly rejected the compa- ny’s six-year contract proposal Oct. 19.

“This shows we are still together, we are one group,” USW staff representa- tive Bryan Gross told the *Beaumont Enterprise*. “The refinery guys are sup- porting the (blending and packaging plant) workers, and vice versa.”

“We overwhelmingly voted no,” Earl Miller, an assistant refinery operator at the plant, told the *Militant* in a phone interview Oct. 20. “It was unfair to our brothers and sisters in the B&P plant and would eliminate the A-operator, a posi- tion key to keeping the community and the unit safe. It takes years to get trained to get up to the level for this job.”

Workers stood firm in the face of a phone-calling campaign by the oil bosses to pressure workers to vote yes and to join in a company-backed effort to have the National Labor Relations Board decertify the union.

“As long as we come together to show we are not going to have our seniority taken away and vote ‘no,’

everything will be fine,” Teria How- ard, a complex operator in the refin- ery, told the *Militant* in a phone inter- view. “This is an important issue for us and our future co-workers.”

There is a food pantry at the union hall, well stocked with meat, poultry, canned goods, diapers and other gro- cery items donated from USW locals at other refineries, other unions and bought with funds sent by working people from around the country. This has helped sustained the unionists.

“I am on the intake team for the union,” Howard said. “Every Tues- day and Thursday we take applica- tions for members who need assis- tance with mortgages, water, electric- ity and propane bills. We have gotten a lot of support from other USW lo- cals and the international. Unemploy- ment has run out for some and will run out soon for others. So we are seeing members coming for help with their bills for the first time.”

Your support can help workers continue their fight. Donations and letters of solidarity can be sent to USW Local 13-243, 2490 S. 11th St., Beaumont, TX 77701.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, SWP fund						
October 2 - November 23 (week two)						
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	80	23	80	40	\$8,200	
Atlanta	80	26	80	33	\$11,200	\$813
Chicago*	115	64	100	38	\$13,500	\$300
Cincinnati	60	10	60	15	\$5,000	
Dallas	40	20	40	15	\$3,100	\$400
Lincoln	12	6	12	8	\$350	\$106
Los Angeles	85	41	85	51	\$13,700	\$748
Miami	30	8	30	9	\$4,200	
N. New Jersey	75	30	75	28	\$6,600	\$1,190
New York	105	54	105	76	\$16,300	\$1,922
Oakland	85	39	85	55	\$13,100	\$1,183
Philadelphia	30	13	30	7	\$4,000	
Pittsburgh	45	21	45	20	\$4,000	
Seattle	65	22	65	21	\$12,000	\$1,300
Twin Cities	55	26	55	38	\$5,000	
Washington	50	20	50	13	\$5,800	
Other						
Total U.S.	1012	423	997	467	\$126,050	\$7,962
Prisoners	25	17				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	40	13	40	20		
Manchester	40	20	40	11		
Total U.K.	80	33	80	31		
Canada	90	34	90	27		
New Zealand	25	7	25	9		
Australia	25	5	25	6		
Total	1,257	519	1,217	540	\$126,050	\$7,962
SHOULD BE	1,300	370	1,300	370	\$130,000	\$37,050
*Raised goal						



# Kellogg strikers stand strong

Continued from front page

Omaha, Nebraska; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Memphis.

They are standing up to the bosses' push to build on past concessions forced on the union and to deepen divisions among workers. The company is demanding a two-tier contract, with new hires stuck at \$13 an hour less than veteran workers and no way for them to ever reach the highest pay rate. The contract saddles these workers with worse benefits and pensions. It would eliminate cost-of-living adjustments, and end the 30% limit on the number of workers bosses can hire on inferior wages, conditions and benefits. To add insult to injury, the company is demanding the cereal boxes no longer carry the union label.

### Growing support on picket line

"Autoworkers, steelworkers, Teamsters, CWA, IBEW, UFCW, IA-TSE and others have all stopped by, brought donations and helped walk our picket line," Bradshaw said. Support has also been received from community and Black rights groups, as well as churches, including the Baptist Ministerial Association.

This is the third strike in the past few months fought by members of the Bakery Workers union. Workers at Frito-Lay in Topeka, Kansas, struck in July and successfully pushed back "suicide shifts," with only eight-hour breaks between day after day of 12-hour shifts. BCTGM members at Nabisco made gains in their strike over work schedules, seniority, mandatory overtime, cuts to pensions and rising health insurance costs. In both fights the unionists won solidarity from working people and their unions. They held off boss attacks and returned to work stronger and more united, having used union power to defend workers' interests.

"We have 274 union members on strike here in Memphis," Bradshaw said. "About 70% of us were here when the nine-month-long company lockout began in October 2013. They're veterans of that fight, so that's a big help to us now."

At that time Kellogg's bosses locked the Memphis workers out when the

union refused to accept different pay and conditions for temporary, part-time workers. The unionists won reinstatement after a hard-fought struggle.

They carried banners harking back to the fight against Jim Crow segregation, saying, "Kellogg's this is not the 1960s — We've already won our rights!" with a picture of Martin Luther King Jr. Memphis is 64% Black and BCTGM Local 252G in its majority is African American. Bradshaw also serves as president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists there.

"The company tries to give the impression that they're talking to the union, but that's not true," Bradshaw said. "They've started to bus in scabs to the Memphis plant. We're seeing four or five buses drive in, but only about 30-40 workers get off. From information we're getting, they are only doing cleanup as of now, no production."

"It was great to hear about the strike at John Deere," Bradshaw said. Over 10,000 workers there, members of the United Auto Workers, went on strike



Kellogg Union Members Appreciation Page

Some 1,400 members of Bakery Workers union began nationwide strike at Kellogg's four cereal plants Oct. 5. Above, workers picket in Memphis, Tennessee. Other plants struck are in Battle Creek, Michigan; Omaha, Nebraska; and East Hempfield Township, Pennsylvania.

Oct. 14. The BCTGM in Memphis is organizing a solidarity rally with the UAW and Central Labor Council on Sat., Oct. 23, at noon on the picket line on Airways Boulevard, near the Kellogg's plant.

The BCTGM website lists the locations of the strike picket lines at all four

cereal plants where you can join in and drop off food, drinks and other needed supplies. It also lists the mail and email addresses where you can send messages of support and contributions at <https://bctgm.org/2021/10/08/5-ways-to-support-the-kelloggstrike>.

# John Deere workers fight against divisive two-tier

Continued from front page

ed down a proposed contract by a resounding 90%. One of the central issues is the company's demand that new hires receive no traditional pension and to create a third tier of workers.

"There's a lot of new hires. I'm not going to sell them up the river," Tina Swanson, a member of UAW Local 865 who's worked at the Deere Harvester plant here for 14 years, told the *Militant* on the picket line the first day of the strike. "That's what happened in 1997. We're not going to do a three-tier contract. This could be my grandchildren's future."

In 1997, UAW members at Deere took concessions that created a second tier. Workers hired after that date receive lower pay and pensions than the pre-1997 workforce.

Many other strikers this worker-correspondent spoke to here, and at the forestry equipment plant in neighboring Davenport, Iowa, echoed her view.

They've seen how different tiers divide workers. And they're determined to regain some of what's been lost, instead of giving up more.

"We need more pay to keep up with rising prices," said Alex Melody, who has three years seniority and works in the paint department. The company has offered a six-year deal with a 5% or 6% raise now, and then only 3% in the third and fifth years. This is below today's inflation rate.

"The company is making tons of money," Melody said. "We just want a future." John Deere posted record earnings of \$1.79 billion in the second quarter, and is projecting nearly \$6 billion in profits for 2021.

"Higher wages is number one for me. And elimination of tiers," said Josh Krebs. He's worked for eight months as a mechanical assembler here. He and other workers described how part of their pay comes in the form of productivity bonuses. Workers on some lines get more than those on others, based on factors out of their control. Krebs also said he thought it unfair that newer workers often face seasonal layoffs, and lose their seniority rights when they take jobs at other Deere facilities.

### Inspired by other fights

This is the first strike at John Deere since 1986. Workers here have been following other labor battles around the country, including strikes by bakery

workers at Nabisco and Kellogg's. Some said they were encouraged to take a stand by the UAW members at the Volvo plant in Virginia, who voted down three contract proposals and went on strike earlier this year, also over the issue of divisive wage tiers.

Pickets said that within hours of going on strike they already had a visit from a couple of UAW members from a Ford plant in Kansas, who promised to come back with others. Members of UAW Local 865 at the Harvester plant also have some experience offering solidarity to others. Two years ago, a busload of them traveled from East Moline to Bolingbrook, just outside Chicago, to walk the picket lines with strikers at General Motors.

Some 49,000 workers struck GM in 2019, gaining a contract that narrowed some of the divisions they face.

Constant honking from drivers passing the picket line here reflects the local support for the strikers. John Deere has its headquarters and several plants in the "Quad Cities" on the Illinois-Iowa border, and is a major employer in the area.

The company is trying to continue production with supervisors and office staff.

Bosses are trying to undercut support for the UAW members, saying it needs to keep production going so farmers can harvest crops. In an Oct. 14 statement the company said it aims at "meeting the needs of our customers, who work in time-sensitive and critical industries such as agriculture and construction."

The media repeats the bosses' efforts to pit strikers against other working people. Fox Business News quoted comments by "supply chain expert" Jennifer Blackhurst, who says a parts shortage at harvest time could create a "perfect storm" for farmers and may drive inflation. "Pointing to the shortages of proteins like bacon, which is hovering at its highest price in 40 years, Blackhurst said the strike could make things even worse."

Strikers of all generations remain determined. "Our strike and picket line shows the company our unity and gives the company a message," 19-year-old Jake Blowers told the *Militant*.

### Anti-labor outfit attacks John Deere workers, UAW

EAST MOLINE, ILL. — The 10,000 striking members of the United Auto Workers at John Deere are setting an example for working people. They're using their union to push back against decades of attacks by bosses, fighting to end divisive wage tiers, improve working conditions and win raises that keep up with inflation. They need and deserve as much solidarity as we can mobilize, as do other fighting union members on strike today.

What strikers don't need is the anti-union campaign carried out by an outfit calling itself the Socialist Equality Party. Its online-only publication, the "World Socialist Web Site," has a long record of trying to demoralize and divide labor struggles by calling on workers to quit their unions.

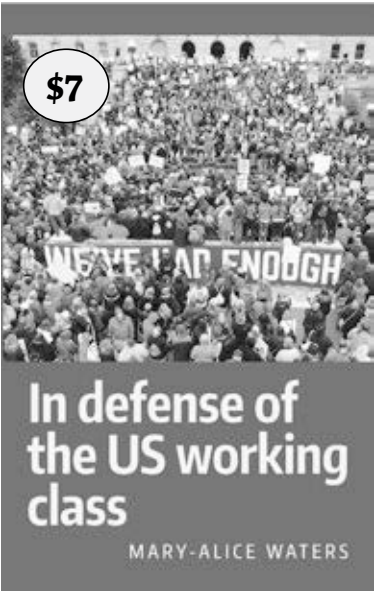
True to form, an Oct. 15 article claims that "the UAW, like all so-called 'unions' of today, is not a workers' organization but a labor police force working on behalf of management." The union, the website claims, "is working consciously and systematically to isolate and defeat the strike." They call for workers to break from the union and join what they say is a "John Deere Workers Rank-and-File Committee," whose only address is the WSWWS website.

What a gift to the bosses and their government, who hammer away at the claim that the unions are corrupt and workers are better off without them!

This group's provocative actions are used by some union officials to tell workers not to talk to the press. This undermines one of the strongest weapons workers have to win support — getting out our side of the story.

Workers face serious challenges, and today growing numbers are using our unions to fight. We need to build more solidarity to strengthen every one of these struggles. In the course of combating the bosses, we can rebuild a fighting labor movement.

— NAOMI CRAINE



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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Stationary engineers strike 24 Kaiser hospitals in California

OAKLAND, Calif. — Some 700 members of Local 39 of the International Union of Operating Engineers continue to maintain picket lines around the clock at 24 Kaiser hospitals in Northern California. The strikers are demanding respect and a contract that is competitive with those of other stationary engineers in the Bay Area. The unionists have been on strike since Sept. 18 and are gaining more support.

Contingents of workers from Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West, a union of 57,000 medical assistants, technicians and other healthcare workers, began joining the engineers' picket lines Oct. 18 at different Kaiser hospitals each day.

Striking engineers from Oakland, San Francisco, San Leandro, Vallejo, San Rafael and beyond converged at Kaiser's hospital here Oct. 13 to protest the company's refusal to budge from its contract offer. They were greeted by honks of support from passing cars.

"These are my fellow workers out here. We are all labor and we need to stick together," emergency-room nurse Stacey Eddie told this *Militant* worker-correspondent on the Kaiser Oakland hospital picket line. Eddie said she'll be talking with other nurses about how they can do more to support the strikers.

"The wage being offered is far below inflation," said Anne Potts, a Local 39 retiree who worked as a biomedical engineer at Kaiser for 35 years. "They have been working throughout the pandemic and this is the thanks they get!"

Strikers at the hospital here said that during the first weeks of the strike they were able to keep trucks from entering. But then cops threatened to arrest them for peacefully picketing, and they were forced to stop.

At the same time, more than 24,000 nurses and other Kaiser workers in Southern California and in Oregon overwhelmingly voted to authorize a strike against the bosses' offer of a 1% pay raise a year as well as its demands for a two-tier wage scale that could reduce the pay of new hires by at least 26%.

— Betsy Stone

## Minnesota nurses strike 3 days over holiday pay, benefits

PLYMOUTH, Minn. — Some 50 emergency room and urgent care nurses, members of the Minnesota Nurses Association, struck Allina WestHealth here Oct. 17-19 over holiday pay and benefits. The workers by a two-thirds majority had voted down the company's most recent contract offer. Allina refuses to pay nurses summer holiday pay, unlike its other contracts in the area where nurses get double pay on holidays.

"Our contract is the worst of the 13 Allina locations," Sonya Worner, a registered nurse and union chair at WestHealth, told the *Militant* on the picket line. She was part of a seven-week strike in 2016 against Allina around health care benefits.

During negotiations, which have been going on since May, the company proposed cutting nurses' paid time off almost in half, to 140 hours a year, in exchange for summer holiday pay.

"WestHealth nursing staff stayed the course during the COVID-19 pandemic," Worner told the media. "Now, in its wake, Allina is refusing to make the necessary movement toward a fair contract."

The rest of Allina's contracts in the area expire in May 2022.

— Gabby Prosser

## Child care worker walkouts spread across Quebec

MONTREAL — Some 600 child care workers, members of the Confederation of Quebec Unions (CSQ), rallied in front of the Ministry of the Family here Oct. 12 demanding higher wages, better working conditions and an end to forced overtime. The action is part of a series of one-day strikes fighting for a new contract in the province.

"Even though I've worked in child care for 20 years I still cannot afford the average rent in Montreal," Marcie Courjean told the *Militant* at the demonstration. Wage increases are needed to "keep up with inflation." Three days later, another 6,000 striking child care workers, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), marched through the streets of Quebec City. Like thousands of other workers at the 7,000 child care centers (CPEs) across Quebec, they have been without a contract for 18 months.

CSQ Child Care Division President Valerie Grenon told the media that the unions are demanding higher wages. The unions want pay increases of up to 27% over four years. She added that the CPEs are understaffed by 3,000 workers.

The continuing one-day strikes have



Militant/Betsy Stone

Striking members of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 39 march on Kaiser headquarters in Oakland, Sept. 30, in fight for higher wages, new contract at 24 hospitals.

put pressure on the government. It made a public announcement Oct. 14 that as of mid-November it would offer those holding college diplomas in childhood studies a 12% increase. But those without diplomas would get only 9%.

"The strikes and demonstrations by child care workers against the Quebec government have the broad support of working people, including tens of thousands of parents affected by the strikes," said Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal, as she marched with the strikers Oct. 12. "They deserve and need the active support of unions everywhere."

— Rosemary Ray

## Scaffolders strike giant steel works in United Kingdom

SCUNTHORPE, England — Scaffolders at the giant British Steel site here, members of the Unite union, have been on strike since Oct. 4.

They are demanding their basic wage be raised in line with the National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry. Currently they receive 2 pounds (\$2.75) per hour less.

"Our take-home pay is much the same as six years ago," shop steward Dave Birchall told the *Militant* Oct. 18. "Not only that, we used to get double

time for night shift. Now we get time-and-a-third." Shift allowances and sick pay have also been cut.

The 60 workers are employed by Actavo, which took over the contract Feb. 15. Five Actavo workers who were transferred to the plant from other sites are paid the higher engineering construction industry rate. They're on strike too. "We're solid," Birchall said. "Our next step is setting up a strike committee to involve more of the workers and get a brazier and gazebo." The strikers are holding marches each Monday.

Earlier this year when they were employed by contractor Brand Energy, scaffolders carried out three 48-hour stoppages. "The company asked people to come in on the weekend to make up the lost work. So we decided it had to be all out," Dave MacDougall said.

The strikers' fight has won backing from other scaffolders at the plant, also Unite members employed by different companies. "We started picketing from 5:30 to 9:30 a.m., but extended it to 4 p.m. and on the weekend to make sure that contract companies couldn't change their start time to avoid the picket line that union scaffolders won't cross," shop steward Dane Whittingham said.

— Pamela Holmes and Jonathan Silberman

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 4, 1996

PARIS — Nearly two million public workers struck and some 200,000 demonstrated throughout France against government austerity measures on October 17.

France is in the midst of a worsening economic crisis. Economic activity has declined in three of the last five quarters. Official unemployment is 12.5 percent and still rising.

Medical workers made up large contingents in the demonstrations. "There's too much work in the hospital — there's too much unemployment outside — hire, hire the unemployed," shouted demonstrating hospital workers.

The demonstration in Paris was joined by 50 Air France workers who work at Narita Airport in Japan. "Liberty and Human Rights for the Japanese personnel of Air France" read their banner. One of the contingents was made up of several hundred undocumented workers and their supporters.



November 5, 1971

SAN FRANCISCO — A new wave of antiwar opposition is sweeping the armed forces today. One example is the petition signed by more than 1,000 crew members of the aircraft carrier U. S. S. Coral Sea, asking Congress to halt the ship's scheduled return to Vietnam.

Seaman Larry Harris, a former Coral Sea crew member now stationed at the Treasure Island Navy base here, and others began circulating the petition after hearing about the drive in San Diego by members of the crew of the U. S. S. Constellation and the San Diego antiwar movement to keep that aircraft carrier from sailing to Vietnam.

Harris and several others typed up a petition and circulated it. They gathered more than 300 signatures in a few days. They expected to get many more from the 4,500-man crew, but the executive officer and two chief petty officers seized the petition.



November 2, 1946

Headed by the organized labor movement, the masses in the American-controlled section of Korea are fighting back with powerful demonstrations against the oppressive rule of the American Military Government.

The Koreans demand the independence they were promised by [President] Roosevelt in 1944, as well as freedom of trade union activity and an end to the terror regime which is depriving them of elementary democratic rights. The demand for greater distribution of food to the starving masses was answered by the calling out of troops. Bloody struggles followed in many centers.

Last May the Korean Federation of Trade Unions with a membership of 800,000 appealed to the CIO in the United States to aid the Koreans in throwing off the yoke of AMG, whose anti-labor decrees it characterized as "worse than the cruel laws of Japanese imperialism."

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



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Maoism: An anti-working-class record of defeats around the world

BY ROY LANDERSEN

As he moves to tighten state control over the Chinese economy, President Xi Jinping is portraying his regime and its policies as the continuation of the teachings of Mao Zedong. Mao commanded the Stalinized Chinese Communist Party, from the late 1920s through the 1949 overturn of capitalist rule and for decades afterward — a period of disastrous policies imposed on working people at home and Maoist forces abroad.

Xi's regime fears mounting inequalities and uncertainty could lead to a rise in working-class struggles. It has curbed some profiteering by a few of the country's private capitalists and claims to be defending socialism. His regime's praise of Maoism is aimed at reinforcing its political authority at home as its trade and political conflicts with Washington sharpen.

Xi's policies, like Mao's, have nothing to do with working-class rule or advancing the class struggle worldwide.

The Chinese Communist Party was corrupted and destroyed as a communist organization shortly after its founding, at least two decades before the 1949 revolution. Maoism has its roots in the degeneration of the Russian Revolution at the hands of growing bureaucratic petty-bourgeois layers in the Soviet state headed by Joseph Stalin.

Under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, workers and farmers were led to take power in Russia in 1917, inspiring a wave of revolutionary struggles worldwide and the growth of the world communist movement. But in less than a decade workers and peasants were driven from power in the Soviet Union in a political counterrevolution that advanced the special interests of a ruthless ruling bureaucracy. As it crystallized into a privileged caste, standing above and against the toiling majority, the bureaucracy played a reactionary role not only at home but throughout the Communist International.

Nowhere was Stalin's overturn of Lenin's proletarian internationalist course clearer than his directives to the Chinese Communist Party as the mighty 1925-27 Chinese Revolution unfolded.

Under the impetus of the Russian Revolution, workers and peasants in China fought revolutionary struggles against both local exploiting classes and imperialist intervention in their country. Peasants seized land. In March 1927, workers in Shanghai took over the city. But the leaders of the CCP were ordered by Stalin to lay down their arms and subordinate working-class interests to seek an alliance with the Kuomintang, the central party defending capitalist interests. Its leader, Chiang Kai-shek, then launched a massacre of tens of thousands of vanguard workers in Shanghai.

To silence opposition to the disastrous results of this course, Stalin ordered the ruthless purging of revolutionaries who had opposed this deadly policy. Mao then rose to head the party, as it was transformed into an obedient tool for the Soviet bureaucracy's anti-revolutionary foreign policy worldwide.

**Anti-working-class regime**

Out of the slaughter of the second imperialist world war, the CCP still sought alliances with capitalist parties and opposed revolutionary action by working people. But confronted with the inevitable U.S.-led Korean war, Mao moved to transform the country.

The victorious Chinese Revolution of 1949, carried out using Stalinist methods that crushed any independent working-class action, freed a fifth of humanity from imperialist plunder, overturned capitalist rule and opened the door to economic development. But the CCP, consistent with its Stalinist training and outlook, came into collision with workers and farmers at every step. In a poverty-stricken country, with a party subservient to Moscow and no mass communist organization



AP file photo  
Indonesian Communist Party youth under guard by military, Oct. 30, 1965, after coup. Over a million were killed as counterrevolutionary Maoist misleaders led working people into a slaughter.

to challenge it, conditions "favored the growth of a caste on the Soviet model," wrote Socialist Workers Party leader Joseph Hansen in 1974.

"This process had in fact already begun before 1949 in the remote rural areas where the petty-bourgeois Stalinist leaders exercised command over hundreds of thousands and even millions of peasants through the Maoist 'Red Army,'" Hansen wrote. His article can be found in his invaluable booklet *Maoism vs. Bolshevism*.

As Washington drove against both the Korean and Chinese Revolutions during the 1950-53 Korean War, the Stalinist rulers in China were compelled to carry out sweeping expropriations establishing a workers state deformed at birth.

**Stalinist-led defeats and disasters**

In power, Mao treated working people as objects to be manipulated or savagely suppressed.

His regime decreed a "Great Leap Forward" in 1958, claiming China would rapidly surpass the industrial output of the most developed capitalist countries. It instituted forced collectivization, driving peasants off the land and into "Peoples Communes," where their labor was mostly wasted in primitive and unproductive labor. Grain production plummeted, causing a famine and the deaths of millions.

Even with these anti-working-class policies, the CCP had tremendous prestige among oppressed peoples across the world. But Mao's foreign policy was an extension of his actions at home. Like the regime in Moscow, his government sought an accommodation with U.S. imperialism and collaborated with other capitalist regimes to strangle any working-class struggles threatening capitalist rule, hoping to gain "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism in return.

Mao sought an alliance with Indonesia's President Sukarno. He blocked the Maoist Indonesian Communist Party from developing a revolutionary policy to put workers and farmers in power.

The Indonesian CP had 3 million members, and 20 million more were in organizations affiliated to it. The Indonesian army stood at only 350,000 strong. But under Mao's orders the Indonesian CP continued to back the Indonesian regime and was left defenseless when the military turned on them and carried out the slaughter of over a million members and supporters of the party in 1965. Hansen described the massacre as "the most devastating defeat for the working-class since the fascist victory in Germany in 1933."

When Mao's adversaries inside the CCP moved to oust him, he launched the so-called Cultural Revolution in 1966, aimed at bolstering his rule and liquidating his opponents. He set in motion a brutal witch hunt by Red Guard youth targeting both working people and his rivals in the bureaucracy. Within a year, he turned to the army to suppress the anti-working-class movement he had unleashed by exiling many of the Red Guards to the countryside. Millions were killed or imprisoned.

Maoism became the dominant Stalinist current across Asia and beyond.

Under Maoist leadership, the ruling Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea in the late 1970s unleashed barbaric repression, forcing mass evacuations from the cities to labor camps in the countryside and liquidating anyone who it considered might stand in its way.

A sharp rift between the Stalinist parties in Moscow and Beijing opened in 1960. Two regimes with conflicting bureaucratic national interests could no longer find a common front in world politics. Moscow pulled its advisers out of China, deepening the crisis of world Stalinism and splitting Stalinist parties around the world. But neither side in the bitter dispute broke from counterrevolutionary Stalinism.

Mao increasingly feared the impact of revolutionary struggles abroad on workers and peasants in China. His regime openly sided with U.S. imperialist-backed reactionary forces during the Cold War, while continuing to mouth anti-imperialist platitudes.

Beijing turned its back on the Vietnamese people's victorious struggle to defeat Washington's bombardment and to reunify their country, in return for improved relations with the U.S. rulers. In contrast, revolutionary Cuba offered every assistance to the liberation forces.

Fidel Castro, the central leader of Cuba's socialist revolution, described the Maoist regime as one of "imperialism's brand-new allies in the camp

Continued on page 7

Forum: Rise of union struggles, prospects for the working class

**Continued from front page**

ers' offensive, all too often facilitated by the class collaborationist course of our trade union leadership. Today only 6.3% of workers in private industry are in unions, a lower percentage than before the explosion of union battles and the rise of the CIO in the 1930s."

**Things are changing**

"But things began to change in 2018," he continued, when a series of teachers strikes swept across the country, starting in West Virginia, where their battle was marked by the spirit of past class struggles by the United Mine Workers.

Then in 2019 the largest number of industrial workers went on strike in 35 years, Studer said, including 49,000 United Auto Workers at General Motors; 31,000 United Food and Commercial Workers at Stop & Shop stores on the East Coast and 20,000 members of the Communications Workers of America at AT&T.

This was cut off in 2020 by the rulers' lockdowns imposed in the name of fighting the pandemic, Studer explained, but picked up again in 2021, beginning with 1,400 Teamsters striking Hunts Point Produce Market bosses in New York. This has been followed by the continuing coal miners strike against Warrior Met in Alabama; Volvo Truck workers, who three times voted down "deals" that didn't meet what they felt they deserved; and hard-fought strikes by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union at Frito-Lay, Nabisco and 1,400 workers currently on



Militant photos: above, Samir Hazboun; inset, Laura Anderson  
Pickets at Heaven Hill distillery in Kentucky, Sept. 16. Inset, Ved Dookhun, SWP candidate for Albany mayor, and Noeth Cambell discuss SWP program, the *Militant*, in North Albany, Sept. 17.

strike against Kellogg's. Now more than 10,000 UAW members are out at agricultural implement giant John Deere.

Workers all across the country — and the boss press — are watching these battles, Studer said. They want to know how to fight effectively and *win*. Big questions are posed: how to overcome divisions the bosses foster, how to break through press blackouts and win over public support, how to find ways to shut production down.

The bosses work overtime trying to divide us — by race, sex, nationality, immigrant against native-born, employed vs. unemployed. They try to make competition among workers a

defining condition of life. For example, Studer said, Deere bosses are trying to pit farmers against the workers because the strike comes at harvest time.

"But our fights against the employers and their government teach the opposite," Studer said. "We learn that workers all face a common enemy. We need to unite to confront their attacks. This opens the door to strengthening and using our unions.

"Many workers have been living under worsening conditions, as bosses push to place the crisis of their capitalist system, exacerbated by the pandemic, on workers' backs," Studer said. "They're convinced there must be a road forward

Trial boosts interest in Thomas Sankara, Burkina Revolution

**BY SETH GALINSKY**

The military trial that began Oct. 11 of Blaise Compaore and 13 others for the Oct. 15, 1987, assassination of Thomas Sankara, then president of Burkina Faso, and the overthrow of the popular revolution he led, is increasing interest in Sankara's ideas and example.

Sankara took power through a mass uprising in 1983 and led working people in that West African country in the face of opposition from U.S. imperialism as well as the country's former colonial master in Paris. Compaore, a member of the National Council of the Revolution who staged the bloody 1987 counterrevolution and lives in self-imposed exile in Ivory Coast, is being tried in absentia.

Sankara led millions of working people in Burkina Faso to confront the consequences of decades of imperialist exploitation, and to fight to

change their conditions.

With broad popular support, the government nationalized the land to guarantee rural toilers the right to use it. It mobilized peasants, workers, craftsmen, women and youth to carry out literacy and immunization drives; build roads, schools and housing; plant trees to hold back the advancing desert; and to irrigate the land. From the start the revolutionary government fought the subjugation of women.

"I come here from a country whose 7 million children, women and men refuse to die from ignorance, hunger, and thirst any longer," Sankara told the U.N. General Assembly in 1984. "My aspiration is to speak on behalf of my people, on behalf of the disinherited of the world. And to state the reasons for our revolt."

Sankara's government was a threat to the imperialist powers' exploitation

of the African peoples and to those like Compaore who viewed him as an obstacle to their own advancement, power and enrichment.

The opponents of the revolution, including local Stalinist forces, believed that by murdering Sankara they could stamp out his ideas and revolutionary example. In that, they have failed. During mass demonstrations that led to the overthrow of Compaore in 2014 many protesters carried photos of Sankara.

To take advantage of renewed interest sparked by the trial, Pathfinder Press is prominently featuring on its website books it publishes of Sankara's speeches. These include *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, speeches and interviews with the revolutionary leader, in English and French. *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* is available in English, French, Spanish, and Farsi, as is *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions*.

Working people will find that Sankara's words point the road forward in the fight against exploitation and oppression in Africa and worldwide today. To order, visit [www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com) or contact the nearest distributor listed on page 8.

Maoism's anti-working-class record

**Continued from page 6**

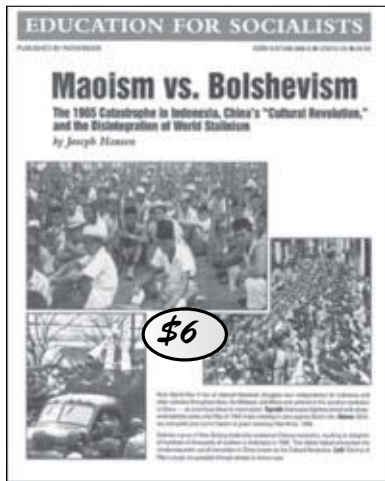
"Mao Tse-tung is deifying himself," Castro said in 1966. "Someday the Chinese people will settle accounts with its leaders."

Xi's identification with Maoism today will only succeed for a time in stifling working-class struggle — an inevitable consequence of state capitalist methods utilized by his regime and its predecessors. The massive expansion of industry in China has drawn millions out of the countryside and into the industrial working class,

chafing at their conditions. There have been mighty explosions against Stalinist rule in China, like the mass protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989, brutally repressed by the regime.

Deepening exploitation and rising social tensions will eventually drive working people to seek ways to defend themselves. This process will be greatly aided by revolutionary upsurges in other parts of the world.

In the coming battles, workers and farmers in China will have an opportunity to establish a government they can truly call their own for the first time.



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# ‘Social solidarity: Moral foundation of Cuba’s revolution’

The Spanish edition of Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War, 1956-58 by Teté Puebla is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for October. Puebla was an officer in the victorious Rebel Army and of its first all-women’s platoon, founded by Fidel Castro, the central leader of the Cuban Revolution. She rose to become a brigadier general, the highest-ranking woman in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, a registration of how the revolution transformed the social and economic status of women. She described the experiences to Mary-Alice Waters, the book’s editor. The excerpt is from the chapter, “Social Solidarity: the Moral Foundation of the Revolution.” Copyright © 2003 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

WATERS: Fidel has often said that as difficult as it was to overthrow the Batista regime, the much bigger challenges began after January 1, 1959. The Rebel Army and July 26 Movement had to lead working people to take the political power they had won, to transform social relations from top to bottom, and to defend the revolution from attack by the U.S. ruling class and its government.



Cuban teacher in Luanda, Angola, with students, largely youth orphaned by apartheid South Africa’s invasions from 1975 to 1988. Cuba’s 425,000 volunteers, military and civilian, helped defeat South African forces. “The principles of our revolution are the moral foundation of our struggle,” Puebla said.

What new tasks did you find yourself responsible for after the revolution’s triumph?

PUEBLA: On January 8, 1959, as we were heading to our homes, thinking of catching a few days’ rest, the commander said to me: “You’re going to tend to Oriente province,” to head up the Department of Assistance to War Victims and Their Families, which was led by the Rebel Army in the area. We had to deal with all those affected by all the dictatorship’s crimes, the burned-down houses, the destruction from the offensives waged in the eastern region. The new department’s slogan was, “In the face of pain, the homeland makes no distinction. To save a child is to build the homeland.”

So in early 1959 I went to Oriente province, to see to the victims of the war and their families. We worked very closely with Celia [Sanchez] and Fidel on this. ...

Taking care of the victims of war was a tradition of ours going back to the days of the Sierra Maestra.

An example is the case of Eutimio Guerra, a peasant who joined the struggle and helped in the early days. But he turned traitor and sold out to the dictatorship’s army for money. His assignment was to kill Fidel, but he was discovered and executed. Afterward we took care of his family. They were given 50 pesos a month, even though our guerrilla column had no money. And we gave them a cow, so his children would be fed. His widow and four children became fully incorporated

into the revolutionary process.

So in Oriente our starting point was to take care of all the victims of the war. We addressed everything the Batista government had destroyed.

Sometimes you’d care for a peasant child whose mother and father had been murdered, whose house had been burned down. And since our army is an army of the people, we rebuilt all those houses that Batista’s army had burned down. We took in all these families because they’d had their land taken away, they’d lost their jobs, they’d suffered every kind of abuse.

The Masferreristas — the ones I referred to earlier who would put people in a sack, pour gasoline on them, and burn them alive — those perverted assassins were in all the eastern zones, and they devastated towns.

But the families of these murderers were provided for. Their children were provided for the same as the children of the rebels. That’s why with all truthfulness we can say our revolution is so great and humane. Although we had no money, we provided their children with the same care and the same schools that we provided to the rebels’ children. The children, the mothers, the widows weren’t to blame for the murders the army of the dictatorship committed. So we looked after them in the same way. Batista soldiers’ widows along with rebel fighters’ widows attended schools for adults. ...

Among the people there was a great deal of hatred for the murderers of Batista’s army, and everyone knew who

the killers were. So whenever we set up a school with a group of children, we didn’t say who their parents were. Only those of us in charge of them knew. We protected these children in this way. At present those boys and girls are doctors, engineers, university graduates. They’re part of the revolution. There are eighteen war orphans that are like my own children to me, and their children are like my grandchildren.

The widows and mothers of members of the Batista army collect a pension, and that’s been true throughout the 43 years of our revolutionary process.

This is a characteristic of the revolution. It’s called humanity. Love for one’s fellow human being.

Love for ... countries that suffer injustice. We identify with all peoples of the world who fight against misery and hunger. We feel the same way for the hundreds of millions of abandoned children in the world who live in the streets looking for the means to subsist on. There are no such children here in Cuba. Because even back then in those penniless times, this revolution was capable of sheltering everyone, of taking these children off the streets. If the revolution didn’t have these qualities, it would no longer exist. This began with Fidel. These principles of the revolution are the moral foundation of our struggle. ...

In April 1966 I was transferred to the general staff and served in a special unit led by Sergio del Valle to attend to the needs of the families of those who had left to fulfill internationalist missions.

So I’ve been doing this since the first Cuban volunteers left for Algeria, for the Congo, Vietnam, Angola, Ethiopia, everywhere. I’ve been helping all their families, so they wouldn’t have to worry about any situation that might arise. Later on, I also oversaw the care of all the physically disabled who served on internationalist missions.

When we go to these countries, we don’t take their wealth or resources home with us. The only material thing we bring back to Cuba is our dead. The compañeros who fell fulfilling internationalist missions didn’t die in vain. They died for the revolution, to defend the principles of our revolution, aiding movements that had requested our help in different parts of the world.

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# Join, build working-class struggles today

Statement by Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor, Oct. 19.

The boss press is taking note of the growing number of strikes today — not to spread the word about these fights, but to alert the capitalist ruling families to the challenge threatening their profits.

The ruling propertied families and their hangers-on in the middle class fear actions by the working class will spread more broadly, help rebuild and strengthen the labor movement, and win allies.

Through today's strikes, workers are holding off bosses' attacks on wages, conditions, divisive two-tier contracts, and grueling speedup and schedules. After the strike, they return to work with a stronger union, determined to use it to defend themselves on the job and to offer solidarity to others.

The capitalist rulers and their political parties do everything they can to hide the truth about the conditions workers face, to blame higher prices on workers demanding pay raises, to try and isolate strikers as they are doing today by saying the strike at John Deere threatens farmers from bringing in the harvest.

Bosses insist workers must adjust — and make concessions — to assure the employing class stays “competitive,” at home and abroad. But more workers are

saying, “No more concessions!” and they're fighting. It is becoming ever clearer to working people that all questions today have two sharply counterposed answers — one that benefits the handful of bosses and bankers and the other that defends the interests of the millions of working people. How our side — the working class — comes out of today's skirmishes will determine how prepared we'll be for the bigger battles the crisis of capitalism portends. The rulers are ready to deploy their cops, criminal “justice” system and military power.

We need to act as a *class* with common interests, an international class. To defend ourselves we not only need stronger unions, but our own political party, a labor party. Such a party would bind together workers and farmers, employed and unemployed, native-and foreign-born workers, men and women, and all nationalities in struggle. It would draw lessons from past examples of workers' struggles, like that of the Cuban Revolution, where working people took political power into their own hands and have used it to advance the interests of working people worldwide. This is the course Socialist Workers Party candidates advance.

Spread the word about today's labor battles, build participation on the picket lines, and help get the word out about the SWP! Join us!

## Inflation hits workers, how can we defend ourselves

Continued from front page

goes to the grocery store knows that in reality the price hikes have been much higher. And energy prices have already shot up nearly 25%, before the start of winter. The national median rent has increased 16.4% since January.

The impact of inflation is class-divided. Every Sunday the London *Financial Times* — read by many of the super-rich as well as their upper-middle-class hangers-on — prints a slick magazine called “How to Spend It.” It doesn't have advice on how to clip coupons or save money. Instead, it's filled with ads for obscenely expensive designer clothes, gadgets and diamond-studded Swiss watches. They're not worried about prices.

### Higher wages don't cause inflation

The capitalists and their government seek to turn “consumers” — that is millions of fellow working people — against workers who are demanding better pay.

They claim that higher wages are the reason for soaring prices. But that's simply not true.

Bosses pay workers less than the value of what we produce. The “surplus” — after taking out what is necessary to replace machinery, etc. — goes to the capitalist owners as profits.

“Since the capitalist and workman have only this limited value, that is, the value measured by the total labor of the working man, the more one gets the less the other will get, and vice versa,” revolutionary working-class leader Karl Marx explained in detail in *Value, Price and Profit* in 1865.

When workers go on strike and win higher wages, it just means the boss gets a smaller portion of the surplus we create, and we get more.

Bosses have other ways to increase their share of the value we produce with our labor. Over the last year bosses have pushed to increase “productivity,” their word for speed-up. A major issue in most of today's strike battles is longer and longer work days and weeks imposed by Kellogg's and other employers, another way they increase the proportion of our labor they appropriate.

Capitalist governments have printed money and raised their debts to unimaginable heights, both to

shore up profits and to try to head off working-class resistance. The U.S. government debt as of Oct. 1 was \$28.8 trillion.

The Federal Reserve through its “quantitative easing” scheme is buying up \$120 billion a month in government-backed bonds, to keep interest rates low. It hopes banks will offer loans at nearly zero interest to encourage companies to create new jobs. But the capitalist class finds it's more “profitable” to speculate on various forms of financial paper instead.

Inflation usually arises when “governments and banks crank out money in various paper forms, eventually far outstripping the output of commodities that could be purchased with that money,” writes Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, in *New International* no 10. “Under such conditions, competing capitalist commercial interests bid prices up and up and up and up, in an ultimately self-defeating effort to reap surplus profits.”

Exacerbating inflation today are supply-chain bottlenecks, including the backlog of container ships unable to unload at ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach, California, and Savannah, Georgia.

In the U.S. there's a shortage of 60,000 truck drivers nationwide. The Joseph Biden administration, in collaboration with the two California port owners, Walmart and other giant corporations will institute a 24/7 logistics work schedule. Bosses at all these companies will use these moves to press for longer hours and speedup.

### Strikes are key to fight higher prices

It's on the picket lines, with the growing number of striking workers, that unions are in the strongest position to lead a fight for protection against inflation and speedup, and for decent wages, benefits and dignity on the job.

“Unions need to fight for automatic cost-of-living adjustments in every contract, all retirement benefits and Social Security to offset every price rise,” Malcolm Jarrett, SWP candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, told the *Militant*.

“Employers have been on an offensive to weaken or eliminate them from union contracts where they have existed, like they're trying to do at Kellogg's and John Deere plants today,” he said.

“As the labor movement gets stronger, workers can fight for the establishment of price committees of our unions, farmers' organizations, housewives and others to force the bosses to open the books and take control over setting prices,” Jarrett said. “This will help show farmers and small-business owners that it's the bosses' profiteering, not workers' wage demands, that cause inflation.”

## Iraq election boycott

Continued from front page

their influence by organizing militias across the region based among Shiite Muslims. Their intervention has brought them into growing conflict with working people across the Mideast and inside Iran, where hundreds of thousands protested the financial and human cost of the Iranian rulers' military adventures.

For decades the cleric-led capitalist regime in Iran has sought to extend abroad the counterrevolution that it carried through at home. This aimed to push back gains won in struggle by millions of workers, farmers, women and oppressed nationalities during and for a few years after the 1979 Iranian Revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah of Iran.

### Anti-government protests in 2019

Protests against intolerable conditions of life and calling for the downfall of the regime erupted in southern Iraq Oct. 1, 2019. Security forces fired live ammunition and Tehran-backed thugs carried out numerous assassinations of protest leaders. More than 600 people were killed and thousands more were injured or jailed before protests were finally quelled months later. The issues that spurred the demonstrators remain unresolved.

With almost 60% of registered voters staying home for this election, the sixth since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003, the turnout was a record low. Anti-government protesters had called for a boycott. The election didn't produce a clear majority among the rival capitalist parties, nor one that settled a clear course forward for a government.

Competing Shiite groups, the majority of Iraq's population, have dominated capitalist politics since the U.S. rulers' invasion that toppled the Sunni-based Saddam Hussein government. After Washington dismantled Saddam's Baathist regime, government posts were divided along religious and ethnic lines. Officials from the religious-based parties used this to siphon off millions of dollars from the state's oil wealth, with little regard for the conditions of working people.

Al-Sadr's Shiite-based Sairoon Alliance has become the largest electoral bloc in the Iraqi parliament, increasing its total from 54 to at least 73 out of 329 seats. He presents himself as a champion of the downtrodden. After supporting the imperialist overthrow of Saddam, in 2004 his militias attacked both occupying U.S. and British troops as well as the remnants of Saddam's Baathist forces.

Al-Sadr at first supported the anti-government protests in 2019. Then, under pressure from Tehran, his forces attacked demonstrators.

The pro-Tehran Fatah grouping lost more than half its seats. Washington was briefly aligned with Tehran's forces in Iraq during its bombardment and defeat of Islamic State, which had seized substantial parts of the country from 2014 to 2017.

Pro-Tehran parties demand the withdrawal of the 2,500 U.S. troops remaining in Iraq. Al-Sadr now says he accepts the continued presence of U.S. forces, winning him tacit backing from Washington.

A further unresolved crisis in Iraq — and in Iran, Syria and Turkey — is the oppressed Kurdish nationality. The Kurdish Democratic Party won in the Kurdish region of Iraq, with Kurdish deputies obtaining 60 seats. Some veterans of anti-government protests ran in the election as the Tishreen (October) movement, winning seats in Baghdad and the country's south.

Al-Sadr's bloc is now seeking allies to appoint a prime minister and a new coalition government.

## Revolution, Counterrevolution and War in Iran

by Steve Clark



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