

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**'Sankara' play: A vivid portrayal of revolution in Burkina Faso**  
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 82/NO. 17 APRIL 30, 2018

## *'I want to read these socialist books and that Militant paper'*

BY DAN FEIN

FRANKFORT, Ky. — "I want to read these socialist books and newspapers. They are just what I was looking for. Capitalism has nothing to offer workers today," said math teacher Charles Coulston when he came up to

### **SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY SPRING DRIVES**

the Socialist Workers Party literature table we set up at the April 14 teachers' rally at the state Capitol here.

Thousands of teachers and their supporters were demonstrating to defend their pensions that are under attack by the state legislature.

Nineteen subscriptions and 19 books on special offer were grabbed up by teachers and others looking for how to confront the effects of today's crisis of capitalism. Fifty-one single copies of the *Militant* were sold. Two teachers made donations to the Militant Fighting Fund.

Members and supporters of the  
**Continued on page 3**

## Teachers mount fights against gov't attacks

School protests inspire workers, set example



Teachers protest April 13 in Frankfort, Kentucky. Teachers' struggles across country are taking on character of broader social movement, an example for building a fighting labor movement.

BY SUSAN LAMONT

FRANKFORT, Ky. — In a scene increasingly familiar across the country, thousands of teachers, other school workers and students and supporters rallied outside the state Capitol here April 13. They were protesting attacks by Gov. Matt Bevin and the state legislature on retirement funds and money for public education.

These actions — here and in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona and elsewhere — have tended to take on the character of a broader social movement. They have inspired workers across the country.

As the legislators met for the final two days of their 60-day session,

**Continued on page 6**

## *The working class is the true target of liberals' fury*

BY TERRY EVANS

In a virtually unprecedented move, FBI agents raided the office, home and hotel room of President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Michael Cohen April 9. They were directed by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, at the recommendation of former FBI Director Robert Mueller, the special counsel seeking to get the president impeached.

The move is further proof that Mueller's probe, supposedly into Russian interference in the 2016 election, is in fact a frame-up operation using methods that are dangerous for the working class.

After almost a year of digging around and seeking to stick charges against people around the president to see if he can get one to turn on him, Mueller has produced nothing. The liberals and petty-bourgeois left have hailed the former top U.S. government spy, hoping he can oust Trump from office.

"Are we really in a situation where Bob Mueller is no longer investigating crimes, he's just investigating people?" asked Rep. Matt Gaetz, a Republican from Florida. But Mueller's probe, like all prosecutors and grand juries, works by targeting an individual and then searching for a crime to pin on them.

**Continued on page 9**

## US-led Syria missile attack driven by conflicts with Tehran, Moscow



Douma, eastern Ghouta, near Damascus, March 30. After five-year siege, air assaults and chemical weapon attack, Syrian government forced opposition groups to surrender and leave.

BY TERRY EVANS

The imperialist rulers in Washington, London and Paris carried out a joint missile attack on the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship's chemical weapons operations in Syria April 13. This followed the regime's gas attack on civilians in opposition stronghold Douma, a Damascus suburb, a week earlier.

These two military moves — and

the reactions from Moscow, Tehran, Ankara, Riyadh and other capitalist regimes in the region — exposed their conflicting economic, political and military interests there.

U.S., French and U.K. naval vessels fired 105 Tomahawk missiles. They hit and destroyed some of Assad's chemical-weapons research and de-

**Continued on page 9**

## *SWP: 'All US troops out of Korea! End sanctions against the DPRK!'*

The following message was sent to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by Steve Clark, writing on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists April 13.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists send greetings on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's April 15 national holiday. We stand in solidarity with the seventy-three-year-long struggle to reunify Korea, which Washington partitioned after World War II as it drowned popular uprisings of Korean working people in blood.

We welcome recent steps that have opened the road to agreement by Seoul, Beijing, and Washington to sit down at the table with the DPRK for talks. We demand that Washington, after almost sixty-five years, sign a peace treaty ending the murderous war the US imperialist rulers inflicted on the Korean people from 1950 to 1953.

We demand an immediate and un-

conditional end to US-initiated economic and financial sanctions against the DPRK. We call on Washington to withdraw all US troops and weapons

**Continued on page 3**

### Inside

France: Rail workers strike against government attacks 2

Workers in Puerto Rico resist attacks by US, colonial rulers 4

Editorial: Campaign with 'Militant,' SWP books! 9

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Australia dockworkers strike four days over working conditions

Norfolk Southern sues rail workers for crash damage



# France: Rail workers strike against government attacks

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS — An eerie silence settled over the deserted Gare de l’Est train terminal here April 9, replacing the noisy hum of the hundreds of thousands of passengers who normally crisscross the station daily. In a wave of rolling strikes, railroad workers have been bringing much of French transit — both freight and passenger service — to a halt.

Rail unions have called for two days on strike followed by three days of work in a repeating cycle for the next three months. They are protesting the French government’s plan to reorganize the SNCF national rail system, targeting workers’ job rights. Currently rail workers have legal protections against layoffs and firings, a result of decades of class battles. These protections are commonly called “special status.” Under the government’s plans, new hires would no longer have these protections, creating a divisive two-tier system. Most rail workers fear these steps will lead to deeper attacks.

The government of President Emmanuel Macron is going after the unions in France and seeking other cutbacks to strengthen French capital and its ability to compete and reap profits. They hadn’t expected the solidarity of rail workers with the “new hires.”

Bondholders are increasingly worried about the fate of the SNCF’s 47 billion euro debt. Macron says that the government is willing to pick up part of the debt — as long as the rail workers give up their hard-won gains.

Rail workers held an April 13 strike meeting at Paris’ Gare du Nord, the larg-

est train station in Europe. Worker after worker spoke, demanding the unions go beyond their call for two-day rolling strikes. Support for this position was adopted by majority vote. The meeting also voted to set up a strike fund to finance printing costs to reach passengers and other workers. The strikers also discussed the possibility of uniting their strike protests with actions taking place by other workers and students.

One striker gave a report on the 44-day strike last December against ONET company by mostly immigrant workers subcontracted to clean the trains and rail stations in the north of Paris. These workers don’t have “special status,” which is reserved for French citizens. “We should look for convergence between our struggles and theirs,” she said. ONET workers marched with the rail workers at the March 22 demonstration that opened the current round of strikes.

Gauthier Tacchella is an engineer with eight years at the SNCF and a member of the Strike Organization Bureau at Gare du Nord. He told the *Militant* that they would be looking for common actions with hospital workers, students and strikers at Carrefour, a Walmart-like chain in France and elsewhere. The Strike Organization Bureau is a voluntary association of strikers, both union members and nonunion, who do much of the organizational work for the strike. A similar association called the Mobilization Committee exists at the Gare de l’Est terminal.

Some 20,000 Carrefour workers went on a one-day nationwide strike



Militant/Claude Bleton

Protest inside Gare du Nord terminal in Paris, March 22, by striking rail workers and employees of ONET, mostly immigrants who clean trains and stations, during rail workers’ strike.

March 31. The retail giant has a total workforce of 115,000. The strike was a protest against boss plans to slash 5,200 workers this year and close 273 smaller stores. Many workers can’t get full-time work and face split shifts and ever-changing schedules.

Marc Kinzel, who works in the port of Marseille, told the *Militant* that his local Carrefour was barricaded by striking workers who had moved in shopping carts to block access. “It wasn’t a normal French strike,” he said, “It was more like a determined mobilization for dignity.”

After their meeting, strikers at Gare du Nord were joined by fellow rail workers from Gare St Lazare, Gare de l’Est and Gare d’Austerlitz to march

across Paris to Tolbiac University. It’s one of a number of campuses across the country where students have been occupying buildings in opposition to government moves to “reform” university level education.

The two demonstrations — some 2,000 students and workers in about equal numbers — came together, chanting, “Rail workers, students, same Macron, same struggle.”

The night before, the police raided the Sorbonne to evict students occupying the university center there.

Marc Kinzel in Marseille and Claude Bleton in Paris contributed to this article.

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Three-part *Militant* series on Korea

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Supplement  
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## History of US intervention in Korea

### US out of Korea! An unknown history

BY STEVE CLARK

The following article was originally published in three parts in the *Militant* in 2013 on September 23, September 30, and October 7.

**Part 1: How Korean workers and farmers began resistance to U.S. domination, forced partition of nation**

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Korean peo-

well, the vast majority of homes, hospitals, schools, factories and other structures were leveled. Only three major buildings were left standing in Pyongyang, and 18 of the 22 largest cities in the North were 50 to 100 percent destroyed.

After Chinese troops joined the DPRK’s fight against Washington’s war of conquest on the peninsula in October 1950, Gen. Douglas MacArthur ordered destruction of every “installation, factory, city and village” in the North up to the Yalu River. Gen. Curtis LeMay, head of the U.S. Strategic Air Command at the time, later wrote, “We eventually burned

## The Militant

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**THE MILITANT**

## Amnesty now! No more deportations!

The fight to organize immigrant workers is a life-and-death question for uniting the working class, building effective unions, defending our class interests and opening the road to fight to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

Farmworkers in Florida fields 2017. To compete, capitalists exploit immigrant workers.

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'I want to read these books'

Continued from front page

SWP and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K. are on an eight-week campaign to sell 1,400 subscriptions to the *Militant* and a similar number of books by party leaders and other revolutionaries, and to raise \$112,000 for the paper. The annual fund drive helps cover the paper's operating expenses and to set up an improved website, scheduled to be completed before the end of May. The five books on special are shown below.

Dozens of SWP supporters have joined rallies of teachers and other schools workers fighting for higher wages, better conditions and more funds for schools in West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Arizona.

Joanna Thompson, a teacher from Hazard, told SWP member Ilona Gersh, "If we don't do something now, the public school system will lose its funding and be forced to close the doors." Gersh asked her, "Where do you think the school funding should come from?"

"They can't put more taxes on us," Thompson said. "Tax the coal companies, the gambling industry and medical marijuana companies." She signed up for a *Militant* subscription and got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. SWP members Rose Engstrom and Rachel Wilson participated in a teachers' rally in Oklahoma City April 10 where they met Christa McAlister, a 26-year-old band director. "This crisis shows Oklahomans how important it is to vote," she said.

"In every social struggle that gains some strength, we see the Democratic Party tries to usurp that power and suck it off the streets and into the capitalist two-party system," Wilson replied. McAlister thought about it and

agreed, and got a *Militant* subscription. "I support the teachers 100 percent! I think it's great!" was the response of Charley Manning when SWP members knocked on her door in Chandler, Oklahoma. She said she took her kids to see the teachers' march from Tulsa to the Capitol in Oklahoma City when it came through town to show support to their fight. Manning got a subscription, as did two other people in Chandler when we knocked on their doors April 11.

A team of three SWP members from California went to Arizona April 13-14 where teachers are fighting for a 20 percent wage increase after years with no raises. The team went door to door in Mesa where they met Martin Hernandez, an organizer for the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Hernandez picked up a year's *Militant* subscription as well as a copy of "*It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System*," written by five Cuban revolutionaries who had been imprisoned up to 16 years in the U.S. for their activities in defense of the revolution. Team members sold six *Militant* subscriptions and nine books on special.

Erin O'Brien met Communist League member Katy LeRoux in the employee cafeteria at the retail store where they work in British Columbia. She wanted to learn more about Cuba, so LeRoux



Militant/Carole Lesnick  
Martin Hernandez, left, an organizer for United Food and Commercial Workers union, got *Militant* subscription and "*It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System*" when Bernie Senter knocked on his door in Mesa, Arizona, April 14, to introduce the SWP.

told her about "*It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System*." She invited LeRoux over for coffee.

When LeRoux showed her the *Militant's* coverage of the U.S. teachers' fights, she said, "I'd like to read that." On Monday she brought in \$20 for the subscription, the book and a donation to the Militant Fighting Fund.

"As part of teams going door to door in Carlton, a working-class suburb in Sydney's south April 15, I met Yuantu Huang, 58, a worker in a computer fac-

tory," Ron Poulsen writes from Australia. "He told me that after some layoffs at the factory, he is now forced to do the job of two workers and to take work home to complete without pay.

"Huang made a \$20 donation to the Militant Fighting Fund," Poulsen said.

To go with SWP members to the teachers' fights, and to join efforts to expand the reach of the party's publications and raise funds for the *Militant*, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 8.

SWP: 'All US troops out of Korea! End sanctions!'

Continued from front page

from Korea. And to end, once and for all, the annual Foal Eagle/Key Resolve joint US- South Korean military maneuvers, which are taking place again this very month.

On top of these *direct* violations of Korea's sovereignty, the US government has far and away the largest "strategic arsenal" in Asia, deploying 60 percent of the navy's sixty-nine submarines, equipped with both conventional and nuclear missiles. The stakes have never been higher in ensuring a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and Japan, including an end to Washington's nuclear "umbrella" and deployment of nuclear-armed warships and submarines

in the surrounding seas and skies. Rising struggles by teachers and school workers in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and elsewhere across the United States — supported by other workers, unionists, and students — are among the signs of a political awakening among working people whose lives and livelihoods have been ravaged by world capitalism's economic and political crisis. It is working-class and farm families in the US, too, who are hit hardest by deaths, injuries, and ruined futures as cannon fodder for Washington's brutal military actions and wars against fellow working people in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and beyond. As Socialist Workers Party members and Young Socialists fight alongside other workers and trade unionists; as we campaign on their doorsteps and porches; as we join protests demanding "Amnesty Now! Stop the Deportations!" demonstrations against cop brutality

and killings, and protests in defense of women's rights — we explain that assaults on working people at home are inflicted by the same wealthy families who plan and benefit from Washington's reactionary foreign and military policies against our sisters and brothers the world over. It is among workers and farmers like these that the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists explain why all of us must raise our voices to demand: End all economic and banking sanctions against the DPRK by Washington and every government in the world! US troops, ships, planes, and missile and radar systems out of Korea! For a Korean Peninsula, Japan, and surrounding skies and waters free of nuclear weapons! On this DPRK national holiday, we join the courageous and embattled Korean people in affirming: *Korea is one!*

Campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, fund						
March 24–May 22 (week three)						
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	95	43	95	23	\$5,000	\$300
Atlanta	90	27	90	20	\$9,700	\$1,490
Chicago	110	64	110	51	\$11,500	\$2,426
Dallas*	50	34	40	19	\$1,900	\$475
Lincoln	20	12	20	8	\$300	\$116
Los Angeles	125	52	125	15	\$10,000	\$1,851
Miami	35	14	35	13	\$3,200	\$1,843
New York	165	71	165	52	\$16,700	\$3,769
Oakland	85	29	85	20	\$13,000	\$3,839
Philadelphia	65	27	65	19	\$3,600	\$700
Seattle	95	41	95	26	\$7,900	\$476
Twin Cities	65	43	65	28	\$4,500	\$320
Washington	70	39	70	19	\$7,500	\$2,366
Total U.S.	1,070	496	1,060	313	\$94,800	\$19,971
Prisoners	25	9				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	70	44	70	30	\$2,500	\$480
Manchester	50	12	50	4	\$950	\$71
Total U.K.	120	56	120	34	\$3,450	\$551
CANADA						
Montreal	60	11	60	14	\$5,700	\$1,325
Vancouver	45	17	45	11	\$3,000	\$363
Total Canada	105	28	105	25	\$8,700	\$1,688
NEW ZEALAND						
	45	18	45	8	\$4,000	\$808
AUSTRALIA						
	40	19	40	10	\$800	\$375
Other						500
Total	1,405	626	1,370	390	\$111,750	\$23,893
SHOULD BE	1,400	525	1,400	525	\$112,000	\$42,000
*Raised goal						

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Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes \$15. With subscription: \$10

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Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism by Jack Barnes

The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record Why Washington Fears Working People by Jack Barnes

Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? A Necessary Debate Among Working People by Mary-Alice Waters

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To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8

The Militant April 30, 2018 3



# Workers in Puerto Rico resist attacks by US, colonial rulers

BY SETH GALINSKY

“We’ve done the Band-Aid,” Mike Byrne, Puerto Rico coordinator for the U.S. rulers’ Federal Emergency Management Agency, told the press in early April. “We’ve patched the [electrical] system back together.”

Some patch! At least 100,000 people are still without power and may never get it, mostly in rural towns and in mountainous areas on the island, seven months after hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged the U.S. colony — and just two months before the start of this year’s hurricane season. On April 18 the entire electrical grid went down again when a U.S. contractor got too close to a power line with excavating equipment.

“There are tens of thousands of people without electricity, tens of thousands whose homes were destroyed that don’t qualify for aid because they don’t have official title to the land in the eyes of the bureaucracy,” Rev. Rufino Carrión said by phone from Gurabo April 17. “Some people salvaged sheets of zinc to put on a temporary roof and FEMA says they don’t qualify for help because they already have a roof!”

The electrical grid was on the verge of collapse well before the storms hit, because the colonial regime said its growing financial crisis meant it had to cut back on maintenance, lay off

electrical workers and stop capital investment. The priority was to maximize payments on the government’s \$74 billion debt.

## ‘Criminal neglect’

“This is criminal neglect and a lack of respect for the Puerto Rican people,” longtime independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda said by phone from San Juan April 16. “More people died from the lack of electricity, the lack of oxygen, the lack of adequate medical care than from the hurricane itself. I blame both the U.S. and the colonial government.”

The government’s official death toll from the hurricane is 64. But the *New York Times* reported in December that the real toll is more than 1,000, because the colonial regime doesn’t count deaths that were an indirect result of the monthslong power outages, closed health centers and the inability to refrigerate medicines like insulin.

Meanwhile, the colonial regime and the U.S. government’s Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico continue to put the squeeze on working people to ensure payment on the debt. The board, or junta as it is known in Spanish, was appointed by President Barack Obama with the power to override any financial decision of the island’s government.



Eduardo Meléndez

Protest in San Juan March 19 against Puerto Rican government plan to close 283 public schools, set up charter schools and promote private ones. New protests are set for April 25.

Since 2006, in the face of the worldwide economic crisis of capitalist production and trade, successive governments in Puerto Rico have slashed pensions, laid off more than 30,000 government workers, raised sales taxes and cut medical coverage. Gov. Ricardo Rosselló has accelerated the anti-working-class offensive, pushing plans to privatize the electric company, slash education, shrink the government workforce and keep cutting wages, pensions and benefits.

## Education protests

The Federation of Puerto Rican Teachers is protesting government

plans to close 283 schools — one-quarter of the island’s public schools — set up charter schools and issue vouchers parents can use to pay tuition at private schools. This is on top of 150 schools closed between 2010 and 2015.

“Secretary of Education Julia Keleher says she is closing schools because enrollment has gone down, with so many people moving to the U.S.,” Karla Sanabria, a teacher and member of the federation, told the *Militant* April 17. “She represents the rich and just looks at it like a business, a math question. In Jayuya in the mountains, where they still don’t have electricity, they’re going to close one of the most important schools.”

Even officials of the Association of Puerto Rican Teachers, which has refused to support strikes for fear of losing their official recognition as bargaining agent for teachers, are organizing “a human shield” outside the Capitol in San Juan April 25 to protest the attacks.

The Federation of Puerto Rican Teachers has been organizing daily protests by parents, students and teachers at schools across the island to build for an island-wide strike they have called for May 1, part of broader labor protests that day.

Several hundred teachers joined a national assembly coordinated by the federation and the National Union of Educators and Education Workers, Puerto Rican Educators in Action and Educamos April 15 to adopt plans to fight against the government moves.

But for wealthy bondholders and hedge fund profiteers things are looking up. “Puerto Rican bonds have been the best-performing fixed income investment thus far in 2018,” the *New York Post* reported April 17. Hoping to make a killing, Pacific Investment Management Co. recently added \$315 million of Puerto Rico bonds to its portfolio.

“How can this be?” the *Post* asked, as if the paper’s capitalist owners didn’t already know. U.S. and Puerto Rican capitalists are reaping superprofits on hundreds of millions of dollars of U.S. “aid” and loans to “reconstruct” Puerto Rico, most of which will bring no lasting benefits to the Puerto Rican people. And they’re confident that when the junta certifies the Puerto Rican government’s financial “plan” April 20, payments on the debt will be the highest priority.

# Philippine students scoop up communist literature

BY RON POULSEN

MANILA, Philippines — Members of the Communist Leagues in Australia and New Zealand took advantage of an invitation from PUP SPEAK — the Student Party for Equality and Advancement of Knowledge — to set up a literature table at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines with books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionary leaders.

Three communist workers, this author and Linda Harris from Australia and Janet Roth from New Zealand were here March 6-10 to explain how these books help working people understand and change the world. A Pathfinder books stall was also set up at the University of Philippines, hosted by the Department of English and Comparative Literature.

The tables were always busy, as young people looking to understand the crisis of capitalism today and read about revolutionary working-class politics bought 113 books and six subscriptions to the *Militant*.

Jona Claire Turalde from the Philippine Safe Abortion Advocacy Network said next time she wanted to get the pamphlet on abortion rights that had been already sold out. Books on the fight for women’s liberation were snapped up.

Some students were attracted to titles on labor struggles and working-class politics, including *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?*

Books on the history of the popular insurrection by Cuban workers and peasants led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, and on the way millions of men and women transformed themselves in the course of the socialist revolution there, were a main attrac-



Militant/Ron Poulsen

Display of revolutionary books attracts students at University of Philippines campus in Manila during March visit by members of Communist Leagues from Australia and New Zealand.

tion. Quite a few of those who swarmed around our stalls were looking for an alternative to Maoism, and its Stalinist counterrevolutionary program and thug methods, which have dominated the left and labor movement here for decades.

Glecy Atienza, a teacher at the University of the Philippines, bought a range of titles to help restock her department’s library, which was lost when a university building burnt down.

We also widely distributed the SWP statement, “For Recognition of a Palestinian State and of Israel,” which outlines a perspective for revolutionary struggle uniting working people in the Middle East and worldwide.

The Communist League members also made arrangements for Pathfinder Press to participate in the Manila International Book Fair at the Mall of Asia Sept. 12-16.

## Join May 1 actions to demand: No deportations! Amnesty now!

**Albany, New York:** 11 a.m., March for Immigrant Rights, Townsend Park, 201 Washington Ave. Tel: (518) 669-5299

**Los Angeles:** 12 p.m. to 3 p.m., Pershing Square, 6th and Olive St. Tel: (323) 406-3270 or (562) 243-5559.

**Oakland:** 3 p.m., No Bans! No Raids! No Wall! Oscar Grant Plaza 1333 Broadway. Tel: (510) 444-0484

**Seattle:** 2:30 p.m., Judkins Park and Playfield. March at 3:30 p.m. Sponsors: El Comité and May 1st Action Coalition. Tel: (206) 465-5511.

**Waukesha, Wisconsin:** Day Without Latinos and Immigrants. 10 a.m., gather at Cutler Park on Wisconsin Ave. Sponsor: Voces de la Frontera. Tel: (414) 643-1620.



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Australia dockworkers strike four days over working conditions

MELBOURNE, Australia — Some 90 dockworkers, members of the Maritime Union of Australia, and their supporters rallied outside the gates of Qube Ports' Webb Dock car terminal here April 8. The 145 workers at Qube, who unload imported vehicles, struck for four days to protest the company's drive to terminate their union agreement.

"The main issues are over working conditions," said Andrew Martin, one of the union delegates, who has been a temporary worker with the company for just over a year. Nearly 70 percent employed by Qube at this port are casuals.

Workers on the picket line explained that fatigue and safety are the big questions. The company can schedule workers on a 12-hour night shift with only an eight-hour break before coming back on day shift. Many drive an hour to get to work.

Workers who unload bulk cargo at Qube's nearby Appleton terminal face some of the most dangerous conditions on the docks. "There is nowhere to move

in the hold out of the swing of the crane, you have to be alert," Martin said. Three dockworkers have been killed in the last 15 years at Appleton Dock.

Permanent workers at Qube used to get an unpaid week off after seven weeks of shift work, but the company took this away three years ago, when there was less work. Since hiring has now picked up, workers are demanding this practice be reinstated.

"It's important to win solidarity," Martin said. "All the bosses are looking at this fight. We need to win for everyone."

— Linda Harris and Manuele Lasalo

## Delta workers rally in Minnesota to build support for a union

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Delta Airlines ramp and cargo workers, flight attendants and supporters held a standing-room-only rally at the Labor Center here April 4 to advance their fight to organize a union. Delta workers from the Atlanta, Boston, Minneapolis, New York and Madison, Wisconsin, airports — all part of the International Association of



Militant/Linda Harris

Dockworkers, members of Maritime Union of Australia, rally outside gates of Qube Ports' Webb Dock terminal in Melbourne April 8 at end of four-day strike over working conditions.

Machinists union-organizing effort — spoke at the rally. Delta bought Northwest Airlines in 2008, where workers were members of the IAM.

After the merger, workers at the combined company voted down the union by a small majority under pressure of a concerted boss campaign. Pro-union

workers are campaigning to get enough union cards signed to have a new vote.

The 35 Minneapolis ramp workers in attendance included older and newer workers. New hires on the ramp are all assigned Ready Reserve status. They get half the pay of Delta full-time employees, no benefits and are only allowed to work 1,400 hours per year. Many have been in the Ready Reserve for years.

Rob LaVigne, who was part of the last group of Ready Reserve to become full time several years ago, said he came to the rally because it's about "getting rights back, getting what we're worth." LaVigne said the only way a Ready Reserve worker gets full-time work today is to agree to become a lead.

Melvin Eves, who has worked at Delta for 32 years, came to the rally with a newer ramp worker from Detroit. "We need solidarity in this fight, us older guys have to stand up for the young guys," Eves told the *Militant*. "We had all these benefits and they don't."

Joe Evica, a Ready Reserve worker in Madison, said, "West Virginia teachers are the example we need to follow."

"The reason workers came out is from the deteriorating conditions they face on the job," Minneapolis ramp worker Marty Knaeble told the *Militant*, "combined with confidence that the organizing momentum makes success possible."

— Helen Meyers

# Norfolk Southern sues rail workers for crash damage

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Seeking to pin the blame on workers for deteriorating railroad safety conditions, Norfolk Southern Railway bosses are suing two of its employees for a collision and derailment in Georgetown, Kentucky, last month.

In a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court April 5, the company claims that engineer Kevin Tobergte and conductor Andrew Hall were responsible for the "total destruction" of two locomotives and extensive damage to other rail cars. The bosses are asking the court to find these workers liable for damages to the locomotives, rail cars, tracks, right of way, communications and signal equipment, the costs of cleaning up spilled diesel fuel, as well as payouts to landowners adjacent to the wreck and Norfolk Southern customers whose freight was delayed.

"This is outrageous, Norfolk Southern Railway is attempting to set a precedent in scapegoating a train crew for damages even if the company could prove negligent," Dan Crocker, a BNSF engineer working out of Lincoln, Nebraska, and president of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Division 98, told the *Militant*. "There is an increasing hypocrisy of the employers and the government to let business owners off the hook and go after the workers."

Late in the evening March 18 a track was switched to put Norfolk Southern train No. 175 onto an adjacent track. When the crew stopped the train, another freight train collided with it, *Trains* magazine reported. All four crew members were injured. Over 200 train cars were involved in the collision, 13 of them derailed, with a fire that led to temporary evacuation of residents from the area.

Initially the rail bosses refused to say what the trains were carrying or what spilled, but later said it was a nonhazardous nut oil.

Rail bosses in their drive for profits are skimping on rail and train maintenance, endangering rail workers and nearby communities. They're on a drive to get fewer workers to do more in less

time on longer and longer trains.

As a result, the number of train disasters has risen, with the bosses accusing workers of being at fault. "In the wake of recent dramatic and highly visible railroad accidents in the United States and Canada," said BLET President Dennis Pierce earlier this year, "there has been a trend to criminalize railroad workers and prosecute them as the sole cause of these tragedies."

This includes the 2013 runaway train that derailed and exploded in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, killing 47 people. Engineer Thomas Harding and traffic coordinator Richard Labrie were scapegoated by the rail bosses and put on trial by the Canadian government. But the frame-up came apart and the jury found the rail workers not guilty in January.

Other examples include the Amtrak train that derailed and killed eight people near Philadelphia in 2015; derail-

ment of a CSX freight train in Hyndman, Pennsylvania, in August 2017, with spillage of molten sulfur and liquefied petroleum gas forcing evacuation of residents; and the December 2017 crash and derailment of an Amtrak train in Washington state, killing three passengers and wounding over 100.

Many unionists think the rail bosses' goal in the lawsuit is not to get money. "They're going to have to start paying railroaders \$1 million or \$2 million annually so they can pay for when their employer sues them," John Risch, national legislative director for the SMART Transportation Division union, told *Trains* after the Kentucky derailment.

The real reason for the suit is to intimidate and threaten rail workers.

Joe Swanson in Lincoln, Nebraska, contributed to this article.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 3, 1993

President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno are responsible for the cold-blooded murder of 86 people, including 17 children, outside Waco, Texas.

Tens of millions of people watched in horror on TV the inferno that culminated the FBI's April 19 assault on the large wooden complex housing the Branch Davidian religious sect. Six hours earlier armored vehicles had begun smashing through the walls of the buildings, pumping tear gas inside.

This heinous crime exposes the true face of the bipartisan imperialist presidency, Congress, armed forces, cop agencies, and courts. The entire operation had been carried out over weeks with coarse disregard for democratic rights and with callous indifference to the human life of anyone outside of ruling-class circles and the multitude of professional and middle-class retainers.



April 29, 1968

The need for the antiwar movement to fight for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Vietnam through mass mobilizations in the streets is more urgent than ever.

Washington has escalated the war once again. More troops are being sent to Vietnam. The bombing of North Vietnam has reached the highest level of the war. The bombing in South Vietnam continues heavy and brutal. The killing of Vietnamese goes on, and the death toll of the GIs mounts.

The antiwar movement must mobilize as never before. It must bring massive new forces to bear in the struggle to end the war. False hopes have been stirred by diplomatic maneuvers which may lead to talks with North Vietnam. The people of Vietnam have demonstrated that they will fight to the death for the right to determine their own fate and the future of their country.



May 1, 1943

The government's wage-freezing program entered a profound crisis and the miners' struggle for higher wages was headed for a showdown as tens of thousands of union members walked out of the coal mines. The UP reported that 41,000 had discontinued work and many more were expected to join them before the contract expired April 30.

UMW President John L. Lewis reaffirmed the traditional stand of the union that "It is perfectly reasonable to assume at all times that the mine workers of the country will not trespass on the properties of the coal operators in the absence of a contract."

The UMW relies on its own half-million members, loyal and militant unionists who understand the difficulties facing them, who have more than once shown the way to the rest of American labor and who are supporting the present struggle almost to a man.



# Teachers fight gov't attacks

Continued from front page

workers demonstrated outside and massed inside the Capitol building. Some secured seats in the galleries over the legislative chambers. At one point hundreds assembled on the floor of the House, chanting, "Where is Bevin? Show your face!"

Those who couldn't get in continued to rally and march outside. At least 39 school districts were shut as teachers got leaves or came down with "sewer flu," a disease that refers to how legislators had passed a bill turning new teachers' pensions into 401(k) accounts by attaching it to a sewage bill. This was one of several sizable rallies by workers and students at the Capitol in the last few weeks.

"I work at a K-12 school in a small town," said Megan Berketis, a young teacher from Danville, 43 miles south of here. She was one of hundreds of workers from across the state who talked with members of the Socialist Workers Party at the protest. "There are 33 teachers, and 26 of us are here today. We haven't had any rallies back home, but before the sewage-pension bill passed, we had several 'walk-ins.' We gathered outside the school with some of the students, and all walked in together to show we're united and strong."

Early morning pickets of school workers all dressed in red, followed by walk-ins, have been a common feature of the recent mobilizations across the country.

Teachers in Kentucky aren't eligible for Social Security, so they depend entirely for retirement on their pensions. The protests made the politicians back off from a proposal to cut the cost-of-living adjustments for retired teachers. But in a divisive move, the sewage bill puts teachers hired after Jan. 1, 2019, in a 401(k)-type plan. Everyone has to pay into it, the money is pooled and some government-hired "professional" sticks it in the stock market. If he picks well — and assuming the capitalist market never crashes — you get paid. If not, you're out of luck.

The Kentucky Education Association, the teachers' union, urged members who could "legally be in Frankfort" to come April 13 for a "Legislative Action Day." Initially, KEA officials opposed holding a rally, instead saying teachers should concentrate on lobbying legislators and look to the November elections to make changes. After it became clear that county union chapters were organizing to go to Frankfort, the officials lent their support.

This discussion and debate over which way forward continued at the rally. While many thought lobbying and working to throw the bums out and get new ones was the way to go, others thought it was relying on themselves, building the protests and solidarity with other workers that could make the difference. Many were influenced by recent mass union protests and gains in West Virginia and Oklahoma.

Several weeks ago the state legislature passed a budget, which increased some money for schools but was "balanced" by a bundle of sales tax assessments that will hit working people. Bevin attacked the new funding and vetoed the budget. But as the teachers mobilized, legislators overrode his veto April 13 and passed it. Many people

at the rally thought this was important because it contains more funding for public education, including some relief to school districts in eastern Kentucky's coal-mining areas, which have been devastated by the ongoing capitalist economic crisis and dramatic decline in coal production in recent years.

## 'There is no pie'

"They talk as if there is a giant pie, and if someone gets a bigger slice, then yours gets smaller," Berketis said. "But there is no pie. We shouldn't have to pay more taxes. Money for education should come from the companies that make a lot of profit."

Teachers and workers throughout the state were furious when Bevin expressed the reaction of the propertied rulers to the protest by saying, "I guarantee you somewhere in Kentucky today, a child was sexually assaulted that was left at home because there was nobody there to watch them."

The firestorm of protest made him "apologize," but he refused to retract what he said.

"Among many workers here there is a strong desire for a win for teachers and school workers," retired coal truck driver Clinton Lafferty told SWP members when they knocked on his door while campaigning in Paintsville in eastern Kentucky April 4. "It's a dirty deal," he said, referring to the attacks on teachers' pensions and on education. "You work all your life, and it's for nothing."

"I hope workers in Kentucky get a chance to experience the kind of solidarity and brotherhood we did in West Virginia," school bus driver Scott Whitt told the *Militant* by phone from Beckley. "Kentucky has the shared history with the miners' union that made the difference in our fight. If labor is strong, the teachers can win."



## Oklahoma teachers end walkout for now, debate what's next

OKLAHOMA CITY — After weeks of preparations, 10 days of teachers walking out of schools across the state and traveling to protest at the state Capitol, a seven-day 110-mile march from Tulsa to Oklahoma City, and countless early morning "walk-ins," teachers and other school workers in Oklahoma suspended their walkout April 13.

"Our formal efforts to lobby elected leaders have achieved all they will be able to accomplish this legislative session," Alicia Priest, president of the Oklahoma Education Association, the state's largest teachers union, said at an April 12 press conference announcing the decision. Continued advocacy needs to happen at the ballot box, she argued.

Workers were divided in their response to the call to end the walkout. Hundreds contin-

## Colo. teachers rally at Capitol April 16, plan more actions



AP Photo/David Zalubowski

DENVER — More than 150 teachers from the Englewood school district headed for their first statewide "Day of Action" outside the Capitol here April 16, demanding higher wages, increased school funding and no cuts to retirees' pensions. The Englewood teachers joined others from across the state in spirited noon and late afternoon rallies of several hundred.

"We want to teach, not proctor tests!" workers chanted, expressing anger at test-score-based schemes to rank teachers, schools, districts and funding. Some added calls to "Defend the undocumented," in a state where there are debates about education for immigrant youth, and for "No guns in the classroom!"

"Our spirits are buoyed by what West Virginia and Oklahoma have accomplished so far," Kerrie Dallman, a high school teacher and president of the Colorado Education Association, which organized the rally, told the crowd. The union has called its next "Day of Action" for April 27.

— HORACE KERR

ued to rally outside the Capitol the next day, saying they would continue the fight. Some, whose schools were not in session, decided to go there the following Monday, April 16, as well. Many debated perspectives on a closed teacher Facebook group called "Oklahoma Teacher Walkout — The Time is Now!" It started at the outset of the protests and now has some 70,000 followers.

"The fight is not over in us and we believe that it's very important to keep going," Christina Floyd, a teacher at Berryhill Public Schools in Tulsa, told Oklahoma News Channel 4. She had been at the Capitol every day since April 2.

Through their mobilizations workers won \$50 million in increased school funding in addition to a \$6,100 wage increase for teachers and \$1,250 for other workers, their first pay raise in 10 years.

Teachers here face the effects of years of budget cuts, pushed as capitalist crisis conditions deepened, and rul-

ing class indifference. Textbooks are a decade old and falling apart. About 20 percent of the state's schools are only open four days a week, for longer hours, to cut costs. So the gains teachers won fell substantially short of their demands.

The discussion on how they can win more has already started, building on the rich lessons of their fight and others taking place across the country.

— Alyson Kennedy



## Arizona school workers vote on whether to strike or not

Teachers, other school workers, parents and students rallied outside their schools across Arizona April 11 and then walked in together to start classes. According to Arizona Educators United, which started the RedForEd movement there and called for the walk-ins, some 110,000 people participated.

The next day Gov. Doug Ducey announced pay raises for teachers of 9 percent this year and 5 percent each of the following two years. Only two days earlier Ducey had called the group a "political circus" and refused to meet with its organizers.

Ducey didn't mention any of the group's other demands, including increased funding for schools and pay raises for other staff — librarians, custodians, cafeteria workers, health assistants and others.

This is "an attempt to stop whatever actions we may have been taking," Arizona Educators United founder Noah Karvelis said in a Facebook video to the group's 40,000 members.

"We can't go back to work" and say to co-workers, "Hey, my pay is great; sorry you're still making minimum wage," teacher Derek Harris told the *Arizona Daily Star* April 12.

The AEU has called for an April 17-19 vote to decide on whether to call a strike.

— Emma Johnson



AZEd News/Lisa Irish

Some 2,500 people gather in "RedForEd" rally March 28 at state Capitol in Phoenix. Arizona ranks among country's lowest in pay.



# ‘Sankara’: a vivid portrayal of Burkina Faso Revolution

London performance depicts how communist leadership of 1983-87 revolution resonates today

*Sankara, a play written and directed by Ricky Dujany, 2018, ran at London's Cockpit Theatre from March 20 to April 14.*

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN  
AND ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON — Our congratulations to Ricky Dujany, who wrote and directed the play “Sankara,” as well as the fine performances by the cast and the band who presented it. They movingly presented the revolutionary political life and contributions of Thomas Sankara, who led the popular revolution that put the toilers in power in Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987. The play has a powerful resonance in today’s crisis-ridden world.

“I was amazed by what the Burkinabè Revolution did in such a short time, and by Sankara’s insistence on taking everything back to the people,” Elise Kitson told the *Militant* after seeing the play.

The play provides a vivid introduc-

## IN REVIEW

tion to the revolution in Burkina Faso, its power and accomplishments, and to the communist political leadership of its president, Thomas Sankara.

We learn from Ike Chuks, who plays the title role, that freedom cannot be granted, it must be conquered; that the goal of the revolution consists in having the people assume power; that through revolution, the toiling masses were both changing the world in which they lived and transforming themselves in the process; and that there could be no social revolution without the liberation of women.

### The Burkinabè Revolution

Formal independence from French colonial rule of this backward, largely rural country, which had an illiteracy rate of over 90 percent and strong remnants of pre-capitalist social relations, was established in 1960. In the words of Sankara’s character, the revolution means “liberating ourselves from the forces who have dominated our country during 23 years of French neocolonial rule.”

Playwright Dujany makes extensive use of quotations from the revolutionary leader, taken from *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, published by Pathfinder Press.



Ike Chuks, left, plays Thomas Sankara, central leader of 1983-87 Burkina Faso Revolution in Ricky Dujany’s play “Sankara,” which ran in London March 20-April 14. Right, Shereener Browne playing Mariam Sankara. With his back to camera Chris Machari plays Blaise Compaoré, who led a coup, murdered Sankara and overthrew the revolutionary government.

He invited Pathfinder to staff a book table and attractive photo display in the theatre lobby at every performance, and at a pre-play seminar.

Audiences topped 2,000. They were inspired to find out the whole story about the Burkinabè Revolution. Of the 600 Pathfinder books bought, some 450 were by Sankara.

Dujany’s imaginative use of video helps the play give a picture of the participation of millions of toilers in the revolution — in mobilizations, in voluntary work, and participating in the work of the Committees for Defense of the Revolution. The CDRs are the “authentic organization of the people for wielding revolutionary power,” Sankara said, “the instrument the people have forged in order to take genuine command of their destiny and thereby extend their control into all areas of society.”

With broad support the popular revolutionary government abolished tribute payments and compulsory labor services to village chiefs; nationalized the land to advance agrarian reform; launched tree-planting and irrigation projects to increase productivity and stop the advance of the desert; made basic health care and immunization available to millions.

Literacy campaigns, including in the country’s indigenous languages, were launched. Trusting in the morality and revolutionary justice of the

toiling majority, the government set up popular courts to try former leaders and high officials accused of corruption. To this day, Sankara’s campaign against corruption and privilege is celebrated far and wide.

Women were encouraged to fight for their emancipation. The government took concrete steps, brought home in a comic scene where male ministers — played by Clovis Kasanda and Yinka Ayoni — nearly fall off their chairs when they hear that not only has a woman been appointed as one of their peers, but that she is paid the same as they are! Later on, men go to the food market to join in the “day in solidarity with housewives,” while their spouses take a day off.

Speaking to several thousand women on International Women’s Day in 1987, Sankara insisted that the “revolution cannot triumph without the emancipation of women.” The speech is included in *Thomas Sankara Speaks* and in *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* also published by Pathfinder.

The play attracted audiences drawn from around the country and even from abroad. “All through the play I was thinking I must find out more about the revolution,” said Paris Williams. “I really enjoyed the scene in which Sankara explains Burkina’s debt slavery,” said Kumail Jaffer, a student at Warwick University.

In that scene Sankara offers some dates to French President Francois Mitterrand, played by Rufus Graham. Mitterrand eats the dates and Sankara demands their return. It’s an amusing way to explain how the imperialist powers use the debts of semicolonial countries to maintain their subjugation.

We also see Sankara in Ethiopia, at an Organization of African Unity conference where he issues a call for forming a united front against the Third World debt.

Sankara’s remarks there show his ability to act as a

“tribune of the people.” The Sankara-led revolution in Burkina Faso was at the disposal of the world’s toilers.

### The revolution overthrown

The play depicts the political divergence within those who had led the revolution, an increasingly fundamental split that ultimately led to a counter-revolutionary coup, and Sankara being assassinated along with 12 of his comrades on Oct. 15, 1987. Coup leader Captain Blaise Compaoré, played by Chris Machari, then unleashed a reign of terror against the population. He held onto power for the following 27 years.

In explaining the coup, the play exposes — at times with humor — the machinations against the revolution by French and U.S. imperialism, and of the rulers of the Ivory Coast, where hundreds of thousands of Burkinabè worked. Ultimately class forces described by Sankara as “the enemies of the people” — both inside and outside the country — whose property and class domination were threatened by the deep-going revolution, were responsible for its overthrow.

The play explains how Compaoré increasingly pressed for an accommodation with imperialism, saying that loans and trade agreements were the only way to advance. Sankara, to the contrary, saw deepening the revolution and linking it up with the world was the way forward. Above all he saw the toiling majority as *actors* — “the people, always the people,” he would say.

Borrowing from Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar,” Dujany shows this growing division by depicting Compaoré as Brutus, increasingly seduced by a combination of the untold riches of the capitalist class and world imperialism. He turns against Caesar — Sankara — and murders him, bringing down the revolution.

And Compaoré’s Lady Macbeth-like Ivorian wife Chantal, played by Cherice McKenzie-Cook, is portrayed as an agent of Ivory Coast President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, played by Shereener Browne.

In the days following the counter-revolution, the *Morning Star*, the daily newspaper associated with the Communist Party of Britain, approvingly cited Compaoré, denouncing Sankara as a “renegade.”

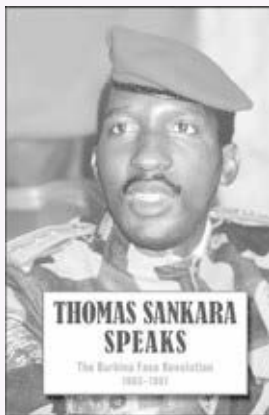
“By an accident of history, this autocrat was propelled to the leadership of our revolution,” the paper features Compaoré saying, “the better to throttle it from within.”

Sankara was aware of the dangers his opponents posed. He spoke about the counterrevolutionary coup that toppled the Grenada Revolution in October 1983, when Stalinist forces murdered its central leader, Maurice Bishop, opening the door for Washington to invade.

The play concludes with the 2014 popular uprising that ousted the Compaoré regime, combining this with Sankara’s speech, “You Cannot Kill Ideas,” that he delivered on the 20th anniversary of the murder of Che Guevara. The mass protests in 2014 brought down Compaoré, but didn’t lead to revolutionary change.

The message from the play is clear — the struggle remains in front of us, for which Sankara’s political legacy is decisive.

### Further Reading from Pathfinder



**Speeches of Thomas Sankara:**  
**Thomas Sankara Speaks**  
*The Burkina Faso Revolution, 1983-1987*  
In English and French. \$24

**We Are Heirs of the World’s**  
**Revolutions**  
In English, French, Spanish, Farsi. \$10

**Women’s Liberation and the**  
**African Freedom Struggle**  
In English, French, Spanish, Farsi. \$8

Also recommended:

**Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa**  
by Mary-Alice Waters and Martin Koppel  
In English, Spanish, Farsi. \$10

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# Defeat of US imperialism at Playa Girón was historic

Below is an excerpt from Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy, 1975-80, by Fidel Castro, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. It comes from his speech "Angola: African Girón," given on April 19, 1976, in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the Cuban victory at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón). This year marks the 57th anniversary of the "first defeat of Yankee imperialism on this continent."

African Girón refers to the March 27, 1976, battle where the apartheid South African army — which invaded Angola right before it was to celebrate its independence from Portuguese colonial rule — was pushed out of Angola with the help of thousands of Cuban volunteers. Over the next 15 years hundreds of thousands of additional Cuban internationalist volunteers joined this effort. In 1988 combined Cuban, Angolan and Namibian liberation forces dealt a decisive military defeat to the apartheid regime at Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola. Copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### BY FIDEL CASTRO

Precisely fifteen years ago, at this very hour, you could still hear the echoes of the last shots of the battle that smashed one of Yankee imperialism's most sinister and traitorous actions against a Latin American people. Girón [Bay of Pigs] went down in history as the first defeat of Yankee impe-



Verde Olivo

Fidel Castro, center, and next to him, José Ramón Fernández, field commander under Castro at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs). On 15th anniversary of the victory Castro said, "Option between the past and future, reaction or progress, treason or loyalty to principles, capitalism or socialism, imperialist domination or liberation, was what was decided at Girón, on April 19, 1961."

rialism on this continent.

It would be useless to try to find the slightest ethical principle in a system whose every act is characterized by exploitation, plunder, deceit, and crime. ...

Everything concerning the Girón episode was treacherous, a flagrant violation of international law, a perfidy, and a crime. The sinister CIA invested tens of millions of dollars to recruit, train, and equip mercenaries: landowners, bourgeois elements, traitors, war criminals, drug addicts, common criminals, and lumpen. Its strategy was accompanied by hair-raising plans to assassinate leaders of the Cuban revolution, in which they did not hesitate to use known Mafia leaders, poison, bacteria, explosives, and the most refined criminal methods. Beforehand, at every hour of the day and night, in planes or boats, scores of agents and thousands of arms were systematically brought in. They established their training bases in one Central American state and the embarkation points and air bases in another.

One quiet, clear dawn, on April 15, 1961, Yankee bombers bearing Cuban insignia attacked our air bases where a few rickety old planes, with barely half a dozen pilots, constituted our air forces. With unparalleled cynicism, the United States representative declared in the United Nations that those planes were part of our own air force

that had rebelled.

Everything was done with the tacit complicity and in many cases with the collaboration of the majority of the Latin American governments and the approval and support of the loathsome and repugnant OAS. Never before in the history of our continent were such corruption, shamelessness, cowardice, immorality, and crime brought together to carry out a military and political action. That is what the mercenary attack on the Bay of Pigs symbolizes. ...

The option between the past and the future, reaction or progress, treason or loyalty to principles, capitalism or socialism, imperialist domination or liberation, was what was decided at Girón, on April 19, 1961. Three days earlier, at the grave of the first martyrs of that brutal aggression, the people proclaimed the socialist nature of our revolution, and the men and women of our homeland expressed their readiness to die for it. No one knew how many mercenaries there were; no one knew how many Yankee marines and soldiers would come in after them, how many planes, how many further bombings it would be necessary to bear. Never, as at that moment, was the slogan of "Patria o muerte" more dramatic, real, and historic. The decision to win or die, embodied in a whole people, was stronger than all the risk, suffering, and danger.

This made that day doubly historic, because our Marxist-Leninist party was really born at Girón; [Applause] membership in our party is recognized from that day on; from that day on, socialism was cemented forever with the blood of our workers, peasants, and students; from that day on, a new and completely different destiny opened up before the people of this continent because of the liberty and dignity that one of them had conquered in the face of aggression from the powerful empire that subjected all. Because, say what you will, after Girón, all the peoples of America were a little bit freer. ...

In commemorating this, the fifteenth anniversary of the heroic, glorious victory at Girón, our people have an additional reason to be proud, which constitutes their finest expression of internationalism and transcends the boundaries of this continent: the historical victory of the people of Angola, [Prolonged applause] to whom we offered the generous and unlimited solidarity of our revolution.

At Girón, African blood was shed, that of the selfless descendants of a people who were slaves before they became workers, and who were exploited workers before they became masters of their homeland. And in Africa, together with the blood of the heroic fighters of Angola, Cuban blood, that of the sons of Martí, Maceo, and Agramonte, that of the heirs to the internationalist tradition set by Máximo Gómez and Che Guevara, [Prolonged applause] also flowed. Those who once enslaved man and sent him to America perhaps never imagined that one of those peoples who received the slaves would one day send their fighters to struggle for freedom in Africa.

The victory in Angola was the twin sister of the victory at Girón. [Applause] For the Yankee imperialists, Angola represents an African Girón. At one time we said that imperialism had suffered its great defeats in the month of April: Girón, Vietnam, Cambodia, etc. This time the defeat came in March. On the twenty-seventh of that month, when the last South African soldiers crossed the Namibian border, after a retreat of more than 700 kilometers, one of the most brilliant pages in the liberation of Black Africa was written.

*April* **BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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# Campaign with ‘Militant,’ SWP books!

The *Militant* urges its readers to join the Socialist Workers Party campaign to sell subscriptions to the party’s paper, books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries, and win contributors to the Militant Fighting Fund. The increase in labor battles by teachers and others today means there are more openings to expand the reach of the *Militant* and books and to build the party.

As teachers battle government attacks, protests continue against cop killings, for amnesty for undocumented workers, for women’s rights and against Washington’s wars abroad. Workers going through these experiences and others picked up by their example are discussing how we can strengthen our class unity here and around the world.

Moral revulsion at the horrors inflicted on the toiling majority in the Mideast spurs many workers here to seek a deeper understanding of the class roots of the rulers’ never-ending wars. As Washington heads to talks with the North Korean government, working people are open to discuss why the U.S. rulers should get their troops and weapons out of Korea. Many are interested in understanding the stakes in opposing the FBI, special prosecutors and their frame-up methods hailed by the liberals and middle-class left in their efforts to bring down Donald Trump’s presidency.

The SWP — a party that speaks clearly and confidently for the class interests of working people, and

offers an independent working-class course to combat the effects of capitalism’s social and political crisis — gets a wider hearing today. The SWP is announcing candidates around the country for U.S. Senate and governor as part of this campaign.

In discussion and debate with fellow workers on their doorsteps in cities and small towns, on picket lines and at protests, party members are winning new readers to the *Militant* and revolutionary books that present the necessity of replacing capitalist rule with workers power and offer a convincing perspective for how that can be done.

The class arrogance of the capitalist rulers blinded them to the revolutionary capacities of working people in Cuba who demonstrated in practice in 1959 that workers and farmers could make a socialist revolution. Since then they have proved capable of holding off U.S. imperialism’s ceaseless efforts to overthrow their conquests. They’ve joined battles against exploitation and oppression worldwide. They’re an example for us to emulate.

Join the SWP campaign — to expand the *Militant* readership, get out books that explain what the action of millions of workers can accomplish, get a hearing for SWP candidates, and help fund the paper. You’ll get a better feel for the openness of working people today to discuss, learn and fight for change. It can open a new life for you — one of the most fulfilling possible!

## Working class is the target of liberals’ fury

**Continued from front page**

The FBI seized Cohen’s electronic devices, financial records and communications with the president. The raid was given the green light by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller to investigate Trump.

“Attorney-client privilege is dead!” the president tweeted after the raid, adding afterwards, “A TOTAL WITCH HUNT!!!”

This constitutionally protected privilege flows from the Sixth Amendment in the Bill of Rights, which protects one’s right to trial and “to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.”

David Cole, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union — among the groups for which driving Trump out of the White House comes before everything else — defended the latest steps in the witch hunt and blow to our rights. He blessed the break-in and seizure of private documents as “pursuant to the rule of law.”

**Washington’s political police**

Raids like this are part of the methods cops have used for decades to frame up workers in the frontlines of class battles. The FBI’s role is to safeguard the interests of the capitalist rulers. It has organized frame-ups of fighters in the labor movement and for Black rights, opponents of Washington’s wars and communists, under Democratic and Republican administrations alike. Many of the top officials of the FBI today have been exposed as part of the anti-Trump gang.

The special counsel has a broad reach, immense powers and unlimited time. Mueller isn’t accountable to anyone but himself. His “investigation” undercuts rights and protections won in the Bill of Rights. These will be increasingly important for workers as sharpening class battles deepen in years ahead and the propertied rulers seek to break working-class struggles, bust up unions and frame up those who lead them.

The raid on Cohen was justified by the U.S. Attorney’s Office as part of a previously undercover investigation of his “personal business dealings.” But the entire debate in the bourgeois media focuses on his relation to the president.

Despite almost a year of freewheeling operation, Mueller is no closer to finding evidence that could be used to impeach Trump for collusion with Moscow’s interference in the 2016 election. But the probe just keeps going, with no end in sight.

A fever-pitch hysteria has taken hold of the liberals and the left, as they try and make an amalgam of alleged Moscow connections, tidbits from another former FBI Director, James Comey. They use the slan-

ders and allegations in his new book about being fired by Trump, and lurid innuendoes about the president’s alleged infidelities. In fact, polls show there is growing support for Trump as employment improves and he has made some popular moves in foreign policy, like his effort to reach a deal with North Korea.

The liberal media and the left try to paint President Trump as something fundamentally new and different in U.S. politics. Writing in the *New York Times* April 6, Madeleine Albright, former secretary of state under Bill Clinton and author of the just published book *Fascism: A Warning*, claims Trump is opening the door to what she says is a worldwide resurgence of fascism.

In reality, the Trump administration, like all those before it, defends the interests at home and abroad of the propertied capitalist rulers.

**The dangerous class**

It’s true there is a political crisis in the U.S. today ripping through the rulers’ two political parties — the Democrats and Republicans. Its roots lie in the concerns and fear of the meritocrats and liberals about the working class. That is what they saw as “different” about the Donald Trump campaign — and now, to their horror, his presidency. For them the only explanation is that the working class is becoming more racist, more anti-immigrant, more opposed to women’s rights, and has to be controlled and “taught.”

This political crisis has no equivalent anywhere else in the capitalist world.

In comments in India last month, Hillary Clinton picked up on her 2016 campaign remarks that workers who voted for Trump were “deplorable.” She told a meeting there that the president won votes from people in areas of the country that shouldn’t really count. She stressed that she, on the other hand, “won the places that represent two-thirds of America’s gross domestic product.” She and those like her deeply believe that votes in wealthier areas of the country should count for more than those in areas where she derisively said workers were “looking backwards.”

It’s these “deplorable” workers who are involved in labor battles today in states where Trump won the most votes in 2016 — like West Virginia, Oklahoma and Kentucky. They are providing a powerful example that is being watched closely by millions of workers across the country today. Through their tenacity, organization and discipline, striking teachers and school workers are demonstrating that it is possible to wage a united and effective struggle against the bosses and governments at all levels that are trying to make working people pay for the economic, political and moral crisis of capitalism.

## US-led Syria attack

**Continued from front page**

velopment centers and storage facilities, but otherwise didn’t affect the regime. Assad began bombing opposition forces and civilian neighborhoods in Homs and Hama north of Damascus the next day.

“Mission accomplished!” President Donald Trump said, underscoring the airstrikes’ limited aim. They were intended to avoid Russian casualties and to deter Moscow’s threat, largely bluster, to shoot down U.S. and allied missiles. The week delay in launching the attack meant Assad had time to move his air fleet and other weaponry to Russian bases, safe from attack.

Spokespeople for Moscow have claimed that the April 7 gas attack either never happened, or was carried out by opposition forces seeking to smear Assad. They also accused London of masterminding a “fake” chemical attack.

The president feigned concern for the Syrian people, describing Assad’s use of chemical weapons as “barbarism.” The U.S. rulers are no strangers to barbarism — in the Vietnam War they dropped massive amounts of napalm, a mixture of gasoline and gel that sticks to people’s bodies and generates temperatures of 1,500°F. The Pentagon dropped 690,000 tons of napalm in one hour on Tokyo in 1945, killing some 100,000 people. Washington also used napalm in Korea.

And Washington is the only government to use nuclear weapons, devastating Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the second imperialist world war.

**Moscow, Tehran shore up Assad’s rule**

Assad turned to Moscow and Tehran-backed militias to shore up his rule when massive repression failed to extinguish a popular rebellion that broke out in 2011 against his tyranny. Throughout the subsequent civil war he has used chemical weapons and barrel bombs on civilian populations, as well as sieges to starve opponents into submission.

Hours after its poisonous attack on Douma, in eastern Ghouta, opposition forces there surrendered to Assad’s forces and Russian troops. Since then, over 160,000 people have been bused from eastern Ghouta to northern Syria. Russian military police were deployed to Douma once opposition forces left.

Moscow has expanded its military and political influence in the region during the civil war, something Washington seeks to reverse. The U.S. rulers’ central goal is to push back against gains made by the counterrevolutionary regime in Tehran. The Iranian rulers and their allies in Hezbollah have set up bases in Syria, established a land bridge between Iran and Lebanon, and threaten to launch attacks against Israel.

Tel Aviv launched an airstrike on an Iranian base in Syria April 8, killing seven Iranians. This “was the first time we attacked live Iranian targets — both facilities and people,” an Israeli military source told the *New York Times*.

The U.S. rulers are trying to find a way to constrain the rising clout of Tehran and Moscow across the region, without committing large numbers of U.S. troops to combat operations. Washington currently has some 2,000 troops in Syria, and tens of thousands more at bases throughout the Mideast. Along with their Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces ally, Washington controls some 25 percent of the country.

The Trump administration is pressing Arab allies to send troops to Syria. Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir said the monarchy there is willing to do so. Washington has approached the governments in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt as well.

If the administration succeeds, Trump hopes to reduce U.S. troop deployment in Syria. “No amount of American blood or treasure can produce lasting peace and security in the Middle East,” he said April 13. “It’s a troubled place.”

But it has been Washington’s brutal wars in the Mideast over decades, alongside the intervention of rival powers, that have intensified sectarian conflicts and the social crisis imposed on working people by the region’s capitalist rulers.

### Correction

In issue no. 16, the photo caption on page 4 should have said the teachers’ rally took place in Tucson, Arizona, April 4, not Phoenix on March 28.