

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

NYC cab drivers launch hunger strike, demand debt relief
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 42 NOVEMBER 15, 2021

SWP campaign points the road forward for all working people

BY SETH GALINSKY

Today's discussion about what workers can do to fight back against the relentless attacks of the bosses and their government continues broadly, as results of the Nov. 2 elections offer no solutions for working people.

Socialist Workers Party campaigners continue to present the party and its program as they talk to working people on their doorsteps; build solidarity with workers striking for better conditions and wages; and join protests against the U.S. embargo of Cuba and in solidarity with working people in Sudan fighting to overturn the military coup there.

They explain why organizing solidarity with today's strikes by unionists at John Deere, Kellogg's, Warrior Met Coal and elsewhere is not only in the interests of all workers, but is the foundation for building the fighting labor movement we need. Workers who have gone on strike return to work with some gains, setting an example to millions who face bosses'

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Spread word, build support for Deere, Kellogg's strikes!



Battle Creek Enquirer/Alyssa Keown

Oct. 27 union rally in solidarity with Kellogg strike at corporate office in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Kellogg's workers demand 'Equal pay for equal work'

BY OSBORNE HART

LANDISVILLE, Pa. — Striking Kellogg's cereal workers, members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union Local 374G, held a cookout and rally at the fire station pavilion here Oct. 30. Some 1,400

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Deere strikers vote down contract, fight continues

BY KAREN RAY

AND VAL JOHNSON

DENVER — Production and maintenance workers at John Deere's 12 plants in Iowa, Illinois and Kansas voted 55% to 45% Nov. 2 to reject the agricultural implements bosses' latest contract offer.

While a majority of United Auto Workers members at some plants voted in favor, at the two biggest plants significant majorities voted no — members of Local 838 in Waterloo and Local 94 in Dubuque, Iowa. In Waterloo 71% reject the contract.

Douglas Woolam told the *Des Moines Register* that he voted against the contract because of the two-tier

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Georgia trial in killing of Ahmaud Arbery begins with jury selection

BY SAM MANUEL

ATLANTA — Family members of Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old Black youth gunned down last year after being chased by three vigilantes as he was out for a jog, organized a rally outside the Glynn County courthouse Oct. 18 as jury selection began in the trial of his assailants. The trial takes place there, some 260 miles southeast of Atlanta. Arbery's family and their supporters have called for peaceful protests throughout the trial.

"We all don't have to look alike, we don't all have to believe in the same beliefs, but we are so much greater together," Thea Brooks, Arbery's aunt, told the 100 rally participants.

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Alabama court bans miners' right to picket at Warrior Met

BY SUSAN LAMONT

ATLANTA — In an outrageous assault on workers' rights, Tuscaloosa County Circuit Court Judge James H. Roberts Jr. handed down a restraining order Oct. 27 ordering the United Mine Workers of America to halt all

DEFEND RIGHT TO STRIKE, PICKET!

— see SWP statement page 9

picketing or any other union activity within 300 yards of Warrior Met Coal. It covers all 12 of the mine entrances, railroad crossings and other sites in Brookwood, Alabama, where striking union members have been picketing since the walkout began.

"The judge has said 'no picketing' for the time being," striker Steven Smith told the *Militant* in an Oct. 30 phone interview. "We still have our

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Marches, strikes protest coup, call for end to military rule in Sudan

BY TERRY EVANS

Carrying banners saying "No to military rule," hundreds of thousands marched through the streets of Khartoum and other cities across Sudan Oct. 30, demanding the military coup carried out a week earlier be overturned. Solidarity protests were held the same day in cities around the world.

"People are not going to leave the streets until we get the prime minister back," Musa Hussein, a factory worker from Manchester attending a protest in London, told the *Militant*. Prime Min-

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Cuban Revolution vs. US capitalism: A convinced people vs. pandemic mandates



Radio Grito de Baire

One of millions of home visits in Cuba by medical students, volunteers, in Ciego de Ávila in March, to check on people's health, ensure anyone with COVID symptoms gets treatment.

BY SETH GALINSKY

There is no COVID-19 vaccine mandate in Cuba. Yet by the time you read this some 73% of the population will be fully vaccinated and over 90% will have at least one dose, one of the highest rates in the world.

Leaders of the socialist revolution there act on the capacities of working people to join together and mobilize to advance our interests. That approach is well captured in the words of Thomas

Sankara, the communist leader of the 1983-87 popular revolution in Burkina Faso, West Africa. A real revolution, Sankara said, is based on "a convinced people, not a conquered people."

In the United States, the most powerful capitalist country in the world, the fully vaccinated rate is less than 60%. Millions refuse to get vaccinated, despite the threat of being fired.

What's at the heart of this stark con-

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As prices of necessities rise, workers need unions to fight back 7

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Kaiser workers protest two-tier pay, demand more staff

Clark shoe workers in UK enter fifth week of strike

Cuba: A convinced people

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trast? In the U.S. many people don't trust the government and the owners of the for-profit health industry, and with good reason.

In Cuba working people see the government as their own and trust it to tell them the truth about what needs to be done. That's a result of a revolution that overthrew a brutal dictatorship in 1959 and brought the working class to power. With communist leadership, working people overturned capitalist property and set out to transform their conditions and themselves.

When COVID-19 spread in Cuba, the government mobilized working people to confront the challenge. No one was left on their own.

Mass organizations, including the neighborhood-based Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the Federation of Cuban Women, student groups and unions, organized to carry out millions of visits, every day for months, to make sure people knew what precautions to take and that everyone who needed medical care got it.

Daily reports on the disease's spread and measures taken made sure everyone was informed. Cuban Minister of Health José Angel Portal Miranada told the National Assembly of People's Power in October that it was necessary to respond "in every neighborhood." Constant communication, he said, "allowed us to listen better, share ideas and to know what were people's main questions."

At the same time, Cuban medical researchers got down to work and developed not one, but five vaccines.

"We wanted to rely solely on our own capacities to vaccinate our population," Vicente Verez Bencomo, a Cuban scientist who helped develop the

Soberana vaccine, told *Nature* magazine in April. "And life is proving us right. What we're seeing across the world is that vaccine supplies are being hoarded by the rich countries."

The U.S. government gave millions of dollars to owners of pharmaceutical companies to develop vaccines that they used to reap vast profits. Pfizer bosses now project 2021 revenues to top \$36 billion.

In Cuba, where health care is free and universal, people face the brutal consequences of the U.S. rulers' decision to step up their embargo of the country. Companies "that have been selling us materials for 60 years," got scared, Verez said, after the administration of former President Donald Trump imposed 243 new sanctions — all of them continued by President Joseph Biden. Many companies stopped trading with Cuba.

Research institutes in Cuba have all "taken the resources we had for other projects and put them into this," Verez said. "Our scientists are used to doing a lot with very little." After producing enough vaccine for the entire island, Cuba is sharing it with other countries and helping others produce it.

Biden treats workers as 'deplorable'

Unlike in Cuba, the U.S. rulers consider working people "deplorable" and dangerous, blaming them for the disease's spread. It treats them as recalcitrant objects to be bullied and regulated.

"Our patience is wearing thin," Biden lectured in September as he announced vaccine mandates for firms with over 100 employees. "And your refusal has cost all of us," he said, trying to divert attention from disregard for the lives of working people by the government and health companies that led to the unne-

Protests say: 'End US economic war against Cuba!'



Militant/Nelson Gonzalez

Over 60 people rallied in front of Miami City Hall Oct. 31, above, demanding an end to the U.S. government's embargo against Cuba. They set out in a caravan of 50 cars to Little Haiti's Toussaint L'Ouverture Park, receiving a spirited response from many along the route. In Chicago, caravan participants rallied on a busy street corner in the working-class suburb of Berwyn, where several speakers denounced provocations planned in Cuba for Nov. 15 by groups organized and financed by Washington.

Similar actions took place that day in other U.S. cities, including Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York, Phoenix, San Francisco, Seattle, and in Los Angeles and Boston the day before. In Canada, caravans and rallies were organized across the country, in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton and Vancouver. Solidarity actions also took place in London and Bristol in the United Kingdom, Managua, Panama City, Mexico City, Santo Domingo, the Bahamas and Turkey.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

essary deaths of tens of thousands.

This is nothing new. In the late 1950s and early '60s some 20,000 pregnant women in the U.S. were prescribed thalidomide to treat morning sickness. Richardson-Merrell, the company marketing the drug here, told doctors in 1961 there was no proof of harm, despite reports from Europe that mothers taking it bore children with no arms or legs. The drug wasn't banned until mid-1962.

Between 1932 and 1972 the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama conducted a "study" on some 400 Black men with syphilis, deliberately withholding treatment long after penicillin became known as a cure.

As of Nov. 1, in New York City alone, the government has placed some 9,000 sanitation, firefighting and other workers on unpaid leave for not getting vaccinated. As a result, garbage is piling up and some fire com-

panies say they can't provide service.

"Working people should get fully vaccinated, but our class's interests are threatened by government mandates that undercut rights," Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Manhattan Borough president, told the *Militant* Nov. 1. "We have no reason to give bosses and their government more tools for prying into our lives or more power to fire us.

"Instead, we urge unions to open their facilities and lead the fight to make sure everyone has access to vaccines and decent medical care," Lobman said, "and to convince workers to get vaccinated so we can join together on the job to build the fighting union movement we need."

"The actions of the Cuban government show what working people can accomplish when we establish a government of our own," Lobman said. "That's what we need to do here."

The Militant

Vol. 85/No. 42

Closing news date: November 3, 2021

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

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Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in August, one week in September.

Business Manager: Valerie Johnson

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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Australia: Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194 Australia.

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THE MILITANT

Working class can end destruction of land and labor

Capitalist leaders at climate summit call for cutbacks on energy as they seek to boost competitive edge against rivals over markets, profits. The 'Militant' explains that only working class can end capitalism's destruction of land and labor, by charting course to take political power.



Pascal Maitre

Students study by solar lamp in Benin, 2017. Their village of 11,000 has no electricity.

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SWP points road forward

Continued from front page

attempts to put the crisis of their system on our backs.

President Joseph Biden used his trip to the U.N. Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Glasgow, Scotland, to tout his so-called Build Back Better World Initiative, presenting his government as a defender of the “green economy.” The conference is a sham, where Biden and like-minded capitalist politicians spout doomsday talk about environmental disaster to instill panic, fear and paralysis among working people, while offering no serious answers to the real crisis workers face.

Republican Glenn Youngkin’s unexpected victory in the Virginia gubernatorial election reflects the ongoing political crisis that has been gripping the bosses’ twin Democratic and Republican parties since 2016.

Democratic Party candidate Terry McAuliffe tried to rally support by charging that Youngkin is an “acolyte” of Donald Trump. The Democrats’ answer to the fact they have no serious program to offer to working people is to campaign on their hatred for Trump and for the “deplorable” workers who voted for him or didn’t vote at all.

Democrats began to panic when Youngkin gained ground in the polls after McAuliffe scolded parents for having the nerve to “be telling schools what they should teach.” Many working-class parents — who liberals dismiss as reactionaries — object to schools teaching critical race theory, which says all Caucasians are inherently and irredeemably racist, and imposing “woke” pronoun requirements on students. The contempt for working people by the capitalist rulers and their two main parties has grown as the crisis of their system has intensified and more working people see

the need for deep going change.

“Democrats and Republicans are both parties that defend capitalism,” Joanne Kuniansky, the SWP candidate for New Jersey governor, told NJ.com, a website of the *Star Ledger*. “It’s the lesser evil game that’s been a big obstacle to workers organizing our own party that fights in our interests.”

Kuniansky’s campaign has received regular press coverage. As the *Militant* goes to press the final results aren’t in, but so far 3,424 people have voted for the working-class candidate.

“I’m out campaigning for Joanne Kuniansky running for governor,” Evril Goldsberry, a resident of Rutherford, New Jersey, told her neighbors as she introduced them to the SWP candidate Oct. 31. “She’s a worker — she works with me at Walmart.”

Afterwards Goldberry looked through SWP campaign literature over a coffee and told Kuniansky, “They don’t teach us anything about this in school.”

Kuniansky pointed out we’re taught that history is made as a result of the actions of individuals. For example, they hide the fact that it was the disciplined actions of millions of working people, led by African Americans, that overturned Jim Crow segregation.

Goldsberry subscribed to the *Militant* and bought the book *In Defense of the US Working Class*. She suggested getting together with Kuniansky soon to study the book and the *Militant*.

There are three weeks to go in the international drive to sell 1,300 subscriptions to the *Militant* and an equal number of books by leaders of the SWP and other revolutionaries, and to raise \$130,000 in the U.S. for the SWP. (See chart below and ad on page 6.)

Prisoner donates \$100

A first-generation Cuban American who has been imprisoned in Florida for 18 years and subscribed to the *Militant* earlier this year sent in a check for



Militant/Dan Fein

SWP campaigner Gabby Prosser, left, speaks with Raven Mosley in Minneapolis. Mosley said she’s worked hard for 20 years to get by, while bosses “make millions while they’re sleeping.”

\$100. He writes that he was raised to oppose Cuba’s socialist revolution but now wants to “learn as much” as he can about the revolution Fidel Castro led “to continue his great works that help many around the world.”

“I cannot find in other newspapers” what is in the *Militant*, he writes, “which has led me to want to read further.”

Like workers on this side of the prison walls, he has been facing skyrocketing inflation in the prison canteen and extra money “comes in handy.” But when he got a windfall from the IRS he wanted to “donate a few dollars to the *Militant* and the struggle.”

Other workers, farmers and youth will want to do the same by contributing to the SWP Party-Building Fund. Every contribution makes it possible for SWP members to get the *Militant* and books into the hands of workers looking for a road forward.

Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Manhattan Borough president, spoke to a school bus driver in the Bronx Oct. 31. “I told her why workers at John Deere and other companies are on strike,” Lobman said. “Everything from the bosses demanding lower pay for new hires,

to forced overtime, slashing benefits, speedup, and cutting overtime pay.”

“She said, ‘The same thing is happening on my job!’” Lobman reports. The driver subscribed to the *Militant* and bought a copy of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs. The book describes the strikes and organizing drives by the Teamsters union in Minneapolis in the 1930s, which built a movement to defend all working people.

In Minneapolis, Gabby Prosser and Dan Fein met hairdresser Raven Mosley as they campaigned for SWP candidates Doug Nelson for mayor and David Rosenfeld for City Council Ward 12. They showed her the book *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary.

“I’ve been working for 20 years for everything I’ve got — they make millions while they’re sleeping,” Mosley said. She subscribed to the *Militant* and bought the book.

Help the SWP go over the top on all three goals for the propaganda campaign and fund drive! To find the branch of the party nearest you see the directory on page 8.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, SWP fund

October 2 - November 23 (week four)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Albany*	80	32	90	48	\$8,200	\$1,327
Atlanta	80	44	80	47	\$11,200	\$3,742
Chicago*	115	82	100	49	\$13,500	\$6,381
Cincinnati	60	16	60	19	\$5,000	\$2,365
Dallas*	45	30	40	21	\$3,100	\$1,251
Lincoln	12	8	12	12	\$350	\$106
Los Angeles	85	58	85	61	\$13,700	\$3,259
Miami	30	13	30	12	\$4,200	\$700
Minneapolis	55	35	55	46	\$5,000	\$1,357
N. New Jersey	75	47	75	42	\$6,600	\$2,444
New York	105	76	105	93	\$16,300	\$6,329
Oakland	85	60	85	65	\$13,100	\$7,737
Philadelphia	30	21	30	17	\$4,000	\$1,700
Pittsburgh	45	28	45	27	\$4,000	\$2,160
Seattle	65	32	65	33	\$12,000	\$3,933
Washington	50	29	50	27	\$5,800	\$2,445
Other						\$3,073
Total U.S.	1017	611	1007	619	\$126,050	\$50,309
Prisoners	25	28				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	40	26	40	31		
Manchester	40	31	40	26		
Total U.K.	80	57	80	57		
Canada	90	55	90	57		
New Zealand	25	12	25	13		
Australia	25	10	25	12		
Total	1,262	773	1,227	758	\$126,050	\$50,309
SHOULD BE	1,300	741	1,300	741	\$130,000	\$74,100
*Raised goal						

Botched execution fuels call to end death penalty

BY JANET POST

After a six-year “pause” in executions, the result of a series of botched death-house procedures, including 43 minutes of writhing agony for Clayton Lockett in 2014, Oklahoma authorities renewed executions Oct. 28. And once again it was an inhumane disaster, as 60-year-old John Marion Grant suffered visibly before he died during a botched execution at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester.

With Grant’s body bound to the execution gurney, the sedative midazolam, the first drug in the state’s three-drug protocol — the same one used in 2014 — was injected. “Almost immediately after the drug was administered, Grant began convulsing, so much so that his entire upper back repeatedly lifted off the gurney,” reported Dan Snyder, an eyewitness as news anchor for Fox 25-TV.

“As the convulsions continued, Grant then began to vomit. Multiple times over the course of the next few minutes medical staff entered the death chamber to wipe away and remove vomit from the still-breathing Grant,” Snyder said. Additional witnesses say Grant convulsed over two dozen times.

It took 15 minutes for Grant to finally be declared unconscious, press reports said. He was then injected with vecuronium bromide, which paralyzes the body, and potassium chloride, which stops the heart. Grant was declared dead six minutes later.

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections issued a statement saying Grant’s execution was carried out “without complication.” They insist they will continue to conduct executions the same way. Oklahoma Corrections Director Scott Crow said death-row inmate Julius Jones will be executed as planned on Nov. 18.

“If everything went according to protocol and the result was significant convulsions and vomiting, then that is very powerful evidence that the protocol is unconstitutional,” said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center.

After the torturous execution of

Lockett in 2014, Oklahoma officials went ahead the next year with the execution of Charles Warner, who cried out that his body was on “fire” while being injected with the drugs. Then Richard Glossip had his execution called off because it was found that the prison was using the wrong drugs. It came out that Warner had been killed with those same ones. The outcry over these outrages led to the “pause” in executions.

Scientific studies have shown that when midazolam is prepared by dissolving it in an acidic solution, as is the case in executions, it destroys lung tissue.

Grant had been sentenced to death in 1999 for stabbing to death a prison cafeteria worker, Gay Carter, a year earlier. He was already serving a 130-year sentence for armed robberies.

Sarah Jernigan, Grant’s lawyer, said he had never received any mental health care in prison. In his youth, Oklahoma “dumped John on the streets with no skills and no support for the mental illness that was exacerbated by years of being both the victim of and witness to beatings, rapes and extended periods in solitary confinement,” she said. Facts about Grant’s abuse in prison and on the street were

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Cab drivers launch hunger strike, demand debt relief

BY TAMAR ROSENFELD

NEW YORK — Yellow cab drivers organized by the New York Taxi Workers Alliance have been on a hunger strike here since Oct. 20. Their camp near City Hall takes up half the public sidewalk on Broadway, draped with banners, flags, and signs demanding, “Debt forgiveness now,” “Keep your promises” and “End cabbie debt: justice, rights, respect, dignity.”

A line of yellow cabs is parked along the curb. Those wearing red ribbons pinned to their jackets are the hunger strikers. Many are now sitting in chairs after about two weeks without food, and a van of medical volunteers checks on each one regularly.

Other cabbies regularly stop by to spend time with the hunger strikers between driving shifts.

This *Militant* worker-correspondent joined Willie Cotton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate, as he visited the cab drivers’ hunger strike encampment Oct. 31. He delivered a case of bottled water. The camp runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and a constant stream of supporters and passersby stop for a chat, to drop off provisions, or honk as they drive by.

One of the organizers told Cotton that 22 new people had joined the fast that day, bringing the total number up to almost 40.

The drivers are demanding Mayor Bill de Blasio and the city take responsibility for the huge debts they’ve been saddled with. In years past drivers borrowed heavily to purchase medallions, city licenses that allow taxis to pick up passengers on the street. Yellow taxis had a monopoly in the Manhattan market, enforced by the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, until almost a decade ago. The price of medallions soared as they were promoted by the city as an investment that would help finance home mortgages, retirement plans, and college education for drivers’ children. The city raked in cash from auctioning additional medallions and from sales taxes.

But the medallion market has since collapsed. Competition from growing Uber and Lyft operations sent medallion values plummeting. Virtually all

taxi business ground to a halt with lockdowns and bans on travel imposed by the government at all levels with the onset of COVID-19.

Erhan Tuncel, one of the hunger strikers, estimates he has paid \$400,000 in interest on his medallion over 20 years. “We bought a dream from the city, our dream to be middle-class New Yorkers,” he told us. “We’ve lost that dream as there is way too much supply for the demand now.”

In 2018, eight drivers unable to cope with their debts committed suicide.

Víctor Salazar, originally from Ecuador, described what cab drivers face as “Ubernomics.” “They want to chop us into part-time ‘gig’ economy workers. But we are full-time drivers! We’re taking a stand for our lives, for our dignity,” he said. “Uber will starve their own drivers in order to starve us.”

Uber and Lyft drivers are among those who have come by the encampment to offer solidarity.

Salazar said the OSK firm that handled his loan came and physically removed the medallion from the hood of his cab, took his license plates, pried the meter from the dashboard and left him without credentials Aug. 24. “On that day they forced me to stop driving my cab” because he could no longer make his monthly “mortgage payments” on the medallion.

The city administration of liberal Democratic Party Mayor Bill de Blasio in March offered drivers up to \$29,000 in grants to use to seek a



Street Vendor Project

New York City cab drivers protesting at City Hall receive solidarity from street vendors Oct. 25. Banner says: “Hunger strike. End cabbie debt.” Medallions drove workers into debt.

better deal with creditors to pay off their outstanding medallion debts. But most owe far more than that. The city says only 155 drivers have taken up the offer and gotten creditors to restructure their loans.

Randal Wilhite, a lawyer with an agency working on the city’s program, recently came out against it, saying the lenders weren’t offering any substantial debt relief or have refused to participate in the effort at all.

The hunger strikers and the Taxi Workers Alliance are demanding lenders cap the debts at \$145,000 and that the city guarantee to cover any driver who defaults on a loan.

“The working class has to stand together against Wall Street greed,” Salazar said. Cotton described the number of strike battles taking place across the country today, from War-

rior Met coal miners to John Deere to ExxonMobil refinery workers, saying the cabbies and those unionists on strike are all “fighting for future generations.”

Support for area unions is growing. An open letter to de Blasio backing the taxi workers was signed by the New York City Central Labor Council, Service Employees International Union Local 1199 and 32BJ, Communications Workers of America District 1, Teamsters Joint District Council 16, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1500, New York State Nurses Association and others.

Message and donations can be brought to the encampment at Broadway and Murray Street — visitors are welcome — or sent to the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, 31-10 37th Ave., Suite 300, Long Island City, NY 11101.

Deere strikers vote down contract, fight continues

Continued from front page

pay scale that means the majority of the workers continue to get far lower pay. Woolam has worked at the John Deere Seeding Group in Moline, Illinois, for 23 years.

Woolam said family members, including his grandfather, father and aunt, have worked for Deere for 75 years. Workers there have been under attack for years by Deere bosses, who forced through the divisive two-tier wage setup in 1997. And, Woolam said, his father retired earning a higher wage than he does now.

“I’m not thinking about me,” he told the paper. “I’m thinking about people behind me.”

The offer was a significant improvement over the one workers rejected by 90% before going on strike. It included offers of a 10% wage increase this year, two 5% wage increases over the next six years, as well as lump payouts equivalent to 3% of a year’s pay in the other years, and an \$8,500 signing bonus. It gave new hires company insurance.

Workers would have gotten a cost-of-living agreement to help against inflation and continue to pay no premiums for health care.

Irving Griffin, a forklift driver at the Moline plant, told the paper he thought they can get more out of the company by continuing the strike. “Now is the best time to strike and take a stand for what we’re really worth,” he told the *Register*.

The “no” vote “turns up the pressure on Deere management,” the

Wall Street Journal reported Nov. 3, “before customers start to defect to other equipment brands as orders and production get under way for next year’s models.”

Bosses responded to the contract vote by threatening to “execute the next phase of our Customer Service Continuation Plan.” That means trying to run the plants with more scabs.

Before the vote, we attended a picket line by 50 union supporters who came out to join the six United Auto Workers members on strike at the John Deere parts-distribution center here Oct. 29.

Workers here told the *Militant* Nov. 3 they voted for the agreement. “But it got voted down so I had to come out even if I voted in favor,” Jacob Holt said.

“We are part of something bigger,” striker Curtavias Fenderson, who has worked here for 18 months, said, pointing to other strikes going on, like at Kellogg’s and elsewhere around the country. “It’s a domino effect. If these companies don’t want to pay the workers, then workers are going on strike.”

Striker Darius Fenderson said that “during the pandemic the company told us to work harder, we are ‘essential.’ The saying goes, ‘You work hard you will be compensated.’” But that isn’t what happened. “You see inflation and profits going up, but we don’t get anything. It’s our work that’s responsible for their record-breaking profits.”

Jacob Holt was hired by Deere four

months before the strike. He grew up in Indiana where his family has farmed for generations. John Deere bosses are trying to divide the workers, who build farm equipment, from the farmers, saying the strike will make things harder on them. Holt said his grandfather, who is still farming, told him, “I understand why you had to go out on strike, that workers need safe working conditions and decent wages that they can live off of.”

The strikers were joined by fellow UAW Local 186 members who work at the Chrysler auto-parts warehouse down the road, and members of Service Employees International Union Local 105, which organizes 350 janitors at the Denver airport and support staff at Kaiser Permanente. These workers are in contract negotiations themselves, and on Sept. 30 the janitors staged a one-day strike at the airport.

Others joined the picket from area unions, including UPS drivers, who are members of the Teamsters who have stopped making deliveries and pickups at the distribution center.

At the start of the Oct. 29 picket there was a moment of silence for Richard Rich, a fellow union member who was hit and killed by a car two days earlier while crossing the street to join the Deere picket line in Milan, Illinois. Strikers had been calling authorities for days to fix the broken street light at the corner.

John Studer contributed to this article.

Death penalty

Continued from page 3

not allowed to be presented to the jury.

Protesters against Grant’s killing demonstrated outside Gov. Kevin Stitt’s mansion in Oklahoma City and at the penitentiary on the day of the execution. “Simply put, these executions are not justice — they only perpetuate a cycle of pain and trauma,” said the American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma in a statement.

The death penalty is used in the U.S. to terrorize and intimidate working people,” Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for district attorney in Philadelphia, told the *Militant*. “The capitalist ruling families use their entire criminal ‘justice’ system — their plea-bargain-enforced convictions, their prisons and their death penalty — to maintain their rule.”

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Kaiser workers protest two-tier pay, demand more staff

PASADENA, Calif. — Chanting, “From the desert to the Bay, equal work for equal pay,” over 1,000 nurses and other health care workers marched and rallied against cutbacks demanded by Kaiser hospital bosses at facilities in Hawaii, Oregon and Southern California.

The workers are fighting Kaiser’s demand for a permanent two-tier wage system that would mean lower pay for all workers hired after Jan. 1, 2023. They’re also demanding higher wages to keep up with inflation and for hiring to improve staffing ratios.

The workers are organized in a number of unions that are part of the Alliance of Health Care Unions, representing some 50,000 Kaiser Permanente employees nationwide. Health care workers have record levels of burnout from the COVID pandemic, and face protracted understaffing. The Kaiser Permanente system includes 12 million plan members, 39 hospitals and more than 700 medical office buildings. It has turned a \$2.7 billion profit since the pandemic began.

“They are chronically short-staffing,” Jenny Wong Swanson, a registered nurse and union shop steward, told the rally. “Just because we make it through a 12-hour shift with a skeleton crew doesn’t mean it was safe to operate. We are stretched far too thin.”

“Where I park, I had to walk every day past the refrigerated trucks containing the bodies of people who died of COVID,” Brent Jackson, a member of United Steelworkers Local 7600, told the *Militant*. “Kaiser is storing away so much money rather than putting it into patient care. It should be run as a service to people rather than to make profits.” Kaiser bosses admit they are sitting on a reserve fund of \$44.5 billion.

— Deborah Liatos

Barbers defeat boss move to cut pay at army bases

“I’m glad to be back at work,” Mike Kates, a barber with 15 years at the Fort Lee U.S. Army base barbershop in central Virginia, told the *Militant* in a phone

call Oct. 29. “After almost four months on strike, we won some things, and on the picket line we bonded together.”

The 20 barbers, members of Laborers’ International Union Public Service Employees Local 572, had struck Sheffield Barbers, a contractor hired by the Army & Air Force Exchange Service, on July 4. Most of the barbers are African American or Korean American.

Sheffield bosses’ “last, best and final” offer was a 6-cent increase per haircut, even though they had recently raised prices. When the workers walked out, the bosses hired replacement workers to try to break the strike. Under the contract signed Oct. 25, the barbers at both Fort Lee and at nearby Fort Pickett Army National Guard base will make 53% of the \$13.25 posted price, plus tips. If Sheffield raises prices again, the barbers cut will be adjusted to keep the same percentage. This reinstates the pay rate existing before Sheffield took over the shops.

Solidarity made a difference in the strike. “It’s not so easy on a military base, but soldiers, their families, civil service workers and the community found ways to show support. Some Nabisco workers who were also on strike stopped by our picket line,” Sonia Vasquez Luna, business manager of Local 572, told the *Militant* by phone. Over 1,000 members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union at Nabisco had made gains in Virginia and plants in four other states in a hard-fought battle over the summer.

“We are seeing a surge in solidarity among workers,” Luna said. “Our lesson is this: Nobody in this country should be afraid to strike.”

— Arlene Rubinstein

Clark shoe workers in UK enter fifth week of strike

STREET, Somerset, England — “We’re not giving up, we’re keeping on,” said Trevor Stephens at the picket line Oct. 29 at Clarks shoes distribution center here, where workers have been on strike for four weeks. Stephens is the day-shift shop steward for the Community union.



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Kaiser health care workers rally in Pasadena, California, Oct. 30. “We are stretched far too thin,” said Jenny Wong Swanson, a nurse and Alliance of Health Care Unions shop steward.

Over 100 workers are striking against wage cuts of 15% to 20%. Clarks is demanding workers sign new contracts that will take their hourly pay down from 11.16 pounds (\$15.40) to 9.50 pounds. Workers who fail to accept the cuts will be deemed to have resigned — known here as “fire and rehire.” Starting next April, 9.50 pounds will be the national minimum wage.

“What a coincidence!” Stephens said. “I’ll not be able to afford my flat. My kids won’t be able to visit. So I’ll be out of a job and a place to live. Every single one of us faces similar challenges. That’s why the vote for strike action was unanimous.”

“I’ve lost count of the trade union backing” strikers have won, Stephens told the *Militant* by phone Nov. 1. “Last Friday, 20 to 30 steelworkers from Port Talbot in South Wales — fellow members of Community — came to the picket. We’ve had delegations from postal workers, fire brigade, train drivers, local government and other unions. Workers from a local supermarket have brought food.”

The Arts Centre in nearby Bridgewater hosted a fundraising solidarity benefit Oct. 29.

Workers are planning a demonstration in Street Nov. 13.

Send messages of support to Daniel

Francois, regional organizer, Community, 10 Bath Mews, Bath Parade, Cheltenham, GL53 7HL. Tel: 01242-708090; email: dfrancois@community-tu.org.

— Jonathan Silberman

Scaffolders fight contractor for pay raise in UK

SCUNTHORPE, England — Now in their fourth week on strike, 60 steelworks scaffolders are fighting to force contractor Actavo to pay the national rate of 17 pounds an hour (\$23.63). Workers get only 15 pounds now, and have the same take-home pay as six years ago. They maintain 500 scaffolding structures around the 7-mile-long British Steel works here.

“We’re learning fast that the union isn’t about someone helping you. It’s about *us*,” Unite union steward Dave Birchall told the *Militant*. “We began with two stewards but now we have a committee of eight to organize the strike and get support. We have meetings of all the strikers to decide what we do.”

Strikers won backing from the Unite Scunthorpe Steelworks branch. Along with the Community union, it organizes the 4,000 workers who work directly for British Steel at the site. Unite union branches in the area have contributed to the strike fund.

“We’re getting stronger as a union through this,” Birchall said. “We’ll be reaching workers at other Actavo sites in the area, asking for their support.” Strikers plan to visit scaffolders employed by contractor Altrad at Mitsubishi Chemicals in Stockton-on-Tees. They plan to begin strike action Nov. 4 against bosses who also undercut the national rate and pay them just 12.36 pounds an hour.

— Pete Clifford

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 18, 1996

In a victory for women’s rights, on October 30, South Africa’s National Assembly passed a bill allowing women to choose abortion on demand, at state expense, up to the twelfth week of pregnancy, and later under certain circumstances. The bill will be sent to President Nelson Mandela for his signature. The African National Congress benches erupted in cheering at the vote.

In all cases, the abortion may only be carried out at the request of the woman. The legislation also specifies that while counseling may be recommended, under no circumstances are women — including minors — required to consult with parents, spouses, or anyone else. The decision is strictly a woman’s choice.

Apartheid law barred all abortions except in the case of rape or when women’s health was at risk. Some 45,000 women annually are admitted to hospitals after having undergone back-alley abortions or induced miscarriages.



November 19, 1971

Coverage of the Nov. 6 anti-Vietnam-war demonstrations in the U.S. and internationally by the capitalist news media was riddled with lies. The news media has always tried to downplay the significance of the massive street actions of the antiwar movement. They want young people to feel that demonstrations are ineffective and that they should turn their energies to supporting capitalist “peace candidates” in the coming elections.

The truth, however, is that the antiwar movement is anything but dying; it is alive and thriving. Nov. 6 saw increased participation from diverse sectors of the population. The speakers at the rallies across the country reflected broader forces than ever before.

The demonstrations Nov. 6 helped give powerful voice to the unprecedented sentiment for withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Southeast Asia.



November 16, 1946

Defeat of the Democratic Party at the polls has meant defeat for the policies of the CIO Political Action Committee, whose program consisted of drumming up votes for Democratic candidates.

A big trend over the past six years is the shift of the lower middle class away from the Democratic Party and the beginning of the shift of the workers. It is not PAC’s labor character that has driven the middle class into the arms of the Republicans. It is the fact that organized labor has failed to take the lead in building an independent political party to put up a real fight against both the Democratic and Republican parties of Big Business.

Whatever the intentions of the CIO leaders to continue their bankrupt political policy of supporting capitalist party candidates, the decisive factor is the reaction of the workers. The pressure that the union militants exert on the union leaders will determine whether or not a labor party will be formed before 1948.

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Protest military rule in Sudan

Continued from front page
ister Abdalla Hamdok was arrested, a state of emergency declared and the government dissolved by Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan Oct. 25.

Hamdok and al-Burhan had been part of a joint civilian-military interim government that was supposed to pave the way for elections in 2023 and transition away from military control. This interim setup was established in 2019 after protests and strikes led to the overthrow of the bloody regime of Omar al-Bashir, who had held power for 30 years.

In the midst of a deep going economic crisis, the transitional government has defended the country's wealthy rulers, including many in the military itself. It ended subsidies that made getting basic necessities possible for working people, at the request of the International Monetary Fund earlier this year, further ravaging workers' living standards.

Toilers in Sudan have confronted a series of military-led regimes since winning independence from Britain in 1956.

"We have lived under these conditions for generations, myself, my mother, my grandmother," said Randa Ahmad-Hassan at the London action. "That is why the youth are going to be out on the streets for as long as it takes."

Protesters in Khartoum chanted slogans condemning both al-Burhan and Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, commander of the Rapid Support Forces, formerly known as the Janjaweed militia. Hamdan was responsible for the slaughter of tens of thousands in Darfur under orders from the al-Bashir regime in 2003 and afterwards. These forces also helped carry out the massacre of anti-government demonstrators during the final days of al-Bashir's rule.

Al-Bashir held power by brutality and by playing on national and religious differences fostered by the former British colonial rulers. His regime — backed by the Janjaweed — waged wars on minority peoples in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, as well as Darfur.

In recent years Washington has

moved to gain a greater foothold in Sudan, with an eye on its natural resources and strategic location.

Oil workers join strikes against coup
The Oct. 30 protests were initiated by the Sudanese Professionals Association, a group of unions organized in 2012 among doctors, teachers and other professional layers. It has called strikes demanding the restoration of the transitional government. Oil workers at the state-owned Sudapet company joined the strike Oct. 27.

Cutting internet and phone access, authorities aimed to deal blows to the Oct. 30 protests. But neighborhood-based resistance committees, formed during the movement that ousted al-Bashir, ensured the action was widely publicized, using fliers and holding local rallies. Following the protest, troops from the army and Rapid Support Forces mounted patrols in the streets of Khartoum and Omdurman. At least 14 people have been killed in clashes with the military since the Oct. 25 coup.

Central army commanders are an in-



Militant/Dag Tirsén
Protesters in London, Oct. 30, join in solidarity with hundreds of thousands who marched in Sudan to demand overthrow of military coup carried out a week earlier. "We have lived under these conditions for generations," said Randa Ahmad-Hassan at the demonstration.

tegral part of the capitalist class, owning businesses in oil refining, rail and agriculture. The RSF controls much of the country's gold mining. The brass use their hold on political office to ensure their companies get tax exemptions, and their profiteering remains hidden.

Placards and chants at protests in the

past week have included calls for an end to military control over the economy. Demonstrators have also denounced links between the military brass and its allies among Arab governments. The Rapid Support Forces have provided the government of the United Arab Emir-

Continued on page 9

Court bans miners' right to picket at Warrior Met

Continued from front page
canopies and signs and portable johns out there, but no people are allowed for the time being."

Smith is one of some 1,100 UMWA members who have been on strike at Warrior Met Coal since April 1. When the strike started, he was working at the No. 4 mine, one of two underground mines at the company's Tuscaloosa County operations.

When the miners walked out, they shut down Warrior Met's two deep underground mines, a coal-preparation plant and the company's central shops.

The miners are in a hard-fought strike to regain ground lost in 2016, when the union took major concessions in wages, benefits and working conditions after previous owner Jim

Walter Resources went bankrupt.

The mine's new owners, led by the company's outstanding creditors, the largest of which is the New York-based BlackRock hedge fund, used the bankruptcy court hearings as well as threats to close the mines to demand the union give up gains they had won over many decades. They promised the concessions — which the union estimates put \$1.4 billion into the owners' pockets — would only last until the new bosses got the mine back on its feet. But when negotiations began on a new contract, the company insisted on even more concessions. Nov. 1 marks the start of the eighth month of the strike.

Warrior Met sought the anti-union injunction after helping whip up a media push to violence-bait the union and blame picketing strikers for confrontations with scabs at mine entrances. The compliant court quickly granted the sweeping order.

Early in the strike the company started busing scabs into the No. 7 mine, where some production has been going on. Other scabs drive in. All are escorted by Alabama state troopers.

"Warrior Met Coal is condemning the recent increase in vandalism and violence by the UMWA leadership and members," the online Business Wire claimed Oct. 25. The mine bosses charge union pickets have "increased attacks on personal vehicles, property, and uninvolved community members," and that "our employees' homes and vehicles have been shot at from passing cars, and jack rocks and spike strips have been placed on area roads to damage their vehicle tires."

The judge bought the whole story. The restraining order contains "provisions that are unconstitutional and it reinforces the notion that Americans — at least in Alabama — are not free to enjoy their rights to free speech and free assembly," UMWA President Cecil Roberts told the press Oct. 28. "We remain ready to engage in serious and

good-faith negotiations to resolve this dispute, but this TRO will not stop our strike."

A hearing on boss demands to extend the restraining order has been set for Nov. 5.

Attacks on strikers

In sharp contrast, local, county and state police have refused to take any action against Warrior Met management personnel and other scabs who on several occasions have purposely struck miners or family members peacefully picketing at No. 7 mine entrances with their cars. On Aug. 25, the National Labor Relations Board dismissed union charges about these vehicular assaults, despite film footage evidence and eyewitness reports. Several assaults resulted in strikers being sent to the hospital.

"It appears that it is now open season on strikers walking the picket lines," Roberts said after the ruling. The union has appealed.

Meanwhile, BlackRock boasts of record profits, reporting Oct. 13 their net income had risen 19% to \$1.69 billion for the last three months over a year ago. They say they now manage some \$9.46 trillion in assets — more than the gross national product of many countries.

The UMWA and the New York City Central Labor Council called for a protest in support of the Warrior Met strikers Nov. 4, stepping off from 59th Street and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan and marching to BlackRock headquarters at 40 E. 52nd Street for a rally. Miners from Alabama and elsewhere will be joined by area unionists.

The truth about this labor battle needs to be told! Support and solidarity are essential. Make your checks out to UMWA 2021 Strike Aid Fund and send them to UMWA Strike Fund, P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026.

Messages of support can also be sent to District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216, McCalla, AL 35111, or email to umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net.

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As prices of necessities rise, workers need unions to fight back

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Rising prices on food, energy, rent and other necessities are upending the lives of millions of working people. Claims by government economists that this is just temporary are wearing thin.

The government aids the bosses by making inflation appear lower and less damaging than it really is. For example, the Federal Reserve frequently uses “core inflation” that excludes food and energy costs, claiming these items are too “volatile.” But it’s precisely these items, along with housing and utility bills, that make up a huge proportion of workers’ expenses.

Meat, poultry, fish and eggs are up 44% at supermarkets since September 2019. The *Financial Times* “breakfast indicator,” based on futures prices on world trading markets for coffee, milk, sugar, wheat, oats and orange juice, has shot up 63% over the past two years. Oat prices have doubled this year alone.

Gasoline costs have risen almost 60% from a year ago. Workers with houses heated with natural gas — almost half — could see bills rise by 30% this winter, according to the federal Energy Information Administration.

More workers today are using our unions to fight boss attacks and to prevent real wages from plummeting. They are demanding serious wage increases and cost-of-living clauses in contracts, pointing the way forward for all working people.

“I’ve been making the same wage of \$15 an hour over the past two years, but now prices are much higher,” home health aide worker Inmaculada Vargas told the *Militant* at her apartment in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City Oct. 29. “When I go to the supermarket, I only buy the essentials” for her family of four children. But these are the items that are rising fastest.

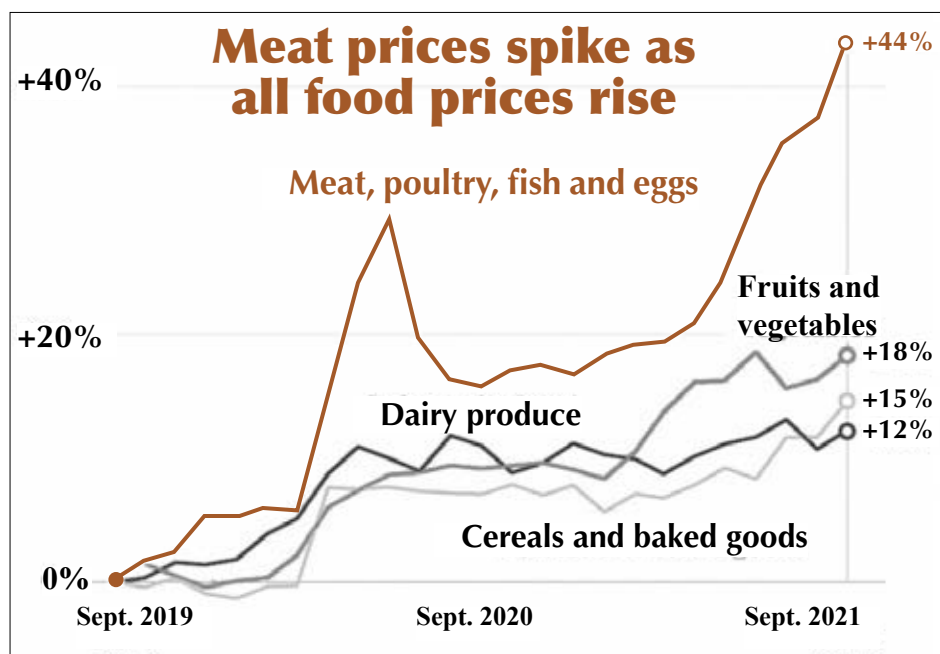
Record oil company profits

With increasing oil and gas prices, ExxonMobil and Chevron made their highest profits in years over the third-quarter. They’re not using these returns to expand production but to drive forward their attacks on workers. Since May 1 bosses at ExxonMobil have locked out workers at the refinery in Beaumont, Texas, as they seek to break the union — the United Steelworkers — push to cut jobs and undermine safety. A company victory will pose a serious threat to all oil workers.

“Food is expensive, and when the food stamps are gone, they’re gone,” grocery store worker Tynicole Lewis, who lives on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, told the *New York Times* Oct. 27. He makes \$12,000 a year and depends on these stamps to help feed his diabetic daughter, Lanese. But they’re now running out well before the end of the month, he said.

Like many other workers, Dominic Kapustka, a quality-control technician in Aurora, Colorado, is trying to make up for rising food prices by working more overtime — 65 hours a week instead of 55. “It seems like no matter how much I fill the cart with, the costs go up,” he told the *Times*.

Rising food prices at the supermarket don’t mean working farmers are better off. In fact, their costs are soaring too. Prices of fertilizers have more than doubled in the past year, and fuel and ship-



Source: Labor Department

Food prices have soared. Government doesn’t count ‘volatile’ figures in official inflation rate.

ping costs are rising as well.

More workers are lining up to get assistance at food banks, but a number of these have less food available now, especially in some key items like beef. Even dollar stores, a staple for many workers, are raising prices. Dollar Tree is pricing items at up to \$5 at some of its stores.

Increasingly the capitalist media describe what’s taking place today as stagflation — a combination of stagnating production at the same time that prices are rising. Such conditions wreaked havoc on the living standards of workers in the 1970s.

U.S. gross domestic product fell sharply to a 2% annual growth rate from July to September this year, down from 6.7% the previous quarter. At the same time, the consumer price index rose by 5.4% in September — the largest rise in

14 years. And it’s been rising at a similar pace for the previous three months. This amounted to a 2% pay cut for the average worker in July, CNBC reported.

“The threat of sudden inflationary explosions is built right into deflationary depression conditions,” writes Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in *New International* no. 10. Facing plummeting profit rates and a rise in working-class resistance, “some capitalist governments will panic and simply begin pumping out money in hopes of buffering the shocks.

“When that happens, workers and working farmers get slammed with the worst of both worlds — high levels of unemployment and explosive inflation. Employed workers will see real wages plunge; working people living on pensions will be devastated; and farmers

Kellogg workers demand ‘Equal pay for equal work’

Continued from front page

BCTGM members have been on strike since Oct. 5 at four plants — in Battle Creek, Michigan; Omaha, Nebraska; Memphis, Tennessee; and here in Lancaster County. There are over 360 Local 374G strikers.

Critical issues are at stake, especially the bosses’ insistence on keeping a two-tier wage system that pays new hires roughly half what workers hired before 2016 get. One of the most popular signs on the picket line is “Equal pay for equal work.”

Other key issues include the bosses’ demands to end a cost-of-living clause in the contract that helps defend workers’ wages from the ravages of inflation, to cut vacation time, and make workers pay more for their health insurance.

Strikers heard from Local 374G President Kerry Williams, as well as David Woods, the union’s international secretary-treasurer, and Roger Miller, East-Central Region vice president.

“All four locals are standing strong,” Woods said. “We’re in this to win it.” He pointed to BCTGM strikes earlier this year, at Frito-Lay and Nabisco, where workers made gains and set an example.

“Our strike has received overwhelming support around the country,” Miller added. With that kind of solidarity, “We can win.”

Woods reported the company had agreed to a new round of negotiations at the beginning of the week, in Arlington, Virginia. All four locals

will be represented.

Williams thanked Bakery Workers Local 6 from Philadelphia, whose members brought food and beverages for the cookout.

Pickets are up 24/7

The local is keeping pickets up 24/7 at the company’s East Hempfield Township plant gates. The bosses are bringing in scabs to try and keep some production going and to demoralize the strikers.

After the event this *Militant* worker-correspondent joined the day’s afternoon picket shift, talking with strikers as they waved to passing drivers.

“What is happening here with our strike, we’re revitalizing the union,” Keith White, an 18-year veteran at the cereal plant, said as we walked the line. I asked if the company is getting much production with the scabs. Pointing to the steam pipes beyond the fence with intermittent puffs of vapor, White said, “less than 25%.”

“Nabisco strikers set the stage for what we’re doing,” said Cheri Wilson, who’s Black and has worked at Kellogg’s for 33 years. “We’re fighting for the future. For the younger workers. We’re out here for the union.”

She said during her shifts no one has crossed. “Even part-timers and students who aren’t in the union have honored our pickets. It’s a testament to the solidarity in the broader Lancaster County.”

Wilson told me the union had played a part in pressuring the company to em-

will be hit with a new wave of foreclosures,” said Barnes.

Capitalist governments have been printing money and raising government debts to unimaginable heights — \$28.9 trillion in the U.S. as of Oct. 29.

“Central banks of the U.S., Japan and Europe boosted their combined balance sheets by more than \$10 trillion since the pandemic started,” reports Bloomberg News. As this money supply far outstrips the output of commodities to purchase, prices rise. This is exacerbated by a bottleneck of goods on dozens of container ships waiting to be unloaded at ports across the country.

Instead of using these vast amounts of money to invest in upgrading manufacturing facilities and creating new jobs, or stepping up production to make things workers need, the capitalist class finds it’s more profitable today to speculate on fictitious capital like stocks and bonds or on bets on bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies.

In the 1970s, cost-of-living adjustments to match rising inflation were a common feature of union contracts. In 1976 more than 60% of U.S. union workers were covered by collective-bargaining contracts with COLA provisions. By 1995 the share was down to 22%. Bosses have targeted and eliminated COLA from many contracts, and our unions have gotten weaker.

Strike battles fought by workers at John Deere and Kellogg’s, coal miners at Warrior Met in Alabama and other labor struggles point the way to strengthening our unions. As we do so, workers need to fight for cost-of-living adjustments in all contracts and for all pensions and benefits.

ploy more African Americans.

Since the walkout began the local has won support and donations from unions and small businesses in the area and across the state.

Support has come from United Steelworkers Local 7687 in York, as well as USW Local 287M in Lancaster County. Two building trades unions, IBEW Local 24 and Carpenters Local 431, joined the picket and brought coffee and hand warmers. And rail workers from SMART Local 830, based in Harrisburg, joined the pickets and brought breakfast.

A number of local and national political figures have come as well. John Fetterman, Pennsylvania’s lieutenant governor, attended the cookout and expressed his support for the union. U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh came to the picket line a couple days earlier. “The company is playing hardball. They want to see who’s going to break first,” warehouse worker Joseph Credito told him. “Well guess what? I’ll stay out here as long as it takes, one day longer than they will.”

As of the cookout, Local 374G has received donations of more than \$56,000 through the union’s website.

The international union’s website — BCTGM.org — has two special sites, one describing the issues in the strike and the other listing five ways you can support the strikers. The latter offers internet links where you can contribute to each of the striking locals.

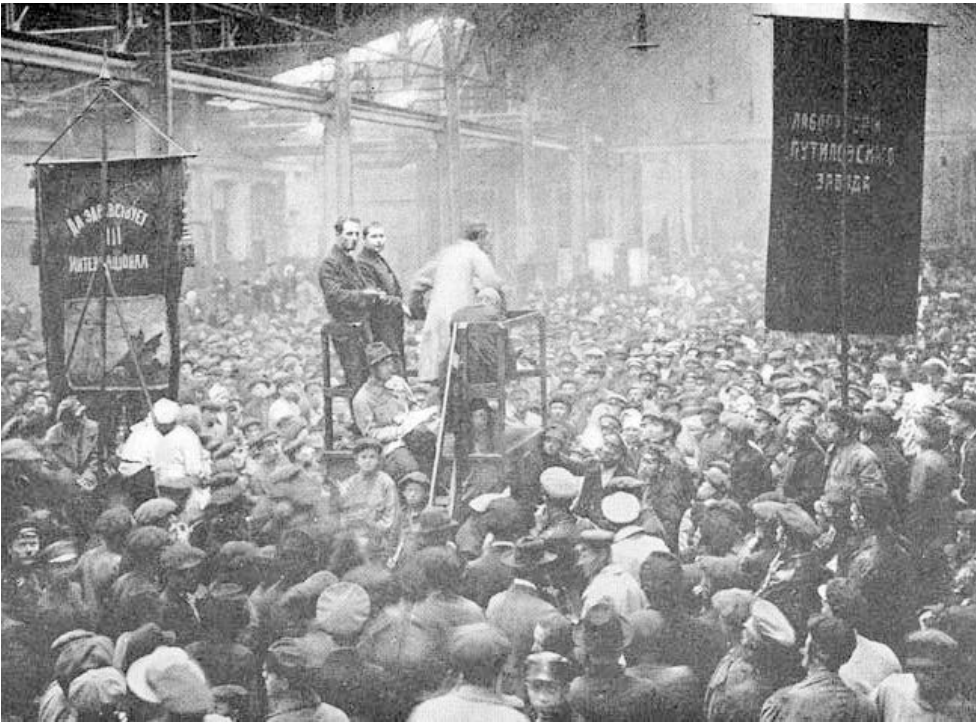
How the program of the Bolshevik Revolution took root in the US

The First Ten Years of American Communism: Report of a Participant by James P. Cannon is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia inspired revolutionary-minded workers worldwide. Cannon, one of many won to the Russian Revolution's example, helped found the Communist Party in the U.S. He describes how the Communist International led by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky helped them. He also tells how the counterrevolution carried out against Lenin's proletarian internationalist course by the bureaucratic caste led by Joseph Stalin helped corrupt the U.S. party and destroy its revolutionary heart. Cannon remained true to the Bolshevik program and traditions and was a founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party. This excerpt from Cannon's introduction describes the early days. Copyright © 1962 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

In its later evolution the Communist Party has written such a consistent record of cynical treachery and lying deception that few can believe it was ever any different. A quarter of a century of Stalinism has worked mightily to obliterate the honorable record of American



Meeting of factory committee during 1917 Russian Revolution. The victory of the Bolshevik-led socialist revolution inspired millions to build communist parties worldwide, including in U.S. Workers founded party here with “perspective of revolution in this country,” said James P. Cannon.

communism in its pioneer days.

Yet the party wrote such a chapter too, and the young militants of the new generation ought to know about it and claim it for their own. It belongs to them. The first six years of American communism — 1918-1923 — represent a heroic period from which all future revolutionary movements in this country will be the lineal descendants. There is no getting away from that. The revolutionist who would deny it is simply renouncing his own ancestry. That's where he came from, and without it he would not be. ...

From 1917 to 1919 the life of the left wing of the Socialist Party — out of which the first troops of American communism were assembled — was governed primarily by international events and influences. Two “outside” factors, namely, the First World War and the Russian Revolution, created the issues which deepened the division between the left and the right in the American SP; and the theoretical formulation of these issues by the Russian Bolsheviks and the Comintern gave the left wing its program.

The factional struggle of this period occurred along clearly defined lines of political principle. The left wing, which had previously fought as a theoretically uncertain and somewhat heterogeneous minority, was armed with the great ideas of the Bolsheviks and unified on a new foundation. The left wing as a whole

clashed with the traditional leadership of the SP over the most basic issues of doctrine, as they had been put to the test in the war and the Russian Revolution.

Leaving aside all the mistakes and excesses of the left-wing leaders, personal antagonisms engendered in the fight, etc., the lines of principle which separated them from the old leadership of the Socialist Party were clearly drawn. The split of 1919, resulting in the formal constitution of the communist movement as an independent party, was a split over *international* issues of *principle* in the broadest and clearest sense of the term. ...

As a matter of fact, in the modern world, internationalism is not an outside influence at all. The whole is not foreign to its parts. America, especially since 1914, has been a part of the “One World” and a very big part indeed. In reacting to events in other countries, America also reacts upon them. There is no such thing as “the international situation” outside and apart from this country. And the American communist movement, in all its reactions to international influences, was never free from the simultaneous influence of its national environment.

The causal factors which brought the Communist Party into being in the first place were both national and international. The same holds true for its later evolution at every stage. American communism, at the moment of its

birth, represented a fusion of the Russian Revolution with a native movement of American radicalism. It is not correct to say that “everything came from Russia.” The ideas of the Russian Revolution needed a given social environment to take root in, and receptive people to cultivate them; as far as we know, the Russian Revolution did not create a Communist Party on the moon.

International events and ideas were the predominating influence in bringing the American Communist Party into existence, but these events and ideas needed human instruments. These were provided by the native movement of American revolutionists which had grown up before the Russian Revolution out of the class struggle in the United States. ...

Objective circumstances are powerful, but not all-powerful. The status quo in normal times works to compel conformity, but this law is not automatic and does not work universally. Otherwise, there would never be any rebels and dissenters, no human agencies preparing social changes, and the world would never move forward.

There are exceptions, and the exceptions become revolutionists long before the great majority recognize the necessity and the certainty of social change. These exceptions are the historically conscious elements, the vanguard of the class who make up the vanguard party. The act of becoming a revolutionist and joining the revolutionary party is a conscious act of revolt against objective circumstances of the moment and the expression of a will to change them. ...

This was demonstrated when the Second International, which collapsed so ignominiously in the First World War, nevertheless provided the forces, out of its own ranks, for the new parties and the new International. Some socialists remained socialists; not everybody capitulated and betrayed. From the Russian party, in the first place, from the German party, and from every other Socialist Party in the entire world, uncorrupted socialists, who simply remained true to themselves, stood up against the degeneration of the old organizations and began to build the new. Even the Socialist Party of the United States, that ugly duckling of the Second International, which really wasn't much of a party, furnished cadres not undeserving of mention in this honorable company.

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Defend the right to strike, picket!

Statement by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party Texas state campaign chair, Nov. 3.

The court order banning picketing and all union activity within 300 yards of entrances to Warrior Met coal operations in Alabama is an assault on striking United Mine Workers members, all working people and our unions. It's an attack on the right to free assembly, a threat to the labor movement and a naked move to back bosses' efforts to use scabs to break the strike.

It must be denounced and vigorously combated, as well as coupled with a step up in vitally needed support for the UMWA's fight.

Get out the word, organize solidarity and join the battle to help the miners win their strike. Join their picket lines and rallies. Send messages of support and contributions from your co-workers and unions. Their fight sets an example for millions of working people facing bosses' demands for concessions.

More workers are using our unions to stand up to the employers' drive to gut gains won in previous labor battles, deepen divisions among workers with multitier wages and benefits, cut health care and pensions, and impose pay rates that don't match rising prices. Mounting determination to carry hard-fought

struggles through to victory is shown by the vote of United Auto Workers members on strike at John Deere to reject a second contract offer and continue their fight. Their slogan is "equal pay for equal work."

The court order reveals the class character of the capitalist "justice" system. Like the cops and the terroristic death penalty, the capitalist rulers use their courts to tie workers up in government regulations and red tape, to try and limit our ability to rely on ourselves and our allies to fight effectively in the arena of the class struggle. Any study of the great labor battles of the 1930s shows it is only when workers band together in large numbers that we can win. The fight of labor must be a social movement.

In 1943 miners waged four national strikes to oppose the imperialist government's wartime wage freeze and coal bosses' efforts to impose deadly speed up and disregard for safety. They rejected the government's no-strike demands. In the face of government threats to use troops to replace the strikers, the miners replied, "You can't mine coal with bayonets!"

A win for the miners at Warrior Met will put all workers and farmers in better position to defend our class interests against the bosses, backed by their twin political parties — the Democrats and Republicans — and their state. Join the fight!

Georgia trial in killing of Ahmaud Arbery begins

Continued from front page

Then they loaded into cars for a "Ride for Ahmaud." Walks, runs and rides became a popular form of protest across the country demanding that all those involved in the shooting — along with county officials who attempted to cover it up — be prosecuted.

Arbery was chased and gunned down in February 2020 by Travis McMichael and his father Gregory. They were joined in the chase and fatal assault by William Bryan Jr., a neighbor who captured the shooting on his cellphone.

Greg McMichael is a retired cop and former investigator in the local prosecutor's office. All three are charged with malice murder and felony murder. They also face federal hate crime and attempted kidnapping charges. They pleaded not guilty.

Only after protests swelled in the months following the shooting demanding the McMichaels be arrested did evidence begin to emerge of how the chase and killing unfolded. It took 74 days, and a number of changes in prosecutors, before charges were brought. It was a leak of Bryan's video of the killing that broke the case open.

Arbery was jogging in Satilla Shores Feb. 23, a suburban neighborhood 25 miles from downtown Brunswick. The McMichaels told the police they got their guns and chased him in their truck because they suspected he might be involved in a burglary.

Arbery had entered a construction site briefly during his run, just minutes before he was fatally shot. He took nothing and no property was damaged. Family members and the attorney for the house owner say it's likely he stopped for a drink of water.

For two months after the shooting local cops and prosecutors did everything possible to avoid arresting the McMichaels and to try to smear Arbery as a criminal. He had faced charges for possessing a weapon and for shoplifting earlier. Gregory McMichael had led the investigation into the shoplifting charge.

Cops initially told Arbery's family that he had been killed while in the middle of a burglary. That was the version the McMichaels had given the cops when they arrived on the scene.

Government officials complicit

Local prosecutors Jackie Johnson, who first got the case, and then George Barnhill removed themselves, admitting they knew Gregory McMichael because he had worked in their offices. Before Barnhill stepped off the case, he told cops not to arrest the McMichaels, claiming they had acted legally under Georgia's 1863 "citizen's arrest" law and in armed self-defense.

In response to growing protests, that law was repealed in May. Under the new legislation, the ability of

private citizens to make arrests is strictly limited. But this new law wasn't in effect when Arbery was killed.

Prosecutor Johnson has been voted out of office and indicted for her conduct in the case. She is accused of violating her oath by "showing favor and affection" toward Greg McMichael during the investigation.

McMichael had called Johnson from the scene of the shooting to ask for her help. "Jackie, this is Greg. Could you call me as soon as you possibly can?" Johnson's voicemail records McMichael saying. "I've been involved in a shooting and I need some advice right away."

The video that blew the case open was leaked by a supporter of the McMichaels, who claimed it showed it "wasn't two men with a Confederate flag in the back of a truck going down the road and shooting a jogger in the back."

It turns out McMichael's truck has a Confederate battle flag on its license plate, a fact defense lawyers are trying to keep out of the trial.

Challenges in finding a jury

The trial began with efforts to select a jury, which presents challenges in a county of 85,000 people, given the extensive news reports on the shooting, the widely publicized video of it and protests against the killing across the country.

A number of the people called to report for consideration haven't shown up. Even though the county is 69% Caucasian, defense attorneys say their case is more difficult because many of those no-shows are likely "white males, over 40, born in the South, who do not have a college degree."

Still, the defense is not asking for a change of venue.

Fifty-five of the 64 potential jurors needed have been selected so far, the Nov. 1 *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported. After 64 are qualified by the judge, the process of selecting the 12 jurors and 4 alternates who will actually try the case begins.

During this phase the defense and prosecution will have unlimited chances to ask that the judge cut a prospective juror with or without cause. Attorneys on either side can challenge such requests if they suspect it is based on the juror's sex or race. Some of those qualified for the pool said they had participated in protests against the shooting or that they had already formed an opinion on the case. One was a retired law enforcement officer, who, when asked what crime he thought had been committed here, answered "murder."

Arbery's family and all those who oppose police brutality and racial oppression, as well as those who care about the defense of rights all working people, need a fair trial and due process. They will follow closely as the trial unfolds.

450 Steelworkers strike at West Virginia plant

BY AMY HUSK

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. — Some 450 members of United Steelworkers Local 40 have been on strike against Special Metals Corp. here for over a month. The company, which is owned by Warren Buffet's massive Berkshire Hathaway worldwide operation, is a producer of nickel alloys used in auto parts, household appliances and industrial equipment.

Workers walked out Oct. 1 when contract negotiations broke down. USW Local 40 President Chad Thompson told the *Militant* that the company's demands included a substantial raise in health care premiums — "four times what we pay now" — and no pay raises at all. Negotiations resumed Nov. 3.

"We have so many issues to work through," Thompson said. "Wages, health insurance, safety and seniority are all issues we still don't have agreement on."

Thompson, a maintenance worker in the plant, said strikers have gotten a lot of support from other unions and the community. "UPS workers and firefighters have come by and dropped off donations. We've also gotten support from the teachers union, workers from our sister plant in Burnaugh, Kentucky, and the Marathon plant in Ashland. We appreciate all the support."

I visited the union hall on Buffington Street along with union supporters from Cincinnati, including Dave Perry, a shop steward for Teamsters Local 100 at a factory run by the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. "We start negotiations at our workplace tomorrow," Perry told strikers at the union hall. "I'm here to support your fight because we are all facing the same attacks."

"We're the ones who do all the work and they want to take all the money," striker Scott Wilks said on the picket line. "Back in 2007 this company had 700 workers, now it's down to 450. They lay people off and expect us to pick up the slack. A lot of the equipment in the plant is old and unsafe."

"If we take anything less than what we already have, we're compromising. And we're not willing to do that," striker Jeremy Blankenship said.

Special Metals bosses are trying to run the plant with replacement workers. "They hire them from an anti-union outfit that specializes in hiring during labor disputes," Wilks said.

Messages of support for the USW strikers can be emailed to Chad Thompson at CSthompson7777@gmail.com. Checks can be made out to USW Local 40, earmarked for the strike fund, and sent to Thompson at 421 Cherry Ridge Road, Thurman, OH 45685.

Sudan protests hit coup

Continued from page 6

ates with soldiers to fight in its military operations in Yemen and Libya.

The governments of the UAE and Egypt seek to advance their own interests in the country by offering to mediate between al-Burhan and Hamdok.

"We had no hope that the military might be able to work within a civilian state," Muzan Alneel told the *Financial Times* Oct. 29. She is an engineer who took part in the 2019 protests. "We knew this was coming and we were just waiting for it."

Military commanders fear loss of government control could lead to their businesses being taken from them and to the prosecution of officers for previous atrocities. In August six officers in the RSF were convicted and sentenced to death for the 2019 killing of six students protesting economic hardships.

In October 2020 the transitional government signed a peace accord with armed groups in Darfur, leading to the withdrawal of United Nations troops from the area.

Since then the Sudanese army, which pledged to maintain security in Darfur, has done little to stop assaults on refugee camps by militias that continue to operate. Thirty-six people were killed in an armed dispute over control of land in South Darfur in June. Some 1.5 million people are still displaced as a result of the conflict in the region.

Protesters say their actions will continue.

Catharina Tirsén in London contributed to this article.