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. This followed up on the March missile attack driven by conflicts with a Damascus suburb, a week earlier.

The reactions included the rejection of the U.S.-initiated economic and financial sanctions against the DPRK. We call on Washington to withdraw all US troops and weapons from Korea. We demand an immediate and unconditional end to the DPRK.”

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

The working class fighting by 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, teachers and others looking for the state Capitol here April 13. They were protesting attacks by Gov. Matt Bevin and the state legislature.

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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 with the “new hires.” Bondholders are increasingly worried about the fate of the SNCF’s 47 billion euro debt. Macron says that the government’s plans, new hires would “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 railroad workers at the March 22 demonstration that opened the current round of strikes.

Gauthier Tiacella 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 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 de Nord were joined by fellow rail workers from Gare St. Lazare, Gare de l’Est and Gare d’Austerlitz to march across 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

History of US intervention in Korea
US out of Korea! An unknown history

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Letters and editorials are welcome at Militant/Claude Bleton
I want to read these books

Continued from front page

SWP and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K. are running 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 school workers fighting for higher wages, better conditions and more funds for schools in West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Arizona.

Amelia Thompson, a teacher from Hazard, told SWP member Ilona Gershel, “If we don’t do something now, the public school system will lose its funding and be forced to close the doors.” Gershel asked her, “Where do you think the funding industry and medical school funding should come from?”

“Ask where you think the funding for 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 13.

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 collective bargaining rights. 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 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 Yantu Huang, 58, a worker in a computer fac-

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.

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.
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 Guanabo April 17. “Some people salvaged a broken piece of 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 monthlong 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.

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 promote private ones. New protests are set for April 25.

“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 as 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 Educanos 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 audit 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 BON 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 the Communist League members in Australia and New Zealand by the Department of English at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines with books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionary leaders.

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 Abortion Advocacy Network said next time she wanted to get the pamphlet on abortion rights that had said next time she wanted to get the pamphlet on abortion rights that had already been 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 Revolutio...
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 that killed eight people, including 17 children, outside Waco, Texas.

For the cold-blooded murder of 86 people, including 17 children, outside Waco, Texas.

When the crew stopped the train, an explosion occurred, killing eight people in a large wooden complex housing the Branch Davidian religious sect. Six members were killed in the blast, and the bodies of the others were found in the buildings, pumping tear gas inside.

The antiwar movement must move to build support for a union that “It is perfectly reasonable to assume at all times that the mine owners and those who have more than once been in the mine workers of the country will not trespass on the job,” Minneapolis ramp worker Mar- vin Eves told the Militant. “Combined with confidence that the organizing momentum makes success possible.”

— Helen Meyers

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. Dockworkers 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 Re- serve worker gets full-time work today is to agree to become a lead.

Melvin Eves, who has worked at Del- ta for 32 years, came to the rally with a newer ramp worker from Detroit. “We need solidarity in this fight, our older guys have to stand up for the young guys,” Eves told the Militant. “We had all these benefits and they don’t.”

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 cul- minated the FBI’s April 19 assault on the large wooden complex housing the Branch Davidian religious sect. Six bodies were left in the walls of the buildings, according to the FBI. The bodies of the others were found in the buildings, pumping tear gas inside.

This heinous crime exposes the true face of the bipartisan imperialist pres- idency, Congress, armed forces, cop agencies, and courts. The entire opera- tion 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 multi- tude of professional and middle-class retainers.

The need for the antivar movement to fight for the immediate withdraw- al 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 lev- els of the war. The bombing in South Vietnam continues heavy and brutal. The killing of Vietnamese goes on, and the death toll of the U.S. mounts.

The antivar movement must mo- bilize 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 maneuvres which may lead to talks with North Vietnam. The people of Viet- nam have demonstrated that they will fight to the death for the right to deter- mine their own fate and the future of their country.

— THE MILITANT

April 29, 1968

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 exp-ired April 30.

UMW President John L. Lewis re- affirmed 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 op- erators in the absence of a contract.”

The UMW relies on its own half-mil- lion members, loyal and militant union- ists who understand the difficulties facing them, who have not once shown the way to the rest of American labor and who are supporting the pres- ent struggle almost to a man.
Teachers fight govt attacks

Continued from front page

workers demonstrated outside and massed inside the Capitol building. Some occupied 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 a 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 Southern 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 Walk-in Thursday 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 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 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 hurt after Jan. 1, 2019, in a 401(k)-type plan. Everyone has to pay money for education into it, the money is pooled and some HQC KEEPER

“Tire was one of several sizable rallies by workers and students at the Capitol in the last few weeks.

During 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 class 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 no body lend their support.

The fist from 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 teach- ers and pensions 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 broader movement we had 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 their 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 state elected leaders have achieved all they will be able to accomplish in 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 capital- ist crisis conditions deepened, and rul-

ing class indifference. Textbooks are a dime a dozen, and “fees,” which might be 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 felt 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, and walked in together to start classes. According to Arizona Educators Unit-
ited, which started the RedForEd move-
ment there and called for the walk-ins, some 10,000 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

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 19.

— HORACE KEEPER

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 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 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 Burkina Dé movement did in such a short time, and
by Sankara’s insistence on taking every-
thing back to the people,” Elise Ketom
said the Militant after seeing the play.

The play provides a vivid intro-
duction 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
there is no revolution without the libera-
tion of women.

The Burkina Dé 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 rela-
tions, was established in 1960. In the
words of Sankara’s character, the rev-
olution 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 revolution-
ary leader, taken from Thomas Sankara Speaks, published by Pathfinder Press.

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 Burkina Dé 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 partic-
ticipation of millions of toilers in the revolution — in mobilizations, in volun-
tary work, and participating in the work of the Committees for Defense of the
Revolution. The CD’s are the “authen-
tic organization of the people for warr-
ing 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 rev-
olutionary government abolished tribu-
tary payments and compulsory labor services to vilage 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 mo-
rality and revolutionary justice of the
toiling majority, the government set up popular courts to try former leaders
and high officials accused of cor-
ruption. 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 tradi-
tional art and culture, and gave more women the chance to enroll in college.由此可以看出，政府采取了一系列措施来推动教育和文化发展，鼓励妇女获得平等教育和参与社会活动的机会。由此可以看出，政府采取了一系列措施来推动教育和文化发展，鼓励妇女获得平等教育和参与社会活动的机会。

Women are enabled to fight for their emancipation. The government took concrete steps, brought home tradi-
tional art and culture, and gave more women the chance to enroll in college.

Women’s Liberation

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 of-
ers 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 semico-
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 a forming unified front against the Third World debt.

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

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

The revolution overthrown

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 the death of the
imperialist powers.

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 coup coincided with the 2014 pop-
ular uprising that ousted the Compaoré
regime, combining this with Sankara’s
speech, “You Cannot Kill Ideas,” that he gave deepening the departure from the days of the Compaoré regime. The massacre
of opposition leaders was widely de-
scribed by Sankara as “the enemies of
the people” — both inside and outside the country — who would use the power
of terror against the population. He held onto power for the following 27 years.

In explaining the coup, the play ex-
presses its horror with humor, its denunciation 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 Burkina Dé worked. Ultimately class forces de-
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the people” — both inside and outside the country — who would use the power
of terror against the population. He held onto power for the following 27 years.
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.”

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 from the Nationalist Front of October 1973, a 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 in South Africa and Namibia. 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 that distant battle. Much of the battle that smashed one of Yankee imperialism’s most sinistral and traitorous undertakings against a Latin American people. Girón [Bay of Pigs] went down in history as the first defeat of Yankee imperialism 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 Giron 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, scouts 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, clear dawn, on April 15, 1961, Yankee bombarding a Cuban insignia attacked our air bases where a few rickey old planes, with barely half a tank of fuel and with one engine, were the only 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 mercenary 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 “Patría 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] because the heroism of the Thirtieth of that month, when the last South American party 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.

Defeat of US imperialism at Playa Girón was historic

<image>

Fidel Castro, center, and next to him, José Ramón Fernández, field commander under Castro at Playa Giron (Bay of Pigs). On 10th 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.”

<image>

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The Militant urges its readers to join the Socialist Workers Party campaign to send subscriptions to the party’s headquarters, labor 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 SWP.

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

Mosul has become a troubled place.” 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 glands 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 nuclear weapons. The U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on 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 oppositions 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 besieged from eastern Ghouta to northern Syria. Russian military police were deployed to protect U.S. facilities and people’s哈尔滨 the rising clout of Tehran and Moscow across the region.

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 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 region, without either resorting to the use of U.S. ground forces or to combat operations. Washington currently has some 2,000 troops in Syria, and tens of thousands more at bases throughout the Middle East. Along with their Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic forces, allied with 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 also reached out to Turkey and 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 and treasure spent in Syria makes the region any safer or more secure,” said the president April 13. “It’s a troubled place.”

But it has been Washington’s brutal wars in the Middle East 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 Arizona teachers rally took place in Tucson, Arizona, April 4, not Phoenix on March 28.”