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

The working class is the true target of liberals’ fury

‘Sankara’ play: A vivid portrayal of revolution in Burkina Faso

Teachers mount fights against gov’t attacks

School protests inspire workers, set example

‘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 protest April 13 in Frankfort, Kentucky. Teachers’ struggles across the 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

Teachers protest April 13 in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Continued on page 9

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

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 development facilities in Damascus, a Damascus suburb, and military interests there.

Ankara, Riyadh and other capitals from Moscow to Seoul, Beijing, and Washington to sit down at the table with the DPRK for talks. We demand that the U.S. remove the terrorist label from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea by Steve Clark, writing on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists April 13.

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

Continued on page 3

Inside

France: Rail workers strike against government attacks

Workers in Puerto Rico resist attacks by US, colonial rulers

Editorial: Campaign with ‘Militant,’ SWP books!

– 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 outside the Gare de l’Est terminal here April 9, replacing the noisy clatter 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 layoffs and firings, a result of decades of 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.

Subscriptions to the Militant may be purchased in newspaper in print and digital format. Advertising: authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner. Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant’s views. These are expressed in editorials.
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 party. The annual fund drive helps cover the party’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 school workers fighting for higher wages, better conditions and more funding 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?”

Thompson replied, “Militant marijuana companies.” She signed up, “I want to read these books”

“When I heard about the subscription 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 party, I was interested,” she said. “I also wanted to get a copy of this book, ‘It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US Justice System.’”

A Militant Fighting Fund subscription costs $7 each with subscription and $4 without subscription. Subscription plus book plus donation = $112,000.

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

To go with SWP members to the teachers’ fights, and to join efforts to expand the reach of the party’s publica-

tions and raise funds for the Militant, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 8.

For more information, contact: Militant/Carole Lesnick

Militant/Carole Lesnick

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 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!

These books just $5 each with a Militant subscription (trial offer for new readers: 12 weeks $5)

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

“It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System” The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class $7 EACH WITHOUT SUBSCRIPTION

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

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 knoked on his door in Mesa, Arizona, April 14, to introduce the SWP.

“The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class” 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 Kat LeRoux in the employee cafeteria at the retail store where they work in British Columbia. She wanted to learn more about Cuba, so LeRoux 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-
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 in 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. Ru- fino Carrión said by phone from Guata- rabo 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 maxi- mize payments on the government’s $74 billion debt.

“Criminal neglect!”

“This is criminal neglect and a lack of respect for the Puerto Rican peo- ple,” 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 re- sult of the months-long 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 en- sure payment on the debt. The board, or junta as it is known in Spanish, was appointed by President Barack Obama with the power to overload any financial decision of the island’s government.

Since 2006, in the face of the worldwide economic crisis of capital- ism 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 acceler- ated the anti-working-class offensive, pushing plans to privatize the electric company, slash education, shrink the government workforce and keep cut- ting 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 tu- tion at private schools. This is on top of 150 schools closed between 2010 and 2018.

“Secretary of Education Julia Kele- her says she is closing schools be- cause enrollment has gone down, with so many people moving to the U.S.,” Karla Sanabria, a teacher and mem- ber 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 or- ganizing “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 Work- ers, Puerto Rican Educators in Ac- tion and EducaMoms April 15 to adopt plans to fight against the government moves.

But for wealthy bondholders and hedge fund profiteers things are look- ing up. “Puerto Rican bonds have been the best-performing fixed in- come investment thus far in 2018,” the New York Post reported April 17. “Hoping to make a killing, Pacific Inves- tment 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 Puer- to Rican capitalists are reaping su- perprofits 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 finan- cial “plan” April 26, payments on the debt will be the highest priority.

Philippine students scoop up communist literature

BY RON POULSEN

MANILA, Philippines — Members of the Communist League in Austra- lia and New Zealand took advantage of an invitation from PUP SWP, the Student Party for Equality and Ad- vancement of Knowledge — to set up a literature table at the Polytechnic Uni- versity of the Philippines, hosted by its Federation of Puerto Rican capitalists are reaping su- perprofits 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 finan- cial “plan” April 26, payments on the debt will be the highest priority.

join May 1 actions to demand: No deportations! Amnesty now!

Albany, New York: 11 a.m., March for Immigrant Rights, Toomsend 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 (362) 243-559.

Oakland: 3 p.m., No Bars! No Raids! No Wall! Oscar Grant Plaza 1331 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 Ac- tion Coalition. Tel: (206) 465-5511.

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

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.

Militant/Ron Poulsen

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

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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 racing to make the case that the injuries and deaths of the two workers killed in a collision and derailment in Georgetown, Kentucky, last month.

In a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in May, the company terms 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, the company's port facility, are members of 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 Mameule Lusadu

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 — all part of the International Association of 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 camping out 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 Mar-

— THE MILITANT

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 members of the sect were killed in a shootout with federal agents in the absence of a contract.

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 not been taken the way to the rest of America labor and who are supporting the present struggle almost to a man.

The Militant April 30, 2018

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Teachers fight govt’s 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 one 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 protests began we passed a number of several ‘walk-ins.’ We gathered outside the school with some of the students, and all walked in together to show we’re united strongly.

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 on the Social Security Act for 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 passed, we had 26 of us are here today. We haven’t had any rallies back home, but before the protests began we passed a number of several ‘walk-ins.’ We gathered outside the school with some of the students, and all walked in together to show we’re united strongly.

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 passed, we had 26 of us are here today. We haven’t had any rallies back home, but before the protests began we passed a number of several ‘walk-ins.’ We gathered outside the school with some of the students, and all walked in together to show we’re united strongly.

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

“Amy many workers here there is a strong desire for a win for teachers and school workers,” retired coal 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 teach er’s pensions and teachers. “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 Witt told the Militant by phone from Beck ley. “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 the elected leaders have achieved all they will be able to accomplish at the 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 continued 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 ruling class indifference. Textbooks are a dime a dozen, and “falling behind,” Bevin said. 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, par ents and students rallied outside their schools across Arizona April 11 and 12, as many walked in together to start classes. According to Arizona Educators Unit ed, 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; but 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 determine on whether to call a strike.

— Emma Johnson

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, according earlier tests that required the teachers to score tests, 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
Sankara, a play written and directed by Ricky Dujany, ran at Lon-
don’s Cockpit Theatre from March 20 to April 14.

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN AND OGMUNDUR JONSSON

LONDON — Our congratulations to Ricky Dujany, who wrote and di-
rected the play “Sankara,” as well as the fine performances by the cast
and the band who presented it. They movingly presented the revolution-
ary 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 Burkinabé Revolution did in such a short time, and by Sankara’s insistence on taking every-
thing back to the people,” Elise Kistin told the Militant after seeing the play. The play provides a vivid introduc-
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 Chucks, who plays the title role, that freedom can not be granted; it must be conquered; that the goal of the revolution consists in having the people assume power; that the goal of the revolution is to take genuine command of the country’s economy and society; and that in order to take genuine command of the country’s economy and society, the toiling majority, the government set up popular courts to try former lead-
ers and high officials accused of corrup-
tion. To this day, Sankara’s cam-
paign against corruption and privi-
lege is celebrated far and wide. Women were encouraged to fight for their emancipation. The government took concrete steps, brought home a comic scene where male ministers — played by Chovis Kasanda and Yinka Aoyi — nearly fell 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 with-
out the emancipation of women.” The speech is included in Thomas Sanka-
ra Speaks, and in a comic scene in Revolution 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 Wil-
liams. “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 Mit-
terrand, played by Rufus Graham. Mitterrand eats the dates and Sankara de-
mands their return. It’s an amusing way to explain how the imperialist powers use the debts of semicolo-
nial countries to maintain their subjugation.

We also see Sankara in Ethiopia, at an Organiza-
tion of African Unity con-
ference where he issues a call for forming a united front against the Third World debt.

Sankara’s remarks 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 overturned

The play depicts the political diver-
gence within those who had led the revolution, an increasingly fundamental split that ultimately led to a counter-
revolutionary coup, and that Sankara being assassinated along with 12 of his com-
rades on Oct. 15, 1987. Coup leader Cap-
tain Blaise Compaoré, played by Chris Macht, then unleashed a wave of ter-
or against the population. He held onto power for the following 27 years.

In explaining the coup, the play ex-
plicits the wizardry of the machinations against the revolution by French and U.S. imperialism, and of the rulers of the Ivory Coast, where hundreds of thousands of Burkinabé worked. Ultimately class forces de-
scribed by Sankara as “the enemies of the people” — both inside and outside the state — with housewives and class domination were threatened by the deep-going revolution, were re-
sponsible for its overthrow.

The play explains how Compaoré in-
creasingly pressed for an accommoda-
tion with imperialism, saying that loans and trade agreements were the only way to advance. Sankara, to the contrary, saw deepening the revolution and link-
ing it up with the world was the way for-
ward. Above all he saw the toiling ma-
jority as actors – “the people, the people” — that could overthrow the autocrat was propelled to the leader-
ship as a “renegade.” Borrowing from Shakespeare’s “Ju-
lius Caesar,” Dujany shows this growing division by depicting Compaoré as Bru-
tus, increasingly seduced by a combina-
tion of the untold riches of the capitalist class and world imperialism. He turns against Caesar — Sankara — and mur-
der him, bringing down the revolution.

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

In the days following the counter-
revolutionary coup, a daily newspaper associated with the Com-
munist Party of Britain, approvingly cited Compaoré, denouncing Sankara as a “renegade.”

“By an accident of history, this autocrat was propelled to the leader-
ship of our revolution,” the paper fea-
tured 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 pop-
singing of Bob Marley’s “No Woman, No Cry,” the daily

Further Reading from Pathfinder

Speaches of Thomas Sankara:
Thomas Sankara Speaks
The Burkinabé 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, $10

Also recommended:
Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa
by Mary–Alice Waters and Martin Kupfel
In English, Spanish, Farsi, $10

www.pathfinderpress.com

The Militant  April 30, 2018  7
Defeat of US imperialism at Playa Girón was historic

Below is excerpt from Cuba’s Internationalist Foreign Policy, 1975-80, by Fidel Castro, one of Pathfinder’s Books. 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.”

Fidel Castro refers to the March 27, 1976, battle where the apartheid South African army — which invaded Angola right before it was to celebrate its independence — 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.

Defeat of US imperialism at Playa Girón was historic

by Fidel Castro

Precisely fifteen years ago, at this very hour, you could still hear the echoes of that war’s last. Most of the battle that smashed one of Yankee imperialism’s most sinister and traitorous missions against a Latin American people. Girón [Bay of Pigs] went down in history as the first of the battles that has shaped the face of this continent: the historic victory of the people of Angola, which constitutes their finest expression of internationalism and transcendence of the finance capital of which we are the legatees.

The victory in Angola was the twin of the battle that has shaped the face of this continent because of the liberty and self-determination of the African masses.

The victory in Angola was the twin of the battle that has shaped the face of this continent: the historic victory of the people of Angola, [Prolonged applause] to whom we of- fered the generous and unlimited soli- darity 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 worse 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 Agraparte, 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 people who received the slaves would one day have to offer his fighters to struggle for freedom in Africa.

The victory in Angola was the twin sister of the victory at Girón. [Ap- plause] This made that day doubly historic, because our Marxist-Leninist party has proven that we, who are the legatees of the selfless descendants of the American people, can state and the embarkation points for the United States representative de- frication of our revolution.

This made that day doubly historic, because our Marxist-Leninist party was really born at Girón. [Applause] membership in our party, which has been recognized from that day on; from that day on, socialism was cemented forever with the blood of our workers, peasants and students; that day opened a new and completely different destiny opened up before the people of this continent because of the liberty and self-determination of the African masses.

Fidel Castro, center, and next to him, José Ramón Fernández, field commander under Castro at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs). On 50th anniversary of the victory Castro said, “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.”

Make no mistake: this was a battle of the people, for their freedom in Africa.

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Make no mistake: this was a battle of the people, for their freedom in Africa.
Continued from front page

The FBI seized Cohen's electronic devices, fi-
nancial records and communications with the pres-
ident. The raid was given the green light by Deputy
Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed
Mueller to investigate Trump. He blessed the
raid after the raid, adding afterwards, “A TOTAL
WITCH HUNT is taking place in our Country. From
Attorney-client privilege is dead!” the president
tweeted after the raid, adding afterwards, “A TOTAL
WITCH HUNT is taking place in our Country. From
this discipline one must be fully aware that the
increasing importance for workers as sharpening
class battles. The FBI's role is to safeguard the inter-
ests of the capitalist rulers. It has organized frame-ups
and frame-up organizations for which
Bill Clinton and author of the just published book
6, Madeleine Albright, former secretary of state under
Trump as something fundamentally new and different
in his efforts to reach a deal with North Korea.

The political world is no longer just a game of
trading victories and defeats. It is a contest of
capitalists and workers. The swamps and
slackness of the political parties— the
United States is that the working class is becoming more rac-
ists, more anti-immigrant, more opposed to women's
rights, more pro-capitalist. 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 gels at 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 nu-
clear weapons, destroying 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 mili-
tias to shore up his rule when massive repression failed to
exhaust 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 op-
ponents into submission.

Hours after its poisonous attack on Douma, in east-
ern Ghouta, opposition forces there surrendered
Assad's forces and Russian troops. Since then, over
160,000 people have been huesed from eastern Ghouta
to northern Syria. Russian military police were de-
ployed to the region, creating a事实
repressive 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 threatened 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 personnel,” 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 re-
gion. The U.S. bears the blame and is the one
posing the greatest threat, largely bluster, to shoot down U.S.
and allied missiles. The week delay in launching the
Moscow's threat, largely bluster, to shoot down U.S.
in Homs and Hama north of Damascus the next day.

Continued from front page

US-led Syria attack

The Militant urges its readers to join the Social-
ist Workers Party campaign to sell subscriptions to
the party’s Militant, a socialist journal and leader among other revolutionary,
and win contributors to the Militant
Fighting Fund. The increase in labor battles by teach-
ers and others today means there are more openings
to reach the readers of the Militant and books and to build
the revolutionary movement.

As teachers battle government attacks, protests
continue against cop killings, for amnesty for un-
documented workers, for women's rights and against
Washington's war on terror. Through these battles
and others picked up by their ex-
ample are discussing how we can strengthen our class
unity here and around the world.

More than that, the horridly inflamed on the toll-
img major 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
negotiate 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 ef-
forts to bring down Donald Trump's presidency.

The SWP — a party that speaks clearly and con-
fidently for the class interests of working people, and
offers an independent working-class course to combat
effects of capitalism’s social and political crisis —
gets a wider hearing today. The SWP is announcing
readers to the revolutionary capacities of working people in
Cuba who demonstrated in 1959 that workers and farmers could make a socialist revolu-
sion. Since then they have proved capable of holding off U.S. imperialism’s ceaseless efforts to overthrow
their conquests. They’ve joined battles against exploi-
tation and oppression worldwide. They’re an example for us to emulate.

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

Correction

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