The working class rises up

BY STEPHEN MILLIES

The U.S. working class is waking up angry and defiant. More than 100,000 workers are on strike from coast to coast. Here are some of the biggest battles that broke out during “Striketober”:

- 10,000 members of the United Auto Workers are on strike at John Deere plants in Iowa, Illinois, Colorado, Georgia, and Kansas. The manufacturer of construction and agricultural equipment, including tractors, is expected to rake in profits of nearly $6 billion this year. That hasn’t stopped Deere from demanding pension cuts for newly hired workers. Salaried, non-union employees are being forced to cross picket lines to try to break the strike. It’s dangerous for these workers to perform jobs that they’re not trained for.

- 38,000 Kaiser Permanente health care workers in California and Oregon have authorized a strike. After 19 months of putting their lives on the line fighting COVID-19, they want better staffing and wages that get ahead of inflation.

- 60,000 members of IATSE (the International Alliance of THEATRICAL Stage Employees) authorized a strike that would have shut down Hollywood. They’re sick of working 14 or more hours a day so that movies can be completed. The workers’ solidarity forced the studio bosses to come to a tentative agreement.

- 1,400 Kellogg’s cereal workers — members of the Bakery Workers’ Local 10 commemoration of Juneteenth and at a Labor Fest program on July 10 where I did a book signing and reading for union members and the community.

There are Local 10 members that are featured in “Mobilizing in Our Own Name.” For many, it was their first opportunity to meet an author who wrote a book about them and their union. Of course, they’re very enthusiastic about the book.

Since then, most of my interactions have been through Zoom. In the past several weeks, I’ve begun to travel to events. I attended and sold books at the Teamsters Women’s Leadership Conference that took place in Las Vegas, Nevada. We met with workers from across the country: Louisville, Kentucky; Houston, Texas; Seattle, Washington; New York City; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and from Phoenix, Arizona. It was the first time that we had a chance to meet workers in one location from various parts of the country.

The Teamsters National Black Caucus (TNBC) invited us to the women’s conference. They played a very important role in organizing the 2004 Million Worker March. Brother Chris Silvera who is the longest serving principal officer in the Teamsters, heads up Teamsters Local 808 in Long Island City, New York. Local 808 members are responsible for maintaining the track at Metro-North. Chris Silvera was the East Coast coordinator of the Million Worker March (MWM) along with sister Brenda Stokely from AFSCME DC 1507.

#Mobilizing in our own name’

Interview with author and labor activist Clarence Thomas

This season is being called #Striketober. Workers are showing their power by striking and demanding better conditions. The release of the anthology, “Mobilizing in Our Own Name: Million Worker March” is timely.

Author Clarence Thomas — an African American labor activist, longshore leader, and an organizer of the 2004 Million Worker March — has been speaking at meetings and gatherings around the country. We talked with Thomas on Oct. 17, the anniversary of the Million Worker March in Washington, to get his insights on the labor struggle today.


Clarence Thomas: Thank you for the opportunity to have this conversation. I have been a member of International Longshore and Warehouse Workers (ILWU) Local 10 for 31 years. Though retired from the waterfront, I’m still in the struggle. After I finished the book, I first reached out to the ILWU Local 10 members. I introduced the book at the Local 10 commemoration of Juneteenth and at a Labor Fest program on July 10 where I did a book signing and reading for union members and the community.

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‘Striketober!’

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Million Worker March Movement contingent at the New Orleans ‘Justice after Hurricane Katrina’ march in December 2005.

Clarence Thomas on right end of banner.
Interview with labor activist and author Clarence Thomas

Justice for Ahmaud Arbery! Lynched for jogging while Black

By Stephen Millies

Philonado Castile was killed by a Minnesota cop for driving White Black. Trayvon Martin was killed by wannabe cop George Zimmerman in Florida for Walking While Black. Ahmaud Arbery was killed by three white vigilantes in Georgia for Jogging While Black.

The 25-year-old Arbery was running near his home when he was shot on Feb. 23, 2020, in the Satilla Shores neighborhood of Brunswick, Ga. On that Sunday afternoon retired police officer Gregory McMichael spotted the former high school football star jogging and decided he must be a burglar.

McMichael grabbed his son Travis and got into a pickup truck that had a license plate decorated with the confederate flag. Together they confronted Arbery with a .577 Magnum handgun and a shotgun.

A neighbor of the McMichaels, William Bryan, Jr., joined the posse of two vigilantes in Georgia for lynching Black man's death.

Ahmaud Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper, was informed of her son's death by a police investigator. The cop said that Arbery was involved in a burglary and was killed by a homeowner.

Bryan's video showed Ahmaud Arbery running when he's intercepted by the McMichaels. Gregory McMichael is seen standing in the truck bed with a gun.

Arbery tried to run around the truck but he was stopped by Travis McMichael. Shots are fired and Ahmaud Arbery fell to the ground.

As civil rights lawyer Ben Crump said, “You look on that video, and it’s like it was a hunting party,” Crump is an attorney for Ahmaud Arbery’s father, Marcus Arbery.

It then took 74 days for the police to arrest McMichaels and another two weeks to lock up Bryan.

Gregory McMichael is actually proud of killing Ahmaud Arbery. He’s been touting saying that “no good deeds goes unpunished?” McMichael said on a phone call from jail. “Yeah, that’s the shining example right there,” referring to the Black man’s death.

A 21st century lynching

The three killers of Ahmaud Arbery are now on trial in Brunswick. Linda Duniokoski came from Marietta, Ga, to be the prosecutor.

The only reason the killers were brought to court was because millions of people across the country joined the Black Lives Matter protests. The deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor in Louisville and George Floyd in Minneapolis ignited this upsurge.

Jackie Johnson, the local District Attorney in Glynn County — where the shooting took place — had to drop the case since her office had employed Gregory McMichael. She was defeated for reelection and has been indicted for attempting to cover up Arbery’s death.

Another DA, George Barnhill in Waycross, Ga., also had to exit because of a similar conflict. He shared Gregory McMichael’s belief that he had a licence to kill.

Barnhill urged the police department in Glynn County not to arrest Ahmaud Arbery’s killers. The prosecutor maintained there wasn’t “probable cause” to arrest the McMichaels since they were pursuing a “burglary suspect.”

The McMichaels are claiming they were trying to make a “citizen’s arrest” of Ahmaud Arbery. Georgia’s “citizen’s arrest” law was passed in 1863 during the Civil War to capture enslaved Africans who were trying to escape.

One hundred twenty-nine years before the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, Wesley Lewis and Henry Jackson were lynched just outside Brunswick on Feb. 21, 1891. According to the Marshall Project, the two Black men were hanged from a tree, riddled with more than 1,000 bullets, then left on display for thousands of white spectators to view.

There were more than 500 documented lynching victims in Georgia. Ahmaud Arbery’s death was a lynching in all.

The unfinished revolution

Brunswick is on Georgia’s Atlantic Coast. It’s near the Sea Islands that stretch 245 miles from Florida to South Carolina.

On Jan. 16, 1865, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman issued field order No. 9, which confiscated the abandoned plantations. The 400,000 acres were to be given to freed Afri can-40-acre plots as a tiny down payment on reparations.

Prof. Andrew Johnson, who did nothing to stop thousands of Black people from being killed by the Ku Klux Klan, overturned Sherman’s order later that year. Northern capitalists grabbed much of the land instead to build luxury estates. Brunswick, Ga., was the stopping-off point to these resorts.

The U.S. Civil War was an unfinished revolution. Instead of land and freedom, Black people were lynched and forced and forced to be sharecroppers.

Seventy miles from Brunswick, Troy Davis was framed in Savannah for killing a police officer. Despite virtually every witness recanting their testimony, Davis was executed on Sept. 21, 2011.

Ten years later, justice for Ahmaud Arbery also means remembering Troy Davis, Henry Jackson, Wesley Lewis and all the other victims of lynching terror.

Mobilizing in our own name

Interview with labor activist and author Clarence Thomas

Continued from page 1

International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) General President, James P. Hoffa, wrote a letter praising the book and discussed its importance in terms of building labor solidarity. He expressed that the concerns of workers addressed at the Million Worker March (MWM) in 2004, are even more relevant today. Hoffa’s support for the book, which features the Teamsters, is one of the reasons why we are able to reach out to IBT members all over the country.

Struggle-La Lucha: The book’s title — “Mobilizing in Our Own Name” — tell us more.

Clarence Thomas: Oct. 17, 2021, is the 175th anniversary of the 1844 Million Work March March in Washington D.C. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The name of the MWM book, “Mobilizing in Our Own Name,” is based on the premise that workers cannot depend on bourgeois politicians to address the issues of systemic racism, income inequality, corporate greed, worker’s rights, universal health care, slashing the military budget, ending the murder of African Americans and other people of color. Today, the contradictions that are precipitated by the crisis of capitalism are greater than they were in 2004.

The MWM anthology is about radical African American trade unionists in one of the main organized radical labor organizations of the world, the ILWU Local 10. They defied the Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO, to mobilize the Million Worker March.

As we relate the story of MWM, organized 17 years ago, to what’s happening today, it is prophetic.

Workers, for too long, have been put into a straitjacket as it relates to their being able to address their needs, because of their respective labor organizations are subordinate to the Democratic Party.

Struggle-La Lucha: Yes. Now there is a strike wave across the country

Clarence Thomas: This October, some 100,000 workers from across the country are withholding their labor at the point of production. No one can speak for workers like workers can speak for themselves. These actions involve workers that are organized, such as the UAW, California nurses, Kellogg’s, Nabisco and John Deere. What we’re witnessing is not limited to the traditional sectors of industry. Workers are coming out of the global pandemic, which highlighted the income and wealth inequality in this country.

The corporate media and economists measure the success of the economy by the number of jobs that are generated, while ignoring the quality of those jobs. What the corporate sector frames as a labor shortage is more accurately described as a living-wage shortage. It is a pay shortage, a child care shortage, a paid sick leave shortage, a health care shortage.

In an interview, an African American woman in Battle Creek, Michigan, reportedly said that at Kellogg’s, a global company, “while we prepare food for the world, we’re unable to take off from work to feed our children.” Kellogg’s workers are being told just minutes before the end of their shift that they have to work more hours. This harkens back to the days before we had unions.

This is a reflection of the capitalist crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 epidemic.

In California where I live, a multi-billionaire, a right-wing, racist capitalist who owns the Oakland A’s, the Gap and other enterprises, wants to build a baseball stadium, a condo-minium, a hotel, as well as retail and commercial space at the third busiest port on the West Coast. This is an example of the neoliberal model of capitalism, which is a policy that makes it easier for corporations, banks and the rich to exploit the working class. This gentrification will compromise the Port of Oakland and the jobs of essential workers.

Struggle-La Lucha: The ILWU has a history of class struggle, of knowing the power of a strike.
Supply chain crisis? There’s more to that story

By Gary Wilson

Fears of empty shelves and online shortages seem to dominate the daily news shows. The reports are completely blown out, as Barron’s admits in a report that’s blocked for common reading by a paywall. (Barron’s, a Dow Jones & Company news magazine, they also publish the Wall Street Journal.)

Barron’s notes that year-end shortages in the supply chain are nothing new. “Our conversations with retailers, manufacturers, shippers, and Wall Street forecasters indicate that businesses are learning to cope with bottlenecks,” Barron’s says.

Moreover, with the reports filling the news, shortages and sales have taken off. The toy industry is reporting that sales have increased by 53% over last year—nearly $22.5 billion—and 28% over 2019. And, you may have noticed, toy prices are going up—allegedly because of “short supply.”

Supply chain bottlenecks don’t originate from COVID-19. The bottlenecks were introduced back in the 1970s by what is called “just-in-time manufacturing.” Manufacturers no longer have big inventories of parts. For global manufacturers, everything is now “off-shored.” Everything from parts to completed products are made globally and then shipped to where they are needed.

With the anarchy of capitalist production, it’s never known what will be needed or when—or not overall for the whole economy. Of course, Ford Motor Co. knows what computer chips it wants and when it wants them for F-150 pickup production. But does that matter if more of Chrysler’s Ram pickups are being sold and use the parts that are most needed? That’s the anarchy of capitalism.

Attack on longshore workers

Besides a chance to raise prices, there’s another game hidden in the shipping bottleneck on the West Coast that’s been the highlighted image on the TV news.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 President Trent Willis says that there is no backlog of ships at the Port of Oakland, the third-busiest port on the West Coast. Local 10 is an African-American-led labor union that is world-renowned for its militant and just struggles. It is currently protesting stopping the loading and unloading of ships from apartheid South Africa and Israel.

“I want to make something absolutely clear: The supply chain backlog on the West Coast has been inaccurately reported.” Willis said in a Labor Video interview.

“It’s being inaccurately reported that this backlog is all up and down the whole coast. Why are ocean carriers refusing to use the Port of Oakland to unload container ships with 70 to 80 ships backing up in the ports of LA?” Willis asks.

“They could be playing some kind of game, you know. We have our contract negotiations starting up in 2022.” 

And they want to gentrify the Port of Oakland. John Fisher, the multi-billionaire, right-wing, racist capitalist who owns the Oakland A’s, the Gap and other enterprises, wants to build a baseball stadium, a condo-minium, a hotel, retail and commercial space there. This gentrification would compromise the Port of Oakland and the jobs of the dockworkers.

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles and Long Beach, the shipping backlog is being used to force the dockworkers to go 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The big shipping operators have been demanding a 24/7 work schedule for years. The ILWU has resisted this in part, because it creates a more hazardous work environment.

Now they are being forced to accept it. Even though the union has agreed to the 24/7 schedule, the shipping companies are still boycotting the Port of Oakland.

‘Mobilizing in our own name’

Continued from page 2

Clarence Thomas: Henry Bridges, one of the founders of the ILWU, said during contract negotiations that the only reason why the employers were at the bargaining table was because they knew that if they did not collectively bargain with us, we were going to shut them down. They would not be able to make any production.

That was over 80 years ago. Nothing has changed. Workers feel like they’re working harder. They also feel that they have put their lives on the line during this pandemic, that they have not been protected. And that after all that they have been through, they have realized that they have to stand up and fight back.

This isn’t some kind of an official country-wide workers’ strike. As a matter of fact, it’s been called an unofficial General Strike. This is not something that has been called for by the leadership of the AFL-CIO, whose agenda is not consistent with the needs of the rank-and-file. We, in Labor, are not the junior partners of the Democratic Party.

Struggle-La Lucha: Is this what you call organizing in our own name?

Clarence Thomas: Yes! Workers must have their own agenda. They do not want to be held hostage to corporate whims.

Workers want to have universal health care that is not dependent on the current health care policies with their jobs. Because even when workers are unemployed, they are still

www.MillionWorkerMarch.com

‘Mobilizing in Our Own Name’

Struggles documented in news articles, interviews, letters, posters, photos, speeches and video transcripts.

Danny Glover who was a part of the MWM, wrote, “Those of us that are activists in the struggle and are contemporaries of my brother and comrade Clarence ‘Buzz’ Thomas, whom I’ve known since our days at San Francisco State, he has done what many of us have talked about but refused to do; write a book! This anthology captures the Million Worker March and so many subsequent struggles that really underscores how the ILWU Local 10 continues its long radical history and tradition of struggle.”

To quote sister Angela Davis, when we both spoke at the Juneteenth 2020 rally at the Port of Oakland, “Whenever the ILWU takes a stand, the world feels the reverberation.”

Mobilizing in Our Own Name will be inspiring and instructive to workers and activists in the future. For those of us that were part of the struggles and actions covered in this book, we realize this is our ‘anthology.’

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Sirhan Sirhan was convicted of the murder of a Kennedy. He could spend less time in prison than this California man

By Thandisizwe Chimurenga

Sirhan Sirhan was convicted of the murder of Democratic presi- dential candidate Robert Kennedy, brother of former president John F. Kennedy, just over 50 years ago. At the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on June 5, 1968. On March 30, 1981, John Hinckley Jr. walked up to then-President Ron- ald Reagan outside of a Washington, D.C., hotel with gun in hand. He fired multiple shots, striking Reagan in the chest, Secret Service agent Tim- othy McCarthy in the side, District of Columbia police Officer Thom- as Delahanty in the neck and White House Press Secretary James Brady in the head, leaving him partially paralyzed.

Hinckley spent 35 years in a men- tal hospital before being granted conditional release. On Sept. 27, he was freed from court supervision and sent home to California for more than 50 years. But isn’t being given to Ruchell Magee, a former presidential candidate Robert Kennedy, brother of former president John F. Kennedy, just over 50 years ago. At the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on June 5, 1968.

Magee was denied parole for another parole hearing in July. He is 82 and housed at the California Elders Unit. Magee has been denied parole since his first eligible for parole in 1981, but he has been denied parole for 25 years since 2000. Magee has been in prison for 50 years and has been denied parole for 35 years. Magee was deemed eligible for parole in 2000, but was denied parole by the parole board.

In light of the prospect of two con- victed presidential shooters walking the Earth as free men, it’s worth in- quiring why similar consideration isn’t being given to Ruchell Magee, a Black man who has been imprisoned in California for more than 50 years. Magee has neither committed nor been convicted of murder. He was first eligible for parole in 1981, but has been denied parole ever since. He is 82 and housed at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville. At his most recent parole hearing in July, Magee was denied parole for another three years. He will be 85 at his next scheduled hearing.

Magee is no threat to society. He has housing, financial and emotion- al support networks in place to help him when he leaves prison. One of his sons, who is currently in college, has visited him many times. Magee’s only chance at freedom lies in a legal challenge. His appeal is pending.

Jackson took several hostages, in- cluding John F. Kennedy’s brother, Robert F. Kennedy, who was killed in New York City in 1968. The younger brother, Robert F. Kennedy, who was killed in New York City in 1968.

Jackson’s case has been the subject of numerous legal challenges. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled against Jackson, but his case has not yet been ruled on by the highest court in the land. Jackson’s story is a reminder of the deteriorating state of the criminal justice system in the U.S.

More than 50 years after his conviction, Jackson remains in prison. He has been denied parole on multiple occasions.

Jackson’s story is a reminder of the deteriorating state of the criminal justice system in the U.S.
There are measures that can be taken to get humanity on track. They would all be large undertakings. It may take a big combination of some of them or reliance on yet unforeseen methods. It is only the for-profit economic system of capitalism that stands in the way of mounting a serious, no-holds-barred fight against global warming.

It will not be possible to curb or stop CO₂ emissions without an enormous struggle — there should be no doubt about that. But curbing or stopping emissions alone won’t solve the problem. To end the crisis it is also necessary to remove the accumulated CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Compare it to a train with 100 rail cars, doing 55 mph that needs to come to a sudden stop. The engineer fully applies the emergency brake, but the train keeps moving for at least a mile. Dr. David Keith, a professor of applied physics and public policy at Harvard, wrote in an Oct. 1 opinion piece in the New York Times that “Average temperatures will stop increasing when emissions stop, but cooling will take thousands of years — while the heat will stop getting worse, sea level will continue to rise for centuries as polar ice melts in a warmer world.”

Fossil fuel industry rules

International pressure has forced some action by the world’s richest countries that have amassed staggering riches from fossil fuels, of which the U.S. is number one. Nothing so far, though, has seriously threatened the riches being amassed by the fossil fuel industry. Biden’s “Build Back Better” proposals, if enacted, would enable the U.S. to attend the November climate conference in Denmark having lived up to commitments made in Paris in 2015.

After the climate disasters this year, many see even those commitments as inadequate. But there is also pressure pushing in the other direction, fueled by energy corporations and investors. Biden left out any elements of the Green New Deal proposed by the more progressive wing of the Democratic Party, and he is weakening on his own proposals as bankers, corporations and especially oil giants push back. Even before this year, actions favored by the ruling class have been half measures that are embraced because they allow energy giants to maintain the status quo.

California had one of the first cap-and-trade markets, which dole out incentives to reduce emissions. A cap gets set on the amount of emissions for every company. Spewing less CO₂ than what is allowed by the cap earns credits that can be sold at auction to companies who can use them to legally emit more CO₂. As useless as it is, some 50 more markets were set up globally since California’s.

Cap-and-trade was a concession to energy corporations, as an alternative to mandatory emissions cuts. But ProPublica reports that the state made more concessions under former Gov. Jerry Brown, whose family members are tied to energy companies, by dropping incremental mandatory reductions that were supposed to be part of the deal. The largest California oil refiners, owned by Marathon Petroleum and Chevron, have increased their emissions by 3.5% since 2017, when California’s market started.

Carbon Capture is snake oil

Now, big energy, banking and other giant corporations are pouring money into another method of dealing with climate change — carbon capture, utilization and storage. The technology pulls CO₂ out of the air. One method stores it underground or in the oceans, with the risk of pipeline and storage vessel leaks. Another method sells the extracted CO₂ at a profit to be used in products such as soft drinks, plastics, or, unbelievably, to assist in the process of getting more oil and gas out of the ground.

Carbon capture is expected to grow to about a $2 trillion industry. No wonder that Elon Musk, Micro- soft, Occidental Petroleum, and ExxonMobil are throwing billions at it. The technology may become very profitable long before it is capable of making a difference. Currently, the amount of CO₂ that it’s capable of removing from the atmosphere is woefully inadequate.

Globally, forty-three billion tons of CO₂ go into the air each year. In 2019, 4.4 billion tons were extracted and stored underground using carbon capture and storage. That is only a tenth of a percent of one year’s CO₂ emissions — not coming anytime near what’s needed to remove almost two centuries of CO₂ that has accumulated, and which will continue raising global temperatures for future generations.

U.S. corporations caused 20% of the greenhouse gases that are warming the planet. Those same corporations now regularly use the word “green” to hawk their wares. Of course, using the word isn’t a real change. Cap-and-trade markets and carbon capture technologies are what they are doing, because neither can stop the continued profitable extraction of oil and gas.
South Korean labor calls general strike to free union president

By Scott Scheffer

Yang Kyung-soo, the president of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) — South Korea’s largest and most militant trade union confederation — has been jailed and is on a hunger strike. A general strike had already been called for Oct. 20, and has now taken on demands to release Yang. Police had attempted the arrest in mid-August at the KCTU headquarters but were fought off by union members and forced to retreat.

Although the Moon Jae-in government rode a wave of support by labor unions, and in particular the KCTU, repression against the labor movement has not changed and is continuing.

Since its foundation in 1995, there have been 13 presidents of the KCTU. All 13 were at one time or another jailed by the U.S.-backed South Korean government.

There has been no international outcry over the arrest, no word of it in the U.S. media. Compare that to when 20 U.S. union members were arrested in Cuba, China, Nicaragua, Venezuela or any other country that resists U.S. hegemony. This struggle to remain independent. Where are the cries for human rights in South Korea?

Instead, the New York Times writes that South Korean workers have lost “enthusiasm” for strikes. They fail to mention that the KCTU has grown to be the largest trade union confederation based on its history of militant and determined struggle.

The percentage of temporary workers in South Korea is among the highest in the world, ranging between 25% and 35% over time, mostly women, children and elderly. Indeed, it’s being-fits are disappearing. Similar to but even more pronounced than the “gig economy” in the U.S., temporary workers in South Korea are forced to work long hours at low wages without even basic benefits.

The pauperization of the working class

The disappearance of jobs with pensions has led to a 50% poverty rate among elderly workers, many of whom are now homeless. This pauperization of a large section of the working class has enabled South Korea’s giant corporate monopolies — chaebols — to run roughshod over the lives of the working class. The chaebols dominate the South Korean economy and have an incestuous relationship with U.S. financial institutions.

Claiming that South Korean workers have lost enthusiasm to fight back is not just twisting facts or taking things out of context — it is an out-and-out lie. The U.S. media hasn’t reported what happened in South Korea just last summer.

In June, some 2,100 couriers struck against unbelievably long hours and overwork that caused the deaths of several workers. They won a cap on hours and several delivery companies have committed to hire more workers to sort packages. During the strike, the workers rallied just blocks away from parliament and the skyscraper headquarters of the chaebols.

Workers at HMM, South Korea’s biggest container ship company, carried out a strike that lasted 77 days until the end of August. They won a 79% pay increase and incentives of up to 650% of workers’ monthly wages.

In August, healthcare workers’ threat to strike won many pandemic-related demands including the establishment of a nurse-to-patient ratio; the establishment of at least four public infectious disease hospitals by Oct. 20; and more funding to subsidize things like long-term care for the nation’s aging population, to go into effect in January 2022.

When South Korea’s economy collapsed in 1997, representatives from the U.S. arranged an International Monetary Fund “rescue.” Some of the biggest U.S. banks, as well as banks from Europe, swooped in and demanded restructuring in return for a bailout.

The crisis gave the Western banks even more control over the half of the Korean nation that they did divide and have dominated and used since the terrible destruction that they carried out in the 1950–53 Korean War. The 1997 restructuring of the South Korean economy was accompanied by a campaign to drive down wages so that the short and long-term loans that the U.S. arranged could be repaid. Those loans were at higher interest rates than the rate at which major global banks normally lend to one another. Now, South Korea’s external debt is growing once again and the financial burden is being placed on the working class.

All trade unionists and working-class activists, especially in the United States, should join the call to free Yang Kyung-soo! Solidarity with South Korean workers and the 2021 general strike! Continued on page 7

China is not labor’s enemy, Wall Street is

Political analyst and activist Bill Dores says China is no threat to the people in the United States; Wall Street, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Pentagon are.

Dores, a writer for Struggle/La Lucha and longtime antiwar activist, made the remarks in an interview with Press TV on Saturday after the CIA launched a new mission center to address what it calls “the most important geopolitical threat” posed by China.

CIA Director William Burns said in a statement last week that the new unit, called the China Mission Center, will “further strengthen our collective work on the most important geopolitical threat we face in the 21st century, an increasingly adversarial China.”

Burns said that his agency will still focus on other threats as well, including those emanating from Russia, North Korea and Iran.

The CIA’s renewed attention to China is the latest evidence of the Biden administration’s change of position on Beijing as its main foreign policy target.

Since taking charge of the White House earlier this year, the Biden administration has been directing resources toward countering China.

Why is CIA targeting China?

“The CIA is grabbing more tax money to start a ‘mission center’ aimed at China, which it calls the ‘most important geopolitical threat we face.’ This is ominous considering the CIA’s history of fabricating evidence to start wars, e.g. Iraq’s nonexistent ‘weapons of mass destruction,’” Dores commented to Press TV.

“U.S. troops have left Afghanistan. But not a dime has been slashed from the bloated U.S. military budget. Indeed, it’s been increased to $787 billion from $753 billion to face the alleged ‘Chinese threat.’ That’s more than the combined military budgets of China, India, Russia, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, Japan, South Korea, Italy and Australia,” he added.

“It’s also been revealed that U.S. Special Forces have been operating secretly on Taiwan for two years. Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress will not pass the Build Back Better Act to modestly extend our social safety net,” he added.

“The People’s Republic of China has five times the population of the United States. But it spends only $258 billion on its military. China’s economic ‘threat’ to U.S. ‘real threat,’ in the minds of the U.S. corporate ruling class, is economic. China produces more than the United States, and its economy is growing much faster,” the analyst said.

“It has achieved this not by destroying the economies of other countries with war and sanctions, but by growth and trade. China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

China’s economic ‘threat’ to U.S.

When South Korea’s economy collapsed in 1997, representatives from the U.S. arranged a ‘rescue’ for South Korea — in and demanded restructuring in return for a bailout.

The crisis gave the Western banks even more control over the half of the Korean nation that they did not divide and have dominated and used since the terrible destruction that they carried out in the 1950–53 Korean War. The 1997 restructuring of the South Korean economy was accompanied by a campaign to drive down wages so that the short and long-term loans that the U.S. arranged could be repaid. Those loans were at higher interest rates than the rate at which major global banks normally lend to one another. Now, South Korea’s external debt is growing once again and the financial burden is being placed on the working class.

All trade unionists and working-class activists, especially in the United States, should join the call to free Yang Kyung-soo! Solidarity with South Korean workers and the 2021 general strike!
The Biden administration on Oct. 16 kidnapped Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab from the West African country of Cape Verde, in blatant violation of international law. Under U.S. pressure, Saab had already been imprisoned and tortured in Cape Verde for 16 months.

"On a flight chartered by the [U.S.] Department of Justice, in which the Cape Verdean authorities had no control that could guarantee the safety of the Venezuelan diplomat, because they do not have a bilateral extradition treaty with the North American nation, Alex Saab arrived Saturday night and was transferred to a high-security prison in Miami," teleSUR reported.

Saab is Venezuela’s Deputy Ambassador to Cape Verde as well as an official representative to negotiations with the right-wing opposition led by the leader of the Venezuelan government suspended Joe Biden’s post-sanction economic work.

"We hold the authorities of Cape Verde and the Government of President Nicolas Maduro responsible for this act," teleSUR quoted Maduro as saying.

Washington’s ‘hate China’ campaign

Washington raises several phony issues in its ‘hate China’ campaign. One is the alleged persecution of the Uighur people in Xinjiang Province. There’s nothing but hypocrisy here," the analyst said.

"If this claim were true — and I’ve seen no reliable evidence that it is — Washington would be the last to care. The United States leads the world in mass incarceration and murder by police," he noted.

"According to the Equal Justice Initiative, ‘Millions of Americans are incarcerated in overcrowded, violent prisons and jails that do not provide treatment, education, or rehabilitation. The majority are from the oppressed Black, Latin and Native nations targeted by police,'" he said.

"Among the incarcerated are dozens of political prisoners, such as former and current leaders of the Popular Will of Venezuela.”

"Washington has flooded the world with devalued dollars since the Nixon administration took the dollar off the gold standard in the 1970s. The U.S. has long used the dollar as an instrument of financial warfare," he said.

"And there is the issue of ‘free navigation’ in the South China Sea. Washington should pay China for inventing paper, iron smelting, the seed drill, compass, rockets, gunpowder, and other innovations that made its economic development possible," he said.

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Why is the U.S. Navy in the South China Sea?

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Washington escalates: U.S. special forces secretly operating for past year in Taiwan

By Gary Wilson

Unless the U.S. government promptly removes its military forces from China’s Taiwan province, China may send in its own military force to defend its territory, declared an editorial in Global Times, the Communist Party of China’s daily newspaper.

Global Times explains: “We must relentlessly define the deployment of U.S. troops in Taiwan as an ‘invasion.’ The mainland has the right to carry out military strikes against them at any time. We will not make any promises over their safety. Once a war breaks out in the Taiwan Straits, those U.S. military personnel will be the first to be eliminated. Through such a declaration, we must make Washington understand that we play a dangerous game that is destined to draw fire onto itself and it is risking the lives of your nation’s citizens.”

On Oct. 7, the Wall Street Journal reported that about two dozen U.S. special operations and support troops secretly arrived in Taiwan to train military forces there for at least a year. The Global Times points out that “since the U.S. has exposed the news through anonymous officials, it has taken a step forward to undermine, from covertly to semi-overly, the key conditions for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Chinese mainland and the U.S.”

The U.S. government officially recognizes that Taiwan is a province of China, not a separate nation. Therefore, what the Biden administration is now doing — secretly sending special forces into the Chinese province — is in violation of both U.S. and international law.

Taiwan is a crucial issue. The struggle over Taiwan, always considered to be a province of China, has been ongoing since 1949, when the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) drove U.S. puppet Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist Army from the mainland as it retreated to Taiwan under the protection of the Pentagon.

Shanghai Communique: One China

The U.S. agreed to surrender the Chinese province of Taiwan, as promised in the Shanghai Communique, on Feb. 28, 1972. The U.S. agreed to promise that “The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves.”

The Trump administration moved toward dropping most of the long-standing policies toward China and Taiwan, even suggesting the possibility of granting Taiwan official recognition and an embassy in Washington.

The Biden administration has not changed any of the Trump policies toward China. A Democratic congresswoman, Rep. Elaine Luria, in an op-ed published in the Washington Post Oct. 11, “Congress must untie Biden’s hands on Taiwan,” called for an act that would allow the president to bypass Congress to declare war on China.

The Stars and Stripes daily newspaper that’s issued from the Pentagon headlined Oct. 12: “Retired Marine colonel says U.S. should weigh nuclear war with China over Taiwan.”

Ruling class behind anti-China campaign

Has the rapprochement between Washington and Beijing, as represented by the Shanghai Communique, ended? This breakup is not just the doing of Donald Trump or Joe Biden. It flows from the fear of the predominant sections of the U.S. ruling class that the attempt to overthrow Chinese socialism from within has failed, just as the previous military aggression from 1969 to 1975 also failed.

In the 1970s when China “opened up,” the giant capitalist monopolies were charging into the Chinese markets. But the strong socialists of the People’s Republic of China has held on. And the stronger China becomes, the more Wall Street fears for its economic dominance and the more the Pentagon fears for its military dominance.

On Feb. 25, China’s President Xi Jinping announced that 853 million Chinese people have lifted themselves out of poverty since 1981 thanks to large-scale interventions from both the Chinese state and the Communist Party of China’s technological and economic strength — as well as its remarkable response to the coronavirus (c. 616,000 total deaths compared to more than 718,000 in the U.S.) — has raised a new respect for socialism.

U.S. ruling class hostility to China, the drive to build a socialist society is behind the New Cold War and the real threat of hot war.
PROPPING UP THE U.S. MILITARY IS DRIVING THE ECONOMY DOWN

By Gary Wilson

Talk about inflation. On Oct. 18, a Senate panel approved an annual Pentagon budget that’s at least $29 billion more than last year and $10 billion more than requested.

Most of the increase is earmarked for “equipment purchases” — a big, fat giveaway to the military-industrial complex.

What happened to the necessity to limit spending, to cut back government spending?

The Pentagon’s budget over nine years, from 2011 to 2020, has been $91 trillion. Funding for the Pentagon constitutes most, but not all, U.S. military spending.

The CIA budget, for example, is unpublished and uncounted.

The U.S. spends more on its military than the next 10 countries combined. India, Brazil, Britain, China, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Korea.

Congress, meanwhile, can’t come up with $350 billion a year — which is $35 trillion over 10 years — to fund President Joe Biden’s Build Back Better Act.

Of course, there’s very little about the military budget being report ed in the major media. The military budget isn’t open to debate or dispute. Even the efforts of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Bernie Sanders to slow down military spending go mostly unreported.

War has ended?

Why did the Pentagon budget need to get a big increase, plus an extra, mystery $10-billion bonus? Military spending was already higher than ever and expanding at a faster rate than ever.

Some say the big spending is meant to counter the economic crisis aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. One sometimes hears that it was the military buildup for World War II that finally ended the Great Depression of the 1930s.

But military spending was already at record highs when the recession of 2020 hit, so it clearly didn’t prevent an economic downturn.

Of course, the 2020 recession was more than the usual cyclical downturn. But there were many signs a recession was developing before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Industrial production in most countries had already ceased to rise. The U.S. Federal Reserve System had already initiated an “easing” cycle — that is, increasing the money supply — in an attempt to contain the incipient downturn.

CAPITALISM’S BOOM AND BUST

The capitalist boom-and-bust cycle was noted long ago by Karl Marx. While capitalism has changed since Marx wrote, evolving from industrial capitalism to monopoly capitalism, the boom-and-bust cycle has continued.

The domination of capitalism on a world scale means that periodic crises return again and again, each one causing great hardship.

The system’s dependence on relentless expansion and its inherent drive to maximize profit rather than meet human needs causes periodic collapses. And the bosses make the workers pay for the collapse.

Marx identified the essence of the periodic crises of capitalism as crises of overproduction very early on, even in the Communist Manifesto in 1848. Traditional bourgeois economic theory denied that capitalism could have crises. Bourgeois economist John Maynard Keynes, looking at the catastrophic crisis of the 1930s, may be best known for acknowledging the reality that capitalism can have crises.

Keynes — and the economic policies identified with him — believed the state could intervene to lessen the crises if not eliminate them altogether.

According to Keynes, capitalism does not have crises of overproduction, as Marx had shown. Rather, Keynes argued that it was a crisis of under-consumption that can be resolved by the state stepping in to purchase goods directly, printing money to give people to spend themselves and/or using government deficit spending to put more money into the economy.

Part of the reason Keynes favored ending the gold standard was to allow this to happen more easily.

A STIMULANT BECOMES A DEPRESSANT

Military spending was at first a powerful stimulant to production. A fact that Keynesian economists never tire of noting. The constant and expanding military spending in the U.S., however, has become a primary cause of inflation, even if that is not acknowledged by the bourgeois economists.

At the same time, military spending represses the expansion of capitalist reproduction.

Economic reproduction is the process whereby the means of production — the raw materials, facilities, machinery and tools used in the production of goods and services — are replaced. Expanding reproduction — or reproduction on an expanded basis — is the economic essence of capitalism.

Under expanded reproduction, the means of production are not only replaced, they are expanded. The capitalist must expand capital and machinery — constant capital. If not, there is failure: expand or die.

However, military spending means contracted reproduction. Factories that under normal conditions produce commodities that are used to replace the equipment of existing factories or build new factories are instead producing the means of destruction.

The economy rots from within by destroying the productive forces, including, in the case of actual warfare, the most important productive force — the workers.

NFL’s RACISM, MISOGYNY AND HOMOPHOBIA

Continued from page 4

PGA TOUR

South Africa, which has a password non grata.

After the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis sparked weeks of militant national protest, the NFL was finally embarrassed into changing its position on issues of race such as the Black Lives Matter movement.

And yet, even after being called out by players, to say what he had previously avoided: “Black Lives Matter.” He apologized for not speaking before and vowed that the NFL would change.

It was because of the mass movement that John Gruden is now on board, after being called out by players, to say what he had previously avoided: “Black Lives Matter.” He apologized for not speaking before and vowed that the NFL would change.

In the wake of the protests and civic unrest of 2020, the league continues to make a big deal of its supposed commitment to supporting women, LGBTQ+ people and particularly African Americans. This year, the NFL kept up the practice of painting feel-good phrases like “End Racism” in end zones and of allowing players to wear approved slogans like “Black Lives Matter” on the back of helmets.

Even though the league gives lip service against racism, the numbers demonstrate the NFL’s hypocrisy.

Black players make up close to 70% percent of the NFL rosters, including most of the league’s biggest stars.

However, there are only five Black general managers of teams. There are no Black team owners with majority shares. In addition, only three out of 32 head coaches are Black, even though there were eight head coach vacancies from last season.

Ironically, the Raiders under the ownership of Al Davis was one of the most progressive teams in the league. In 1989, the Raiders hired Art Shell, the first Black head coach in the league’s modern era. The Raiders also hired the first Latinx head coach, Tom Flores, in 1979. The Raiders in 1997 also hired AnyTrask, the first woman to become an executive for a NFL team.

After the hiring of Art Shell 32 years ago, not much has changed.

Powerful, wealthy white men have by far the most control over professional football. How they act, whom they appoint and hire, what they say — and in this case the casual jokes and demeaning put-downs — underscores the lie of the league’s public relations displays. These are the men who make the day-to-day decisions in football. And those emails are where the NFL owners’ culture was exhibited.

The league may try to spin and make John Gruden to be just one bad apple but the truth is, the whole NFL ownership and management is rotten to the core.

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EUA para destrozar el país mediante Fiscal impuesta por el congreso de terremotos y ahora la pandemia. No han sido pocas. Porque al terrible Huracán María del 2017, le siguieron una catástrofe, que por cierto aquí no han sido pocas. Porque al terrible Huracán María del 2017, le siguieron terremotos y ahora la pandemia.

Pero la peor catástrofe ha sido la imposición de la Junta de Control Fiscal impuesta por el congreso de EUA para destrozar el país mediante recortes absolutos a los presupuestos de servicios esenciales.  

Aparato de las privatizaciones de servicios básicos, intentan destruir el sistema público universitario, la Universidad de Puerto Rico con sus 11 recintos. Y todo esto que más se empieza en cerrar es el de la montaña, en Utuado. ¿Por qué? Este se especializa en agricultura. Y en un país—la que depende en más del 98% de la importación de alimentos para subsistir, este cierre es una amenaza a nuestra sustentabilidad.

Teniendo en cuenta que los jóvenes que se han empeñado en quedarse para desarrollar el país, están creando fincas agropecuarias que se benefician de los estudios del recinto de Utuado. Por lo tanto este cierre es un ataque directo a esa juventud.

Pero el otro problema es que no se ha escrito y los jóvenes universitarios son conocidos por su combatividad.