Mobilize to say
No war, no way!

Syria poison gas?
Pretext for U.S. military attack
By Sara Flounders

U.S. wars are based on lies and staged provocations. This is hardly news.

Now comes the charge that on April 7 someone — the imperialists are saying it was the Syrian government, although there is no proof of that — killed dozens of Syrians with a poison gas attack on the town of Douma, which had only recently been liberated from anti-government forces.

The brutal seven-year war against Syria had been winding down after the failure of every effort by U.S. imperialism to overturn the Syrian government.

The last groups of reactionary, Saudi-backed military units were defeated this month. They had relentlessly shelled the civilian population of Damascus, the Syrian capital, for years. Thousands of these fighters have finally surrendered and were forced out of the hills of East Ghouta province overlooking Damascus. They are due to be bused out of the area to Idlib, a rebel-held area in the far north of Syria.

Continued on page 8

Gaza
Mass uprising defies Israeli oppression
By Deirdre Griswold

The people of Gaza, in a show of their unbreakable will to resist Israeli rule and control their own destiny, have begun a series of demonstrations at the heavily fortified border with Israel that are to continue every Friday until mid-May. The result has already been a historically heroic uprising by Palestinians, young and old, women and men, who are joining the demonstrations by the thousands.

It is not only the Israeli government’s murderous repression that has ignited this firestorm of resistance. The Palestinian people know full well that Israel is backed to the hilt by the U.S. imperialist government. Israel has functioned as imperialism’s attack dog against the peoples of the Middle East for decades. Now President Trump’s decision to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is meant to destroy the possibility — known as the “two-state solution” — of the Palestinians being able to establish a state on any part of the lands stolen from them in 1948.

Continued on page 8

Remembering Winnie Madikizela Mandela
2

RESIST border bluster

Anti-war April 14-15
Why we march
By Workers World editors

SpringAction 2018, a significant coalition of hundreds of progressive groups, has been mobilizing for anti-war demonstrations across the U.S. on April 14-15. Its appeal calls for an end to all U.S. wars and militarism along with fighting white supremacy at home and defending immigrant rights, as well as protecting the environment.

Radio host Mimi Rosenberg invited three of the New York based organizers of these demonstrations on her April 4 Morning Show on Pacifica Radio 99.5 FM, WBAI.org, to discuss these protests on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The following are excerpts from the comments Kay-la Popuchet, a Haitian-Peruvian student activist; Jose Monzon, a Black anti-war activist and member of Black Alliance for Peace; and Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center and member of the United National Antiwar Coalition, made on the show.

Rosenberg: “You cannot remain silent,” say our

Continued on page 9

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VENEZUELA 10       BRAZIL 11       FRANCE 10, 11

END POLICE MURDER

WORKERS IN MILITANT MOTION
Memphis, New York City 6-5
Oklahoma teachers, North Carolina 6-7
How I remember Winnie Madikizela Mandela

By Devyn Springer

News broke on April 2 that Winnie Madikizela Mandela, revolutionary South African anti-apartheid activist, died at age 81. Also known by her birth name, Zanyiwe Madikizela, Winnie played a key role in the struggle against the brutal apartheid regime in South Africa that lasted until the early 1990s. She became an international symbol of African women’s liberation.

Winnie was married to Nelson Mandela from 1958 to 1996. During the early years spent behind bars, she helped him communicate with the outside world and brought him political reading materials.

Winnie fought for a better world — not just in South Africa but globally — throughout her spouse’s imprisonment. The apartheid police violently harried her, and she was often followed and arrested. She was expelled to a small Free State town, harshly betrayed by friends and former allies, and spent over 18 months in solitary confinement at Pretoria Central Prison.

Winnie was always keen to discuss gender roles in South Africa, particularly within the anti-apartheid movement. She often focused on revealing how the women and children of the nation were as important to the struggle as the popular male leaders.

In discussing the exceptionalism ascribed to Nelson Mandela, Winnie said: “Mandela was extricated from the masses. He was made an idol, almost Jesus Christ. This is a lot of nonsense. The freedom of this country was attained by the masses of this country. It was attained by the children who gave their lives in 1976, who faced machine guns with stones and dustbin lids. It was attained by women who were left to fend for their families. They fought the enemy. We are the ones who fought the enemy physically, who went out to face their bullets.” (London Review of Books, Jan. 9, 2014)

Soweto Uprising inspired resistance

The Soweto Uprising took place in 1976, just outside of Johannesburg, when a series of demonstrations by thousands of Black middle and high school students protested the implementation of the apartheid educational system. The students were met with enormous violence, as over 1,500 South African police fired into the unarmed crowd. The state reported a mere 23 casualties at the time, but the truth is that hundreds of students lost their lives due to police terror.

Winnie was one of the first to understand the significance of this international tragedy and was able to garner world attention to the murder and abuse of these children. Along with her campaign against this state-sanctioned violence, she also urged her then incarcerated spouse — who maintained great influence despite his incarceration — to support the uprising. The Soweto Uprising became a pivotal moment in the anti-apartheid struggle, inspiring resistance in black towns throughout the country. It was a struggle — until the very last weeks of her life — Winnie was a fighter. When college students united across South Africa under the slogan #FeesMustFall, setting off protests against the country in 2015, she joined them in the streets. Upon hearing of violent police crackdowns on the thousands of protesters, she announced that she would stand with the crowd for another day of marching and protesting. Winnie militantly stated: “Let us see if the police will shoot with me in the front line. I dare them to.” (News24, 22 Oct, 2015)

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, joblessness and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it.

Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black and Brown youth and trans people are gnawed down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in this society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capital profit. The workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a Workers World branch near you.

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
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The recent police executions of two Black men — Stephan Clark in Sacramento, Calif., and Saheed Vassell in Brooklyn, N.Y. — are just two examples of the ongoing pattern of police murder of Black and Brown people. Killings of Black and Brown people are grossly disproportionate to their overall numbers in the U.S. The police killings of Indigenous people are not even on official records! None of the cops involved in these shootings have been indicted on any kind of murder charge, much less arrested.

These killings help to reinforce the Marxist view that agents of the repressive state apparatus, especially the police, are above the laws that working and oppressed peoples are obliged to obey — they do not risk being heavily fined, put in jail or killed.

This is why capitalism, which the police protect and serve as an armed force, must be abolished and replaced with a socialist system that provides for human needs for all — and doesn’t serve the interests of the super-rich.

Continued from page 2

However, Winnie’s life was not without controversy, slander and false accusations. The apartheid-state police that controlled her on many occasions. In her autobiography, “49 Days: Prisoner Number 1329/09,” Winnie reported several beatings by police and how she spent over a year in solitary confinement. (Ohio University Press, 2014)

In 1986, due to her vocal support of what was labeled a violent uprising by the masses she faced strong political and personal defamation. In court her opposition cited a spray of bullets which had been turned into vegetables by the South African government. We are the mothers whose babies have [been] shot on our backs and sometimes we fall with those babies. The atrocities that have been committed by the police are against every mother’s bitterness which you cannot put in words.”

Winnie — also known by her native Xhosa name, Nomzamo, meaning “she who strives” — spent her life as a freedom fighter and a woman of the people. As a powerful force of reckoning and retribution, of righting wrongs and rioting, of sowing seeds and setting fire, of piloting massive protest by her followers, Winnie Mandela never gave up the struggle. Nor did she silence even one part of her own identity.

And throughout her life, Winnie did light boxes of matches. She was falsely accused of supplying of armed individuals or groups. The Western media carried a smear campaign against her, eerily similar to that against Black revolutionary Angela Davis during the 1970s. Winnie’s role was to uplift the voiceless, defending women and children, and making sure that every human being was heard.

In an interview in the Duluth Tribune News on June 23, 1990, she said: “We are the women of the world, the women who have been hunted by our children all these years. We are the women who have been seen in a physical sense the horrors of apartheid. We are the mothers who have held the bodies of our children in 1976. We are the mothers who have been turned into vegetables by the South African government. We are the mothers whose babies have [been] shot on our backs and sometimes we fall with those babies. The atrocities that have been committed by the police are against every mother’s bitterness which you cannot put in words.”

Winnie told reporters, “I am not a burden on any man or anyone else. In her memoir, she wrote: “I said I was not going to back in his shadow and be known as Mandela’s wife; they were going to know me as Zanyise Madikizela. I fought for that. I said, I will never even back in his politics. I am going to form my own identity.”

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NYC construction workers: Defending union jobs nationally

Thousands of construction workers crammed two blocks south of Times Square April 4 to protest The Related Companies’ use of nonunion labor on the massive Hudson Yards westside development. “New York City is a union town,” said Gary LaBarbera, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York, opening the rally. After a moment of silence remembering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., he noted that workers are still in the streets 50 years after his death.

Chanting “Union!” and waving green #CountMeIn placards, the workers were protesting because Related, which built the first phase of Hudson Yards with union workers, has refused to sign a project-labor agreement for the second phase. The developer hired Boston contractor Gilbane Building Co., which uses a so-called “open shop” mix of union and nonunion workers, to construct a 31-story office tower. Also, Related has hired nonunion metalworkers and operating engineers, not workers from Laborers Local 638.

Noting that nonunion labor is cheaper, Mason Tenders District Council Business Manager Bobby Bonanza said: “It’s not about saving nothin’. It’s about breaking us.”

Related is using the Building Trades Council and LaBarbera personally, accusing them of defamation and fraudulently inflate labor costs. The council, joined by the New York State AFL-CIO, has responded by filing unfair-labor-practice complaints with the National Labor Relations Board, accusing Related of illegally retaliating against union supporters. (Labor Press, April 3) This struggle is just beginning. Stay tuned.

Join FLOC’s fight for tobacco workers: Boycott VUSE

E-cigarettes have different qualities from those of their analog peers, but conditions are the same for the mostly Latinx workers who labor in Southern tobacco fields. Workers routinely get “green tobacco sickness,” heat stroke and pesticide exposure that poisons them, while children must work to support their families. A North Carolina farmworker earns less than $8,000 a year.

That’s where the international union fighting for farmworkers’ rights, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, comes in. More than 10 years ago FLOC took on Reynolds American, one of the largest tobacco corporations in the world. FLOC wants Reynolds to accept a project-labor agreement for the workers to certify their support of Reynolds and stop using children in the fields.

Workers mass in Memphis commemorate Dr. King and sanitation strikers

By Dianne Mathiowetz

Memphis, Tenn.

April 4 — Thousands of people from far and wide, including worker delegations, gathered here on the 50th anniversary of the heroic Memphis sanitation workers strike and the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Wearing their union T-shirts, NAACP jackets or other identifying organizational garb, they filled huge halls to standing room only. They heard from key leaders of the Southern American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1733 sanitation workers’ strike, and marched to a rally next to the Mason Temple. UNITE HERE brought at least 2,000 members, travelling to Memphis on 41 charter buses.

The rally gathered for more speeches and singing outside the Lorraine Motel, where King was killed by a single bullet.

The Lorraine and nearby buildings house the National Civil Rights Museum, with an extraordinary collection of photos, documents, videos, oral histories and related exhibits. On display is a sanitation truck like the one that crushed to death workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker, sparking the 1968 strike.

The famous slogan of the sanitation workers’ picket signs, “I Am a Man,” appeared on murals and commemorative T-shirts and was inclusively transformed on signs. “I Am a Person,” “I Am a Black,” “I Am a Woman” — many present were older people who had participated in marches and voter registration drives, faced police dogs and water cannons, or been fired from their jobs or evicted from their homes. Everywhere were families with teenagers and actual children. Young adults, now part of #BlackLivesMatter and movements against police killings, state violence, gentrification, low-wages, poverty and white supremacy, came to April 2-3 training sessions.

These were designed to transfer organizational skills and knowledge the edge of previous civil rights struggles to today’s activists.

AFSCME Memphis sanitation workers opened the fight for public workforce employees to belong to a union. In 1968, they used their power to withhold their labor as a tool to win collective bargaining rights and hold onto their rights. Dr. King’s support of the sanitation workers’ strike was also key to the Poor People’s Campaign that he launched earlier in 1968, intending to bring to the struggle against economic inequality and systemic poverty to Washington, D.C. King coupled this action with his demonstration of the U.S. war on Vietnam, declaring the U.S. government to be “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world.” He made the economic war on the poor worse, by saying “the bombs dropped on Vietnam explode” in the nation’s communities of poor and working people.

From a new Poor People’s Campaign to the April 14-15 national “End U.S. Wars at Home and Abroad” rallies — in the strikes and walkouts by public education teachers and staff in West Virginia, New Jersey, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Arizona — the resistance embodied in the Memphis sanitation workers and in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lives on.

Houston honors life of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

By Gloria Rubac

A tribute, “From South Africa to Third Ward: A Celebration of the Life and Legacy of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela,” was held April 8 at the SHAPE Community Center. This was the exact location that Madikizela Mandela visited in Houston in 1981.

The gathering was organized by Akua Holt with Amana Productions and chaired by the national chair of the National Association for the United Nations. Over 100 people were treated to music, documents, videos, oral histories and related exhibits. On display is a sanitation truck like the one that crushed to death workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker, sparking the 1968 strike.

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These were designed to transfer organizational skills and knowledge the edge of previous civil rights struggles to today’s activists.

AFSCME 1733, the Memphis union local that won the first contract with Memphis politicians, marches proud and strong in Memphis 50 years later, April 4, in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

After nearly 11 months of bargaining and 22 days on strike, the Communication Workers of America and Frontier reached a tentative agreement for 1,400 CWA members who work in West Virginia and Ashburn, Va. As of ratification, the contract expands job security for all members — a major victory — and provides wage increases and modest increases in health care coverage.

“Going on strike is never easy,” said Ed Mooney, vice president of CWA District 2-12 in a statement. “But for our members knew what was at stake for their co-workers and for their communities. Thanks to their strength and unity, [we] reached an agreement with Frontier that [continues] good, family-supporting jobs.” Workers received an outsourcing of support from community members who were already in the streets supporting the teachers’ strike. They returned to their jobs on March 28. (cwa-union.org, March 25 and April 2)

Organizing: ‘Best thing that ever happened’ at LA health center

Health center workers at the Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center in downtown Los Angeles won an organizing victory by voting 113 to 53 to join United Electrical Workers on March 22. These workers provide advocacy and support for people with disabilities, allowing them to live in their own communities. But management wasn’t helping them. So the workers organized to stop management disrespect, thereby helping both themselves and their clients.

In UES West Region delegate meeting in Chicago March 25-26, the workers told of management’s excessive write-ups that lead to firings and ridiculous policies like having to somehow report to management eight hours ahead of time when they are sick. More than 300 reported that their co-workers get no breaks. “People throughout this process have become more militant, they’ve lost that fear they had. This campaign essentially brought back the sisterhood and brotherhood that we used to have, the sense of family ... [Organizing] is the best thing that has ever happened at Lanterman.” (April, UE News)
By By John Steffin

It has now been over a year since 1,800 members of International Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 3 went on strike against cable monopoly Spectrum/Charter in the New York City/New Jersey area. Spectrum/Charter in New York City and, with the influx of workers, is the largest cable provider in the U.S. Mergers like this have resulted in gargantuan proportions — so much so that one individual company alone doesn’t have the money or power to actually purchase another company as big as Time Warner. Even Spectrum/Charter needs help — which must be gotten from Big Bank. But taking money from the banks comes with a catch — a catch that Lenin described over 100 years ago in his popular book of 1895, “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism.” The lesson that still applies is quite simple: The banks become the boss — what Lenin called “the finance capitalist.”

In 2015, Spectrum/Charter gobbled up Time Warner and became the second largest cable provider in the U.S. Mergers like this have resulted in gargantuan proportions — so much so that one individual company alone doesn’t have the money or power to actually purchase another company as big as Time Warner. Even Spectrum/Charter needs help — which must be gotten from Big Bank. But taking money from the banks comes with a catch — a catch that Lenin described over 100 years ago in his popular book of 1895, “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism.” The lesson that still applies is quite simple: The banks become the boss — what Lenin called “the finance capitalist.”

The banks only lend out billions of dollars if they know they are going to get something in return. So when Charter/Time Warner took on $27 billion in debt to finance the purchase of Time Warner, the company effectively handed the entire business over to the banks. As the banks are the big bosses, everything they do, all the entire bourgeoisie’s wealth in their coffers.

Despite a year of their workers striking, Charter/Charter/Time Warner — backed by a large segment of the finance capitalist class, including such big names as Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Deutsche Bank and Credit Suisse — still refuses to bargain with IBEW Local 3.

Spectrum Strike

It is a tribute to the power of IBEW and the loyalty of its members that the union has held out for a year during this onslaught by the financial capitalist class.

Workers are doing everything they can to continue the strike, but there is a financial toll. The local is digging deep into the pockets of its strike fund, paying striking workers $350 a week. But once workers use up their personal savings, that fund doesn’t cover basic expenses. In the last few months, some workers have reported difficulties paying rent, and they’ve turned to borrowing from friends to get by, in hopes that the struggle will soon end.

These are the conditions that have turned the SpectrumStrike from a struggle between workers and owners into a titanic struggle between one of the country’s most powerful unions and the entire financial capitalist system.

With a new wave of labor militancy rising from Washington, D.C., protesting 11 years of total blockade and 70 years of occupation. (See article on news from Gaza.)

Israel kills Palestinians in Gaza

Meanwhile, the Israeli army killed more than 30 Palestinian civilians in Gaza this week in the Great March of Return, which protested 11 years of total blockade and 70 years of occupation. (See article on news from Gaza.)

Palestinian activist and author Susan Abuhaowa opened the news conference by reading excerpts from a letter sent in March to the orchestra management requesting a meeting. Over 100 musicians, artists, scholars, union members and others have signed a letter to the American Federation of Musicians, signed the letter calling on the orchestra to cancel the tour. A copy of that letter was sent with a special appeal to the orchestra’s unionized musicians in the American Federation of Musicians Local 77.

When orchestra co-presidents Ryan Fler and Matthew Lode answered on March 26, they invoked “peace and tolerance through music.” Yet they plan to maintain its itinerary. Regev, Israel’s minister of culture and sport, reversed recently African asylum seekers in Israel to “a cancer” — but apologized to cancer survivors for the concert planned to support the orchestra. Regev also posted a video of herself with Israeli soccer fans as they shouted genocidal chants at Palestinians.

One immediate result of the rally was the removal of Regev’s name from the orchestra’s website posting of the tour itinerary.

No cultural exchange of racism

“Israel is doing to the Palestinian people what Israel is doing to the Palestinian people they would say ‘hell no’ to the orchestra trip. Even Super Bowl Sharks players said the Philadelphia Eagles made it clear they would not go.”

Palestinian activist Rabi Mustafa from Al-Aqsa Mosque and West Bank told a press conference in Washington, D.C. stated, “There should be no cultural exchange of racism, of apartheid, of dehumanization and the robbing of culture, history or Indigenous peoples’ land.”

New York/ New Jersey workers have been on strike against Spectrum/ Charter for more than a year.

Protesters for Palestine to Philharmonic 'Violins, not Zionist Violence'

By Betsey Piette

Over 70 people participated in a rally and press conference outside the Kimmel Center on April 6 to protest the Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra’s plans to tour and perform in Israel in June 2018. The event was organized by a newly formed coalition, Philly: Don’t Orchestrate Apartheid.

The rally greeted concertgoers and musicians as they exited an afternoon performance of the Philadelphia Orchestra, in violation of international law. There was no sign that the Philadelphia Orchestra’s plans to perform in the country of Israel would be protested, and it was obvious that the concertgoers were unaware of the location of the performance. The rally welcomed concertgoers and musicians as they exited an afternoon performance of the Philadelphia Orchestra, asking them to stand in resistance to the Philharmonic Orchestra’s plans to tour and perform in Israel in June 2018. The event was organized by the newly formed coalition, Philly: Don’t Orchestrate Apartheid.

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Education workers defy and push forward

By Ben C. and Sara C. Oklahoma City, Okla.

April 11 – Teachers and education support staff have now been on determined walkout to fund Oklahoma public education since April 2.

April 6 – Schools in districts serving the majority of the state’s students are officially closed as rightfully angry educators continue to pack the state Legislature building and grounds. According to the Oklahoma Education Association (@okea twitter), Friday’s goal was to obtain education funding of $841 million yearly via taxes on online Amazon purchases, “ball and dice” games at casinos, and by vetoing the repeal of a $5 tax on hotel/motel stays.

P.L. added: “Lawmakers should expect to see us at the Capitol on Monday, fighting for the passage of capital gains legislation.” Ending capital gains deductions could generate $120 million in state income, especially from corporations.

Beginning Monday, April 4, tens of thousands of teachers, school workers, students and community members have shuttered schools across Oklahoma and rallied inside and outside the Capitol building. The contradiction of resource-poor classrooms on oil-rich land is so sharp that even many district administrators endorse this mobilization as necessary to bridge the funding gap.

Generally speaking, these workers are not defying management but are confronting the state institutions that actually determine their pay and the education budget: Oklahoma’s governor and the state Legislature. Other unions have joined the ongoing demonstrations at the Capitol building as well, including state workers’ Oklahoma Public Employees Association denouncing their own low pay. Teamsters are driving shuttle vans for demonstrators and have refused to cross education workers’ picket lines. Oklahoma Education Association members include public school teachers, coaches, counselors, librarians, nurses, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, secretaries and other support personnel.

Community support

The National Indian Education Association issued a statement of support for the strike, noting: “More than 100,000 Native American students are out of school across the state. They deserve a quality education provided by adequately funded schools. With their strike, Oklahoma educators are demanding the state fulfill its responsibility and fully fund public schools and provide raises to educators. Funding for textbooks, salaries, and professional development are critical and are necessary to create positive, culturally responsive learning environments where students can be inspired and thrive.”

On April 4, a hundred teachers began a 110-mile march from Tulsa to the Capitol in Oklahoma City to dramatize their commitment to better schools for all. Marcher Aaron Baker confirmed to WW that the date was chosen to align with the #MLK50 commemorations in Memphis. “We realized that MLK Day was Thursday, so we decided to jump a day. The next day, at least one marcher’s sign read, ‘Western Heights, we walk for you too.’ In fact, 30 Western Heights staff defied the order. By Thursday, district teachers resolved the problem by organizing field trips, bringing classes to the Capitol in yellow buses (tinyurl.com/8pbaypm)

Impressions from the ground

“They want to shut down and privatize public services and make them to be for profit,” a veteran Oklahoma teacher, Tom Smith, told WW. “That’s why we see all these things about charter and private schools. Nobody’s making any money. That’s why you see everybody wanting to privatize your pension funds, and so forth. We need to solve the root cause and then we can begin to heal up.”

Smith was one of hundreds who gladly received solidarity handouts from Workers World and the Southern Workers Assembly in the first two days of the strike.

Every day, education workers have filled the grounds of the Capitol building in what resembles in many ways an encampment, setting up canopies with the names of their school districts, and even conducting classes for students. Thousands have packed the plaza on the south side of the building for daily rallies. These rallies, in addition to featuring Oklahoma school workers, parents and students, have included West Virginia teachers, who have acknowledged the strikes by education workers taking place in Kentucky and elsewhere, and have included devastating calls to continue to return to the Legislature on mass every day until demands are met.

The atmosphere outside the building also has a marked tone of jubilant resistance, featuring cultural performances, music, dancing and a generally celebratory environment. Many carry creative, homemade signs that reiterate the call for full funding, or highlight the abysmal state of education in Oklahoma, including textbooks that are 20 years old, crumbling school buildings and other deplorable conditions. Some signs point to the role that the big oil and gas companies in the state play and demand that they pay up to fund education. Other signs draw the connection between the massive amount the state spends to incarcerate people compared to the measly funding it provides for education.

Long lines that last throughout the day snake around the Capitol building from both entrances as education workers and their supporters have also maintained a strong presence each day inside the halls of the Capitol. Pacing the balconies of each of the four floors of the building – in a scene that is reminiscent of the state Capitol takeover by state workers in Wisconsin in 2011 – education workers fill the building each day with speeches and chants. When the House or Senate have been in session, hundreds of teachers pack the seating area and the narrow halls outside the doors leading to the chambers, drowning out the sessions with chants for full funding of education.

After Oklahoma Gov. Fallin compared education workers to “a teenage kid that wants a better car,” many pursued her when she appeared on Thursday at the Capitol, jangling their keys in the air and chanting, “Where’s my car?”

Big Oil and Jim Crow

Oklahoma teachers are ranked 49th in pay countrywide. Only Mississippi and South Dakota rank lower. (In addition to the 50 states, the District of Columbia is included in the ranking.) Ninety of the state’s 500 school districts have switched to a four-day school week due to a lack of funding to keep schools open for a full five-day week.

The state is also one of the top five petroleum and shale-oil producing states in the country. The U.S. Energy Information...
Workers continue MLK’s fight for economic and civil rights

By Dante Strobino
Durham, N.C.

When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to Memphis, Tenn., in support of striking sanitation workers 50 years ago, he was actually on his way to North Carolina. A few months after his assassination, in August 1968, sanitation workers in Charlotte, N.C., also went out on strike. This inspired many other sanitation worker strikes across the South in 1968, including in Atlanta, St. Petersburg, Fla., and Durham, N.C. in Charlotte, the mediator was forced to meet with the workers, black and white together, in a public park, because facilities large enough to hold the entire group were segregated.

King’s campaign for economic and civil rights continues in North Carolina, where the NC Public Service Workers Union, United Electrical Workers Local 150, has been building a statewide campaign to fight for a Municipal Workers Bill of Rights and also to challenge the Jim Crow ban on public sector collective bargaining.

Winston-Salem workers fight for $15 and more

On April 4, the anniversary of King’s assassination, city workers, community-first labor support groups and faith organizations in Winston-Salem, N.C., rallied for a family-supporting wage of at least $15 an hour. Hundreds of city workers are currently making the city’s minimum of $11.25 an hour. Over 100 people gathered at the event, organized by Working America, with support from over a dozen other groups, including UE150, NC AFL-CIO, First Baptist Church, Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, the Winston-Salem NAACP and such long-standing local civil rights leaders as the Rev. John Mendez and the Rev. Paul Robeson Ford.

“We have come today not only to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but to build a movement,” the Rev. John Mendez, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, told the crowd. “A commemoration stands still, but a movement moves forward.”

Monticello Mitchell, a city worker in the Vegetation Department, spoke out against the economic squeeze faced by city workers. “The packages in the store are getting smaller and the prices are getting higher,” Mitchell said. “A $15 wage for those who don’t make $15 would help.”

On hand were members of the two-year-old Greensboro Workers Union, a chapter of UE Local 150, to lend their encouragement for efforts of Winston-Salem city workers to organize a union. Bryce Carter, Streets Department worker and UE150 elected steward, shared many of their recent union victories, including wage improvements of workers paid from $8.03 per hour to $11.50. Also won were policy changes to create space for organizational, including winning payroll deduction. Carter said: “I am proud of our chapter. We just keep pressing on. We come together and make changes.”

A major issue that sparked the Memphis sanitation strike 50 years ago was the death of two workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker. Only this past summer, a Charlotte city worker, Anthony Milledge, was killed by heat-related illness after working overtime in the broiling summer. Workers in Greensboro were also injured on the job last summer. The union exposed the city of Greensboro’s lack of heat-safety guidelines to protect workers. Carter noted that, after pressure from the union, “The city has now drafted a policy to keep workers safe in excessive summer heat.”

Durham city workers win City Council resolution

Durham city workers have also been organizing for improved safety, union rights and raises. After a campaign of several months, the Durham City Council voted April 2 to pass a resolution commemorating April 4 and the legacy of Dr. King, and calling on the state legislature to repeal the law, General Statute 95-98, passed in 1959 by an all-white, Jim Crow state legislature, that bans public workers from collective bargaining. Through the resolution, the council also conveyed three pages of recommendations for “improved union access and rights” to the city manager.

In concert with the Durham Workers Assembly, UE150 has been organizing pressure on the city to pass this resolution, along with forming a Workers Rights Commission to assist private sector worker organizing.

Cummins engine workers rally for health care

The Carolina Auto, Aerospace and Machine Workers Union, a chapter of UE Local 150, also organized a workers’ rally on April 4 at the Cummins engine plant outside Rocky Mount in rural Whittakers. The Teamsters, who organize Cummins workers in West Virginia, had reached out to UE150 about a companywide campaign to fight back against a high-deductible health plan.

Workers at the plant wore stickers to their jobs that stated, “Cummins high deductibles keep us sick. All Cummins workers want $1,000 more in their HSA” [health savings account].

The April 4 rally leaflet stated: “Things have changed at Cummins. Now the company is forcing workers into dangerous, unaffordable, high-deductible health care plans. Employees skip medications, delay doctor visits and are racking up debts. And the inexpensive health services at the state-of-the-art Cummins Livewell Health Center are only convenient for those who live near the company’s headquarters in Columbus, Ind.”

According to the joint UE-Teamsters press release, “Cummins is one of the largest diesel engine manufacturers in the world. In 2017, Cummins had revenues of $18.7 billion — is one of the biggest oil producers in the U.S. — a dismal 2 percent.”

This campaign continues in the spirit of the Rev. King, who said, “Of all the forms of injustice, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

MAKING OIL & GAS PAY NOW!!!

PHOTO: NORTH CAROLINA AFL-CIO

PHOTO: TEAMSTERS LOCAL 886

Teamsters Local 886 refused to cross the education workers picket line to do renovations on the state Capitol.

their bidding and impose harsh austerity measures on communities.

As education strikers continue to push forward in Oklahoma on April 5, news is breaking that teachers in Washington, D.C., are also staging a walkout against underfunded school conditions there. These teachers are placing their action in the broader context of the uprising being led by education workers in Oklahoma, Kentucky, Puerto Rico, Arizona, West Virginia and elsewhere.

This burgeoning struggle against austerity cuts and for meeting people’s needs shows signs of continuing to expand in the days and weeks ahead — with teachers and school workers in the lead.
Syria poison gas? Pretext for U.S. military attack

Continued from page 1

The Syrian government has also established humanitarian corridors enabling more than 150,000 civilians to be evacuated by force.

The town of Douma, where the supposed gas attack took place, was the last to be liberated. The Army of Islam or Jaysh al-Islam had agreed to an evacuation. The Syrian Arab Air Force had destroyed more than 300 positions of Jaysh al-Islam in the Douma district, including its main headquarters, communication networks and ammunition depots, over the last 24 hours before the supposed gas attack.

Syria has no motive.

The idea that the Syrian government would choose this moment of victory to suddenly unleash a gas attack is incredible and ridiculous. But it is a charge that serves as an excuse for the U.S. and NATO to renew their bombing, especially since only a week earlier Trump had talked about getting the U.S. out of Syria.

The gas attack, which is said to have killed at least 42 people, was top-of-the-news, front-page coverage in the U.S. media along with Trump’s tweets. While the charge that Syria did it was met with contempt and ridicule throughout most of the world, NATO members France and Britain dutifully chimed in with immediate threats to bomb Syria.

The Israeli regime beat them to it and immediately seized the opportunity to attack Syria. Two Israeli F-15 fighters fired a missile into Syria’s T4 Military Airbase in Homs province before dawn on April 9.

This is beyond belief to accept that Israel — whose troops have killed 28 unarmed Palestinian civilians and injured more than 1,500 over the past two weeks, in addition to the thousands it has killed in its past bombings of Gaza — was attacking Syria over the deaths of civilians.

Charges with no proof

The imperialists’ blatant assertion of Syrian guilt is not only totally unfounded, it is unprovable and totally implausible. Syria has repeatedly denied allegations of chemical weapons use, underscoring that it has no weapons of mass destruction. This was confirmed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry points out that similar allegations emerge every time the Syrian Army makes advances in its fight against terrorist groups.

Last year on April 7, the Pentagon, without waiting for any evidence, attacked Syria’s Shuyurat Air Force base with 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles, supposedly in response to chemical weapons being used at Khan Shikhoun, a town in southwestern Syria. The sudden attack,orchestrated with immediate photos and a coordinated campaign of war propaganda by a compliant media, reached new heights.

Protecting civilians is the claim made by the imperialists to justify their massive bombings, destabilizations campaigns and starvation sanctions — resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians.

Wider war threatened

A wider war exasperating from a confrontation in Syria is a growing danger. Most dangerous right now is the coincidence with the installation of extreme right-wing war hawk John Bolton as Trump’s new national security advisor.

When the U.S. ruling class wants a war, the corporate media fall into line. Whether it was the phony claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction in 2002, which U.S. officials knew to be a lie, or the phony “attack” by Vietnamese PT boats on a U.S. warship in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964, the U.S. media have repeated the government’s lies to justify its wars.

This goes all the way back to the sinking of the battleship Maine in 1898, which was used to justify the Spanish-American War. A U.S. Navy inquiry in 1974 commissioned by Admiral Hyman Rickover concluded that the Maine sunk, not because of a Spanish mine, but because munitions stored aboard caught fire and exploded.

U.S. military corporations have an enormous stake in continued war. But it goes wider than that. The big imperialist corporations and banks fear the defeat of all U.S. strategic plans for the region. So once again military, corporate and media forces are draging out the same playbook they have used time and again to keep U.S. troops in Afghanistan, South Korea, Syria and the more than 1,000 U.S. military bases around the world.

It is especially ominous that Russia was immediately blamed, along with the Palestine liberation movement to Syria has helped stimulate U.S. plans for the overthrow of the Syrian government. In their constant drumbeat of non-stop demonization, U.S. opinion molders don’t even bother to present facts or motivation when making charges against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

They also paint a dire picture that a U.S. military pullout from the region would lead to chaos and benefit Russia, Iran or China, while also leading to a resurgence of the Islamic State group in Syria. What the war planners really oppose is a unified, sovereign Syrian state.

Progressive forces opposed to endless U.S. wars must confront these criminal charges against Syria and demand of the U.S. warmakers: “Hands off Syria!”

Gaza: Mass uprising defies Israeli oppression

Continued from page 2

But repression breeds resistance. The people of Gaza are setting an example of fighting back that resonates with so many who are suffering under the current “world order” — a regime dictated by the tiny class of superbillionaires who have sucked the wealth out of oppressed nations and peoples all over the globe.

The Palestinians have put their bodies on the line, even at the very real risk of being shot down by Israeli soldiers.

Protests continue despite murderous repression

On March 30, at the first protest, 17 unarmed Gazans were killed and hundreds were wounded as Israeli troops used live ammunition and tear gas against the demonstrators. That date is known as “Land Day.” It marks the deaths in 1976 of six Palestinians who were shot to death by Israeli soldiers while demonstrating against the Israeli government’s seizure of Palestinian land, sea and air blockade, and few are ever allowed to leave. Most are city dwellers, but some have small farms that attempt to supply food to the population.

After 10 years of blockade, some 80 percent of the people there are dependent on humanitarian assistance for their very survival.

Rejecting Israeli claims that the protesters were coerced by the Palestinian organization Hamas, one British paper described the conditions in Gaza: “Nor could demonstrators have been persuaded to participate in these numbers were it not for the hopelessness they feel after 11 years that have seen them suffer three bloody wars, an Israeli-Egyptian border closure, and an Israeli blockade that has implored Gaza’s economy. There is despair over the underground world. In the four hours of electricity, the shortage of medicines and the relentless increasing unemployment rate among one of the most educated peoples in the Arab world. Over 60 percent of under-25s are unemployed.” (The Guardian, April 8)

End the occupation! Free Palestine now!

On May 31, 2010, nine pro-Palestinian activists were killed when Israeli commandos raided a Gaza-bound flotilla trying to bring aid in defiance of the blockade. The Israeli attack left a trail of dead and wounded among the 688 activists on the ship, the Mavi Marmara.

In November 2012, an Israeli missile strike killed Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari in Gaza City, sparking a confrontation in which 174 Palestinians died.

In July 2014, Israel launched another air and ground offensive against Gaza that killed 2,100 Palestinians, including 495 children.

Not all Israelis support these murderous attacks. A progressive group B’Tzedon is urging soldiers to disobey any orders to shoot at unarmed civilians. Three Israeli experts on international law have agreed that firing on unarmed protesters is illegal.

On May 15, Palestinians will commemorate the Nakba. On May 16, the U.S. government will move its embassy to Jerusalem. There will undoubtedly be massive demonstrations by Palestinians throughout the world, not just in Gaza but all over the world. Everyone who is for the rights of the oppressed should be there.
Boston solidarity with Palestinian resistance

By Sam Ordóñez
Boston

A series of demonstrations took place in Boston this week in response to the Israeli Defense Forces’ massacre of Palestinian protesters along the Gaza border. On April 5, the Answer Coalition of Boston called an emergency demonstration in Copley Square. Anti-imperialists and allies of the Palestinian people gathered to denounce Israel’s crimes and express solidarity with the Palestinians killed and wounded by IDF snipers during the Great March of Return.

A couple of weeks ago, militant protesters marched to the Israeli Consulate, chanting, “Gaza, Gaza, don’t you cry! Palestine will never die!” and “Resistance is justifiable.” Now, the next group of protesters gathered in front of the consulate with demands to end the occupation of Palestinians. Later in the day, the Answer Coalition held a mock trial to “Indict Israel, not Ahmed Tamimi.”

As the Palestinian people continue to resist Israeli occupation with the Great March of Return, another rally was called by the Boston Palestine Solidarity Network for April 21 on the Boston Common.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Nakba, the Catastrophe, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee their homes during the 1948 war.

Chicago anti-war coalition to march

By Jeff Sorel
Chicago

The Chicago Anti-War Coalition, a new formation composed of dozens of organizations, will rally and march on April 21 to demand an end to wars at home and abroad.

The coalition was formed in February. It seeks to mobilize the building anger in this city against wars being waged by the U.S. government on peoples throughout the world, including here in the U.S., where racism and police violence run rampant, and schools and housing decay from lack of resources.


Why we march

Continued from page 1

test as the motivators for the “End U.S. Wars” action?

Popuchet: A call to end U.S. violence against oppressed peoples of the world, to end the U.S. putting interest in “resource” peoples aside, and to draw the connection between U.S. militarism against oppressed nations, and the way the government treats our own people. The U.S. gives millions of dollars to Israel, where fascist IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] troops treat Palestinians as subhuman, the same way the NYPD [New York Police Department] treats people of color. The NYPD was trained by the Israel forces. A couple of weeks ago, we led a march for Our Lives about the April 13 action and also the killing of Stephon Clark by police, to draw the connection that people are dying by U.S. gun violence in Iran, Yemen, Palestine, the same way that people are dying in the streets of Brooklyn and Sacramento and Ferguson.

Monzon: For the people, a primary motivator has been [King’s] anti-war campaign, which has been a largely forgotten part of his legacy. It is no coincidence he was murdered the year after his “Beyond Vietnam” speech and at the same time he was organizing with sanitation workers.

To me, 50 years later, things are largely the same--the same U.S. wars of aggression against poor people and schools and housing decay from lack of resources. We are opposing U.S. nuclear threats. We oppose U.S. involvement in elections in other countries. Just look at what they did to my country in Latin America. We are opposing U.S. funding fascist states such as Israel and we also oppose the state violence that happens within our own borders.

Monzon: We are saying fund human needs and not endless war. So instead of spending money to destroy nations, let’s spend money to provide services here at home like universal health care and education.

Rosenberg: How do you see a way to move beyond a reactive strategy, to a more permanent solution to implement the goals you are stating?

Monzon: A big part of the strategy needs to be a revitalization of the anti-war movement. We can see that other movements have revived in the last few years in the Occupy movement, Black Lives Matter, #MeToo. If we can rebuild opposition to U.S. war, similar to the Vietnam era, we can rebuild that movement, that will propel us forward.

Popuchet: The NRA [National Rifle Association] is the product of a larger system. If we can build consciousness about the role of the anti-war movement, we can apply that to any type of U.S.-for-eign intervention. The U.S. is beating the war drums against Russia, against the DPRK [Democratic People’s Republic of Korea], while at the same time deploying more troops into the Black Sea area and Eastern Europe. If that’s not building and gearing up for a war, I don’t know what is.

The action will begin with a rally at Congress Parkway and Michigan Avenue, followed by a march through the Loop to a second rally at Tribune Tower. Speakers will include Maria Hernandez of Black Lives Matter, Joe Lombardo of the United National Antiwar Coalition, Randi Nord of Geopolitics Alert, Frank Chaplinsky of the American Friends Service Committee, Maya Arcilla of Anakbayan-Chicago, Dr. Anne Schetz of Physicians for a National Health Program and Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Non-Violence.

Flounders: Thanks so much for this program, and particularly on this day of Martin Luther King Jr., who made these links 50 years ago, and paid the price. The April 14 rallies are organized by a large coalition, so we are expecting an important mobilization in cities around the U.S.

Here in New York City, on April 15, we rally at 2 p.m. at Herald Square, 34th Street and 6th Avenue, and then we march to Trump Tower. At www.sprin-gaction2018.org you will see a list of hundreds of endorsers, a broad spectrum of the U.S. political movement that doesn’t always come together, but that has now united to oppose all U.S. wars, sanctions, coups, and the escalating attacks, repression, racism and cutbacks at home.

Monzon: People should come out on April 14, thinking of the history of U.S. wars, remembering that the U.S. has the largest arsenal of nuclear weapons in the world. There is a real potential to endanger all life on the planet. This is a fight for our lives.

Popuchet: For the sake of oppressed peoples internationally, there needs to be a revival of the anti-war movement. People here in the U.S. need to come out on April 14-15 to show their solidarity with the people who the U.S. has disenfranchised and marginalized. And not only for them, but also for the disenfranchised within the U.S., we need to stand together and begin to end the violence because we know the U.S. government is not going to do that.

Rosenberg: We’ve got to build this mass national movement, for people’s power. Let’s get to that demonstration. For more information, see springaction2018.org.
**U.S. hands off Venezuela**

When the Wall Street Journal starts shedding crocodile tears over the plight of the Venezuelan people, it’s time to watch out for the next war.

The WSJ ran an article April 6 detailing the plight of Venezuelans who can’t get appropriate medical care. Something must be done, cries the Journal, to rescue these poor people!

But when the voice of big money says, “Something must be done!” to the White House and as industrial profits often involves economic blockade, regime change, destruction of infrastructure and mass murder.

The article recently appeared just a week before Donald Trump is set to attend the Organization of American States Summit in Peru on April 13. OAS organizers have been trying to exclude Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Their goal is to mobilize the Latin American states against Venezuela.

What’s revealing about this media alarm for a “humanitarian crisis” is that the WSJ’s usual approach is to put profit above its people, even in words.

Wall Street doesn’t cry about the Yemenis killed by Saudi Arabia — with U.S. military help. It doesn’t sob about the million-plus Iraqis killed and many more displaced by the 2003 U.S. invasion and occupation. It doesn’t report the plight of Hondurans suffering from the militarist regime foisted on them in 2009 with U.S. support.

It is reasonable to doubt that suddenly the WSJ is putting people first. Is Wall Street really worrying about the lack of health care in Venezuela — while it promotes dismantling health care for the poor in the U.S.? Is Wall Street worrying about nutrition in Caracas when its government dismantles the food-stamp program here?

We say “B.S.”

We offer a simple solution to resolve the alleged humanitarian crisis in Venezuela: U.S. hands off the Bolivarian Revolution!

End all sanctions on Venezuela. End the blockade of the country’s state-owned store Venezuela’s access to international banks. Stop mobilizing reactionary regimes in Colombia, Argentina and Brazil against Venezuela. Stop conspiring with right-wing oligarchs and pro-fascist gangs. Stop trying to provoke a military coup, like the one that kidnapped then-President Hugo Chávez 16 years ago on April 11 — until the Venezuelan people forced his release.

These are actions that would go a long way toward improving the everyday life of all working-class Venezuelans.

**Answers to #45’s border bluster**

By John Catalinotto

There is nothing more revolutionary resistance has an other way to throw a wrench in the repressive state machine than Trump who wants to unleash that tool to disrupt the obedience of the troops. In the U.S. imperialist military, this obedience is based on working-class soldiers lacking class consciousness or solidarity in relation to the oppressed peoples they are sent to kill and control.

But, from time to time in history, ordinary troops have surprised their commanders and turned upon the master class they were supposed to serve.

That happened in the U.S. Armed Forces at a high level 50 years ago — during the war against Vietnam.

Today’s U.S. military is a “professional” and volunteer military. The generals expect obedience. Nevertheless, very few of today’s soldiers, including National Guard troops, imagined they would be sent to confront and threaten mainly women and young children attempting to cross the U.S. to do farm work.

How many more troops may hate these orders?

All those who oppose #45, all those who consider themselves part of resistance to his poisonous and racist rule, should make sure that every regular soldier in the army, every National Guard member, knows that they will be supported if they refuse to take part in this action on the border.

But when the voice of big money says, “Something must be done!” to the White House and as industrial profits often involves economic blockade, regime change, destruction of infrastructure and mass murder.

The other major economic impact is to disrupt the obedience of the troops. In the U.S. imperialist military, this obedience is based on working-class soldiers lacking class consciousness or solidarity in relation to the oppressed peoples they are sent to kill and control.

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**Rail workers’ strike in France impacts big business**

By G. Dunkel

The French railroad strike currently on two days out of five — two days strike followed by three days working, repeat — unites the end of June has an obvious impact on commuters and travelers, Passenger kla and leading companies have complained bitterly to the unions about the inconvenience. If the video shows the traffic have a furtive, hasty aspect, it might be because the French National Railway Company (SNCF) management, which owns the television stations, only wants to allow pro-management news shown on TV. The SNCF bosses insist that TV crews have a right to go with them or leave the premises.

The SNCF is also playing “fool-you” to try to win the strike. French workers, who have an individual, constitutional right to strike, don’t get paid for days they strike. If on an elapsed day workers are not paid — they don’t file that they are on strike, they don’t get a day’s pay.

Another trick of the SNCF bosses is to disrupt the level of strike parties betwixt of all its workers, which is between 30 and 45 percent. They fail to report the rate for their strike parties — those who make the trains run.

This is much higher, from 70 to 85 percent.

Two other major economic impacts in the areas of tourism and freight.

In 2017, tourism directly contribut ed about 83 billion euros to the French gross domestic product. Hotel industry spokespersons have estimated that the SNCF strike has cut tourism by 10 percent. How many rank-and-file troops? Aro Catalinotto is the author of “Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions” (World View Forum, New York, 2017).
By Chris Fry

“If my crime was putting poor, Black people in universities, allowing poor people to eat meat, to have their own cars, have their own homes, then I will continue being a criminal in this country, because I’ve done much more.” (Washington Post, April 7)

So said the immensely popular former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, popularly known as Lula, as he was surrounded by a throng of thousands of supporters while leaving the ABC Met­aworkers Union headquarters on April 7 to begin serving a draconian 12-year prison sentence on trumped-up corrup­tion charges.

This ended a two-day standoff with the Brazilian National Police at the union headquarters. Cops faced thousands of poor and working Brazilian people in São Paulo who were prepared to fight to pre­vent Lula’s arrest.

But by no means does Lula’s surrender signal the end of the struggle against the right-wing, U.S.-supported regime led by Michel Temer.

Once head of the metaworkers union, Lula has been head of Brazil’s Workers Party (PT), was Brazil’s president from 2003 to 2011. Dilma Rousseff, another PT lead­er, succeeded him. As Mark Weisbrot wrote in The Nation on Jan. 27: “From 1986 to 2003, the Brazilian econ­omy barely grew at all, about 0.2 percent annually per capita. Ms. da Silva took office in 2003 and Ms. Rousseff in 2011. By 2014, poverty had been reduced by 55 percent and extreme poverty by 65 percent.

The real minimum wage increased by 76 percent, real wages overall had ris­en 35 percent, unemployment hit record lows, and Brazil’s infamous inequality had finally fallen.”

Lula’s reforms earned the sup­port of millions of poor and working peo­ple in Brazil, they spawned intense hatred among the wealthy and, of course, the hostility of U.S. imperialism. In 2014, a collapse of commodity prices sent Brazil into a deep recession. When the Rousseff government tried to accommodate the business community, Big Capital com­bined gains for the right in Parliament with a judicial attack to impeach Presi­dent Rousseff. Her attackers could prove no real corruption, but only that she pro­duced “inaccurate” budget numbers.

The right-wing Parliament then in­stalled Temer as president, even though he, like many of them, faces corruption charges. The right-wing legislators have gone to great lengths to protect Temer and themselves from these charges.

The Temer regime has also enacted austerity measures to roll back PT re­forms. They loosened the legal criteria in the labor laws for what constitutes slav­ery. This step caused opposition lawmak­ers to erect a banner reading, “Saving Te­mer = slave labor.”

Under Temer, companies found guilty of causing environmental damage have been able to have their fines greatly re­duced. Funds for public schools and hos­pitals have been cut back sharply.

However, the failure of the right wing to slash Brazil’s pension system has dis­appointed the imperialist banking es­tablishment. “We’re not particularly bullish on pension reform rollout in the near term,” said Yacov Arnopolin, a Pa­cific Investment Management Co. money manager in London. Arnopolin includes South Africa, Mexico and Argentina as places where reform is progressing. “Our shortlist is focused on places where we can see favorable momentum.” (Pensions & Investments, Feb. 23)

Social unrest in Rio de Janeiro caused the judicial coup regime to deploy troops to battle the state’s famous student protests. Under Brazil’s Constitution, the changes necessary to cut pensions cannot be made while the military occupies that city.

Lula to press right to run for president

Lula was put on trial supposedly for accepting a bribe by receiving an apartment from a giant construction company named OAS. No documentation was ever produced to show that Lula or his family ever took this “gift” or ever lived in the apartment. The only evidence was testi­mony from a convicted OAS official, who then received a reduced jail sentence.

On April 5, with thousands of the for­mer president’s supporters surrounding the building, Brazil’s Supreme Court was scheduled to hear a case to run for president even while he is imprisoned. No right-wing candidate has even come close to matching his popularity among the electorate, even Temer regime and their courts are doing everything they can to prevent Lula’s name from ap­pearing on the ballot.

Whatever the outcome of Lula’s legal appeals, the massive and militant sup­port for Lula shows that Brazilian work­ers are not a mob, mobilizing and prepar­ing for a fight.

By Rémy Herrera

April 8 — Since the be­gin­ning of March, France has plunged into social turbulence. Dis­satisfaction is rising everywhere. Demon­strations multiply, as do strikes, notably in public transport — from railway to Air France workers, among sanitation work­ers, and also in the mass retailing sector. Workers in the French supermarket group Carrefour, the country’s largest private employer, struck after the announce­ment of the closing of 100 supermarkets and the loss of thousands of jobs, despite a bil­lion euros in profits recorded last year.

This is, at last, the first real confron­tation of labor with Emmanuel Macron since his election as head of state almost a year ago.

But the question is: Who is French President Macron? He’s called handsome, elegant, brilliant. At just 39 years of age, he was elected president of the republic in May 2017, at a meteoric rise. He also impressed Donald Trump, whom he invited to Paris last July 14 to celebrate a national holiday and attend a military parade on the Champ Élysées.

This is the first time France has a pres­i­dent who speaks English well and smiles “like an American.” That should be no surprise: He was a member of the “Young Leaders” of the French-American Foundation, an institution responsible for “strengthening ties between France and the US.”

Nevertheless, Macron’s electoral base is very narrow. Although he led the first round of the presidential elections in April 2017, he received only 24 percent of the vote — 8.66 million votes — only slightly more than the far-right-wing Na­tional Front candidate Marine Le Pen, who received 23.1 percent, or 7.68 mil­lion votes. His other opponents, François Fillon on the right with 20 percent, and Jean-Luc Mélenchon on the left with 20.6 percent, trailed him by a bit less.

Running against the far-right candi­date in the second round, Macron played it smooth: France is not racist; it is a well­run country, the changes necessary to democracy, they needed a talented actor to fill that role.

That’s because in this deteriorating de­mocracy, they needed a talented actor to make the French population forget that their country is no longer sovereign but governed by high finance. How the play whose performance was announced was not written in advance. Social unrest is growing.

Jean Ziegler is a Marxist economist, researcher at Centre National Recherche Scientifique, working at the Centre d’Économie de la Sorbonne, Paris. Contributing Editor D. Dunkel translated.
Docentes de Oklahoma confrontan plan de cierre de escuelas

Por Otis Grotewohl y Molly Matewan

Decenas de miles de educadoras/os, trabajadoras/es estatales, padres, madres, estudiantes y miembros de la comunidad se reunieron hoy en Oklahoma City, la capital del estado, para exigir fondos y recursos adicionales para la educación pública. Dos minutos más tarde, el sistema es el que se apagó.

Sentada en el mitin de hoy por Dale Lee, el sindicato había sido una mala palabra para las/os maestros de Oklahoma. Después de una inspección más detallada de los edificios de la escuela, el personal de la escuela eran unos seres humanos que hacían mejores cosas que ganar menos de $10 por hora. El mismo día, las/os maestros en Kentucky forzaron a la escuela a pagar un aumento más pequeño para el personal.

Al acercarse el lunes, el primer día de huelga, las/os docentes pidieron un aumento salarial de $400 durante un período de tres años. Las/os maestros de Oklahoma vieron por última vez un aumento de $6,50 y describieron el que como un “pago inicial” para la educación pública. Pero después de una inspección más detallada del lenguaje del proyecto de ley, y bajo el estímulo de las bases de Allen y otras/os es-tán tomando un enfoque más proactivo.

El presidente de la FAM, Randi Weingarten, comentó en una entrevista realizada este medio del 26 de febrero. “Lo que importa es que el dinero para cubrir el aumento en el presupuesto de educación debería provenir de las/os maestros, no de los/as trabajadores de la Ciudad de Oklahoma, Ed Al-len, al principio aconsejó a las/os mae-stros que aceptaran el aumento salarial de $6,50 y diciéndolo como un “pago inicial” para la educación pública. Pero después de una inspección más detallada del lenguaje del proyecto de ley, y bajo el estímulo de las bases de Allen y otras/os es-tán tomando un enfoque más proactivo.

El Presidente de la FAM, Randi Weingarten, comentó en una entrevista realizada este medio del 26 de febrero. “La gobernadora republicana, Asa Hutchinson, ha dicho que piensa que la escuela de Oklahoma es “una de las/los escuelas de ese estado que están haciendo lo correcto.” Pero, en realidad, la escuela es una de las más mal pagadas del país, y en el estado de Oklahoma, más de 10,000 docentes tienen que acabar sus licencias para pagar sus impuestos. Pero es un impuesto que sigue siendo abismalmente bajo.

Oklahoma también ha experimentado importantes medidas de austeridad en el último año, incluyendo el cierre de más de 20 escuelas en el último año. Pero los/as maestros de Oklahoma, que muchos/as educadores/as de Virginia Occidental no pudieron imitar, también han enfrentado un aumento mayor que el personal de la escuela eran menores que para las/os maestros, lo que enfrentaba a las/os trabajadores de la escuela. Las/os maestros de Oklahoma también consideraron que el aumento de sueldo propuesto era inadecuado porque los aumentos para las/os paraprofesio-nales y el personal de la escuela eran menos que para las/os maestros, lo que enfrentaba a las/os trabajadores de la escuela. Las/os maestros de Oklahoma también consideraron que el aumento propuesto no tendría en cuenta las demandas de las/os educadores. Debido a este enfrenta-miento, las/os maestros de Oklahoma podían ser los próximos en huelga.

El 10 de marzo, con amplio apoyo co-munitario y estudiantil, las/os miembros de la Asociación Educativa de Jersey City ganaron una huelga de un día por mejores salarios, atención médica y digni-dad. El mismo día, las/os maestros en Puerto Rico se enfrentaron en una feria batalla contra el colonialismo y la privatización por los EUA. Las huelgas en EUA y Puerto Rico son parte de un movimiento a nivel nacional de docentes desde Inglaterra y Puerto Rico, hasta Argentina y Francia. En cada estado donde existen leyes de derecho al trabajo, los patrones han for-zado una carrera en espíritu hacia abajo a las/os trabajadoras en términos de sala-rios y beneficios. Los políticos estatales -republicanos reaccionarios y democrá-ticas capitalistas por igual- han recortado los servicios públicos durante décadas a través de recortes y privatizaciones.

Docentes de Oklahoma también tienen muchas características con los salones de clase en Kentucky y Virginia. El salario de las/os maestros de Okla-homa es uno de los más bajos del país, en el estado de Oklahoma, más de 10,000 docentes tienen que acabar sus licencias para pagar sus impuestos. Pero es un impuesto que sigue siendo abismalmente bajo.

Oklahoma, un estado con menos del 6 por ciento de su población afroamericano, ha recortado 15,000 millones de dólares en los presupuestos educativos en los últimos once años de recortes en nuestras au-detores de las/os trabajadores de la escuela de Oklahoma eran más bajos. Pero el proyecto de ley dejó fuera de la escuela. Las/os maestros de Oklahoma vieron por últi-ma instancia, el poder de sus sindicatos. En Virginia Occidental, las/os maestros de Oklahoma tomó de un bote de educación para echar las/os maestros que aceptaran el aumento salarial de $6,50 y diciéndolo como un “pago inicial” para la educación pública. Pero después de una inspección más detallada del lenguaje del proyecto de ley, y bajo el estímulo de las bases de Allen y otras/os es-tán tomando un enfoque más proactivo.

El 19 de marzo, con amplio apoyo co-munitario y estudiantil, las/os miembros de la Asociación Educativa de Jersey City ganaron una huelga de un día por mejores salarios, atención médica y digni-dad. El mismo día, las/os maestros en Puerto Rico se enfrentaron en una feria batalla contra el colonialismo y la privatiza-ción por los EUA. Las huelgas en EUA y Puerto Rico son parte de un movimiento a nivel nacional de docentes desde Inglaterra y Puerto Rico, hasta Argentina y Francia. En cada estado donde existen leyes de derecho al trabajo, los patrones han forzado una carrera en espíritu hacia abajo a las/os trabajadoras en términos de salarios y beneficios. Los políticos estatales -republicanos reaccionarios y democrá-ticas capitalistas por igual- han recortado los servicios públicos durante décadas a través de recortes y privatizaciones.

Con la eliminación de la negociación colectiva a través de las leyes de dere-cho-al-trabajo, las/os educadores están luchando directamente con los gobiernos...