

Trump and the Pentagon Behind the attack on Syria

By Fred Goldstein

“You furnish the pictures. I’ll furnish the war.” Publisher William Randolph Hearst in 1898, preparing the groundwork for the U.S. war with Spain and seizure of Cuba.

The Trump administration’s attack on the Syrian air force was first directed at Russia as well as the government of Bashar al-Assad. China and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea were secondarily targeted.

The chemical weapons attack in Syria was aimed at forcing President Donald Trump to shift his political orientation away from rapprochement with Russia — and to keep military pressure focused on the long-term goal of overthrowing the Assad government. Washington not only wants to overthrow Assad, but it also aims to place a compliant government in Damascus that will oust the Russians from Syria and the Mediterranean altogether.

The U.S. imperialist military strike came five days after Trump’s U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley said, “The United States’ diplomatic policy on Syria for now is no longer focused on making the war-torn country’s president, Bashar al-Assad, leave power.” (Reuters, March 30) The publicity surrounding the alleged chemical weapons attack was designed to reverse this Trump policy.

Charges with no evidence

The accusations against the Assad government have been unanimous and thunderous in the capitalist media, Congress and the military. All this has gone on despite there being not one moment of investigation or one element of cogent proof that Damascus had any role in the alleged attack. The Syrian government has categorically denied the charges, but its denials have received no publicity in the capitalist media.

In all, this one thing is certain: The Syrian government had no reason to carry out such an attack. It has been winning the war without using chemical weapons and has the least motive of all parties involved to carry out such an attack. The attacks hurt the Syrian government and helped the imperialists and their reactionary client groupings inside Syria.

In any criminal investigation the first things to look for are motive, means and opportunity to carry out the crime. The parties with the overriding motives, means and opportunity to do such a thing are the U.S. government and the reactionaries in Syria who are losing the war. Those in the latter group have been unsuccessfully trying to overthrow Assad and seek to draw the U.S. government into the military struggle.

Times neocon propagandists on the Syria case

The New York Times led the charge in instantaneously accusing the Assad government. The Times assigned their two most committed anti-Syrian-government propagandists to cover the story — Michael Gordon

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PHOTO: HOWARD ROTMAN

RAMONA AFRICA discusses MOVE and surviving the 1985 bombing —

Former U.S. political prisoner Ramona Africa is the Minister of Communication for the MOVE Organization and a Philadelphia-based organizer with the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. She is also the only living survivor of the 1985 MOVE bombing, when the FBI and Philadelphia police dropped two C-4 bombs on her organization's home, killing 11 people. Read this three-part interview about the history of MOVE and what it means to be a freedom fighter

Lamont Lilly: Ramona, thank you for sitting down and sharing your time with me. For those who may be unfamiliar, what is the MOVE Organization? Who founded MOVE, and what is the organization about?

Ramona Africa: The MOVE Organization is a revolutionary organization founded by a Black man named John Africa. John Africa brought people together from all different backgrounds, nationalities, religions, etc., and gave us one common revolutionary belief. (tinyurl.com/mslchoj) That belief is in the sanctity and importance of all life, on all levels — without exception. And it is that uncompromising belief and uncompromising commitment to life that has put us in direct conflict with the system that we're living under, a system that doesn't care anything about life — whether it's the air, the water, the soil that feeds us. They don't care. But as members of MOVE, we are committed to life.

We were animal rights activists long before that term was ever invented. We were environmentalists before that term was ever invented. Everything that John Africa taught us has come full circle.

John Africa had even coordinated a raw food diet for us. He put us in touch with what our natural diet

is. People said we were crazy, that we were going to get sick and make our children sick. "You can't eat raw food like that. You have to cook it," they would say. Now, what do we see some 45 years later? You see raw food restaurants, from the West Coast to the East Coast. You see nutritionists now teaching the benefits of raw food. (tinyurl.com/maun9pn)

John Africa even encouraged MOVE women to have babies naturally at home. He would tell us, "When you're pregnant, you're not sick. You don't need a hospital to do something as natural as giving birth." No other species of life goes to a hospital to have a baby.

LL: You're so right, Ramona. I've never thought about it like that.

RA: Another thing, in terms of composting, there's a new movement going on around this now. Well, MOVE was composting 45 years ago. But when we composted, people went crazy. But today, they put a cute little word on it called "composting," and all of a sudden, it's the "green" thing to do. We were also homeschooling 45 years ago. (tinyurl.com/lxph8gu)

LL: When did you become a member of MOVE? What period of life was that for you? How did joining MOVE change your life?

RA: [Laughing] Oh, wow, Lamont!



Ramona Africa is led out of Philadelphia City Hall on Feb. 9, 1986.

That's a story within itself. I went to Catholic school during my high school years. I had begged my mother to transfer me to a public school, but she wouldn't do it because she wanted me to have what she perceived as a "good education." She was also telling me to be a doctor, be a lawyer, be anything you want to be. So I went with that and decided to focus on the legal system. When I graduated from West Catholic High, I ended up going to Temple University and took up a pre-law curriculum. (tinyurl.com/jakg7bg)

It was in my last semester at Temple that I started a work-study program because I needed the money to pay for school. I got hired at Community Legal Services, a free legal aid agency. They assigned me to the housing unit. You can't work in the Philadelphia housing unit without being an advocate for the poor. That's when I first started getting active in the community. That period marked

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MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Who we are & what we're fighting for

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers' living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you're young, you know they're stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That's why for 58 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We've been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism's wars and aggressions. □

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Building for May Day— ‘on the shoulders of Dr. King’

By Dave Welsh
San Francisco

A confident, unified workers’ movement — that’s who was marching here on the April 4 anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Spearheading the march were militants of United Service Workers West (USWW-SEIU) — the janitors, airport employees and other mainly low-wage workers playing a leading role in building for May Day general strike actions in California.

A Black woman homecare provider said, “We stand on the shoulders of Dr. King and our other heroes. But what we’re building is a legacy of our own!”

A USWW worker shouted, “Shut down the union busters, and that includes the biggest union buster of them all: Trump!”

The emcee at the rally, a young man from Nigeria, emphasized, “We’re fighting for \$15 and a union, but that’s just a first step toward living wages and a just society.”

Robbie Clark, of Black Lives Matter Bay Area and Causa Justa/Just Cause, explained, “Today is the 50th anniversary of Dr. King’s 1967 ‘Beyond Vietnam’ speech at Riverside Church in New York. And yet by any measure — wages, family income, unemployment, homelessness, levels of incarceration — people of color are falling further and further behind.

“That is why over 50 organizations have formed a new coalition called ‘The Majority’ — because people of color are the majority — to oppose white supremacy, to promote Black and Brown unity, to fight for international solidarity not militarization, to fight for community needs not gentrification and displacement,” Clark said.

The march kicked off at the King Memorial at Yerba Buena Park, moving down Mission Street to the spot where two waterfront workers were killed and scores injured by police during the West Coast Maritime Strike, the incident that sparked the San Francisco General Strike of 1934.

Derrick Muhammad, secretary-treasurer of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, primarily a dockworkers union, pointed out that on a visit to that union’s hiring hall in San Francisco, Dr. King had been voted in as an honorary member of the local.

“When they killed our beloved brother in 1968,” said Muhammad, “he was awakening the masses of the people — and the rulers of this country were very frightened by that. Official documents have revealed that Cointelpro was consciously seeking to prevent the rise of a so-called ‘Black messiah’ who could unify our people. Now, today, we are still facing the same racist system, the same oppression.”

Several dozen other cities also held April 4 actions, supported by Fight for \$15, NAACP chapters and the Movement for Black Lives. These included Memphis, Tenn.; Los Angeles; Atlanta; Chicago; Flint, Mich.; Las Vegas; and cities in Florida, Missouri, North Carolina and Virginia. □



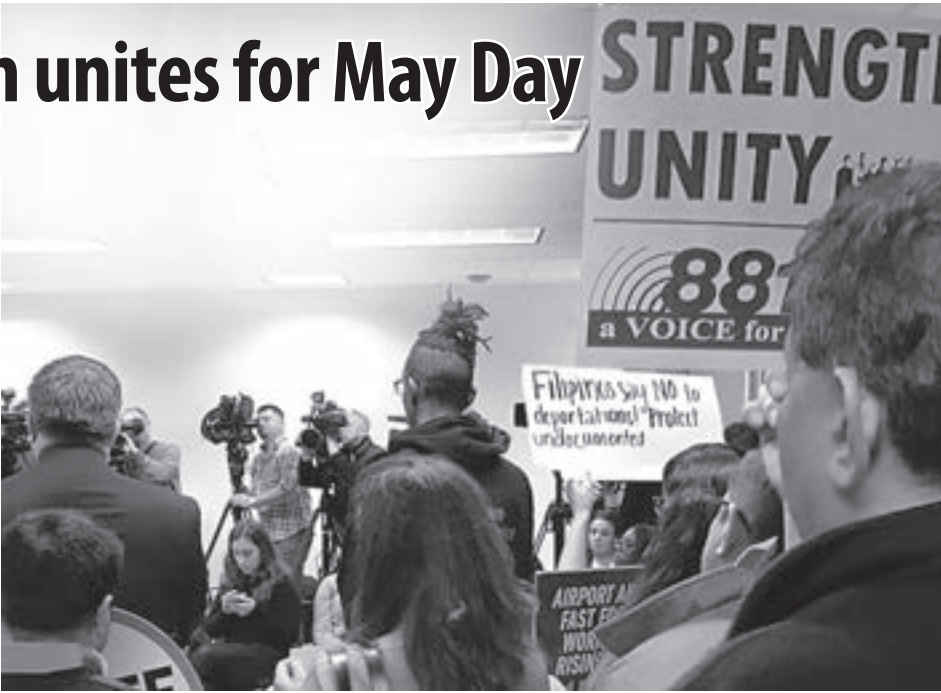
ILWU drill team takes part in MLK march.

WW PHOTO: DAVE WELSH

Chicago coalition unites for May Day

The coalition planning a giant march and rally for Chicago on May Day held a press conference April 5 to lay out the broad array of issues to be taken on by dozens of participating organizations. Chaired by Chicago Federation of Labor President Jorge Ramirez, the panel included speakers from the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Black Youth Project 100 and the Service Employees Union. All pledged to work together to resist the Trump administration’s attacks against workers, in particular immigrants, Black and Brown communities, women and LGBTQ people.

— Report and photo by Jeff Sorel



Honoring Dr. King, getting ready for May Day

RAMONA AFRICA

Continued from page 2

my first arrest at the Philadelphia City Council. I eventually had to go to court for that arrest and met a brother named Mel there. We exchanged numbers, and he would call me and tell me things that were going on. He called me one day and asked if I wanted to go to a meeting to plan a MOVE demonstration.

I lived in West Philadelphia all my life. I had heard about MOVE, but I didn’t really know about MOVE. So I went to the meeting with him. We were supposed to go out that night after the meeting, but I got so wrapped up in the meeting, I wouldn’t go anywhere [laughing]. I was really impressed.

The second time I was arrested, the sentencing judge gave me 60 days in the county jail, the “house of corrections.” But you know what? I tell everybody I owe that judge a nod of thanks — a million thank yous because she sent me to the county jail for two months — up close and personal with MOVE women. That was the best thing she could have ever done for me. When I walked out, there was no turning back. I wanted to be like MOVE women and became a member.

Lilly, a member of the Durham, N.C., Branch, was WWP’s 2016 vice presidential candidate. □

April 4 actions across the U.S. celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s call to end the “three evils of society” — racism, militarism and capitalism — while building for May Day 2017. Here are reports about two such actions contributed by WWP activists.

In Boston there was a spirited rally by Fast Food Workers in Mass Fight For 15, Restaurant Opportunities Center Boston-ROC Boston Organization, Raise Up Massachusetts, Jobs with Justice, housing rights groups, members of Boston’s Chinese community, Veterans For Peace, Service Employees 32BJ, 1199SEIU, SEIU 888, Food and Commercial Workers, the Jewish Labor Committee, representatives of other unions and religious leaders.

The rally at the Parkman Bandstand in the freezing cold and pouring rain commemorated civil rights and social justice leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was assassinated on April 4, 1968, while in Memphis to support striking Black sanitation workers. The rally took place at the site where in 1965 Dr. King addressed people on the Boston Common.



PHOTOS: HOWARD ROTHMAN



DETROIT

WW PHOTOS: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

In Detroit hundreds of low-wage workers and supporters marched April 4 into the Michigan State Office Building in Cadillac Place in the New Center area.

This location was chosen to pressure Republican Gov. Rick Snyder to raise the minimum wage. The demonstration was

called by D15, the Detroit Fight for Fifteen group, to demand \$15 an hour and a union.

After being confronted by the state police, the crowd of mostly youthful workers moved outside for a rally in front of the structure, which included a picket line and speak-out.

Contributors are Abayomi Azikiwe and Howie Rotman.

Athletes speak out, act on social issues

By Monica Moorehead

Social activism among amateur and professional athletes may not have begun with National Football League quarterback Colin Kaepernick’s protest against racist oppression that started in the fall of 2016, but it certainly has helped to spike it. Take, for instance, the huge banner drop at the April 3 season-opening game of the Washington Nationals, a Major League Baseball team, that stated “Impeach Trump,” which exploded on Twitter and other social media. Trump was scheduled to throw out the traditional first pitch but cancelled.

The U.S. Women’s National Hockey Team, which had threatened to strike during the International Ice Hockey Federation Women’s World Championship, recently won a major contract with USA Hockey less than 70 hours before the world games were to begin in Michigan. It was only after USA Hockey could not muster a scab replacement team that they gave in to the women’s demands.

According to progressive sports writer Dave Zirin, here is what the women hockey players won: “The wages, which were a four-figure pittance, will now be \$70,000 per year with bonus opportunities for Olympic and World Championship victories; there will now be a \$950,000 ‘compensation pool’ for players (think back-pay); everyone on the

team will get a pre-bonus base salary of \$4,000 per month, quite a boost from the old rate of \$6,000 a year, every four years (wages for ‘Olympic training’); the USOC [United States Olympic Committee] also stepped up with \$750 to \$2,000 per month based on a player’s experience; for the first time, they will get the same amount of meal money as the men’s team — a \$50 per diem on non-travel days — before this, the women’s per-diem was about \$24; for the first time, their travel accommodations and insurance will be equal to the men’s as well; most importantly for the team, there will finally be a committee aimed at developing youth hockey for girls, and greater promotion for the women’s game.” (thenation.com, March 29)

Clearly, it was solidarity with these players from women, men and gender-nonconforming people that won this important victory, which will surely impact future national battles around pay equity.

Student-athletes speak out

The 2 ½ weeks of college basketball’s “March Madness” concluded April 2 with the University of South Carolina winning the national championship for women and the University of North Carolina winning the same for men on April 3 —



Political student athletes, Nigel Hayes, Jordan Hill, Bronson Koenig.

all in Division I of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

The television rights to air the women’s tournament on ESPN pales mightily when compared to the same rights CBS and Ted Turner’s TNT, TBS and Tru stations pay to air the men’s tournament. These stations will be paying the NCAA an estimated \$1 billion annually through 2032 to air these games. And what will players who make the NCAA super-rich be getting? Not a penny. Talk about super-exploitation of student-athletes, some of whom go hungry when their food vouchers expire. Even National Basketball Association players, such as JJ Reddick with the Los Angeles Clippers, are demanding that student-athletes receive a living wage.

For the past several years, student-athletes including those at Northwestern University have been organizing to secure collective bargaining rights for the labor they provide either on the field or on the court. They want student-athletes to get paid like every other worker.

The University of Wisconsin Badgers players are not only talented — they defeated last year’s NCAA champion Villanova during the tournament — but some of the most political. Nigel Hayes, who is African American, has been very vocal in supporting student-athletes’ right to organize. During football season, he carried a sign saying “Broke athlete” which made national news.

Hayes and other players also criticized a white Badgers fan for the racist act of wearing a Barack Obama mask and carrying a noose in his hand during a football game last fall. Hayes and another teammate, Jordan Hill, also African American, carried out their own protest against the national anthem.

Bronson Koenig, also on the Badgers basketball team, is of Ho-Chunk Indigenous heritage. He has traveled to North Dakota numerous times to support the NO Dakota Access Pipeline struggle.

All three athletes support the Black Lives Matter movement and have been inspired by Kaepernick’s protest. □

San Francisco

Police terror in a ‘Sanctuary City’

By Dave Welsh
San Francisco

April 7 marked one year since the police assassination of Luis Góngora Pat, a 45-year-old Yucatecan Mayan immigrant restaurant worker in the Mission District of this city.

Luis Góngora came to the U.S. from Mexico in 2004. He helped to support his wife, parents and three children in the small town of Teabo, Yucatan, Mexico, by sending remittances from his earnings as a restaurant cook and dishwasher in San Francisco.

An angered, sorrowful community commemorated the anniversary at the spot where Góngora was riddled with police bullets, execution-style, as he sat on the sidewalk near the tent he’d lately been calling his home.

Led by Aztec dancers and drummers, protesters marched to the Mission Police Station. That’s where Cristina Gutiérrez and four others began a 17-day hunger strike in April 2016 to condemn the seemingly endless string of police killings of Black and Brown people in this rapidly gentrifying city. Gutiérrez decried the fact that District Attorney George Gascón has not prosecuted a single one of these killer cops.

The “Frisco Five” hunger strikers had only one demand: Fire Greg Suhr, the police chief who for five years had been crying crocodile tears while justifying every police killing of a Black or Latinx person. For five years, Suhr was vigilantly protected by the mayor, the media, the labor leadership and the city’s ruling Democratic Party political establishment.

The de facto policy of the Democrats seems to be no prosecution for killer cops. However, a militant grass-roots campaign spearheaded by the Frisco Five finally did succeed in forcing out Chief

Suhr, less than a month after the Góngora murder.

The third stop of the “Justice for Luis” procession was the residential hotel where Góngora had been living until he was illegally evicted and forced to live on the street. “They pretend that this is a sanctuary city but that’s a lie,” said Bilal Ali from the Coalition on Homelessness. “If you’re an immigrant in San Francisco and homeless, there is no sanctuary here.”

“McCoppin Park here used to be a refuge for people without a home, where you could lay your head without fear of being harassed or beaten by the Blue Klux Klan,” said Ali. “Now, they’ve put a high fence around the park. That’s how they entrap people, forcing them out into the street where they can be abused or killed. This city spends \$20.7 million to criminalize and brutalize and drive out homeless people.”

Gloria Esteva, from Causa Justa/Just Cause, said, “We need to braid together our many different struggles, small or large, so we can bring down the monster of injustice that is hurting all of us.”

“We are not only advocating against police brutality and murders,” emphasized Laura Guzman, director of homeless services at Mission Neighborhood Health Center, “but also that this city is promoting racist and ethnic cleansing and homelessness” in the Mission and throughout the city. “No one is homeless by design,” she added, calling for “a massive program to provide immigrant housing.”

Góngora’s cousin, Luis Poot Pat, said in Spanish, “My cousin suffered many injustices to get to this sanctuary city, only to face more cruelty here. He suffered poverty, forced migration, low wages, illegal eviction, homelessness and discrimination, only to be killed by an act of senseless police brutality in less than 30 seconds.”

Góngora’s family in Teabo wrote a statement that was read on the steps of City Hall: “Today marks a year since the death of Luis, our beloved father, an exemplary father, a great son and a great

husband, whom the San Francisco police took away from us. The culprits are still free. How is that possible in a city like San Francisco? All we ask is justice for our father.” □

Bakery workers confront immigration edict

Dozens of immigrant workers at Tom Cat Bakery will soon face auditing by Trump’s anti-immigrant Department of Homeland Security. With a history of standing up for their rights, these workers, who bake New York City’s bread, decided to call a protest rally.

Homeland Security had flagged the workers for not having filed “the proper forms.” The bakery owners gave workers a brutal ultimatum: if they couldn’t come up with the forms in 10 days, they would be fired, without severance pay. Some have worked at the bakery for over 20 years.

With support from Brandworkers, a food and retail workers’ rights organization, the bakery workers showed up April 8 at Trump Tower in Manhattan. They were chanting “Whose city? Our city!” Many of their signs said, “Respect our humanity!”

The Tom Cat bakery workers are putting out a call to each and every ally who is opposed to racist scapegoating. They



ask supporters to join together to demand justice for them and other immigrants, including at national May Day events.

The workers are connected to Brandworkers as part of the Food Chain Workers Alliance, a key member of Beyond the Moment. This broad coalition is calling for militant worker actions on May Day 2017. The coalition includes the Movement for Black Lives and Movimiento Cosecha, which fights for undocumented workers (foodchainworkers.org).

The call for “All Out for May Day!” echoed in the chants of the protest: “¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido! The people united will never be defeated!”

— Story and photo by Anne Pruden

THE CHEMICAL WEAPON LIE

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The New York Times and other major corporate U.S. news outlets rushed to accuse the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad of being responsible for the scores of people who died from poison gas in Idlib Province in Syria on April 4.

Meanwhile, working people in the U.S. were commenting: “We’ve heard this before — weapons of mass destruction!” They were referring to the U.S. lies about Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, which were used to justify the imperialist invasion of that country in 2003.

Republicans and Democrats joined in cheerleading Trump’s decision to unleash bombing raids on Syria as “reprisal” against Assad.

But as U.S. cruise missiles rained down terror, working people were posting bafflement on social media about a president who says he has sympathy for the Syrian people, and then simultaneously bombs them and denies them entrance to the U.S. as refugees.

It turns out, not surprisingly, that people’s skepticism is well justified.

In an April 7 Consortium column, investigative reporter Robert Parry reveals that on-the-ground intelligence sources are “saying the preponderance of evidence suggests that Al Qaeda-affiliated rebels were at fault, either by orchestrating an intentional release of a chemical agent as a provocation or by possessing containers of poison gas that ruptured during a conventional bombing raid.”

Parry is an investigative reporter who broke much of the 1980s Iran-Contra

scandal for the Associated Press and Newsweek. He quotes the rejection of the Assad government’s responsibility by former CIA officer Philip Giraldi: “I’m hearing from sources on the ground in the Middle East, people who are intimately familiar with the intelligence that is available, who are saying that the essential narrative that we’re all hearing about the Syrian government or the Russians using chemical weapons on innocent civilians is a sham.”

British ambassador calls it ‘fake news’

Even the former British ambassador to Syria, Peter Ford, says President Assad’s government is not responsible for the chemical weapons deaths, that it would have no advantage in such an action. Ford considered the accusation more likely to be “fake news,” manipulated by al-Qaida-like forces to provoke a U.S. intervention and reverse the policy that the Trump administration had just announced. (Sky News, April 7)

Questions abound about the “rescue” visuals of those horribly suffering from the chemicals. Much of the video footage and accompanying narrative were provided by anti-Assad forces. The most notorious of these groups is the “White Helmets,” who have been linked to al-Qaida and similar organizations cooperating with the U.S. against the Damascus government.

Others are the Syrian-American Medical Society and the Aleppo Media Center,



New York City: Friday, April 7, at Union Square.

WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

which also have a history of providing outright duplicitous information. Corporate news reporting on Syria, such as from the BBC, CNN or Associated Press, relies exclusively on information from anti-Assad “opposition activists” and “opposition media agencies.” (Patrick Henningsen, “Reviving the Chemical Weapon Lie,” 21stcenturywire.com, April 4)

Former U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq Scott Ritter, writing for Huffington Post on April 9, pointed out: “Mainstream American media outlets have willingly and openly embraced a narrative provided by Al Qaida affiliates whose record of using chemical weapons in Syria and distorting and manufacturing ‘evidence’ to promote anti-Assad policies in the west, including regime change, is well documented. These outlets have made a deliberate decision to endorse the view of Al Qaida over a narrative provided by Russian and Syrian government authorities without any effort to fact check either position.”

The “chemical weapon lie” is reviving the 2013 lie holding the Assad government responsible for a sarin gas at-

tack that killed hundreds in Damascus.

Pulitzer-prize-winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh also debunked that “fact.” Hersh linked the 2013 attack to Turkish intelligence forces and al-Qaida-affiliated jihadists. However, true to their role as an arm of the repressive imperialist state, the New York Times and other major U.S. news outlets continue to repeat the “chemical weapon lie.”

The fact is that the Syrian Arab Army of the Assad government has been winning the war against the Islamic State group and the U.S.-backed “rebels.” There was no strategic, political or military reason for the army to mount a deadly chemical attack.

Instead, there are many reasons the Trump administration’s military advisors would try this “shock and awe” move. Trump has won praise from the ready-to-bomb Democrats and war-hawk critics. They commend him for “standing up” to Russia. And he implies that if he can bomb Syria, he can bomb _____. Fill in the blank, but start with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Military procurement contracts have fattened, stock values of the arms industries have soared, oil prices went up in the “uncertainty” and big business rubs its hands with glee.

Meanwhile, the good news is that the people are in the streets, shouting: “We’ve been down this road before! Stop the war! Hands off Syria! □



PHOTO: WAER

Rahzie Seals condemns police brutality at Syracuse BLM protest, April 3.

Syracuse BLM rallies for justice

Syracuse Black Lives Matter launched another year of resistance to cop abuse, racism and the criminal injustice system with an April 3 “Rally for Justice.”

The most recent impetus for the BLM protest was the hit-and-run killing of a young worker by an investigator for Onondaga County District Attorney William Fitzpatrick. The DA has been quick to label arrested 16-year-old youths as “violent thugs” and condemn them to solitary confinement. But when his investigator Peter Rauch ran down and killed an 18-year-

old student walking home from his fast food job, Fitzpatrick’s only comment was that he “felt betrayed” by Rauch. (Syracuse Post-Standard, March 26)

BLM has exposed the DA’s steady refusal to condemn or adequately prosecute malfeasance by local cops and related “injustice” personnel. In particular, BLM has brought forward the case of Maleatra Montanez, an African-American mother raped by a gun-carrying, on-duty cop in her home, in front of her infant son, after she called 911 for assistance. The cop, Chester Thompson, who is white, was allowed to receive his pension and walk free after the DA charged him with a simple misdemeanor.

Organizer Rahzie Seals spoke of her own experiences with police brutality,

including the death of her cousin, Johnny Gammage, at the hands of Pittsburgh cops. Though his death was ruled a homicide, the prosecution of the killer cops ended in a mistrial.

Seals herself was injured by local Syracuse cops when she objected to the racist profiling of a teenage neighbor. “When the most marginalized and oppressed among us is free, we will all be free,” Seals said.

BLM ended the rally with a recitation of names of local people who still need justice, including Sheena Jenkins, a woman sent to jail for “rioting” because she attempted to help a man shot by cops as he lay dying; mothers who have lost children to police brutality; and other as-yet-unknown victims.

— Report by Minnie Bruce Pratt

MARXISM, REPARATIONS and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Domestic Workers United Demand a Bill of Rights Imani Henry

Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle Saladin Muhammad

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation Consuela Lee

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Available at major online booksellers.

Reproductive freedom conference

The conference “From Abortion Rights to Social Justice: Building the Movement for Reproductive Freedom” met for the 31st year on April 7-9 at Hampshire College in Massachusetts. Attending were more than 1,400 mostly young, multi-national, multigendered activists from many parts of the country.

Resistance and intersectionality were strong themes throughout the week-end during two plenaries and more than 75 workshops. Topics ranged from Reproductive Justice 101 to revolutionary mothering, ending the Hyde Amendment, immigration justice, supporting mothers of color, understanding trans identities, “appropriate whiteness,” radical repro-

ductive justice and creating space for people with disabilities in the reproductive justice movement.

The Women’s Fightback Network of Boston was active at the conference with a literature table. WFN members Phebe Eckfeldt and Sue Davis (seated) and Liza Green (standing) handed out fliers for Boston May Day, reprints of WW articles and copies of Workers World, which were well received.

— Report by Sue Davis



WWP Statement

U.S. get out of Syria!

The U.S. rocket attack on the sovereign nation of Syria is an aggressive and criminal action. It's official justification — that the Syrian army used nerve gas against the population — is a lie similar to those used to justify other U.S. aggressions in the past.

For example, August 1964, the phony Gulf of Tonkin incident was used to expand the war on Vietnam until 3 million Vietnamese and 58,000 U.S. soldiers were dead — later exposed by The Pentagon Papers.

In 2003, the phony pretext of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction led to the destruction of Iraq, with millions killed and displaced — later admitted to be false.

In 2011, the Obama administration used phony charges that the Libyan government was about to slaughter the people of Benghazi to justify bombing Libya and overturning the government, leading to today's chaotic situation there.

In the current aggression, the Trump administration reversed its April 3 position that it would live with the Assad government to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson saying on April 6 that there was "no role" for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and to opening an assault on a Syrian airfield early on April 7.

This followed the news that a chemical weapons discharge in Idlib, Syria, on April 4 left dozens of people dead. Before the dust had settled, warmongers in Washington and their British and French allies, both former colonial powers in that region, blamed, with no evidence, the Syrian government and its Russian allies for the attack.

The rhetoric of imperialist politicians, the bourgeois press and the wide variety of pro-war forces immediately reeked of another U.S. invasion and wider war.

The insidious lies of empire are always used to spearhead colonial attacks against

oppressed nations. Trump, the self-proclaimed isolationist, transformed before our eyes into the Clinton interventionist.

The U.S. stance reeks of hypocrisy, given that within the last month U.S.-led bombings in Mosul, Iraq, and Raqqa, Syria, have killed up to 700 civilians, including hundreds of children, according to reports from those countries.

Following a tense situation in 2013, Russia negotiated the removal of Syria's chemical weapons, a process overseen by international observers. The Syrian state no longer has any chemical weapons. Yet the media nearly four years later continue to mimic the Pentagon's argument, as if this had never happened.

Trump's messages evolve ... toward war

The Trump administration's messages on Syria were mixed for a few months. Trump concentrated on blaming the Obama administration for retreating in 2013. But the new administration's actions speak for themselves.

With the Islamic State group (IS) on its last legs, it became clear that the U.S. role on the ground in Syria would evolve. On March 30, Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., said, "Our priority is no longer to sit and focus on getting Assad out."

On April 5, one day after the Idlib chemical weapons attack, Trump said, "My attitude toward Syria and Assad has changed very much. ... You're now talking about a whole different level."

Those who mistakenly believed Trump would be anti-intervention may find this change shocking. Yet Washington never changed its goals in Syria, only its short-term strategy.

When the U.S. government couldn't liquidate the Syrian state directly, NATO, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies, armed death squads

such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State. These reactionary forces oversaw the U.S. goal of destroying Syria's secular, pluralistic society with bombs.

Once these contra forces had destroyed enough of Syria in 2014, the U.S. used them as an excuse to begin bombing Syria. The U.S.-led airstrikes for the most part destroyed vital infrastructure. Often, the U.S.-led coalition struck Syrian soldiers, paving the way for IS advances.

The man at the podium may change, but the ruling class must secure its profits one way or another to survive.

Syria today stands at the front line, defending itself against a massive imperialist assault. It is the last truly independent Arab state.

Stop the war! U.S. out!

It is the duty of those living in the belly of the beast, in the U.S., to unequivocally demand imperialist forces leave Syria. We have to combat bourgeois propaganda until our vocal cords are worn out. The same media that justify the police lynchings of Black children in the U.S. are using the deaths of Syrian children to justify war.

The wars against Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya were all colonial genocides built on lies. Syria is no different. The occupations of all those countries are ongoing. The Afghanistan intervention is the longest war in U.S. history. A U.S. occupation of Syria would be no different.

Because Iran and Russia will not let Syria be turned into a "failed state," U.S. "retaliation" promises to make this regional war a world war. The liberation of the workers and oppressed peoples in the U.S. depends on our ability to unite our struggles with the independence struggles of oppressed nations.

U.S., Turkey, Saudi Arabia, NATO, Israel, contras: Out of Syria! □



By Kris Balderas-Hamel

In cities large and small throughout the United States, the response was swift and strong in condemnation of the U.S. imperialist, cruise missile attacks on Syria in the late evening hours (Eastern Daylight Time) of Thursday, April 6.

Many activists, a good many of whom are socialists and revolutionaries, withstood the corporate-media-spewed Big Lie that Syria allegedly utilized chemical weapons against its own people.

Although most Democrats, liberals and a good chunk of social democrats quickly sided with imperialism and the Pentagon, others took to the streets to protest this blatant intervention and warn others about the dangers of a widening war on the part of U.S. imperialism and its junior "allies."

The protests linked the imperialist wars abroad with the war against the workers and oppressed here in the U.S., noting there is plenty of money for cruise missiles and weapons of mass destruction while basic social services and public education are slated for demolition by the Trump regime.

Following are reports from activists in several cities where demonstrations took place.

In **PHILADELPHIA**, Black and Brown youth, workers, Vietnam war veterans and anti-imperialist activists carried out a militant march and rally in support of Syria, refusing to be intimidated by the police, who outnumbered the 100 or so protesters.

The messaging and chants connected various struggles and also condemned U.S. attacks against Yemen, Venezuela and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Chants included "No bombs, no registry! Fuck white supremacy!" and "From Syria to Palestine, occupation is a crime!"

The march ended at the statue of vile racist Frank Rizzo, the city's former police commissioner, 1968 to 1971, and then mayor from 1972 to 1980. The marchers connected imperialist occupation and attacks abroad to racist police occupation of oppressed communities at home.

In **NEW YORK CITY**, after gathering at Union Square, hundreds took to the streets — including large numbers of

As U.S. rockets hit Syria

Corporate media start loving Trump

By Ava Lipatti

Within a day of the U.S. missile strike on Syria, five major U.S. newspapers — the New York Times, the Washington Post, USA Today, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Daily News — published a total of 18 opinion pieces in support of Trump's action and zero in opposition, according to a Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) article on April 7.

Up to that point, all these corporate daily newspapers had regularly published articles critical of Trump's actions. However, after Trump ordered a missile attack on Syria, the monopoly press quickly fell into line and praised him.

Television news followed the same pattern as the press.

Anyone around and paying attention at the opening of wars against Vietnam, Iraq (twice), Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya, will remember that the corporate media gave exactly the same type of unanimous support for U.S. attacks, whatever the pretext.

The Pentagon — which now has four generals in Trump's gang — launched 59 cruise missiles at a Syrian Army facility in the Homs province. According to the governor of Homs, at least seven civilians were killed and nine were wounded.

Trump ordered the missile launch on

April 6. He claimed it was because of an alleged Syrian government-led chemical attack a couple of days before.

The U.S. missiles were launched without investigation or proof. Only groups like the White Helmets, an al-Qaida-affiliated, pro-U.S. intervention propaganda firm (tinyurl.com/m48792r) and the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a major pro-interventionist operation run by one individual in Britain, claimed they had witnesses.

Capitalist media reveal their class interests

The racist, warmongering propaganda campaign against Russia, Iran and Syria has been central, not only to the corporate media, but also to the "anti-Trump" rhetoric of liberal and pseudo-left-wing media outlets since the Democratic National Committee originally blamed the Russian government for costing Hillary Clinton the election.

The alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian army, just like the accusations of Russian influences, has been parroted by the capitalist press without any hint of substantiation or independent verification. Included in the pro-interventionist media are renewed calls for the Trump administration to implement a "no-fly zone."

While these media outlets may have

opposed Trump's previous actions in rhetoric and even intention, they remain essential propaganda organs for the ruling class, including the Democratic Party and the neoliberal wing of Wall Street. Their "opposition" to Trump is a desperate effort to save the Democratic Party and dying capitalism; it has nothing to do with anti-racism or anti-imperialism.

From the beginning of Trump's campaign, the Democrats and the anti-Trump corporate media have attacked Trump from the right, calling him too critical of NATO, too soft on Putin. The truth is, no matter who is in the White House, U.S. imperialism will continue to orient toward wars of conquest. Trump's "anti-war" populist rhetoric was demagoguery to drum up support for his reactionary agenda.

Now that Trump has openly attacked the Syrian government and Bashar al-Assad, Trump's ruling-class "opposition" calls him "real president material" and all the bourgeois media march in lockstep with the war drive. □



PHOTO: MILWAUKEE ANTIWAR COMMITTEE



Protest U.S. aggression on Syria

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

youth — where protesters were attacked by members of the New York Police Department, who arrested at least 11 people. Among those arrested was Steve Millies of Workers World Party.

Some of the arrestees were brutalized by police, including Nerdeen Kiswani, a NYC Students for Justice in Palestine organizer and a leader in the march. Her head was slammed into the concrete as cops viciously tore her hijab from her head, choking her in the process. (samidoun.net, April 8)

Bayan USA and the International League of Peoples Struggle activists also played a strong role in the NYC march and rally.

‘Militant, uncompromising movement needed’

Anti-imperialist forces from **DETROIT** and the surrounding area joined an emergency demonstration called by Workers World Party immediately following the U.S. missile attack. Militant youth from WWP and Students for a Democratic Society at Wayne State University organized and led the rally, which was strategically held downtown at Campus Martius Park during rush hour.

Protesters raised slogans such as “Feed the hungry, not the Pentagon!” and “The only road to peace is U.S. out of the Middle East!” drawing a direct link between the struggle at home and the struggle of Syrians against U.S. imperialist aggression.

Syrian-American (U.S.) youth organizer Joe Mshahwar of WWP told Workers World, “Students and young workers in the U.S. have nothing to gain supporting U.S. imperialism’s attempts at regime change in Syria. A militant and uncompromising anti-war movement must be ready to challenge further U.S. aggression in the region.”

In **PORTLAND, ORE.**, an emergency hands-off Syria protest got thumbs up and supportive vehicle honks from workers during Friday’s afternoon rush hour. The protest, which was covered by KOIN television, later joined other anti-war demonstrators in the downtown area.



NYC PHOTO: JOE CATRON; DETROIT PHOTO: HANNAH FAHOOME

Demonstrators in **SEATTLE** marched from Capital Hill to downtown, condemning the racist U.S. war against Syria. The Friday action was energetic despite the driving rain because of the many youthful demonstrators. The protest, called by the Answer Coalition, included participation by Veterans for Peace, the Democratic Socialists of America and World Can’t Wait.

Protesters also gathered in **SAN FRANCISCO** in the late afternoon. The rally, organized by the Answer Coalition, included speakers from a broad range of organizations, including the International League of Peoples’ Struggle and Workers World Party.

Protests continue on weekend

On April 8 in **MADISON, WIS.**, a diverse group of labor and community representatives came out to protest at Library Mall. Zach Gevelinger, of Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement, said, “We will remain in the streets until U.S. capitalism and imperialism are defeated.” (wibailoutpeople.org).

Protesters turned out in **BUFFALO, N.Y.**, on Sunday, April 9, to demand “Stop U.S. war on Syria!” and “U.S. out of the Middle East!” and to explain these demands to the many passersby who stopped to ask. The rally was called by the International Action Center and the Buffalo branch of Workers World Party and endorsed by the National Lawyers Guild Buffalo Chapter & Friends and the Sister District for Western New York, and supported and joined by many other groups.



Detroit



WW PHOTO Durham, N.C.

In **DURHAM, N.C.**, anti-war protesters gathered at CCB “People’s” Plaza on Sunday for a rally initiated by the Durham branch of Workers World Party. People attending included members of Muslims for Social Justice; Electrical Workers Local 150, the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union; and the Triangle People’s Assembly.

Protesters held a rally at 3rd and Wisconsin streets and then marched to the Federal Building in **MILWAUKEE** to demand no U.S. war in Syria and money for human needs not war. Youth, students and members from many labor and community groups participated in the protest, which was sponsored by the Iraq Veterans Against the War-Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Antiwar Committee and the Milwaukee Coalition

Against Trump. The Wisconsin Bail Out The People Movement and other organizations supported the action.

According to reports in fightbacknews.org, demonstrations also took place in Minneapolis; Houston; Salt Lake City; Tucson, Ariz.; and Tampa and Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Protesters in Jacksonville, Fla., were viciously attacked by a small group of Trump supporters and police on April 7. Several were arrested and one protester was beaten so severely he required hospitalization.

Terri Kay, Ava Lipatti, Jim McMahan, Tom Michalak, Lyn Neeley, Tom Scahill and WW staff contributed to this report.



Buffalo

PHOTO: TOM BLAKE



San Francisco

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY



Portland

WW PHOTO



Vancouver, BC.

PHOTO: MAWO

Behind the attack on Syria: Trump, Russia and the Pentagon

Continued from page 1

and Anne Barnard.

Gordon was co-author with Judith Miller of Times articles promoting the idea that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction in the build-up to the 2003 U.S.-British invasion. Miller eventually lost her job for lying about claims of the existence of these weapons in Iraq. George W. Bush used these claims to bolster the pretext for invasion. Barnard writes like a publicist for the reactionary Syrian groups.

Progressive writer and founder of consortiumnews.com Robert Parry explained on April 5: “Gordon has been at the front lines of the neocon ‘regime change’ strategies for years. He co-authored the Times’ infamous aluminum tube story of Sept. 8, 2002, which relied on U.S. government sources and Iraqi defectors to frighten Americans with images of ‘mushroom clouds’ if they didn’t support President George W. Bush’s upcoming invasion of Iraq.”

It turned out that the aluminum tubes were meant for conventional weapons.

Seymour Hersh, an investigative reporter who exposed the 1968 My Lai massacre in Vietnam, reported in 2015, “In spring 2013 U.S. intelligence learned that the Turkish government, through elements of the MIT, its national intelligence agency, and the Gendarmerie, a militarised law-enforcement organisation, was working directly with al-Nusra and its allies to develop a chemical warfare capability.”

Hersh continued: “Our senior military officers have been told by the DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] and other intelligence assets that the sarin was supplied through Turkey, that it could only have gotten there with Turkish support. The Turks also provided the training in producing the sarin and handling it.” (reported by Robert Parry, consortiumnews.com, Sept. 16, 2015)

Following the chemical gas attack in 2013, the Times reported that experts followed the path of missiles carrying the gas, and it led back to Damascus. It later turned out that the missiles had a range that could not have carried them from Damascus. The actual range was the distance from rebel-held territory. (consortiumnews.com, Dec. 29, 2013; linked to Times article)

Ruling-class goal: Force Trump to oppose Russia, Assad

Even during the U.S. election campaign and since Trump won, the Pentagon and the ruling class in general have aimed to undermine the Trump administration’s attempt to shift U.S. foreign policy toward more cooperation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The horrendous pictures of the alleged chemical attack in Syria were calculated to box Trump in and leave him no alternative but to attack the Syrian government.

The drumbeats for attack on Syria came relentlessly from almost all rul-

Washington not only wants to overthrow Assad, it also aims to place a compliant government in Damascus that will oust the Russians from Syria and the Mediterranean altogether.

ing-class quarters — from Democratic Party moderates to Republican reactionaries. Trump, who has been the butt of attacks, ridicule and jokes in the corporate media, was momentarily catapulted from the status of bungling buffoon to the position of decisive leader. This status, however, is only temporary. The military and its mouthpieces in Congress, such as Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham, are prodding Trump to go further and explain what’s next.

Militarization of National Security Council

In all the celebration about Trump’s sudden show of leadership, what is being omitted is that he has militarized the government at the top. He received much praise when he pushed Stephen Bannon off the government’s most powerful committee, the Principals Committee of the National Security Council.

Bannon is an ultra-right extremist with an apocalyptic vision of war in Asia and is viciously against Islamic civilization. But the cheers for Bannon’s removal have drowned out any response to the shift in the Principals Committee. Now there are four generals on the council — who are nothing but extremists with weapons.

Under Trump the top foreign policy body of the capitalist government has gone from having the facade of civilian rule to open military control of foreign policy. The attack on Syria must be seen in that light.

Trump’s secretary of defense is James “Mad Dog” Mattis, a former Marine general. Mattis oversaw Middle East operations as chief of Central Command until his retirement in 2013. Mattis’ many colorful quotes include, “Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everyone you meet.”

Mattis opposed President Barack Obama’s Iran deal. He led the attack on Fallujah in 2004, which destroyed this Iraqi city of 300,000 people. The campaign used poisonous and radioactive depleted uranium munitions and caused massive civilian casualties. His troops massacred 24 civilians in Haditha city in 2005. (democracynow.org, Jan. 26, 2012) Mattis refused to apologize. He has been a true military extremist.

The head of the Department of Homeland Security is retired Marine Maj. Gen. John Kelly, a border security hawk who

was in charge of Caribbean and South American operations as head of the U.S. Southern Command. He opposed Obama’s plans to close Guantanamo Bay prison and has stoked fears by raising the specter of terrorists entering the country through the U.S.-Mexican border.

Trump’s national security adviser is Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, who is still on active duty and is a former tank commander in Iraq and Afghanistan. McMaster replaced Marine Gen. Michael Flynn after Flynn was ousted. McMaster played a key role in expelling Bannon from the NSC Principals Committee. The military unseated Bannon, the ultra-right ideologue, to prevent him from interfering with or listening in on their plans.

Also on the committee is Marine Lt. Gen. Joseph Dunford, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was a commander during the 2003 invasion of Iraq and a commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan in 2013. He told the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2015 that Russia is the “greatest threat to U.S. interests.” (Washington Post, July 9, 2015)

The U.S. military plans to have a wide focus that includes Russia, China, the DPRK, Syria, Iran, Yemen, Somalia and Libya. They especially strive to maintain hostility to Russia now because Washington covets Ukraine and is outraged that the Russians moved quickly to frustrate a total imperialist takeover of that country. The Pentagon is a firm backer of the fascist regime in Kiev and plans to feed it more powerful weapons. This is all linked to its anti-Russian campaign.

Washington to Putin: We’re the boss

Last year and at the beginning of this year, a joint Russian, Turkish and Iranian task force discussed political settlement issues for the Syria conflict at talks in Astana, Kazakhstan. (Reuters, Feb. 16) The U.S. had no part in the talks.

Washington and the U.S. military reject the political involvement of the Russian government in settling the Syrian question. U.S. air strikes on the Syrian airbase were meant to show Putin who is boss in the region.

The same scenario was played out in 2016 when then-Secretary of State John Kerry was engaged with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in working on military coordination and peace talks about Syria. After a marathon negotiat-

ing session on Sept. 8, Kerry called the deal “a potential turning point” in the conflict, if implemented. (CNBC, Sept. 9, 2016)

However, barely a week after Kerry’s announcement, the New York Times reported on Sept. 17: “The United States acknowledged on Saturday [Sept. 17] that its warplanes had carried out an airstrike in Syria that resulted in the deaths of Syrian government troops. American military officials said the pilots in the attack, in the eastern province of Deir al-Zour, believed they were targeting the Islamic State.”

The article stated, “Russia’s defense ministry said the United States attack had killed 62 Syrian troops, wounded 100 more.” This attack broke up the talks and all possibility of working out a peace plan.

DPRK and China also subject of Syrian strike

The military rushed the U.S. attack on Syria in order to deliver a major diplomatic slap at the People’s Republic of China at the very moment when Chinese President Xi Jinping was meeting with Trump at his Florida White House. Trump did not tell him about the attack until the meeting was over.

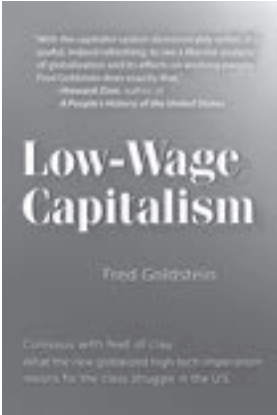
The strike was also meant to threaten the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. To follow up the strike on Syria, the Pentagon is now sending an aircraft carrier strike force toward Korean waters. The carrier Carl Vinson, accompanied by missile ships and frigates, is steaming there from Singapore to arrive in time for the 105th birthday of historic Korean communist leader Kim Il Sung. April 15 is celebrated in the DPRK as “the day of the sun.”

Trump has given the military a long leash. He is fostering their revenge plans against the DPRK, which defeated the U.S. invasions force in the Korean War. The U.S. military has never gotten over it.

Trump has let the Pentagon send more troops to Syria, bomb large numbers of civilians in Mosul and increase drone strikes in Yemen and Somalia — all without the White House signing off on these operations. There has been a major escalation of U.S. military killing of civilians under these new rules.

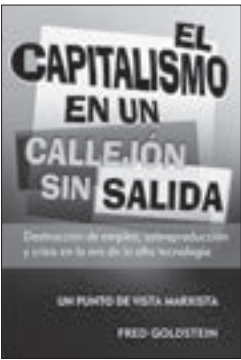
By militarizing the government, Trump has given more priority to the Pentagon and U.S. imperialism’s losing battle to overcome Washington’s diminished position in the world. Trump’s foreign policy slogan is really: “Make the U.S. military empire great again.” But this authoritarian, racist, misogynist, bigoted buffoon has no other talent than to bluster about giving orders. He cannot see that this dangerous course can only end in disaster for U.S. imperialism.

Goldstein is the author of Low-Wage Capitalism and Capitalism at a Dead End. Books can be purchased at several online booksellers.



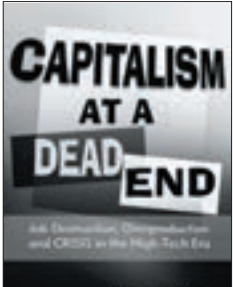
Low-Wage Capitalism

describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.



Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to **LowWageCapitalism.com** Available at all major online booksellers.

LATIN AMERICA

In the crosshairs of U.S. imperialism

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Latin America is in the crosshairs of imperialism, which is trying to halt and even reverse the progressive developments that have taken place in recent years in many of the region’s countries.

These developments were brought about through electoral processes. They don’t reflect the construction of society on a socialist foundation, but they have improved the overall quality of life of the poorest people, while leaving the capitalist system intact. Nevertheless, because they transferred a significant part of state budgets towards improving the health, education, housing, pensions and other programs of great assistance to the people, instead of increasing the private wealth of the capitalists, the new developments present an obstacle to both the national and foreign capitalist class.

Here we must clarify, however, that when the price of some national commodity — such as oil — in the world market was high, the national bourgeoisie, in Brazil, for example, also benefited from the state economic policies.

These policies also sent an important anti-imperialist message of solidarity with the peoples of the region and the world.

But its hostile approach to progressive governments is nothing new for the capitalist class. However, now that capitalism is in a stage of decay, it is taking a more desperate form and is trying to reverse these developments. It is trying to recover its dominant position at the expense of the working class, by taking away benefits previously acquired, increasing the cost of living, etc. Imperialism is “going for broke,” and this includes shutting down the governments that came into office through popular uprisings in the region.

The development of events there also reflects the enormous challenge of establishing progressive measures that benefit the most deprived masses through electoral processes within the framework of a capitalist state without, however, overturning the capitalist social relations.

Lacking a system in which the proletariat truly appropriates and directs the means of production, these governments face the possibility that a few votes — purchased or obtained by deception — can decide the future and smash the achievements obtained for the impoverished class.

We can see this clearly in Argentina under President Mauricio Macri, where thousands of jobs have been lost since his election and social programs greatly reduced, including one that benefits women in a country where one woman is killed every 30 hours!

Other examples in the region where anti-people governments recently have taken office are in Peru, and in Brazil with the illegitimate deposing of Dilma Rousseff’s presidency.

The electoral victory of Lenín Moreno of Alianza PAIS in Ecuador on April 2, on the other hand, served as an encouragement to the peoples of the region and the world. It was a message of defiance in the face of the wave of imperialist attacks. In defeating the banker Guillermo Lasso — who represents the neoliberal agenda — Lenín Moreno safeguarded the Citizens Revolution that under the leadership of Rafael Correa brought about the stabilization of the country and greatly improved the lives of all Ecuadorians.

This election has been followed with great attention, particularly by Latin American observers. Some, like Atilio



Borón on his blog (www.atilioboron.com.ar), have even described it as “the Latin American Battle of Stalingrad,” because the future of Ecuador and Latin America depends upon its outcome. [“Stalingrad” refers to the Soviet Red Army’s heroic defeat of Nazi Germany’s army in 1943, which changed the course of World War II.]

Venezuela and Paraguay: media’s double talk

Recent events in Venezuela and Paraguay illustrate the role the corporate media play as accomplices to the imperialist onslaught.

In Venezuela, the National Assembly (NA), after falling into the hands of the opposition party majority in December 2015, has tried by different means to destabilize the government of President Nicolás Maduro in order to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution.

The opposition tried to get a two-thirds majority to increase their powers and allow them to repeal essential laws with which they disagree, such as the laws addressing labor and education. To that end, the NA swore in three deputies from the opposition Table of Democratic Unity (MUD) coalition from the state of Amazonas, even though these three deputies were being challenged because of factual evidence of electoral fraud.

In January 2016, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (STJ) declared the NA to be in contempt, annulling any provision the NA issues until the disputed delegates in question are removed and new assembly elections are called, something that the NA has not yet resolved.

An impasse arose recently when the Venezuelan Petroleum Corporation S.A. requested an appeal for interpretation of the Hydrocarbons Organic Law regarding mixed companies. This decision requires approval by the NA. Acting in accord with the Venezuelan Constitution, the STJ maintained the contempt order and temporarily assumed the functions of the NA.

OAS head butts in

This action provoked a situation where the opposition right wing, with its allies in the Organization of American States (OAS) and in the U.S., described as a coup d’état carried out by the government, an “auto coup d’état.” Luis Almagro, secretary general of the OAS, sought to impose the OAS Democratic Charter against Venezuela. At the same time, Henrique Capriles — former presidential candidate for the Venezuelan right-wing opposition — was sent to the U.S to obtain an OAS-U.S. intervention against his country.

The international corporate media have elevated this campaign against an alleged coup to the maximum. Mexico and the U.S. have led the campaign in the OAS — through the reactionary Luis Almagro — trying to accumulate forces against the Bolivarian Revolution. On the morning of April 3, however, Bolivia, which heads the Permanent Council of the OAS (PC-OAS), suspended the extraordinary session that the group of 20 countries allied with the U.S. wanted to convoke against Venezuela, until more information is gathered.

The PC-OAS, however, met without the presence of Bolivia and Haiti, the holders of the presidency and vice presidency of the body at the time, in an action meant to illegitimately impose the Democratic Charter and justify a foreign intervention in Venezuela.

Both the Bolivarian government and its allies in the region have rejected such an intervention.

This OAS action emboldened the right-wing opposition in Venezuela, which, in an effort to cause destabilization, took to the streets in a violent way, setting roadblocks on fire and damaging government buildings. In the course of these demonstrations, one person was killed.

The leaders of the violence were people,, mostly young, subcontracted and paid by the opposition party Primero Justicia to commit terrorist acts. Several of them have been caught and are awaiting trial.

The Chavista forces have also been on the streets in defense of the Bolivarian Revolution and their president, Nicolás Maduro.

It is important to emphasize that a deliberative process took place after the STJ decision, effectively striking down the NA’s prohibition. The purpose of the initial decision was to guarantee the rule of law, but after a disagreement between two major government branches, a special meeting was convened by President Maduro to resolve the issue.

The French government has said openly that it won’t make any real concessions to the demands of those on general strike in Guiana, a territory on the northern coast of South America, whose quarter-million population is legally French. Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve claimed that the demands of the coalition Pou LaGwi Yann Dékolé (Let Guiana Take Off) guiding the struggle are "unrealistic."

The PLGD, together with the trade union movement, wants recognition of special status for French Guiana and 2.5 billion euros in emergency aid delivered immediately, before a new French government takes over in mid-May.

It appears that the general strike, which began March 27, will continue indefinitely. While the PLGD relaxed the roadblocks on April 9, it issued an order saying that all traffic — truck, auto, bike, foot — would be restricted starting Monday morning, April 10.

Earlier on April 6, the PLGD held a press conference in Cayenne, the capital, where each of the coalition’s various components — health, education, transporta-

The impasse happened after the national prosecutor, Luisa Ortega, a pro-government official, publicly opposed the STJ’s decision on the grounds of an interpretation of a section of the Bolivarian Constitution. President Maduro then convened an emergency meeting of the Council for the Defense of the Nation. This council is the highest body of consultation for planning and advising the Public Powers in matters related to the integral defense of the nation.

Then, in Paraguay

While this development was taking place, on March 31 in Paraguay, there occurred what can be described as a real coup. Behind closed doors, outside of the people’s view, the right-wing president Horacio Cartes and the deposed ex-president Fernando Lugo — who once was considered progressive and even leftist — shamelessly signed an agreement to amend the Constitution to approve the presidential re-election. This was endorsed by Lugo’s Guasú Front, which in the past was also considered progressive.

When the people found out what had happened, they took to the streets against this corrupt political class, shouting the slogan, “Get all of them out!” Thousands of peasants demanded agrarian reform and young people of different social strata also turned out by the thousands against the ruling class and their lying politicians. They demand the withdrawal of the leaders and raise the need for a new constitution.

Demonstrations spread throughout the country. In Asunción — the capital — as a clear message, people burned part of the Congress facilities.

The police responded violently, shooting at demonstrators and killing one young man with a shot to the head.

Both the Venezuelan and the Paraguayan people are demonstrating at this moment that despite the right-wing national and foreign assault, the people will not stop until they are finally able to determine their future. □

tion, civil society — expressed their particular demands and pledged to continue the strike until all were satisfied.

On April 8, French Guiana’s authorities tried to hold a meeting about resolving the strike without any PLGD representatives being present. Members of 500 Brothers, a people’s militia active in the PLGD, tried to force their way in.

A physical confrontation occurred for the first time during the current strike. The cops’ second in command wound up in the hospital. The cops fired tear gas canisters, which were thrown back at them.

After the confrontation died down, people brought out hammocks and chairs onto the lawn of the government building and stayed the night, showing everyone that the struggle was far from over. □

General strike keeps French Guiana shut down

By G. Dunkel



President Donald Trump’s budget proposal exposes his administration’s real priorities: It slashes spending on necessities that millions of people depend on for transportation, water supply and electricity. Instead of fixing railroad tracks, bridges, electric grids, water pipes and other essential structures and networks, he reduces governmental departments and agencies that address these vital services.

Trump’s earlier proclamation that “crumbling infrastructure will be replaced with new roads, bridges, tunnels, airports and railways ‘gleaming across our beautiful land’” has evaporated. His “request” to Congress to “approve legislation that produces a \$1 trillion investment” in the U.S.’s infrastructure has floated away. (whitehouse.gov, Feb. 28)

The proposed budget cuts \$2.4 billion from the Department of Transportation alone and more from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency and other essential programs.

Whose budget grew? The Pentagon’s, of course. With generals filling White House posts, it’s no surprise that the 2018 budget adds a whopping \$54 billion increase over and above this year’s \$30 billion hike.

War contractors like Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman that sell F-35 and F/A 18 fighter jets, missiles, Apache and Blackhawk helicopters and drones

stand ready to feast on a \$13.5 billion piece of the exorbitant military budget. (cnn.com, March 16)

Each of the 59 Tomahawk missiles the U.S. launched at Syria on April 6 will cost \$1.5 million to replace. That’s \$88 million in total! Raytheon Co., the missile’s maker, saw its stock price soar.

Fund people’s needs, not war!

So, while the Pentagon and arms manufacturers are lauding Trump’s budgetary priorities, workers are paying the price for the deteriorating infrastructure. Recent accidents at New York’s Penn Station exemplify the national crisis.

Some 600,000 workers who daily travel on 1,300 Amtrak, New Jersey Transit and Long Island Railroad trains found their commutes snarled for a week by the second derailment at Penn Station within 10 days. Officials said the April 3 derailment was caused by the failure of a few wooden railroad ties — which each cost less than \$100! — and left eight tracks unusable.

Rail workers labored 24 hours a day to fix the mess, battling overhead wires and a 1910-era infrastructure.

If the Gateway Project — putting a second rail tunnel under the Hudson River to New York City — had been in place, the Penn Station derailment could have been easily managed. The White House’s budget puts Gateway out of the gate.

Besides New York’s programs, a light rail plan in Maryland, a subway project in Los Angeles and a bus project in Kansas City are all slated to be cut.

Despite denials by Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, a recent Treasury Department report admits that “a lack of public funding is ... the most common factor hindering completion of transportation and water infrastructure projects.” (cnbc.com, April 6)

However, billionaire Trump could care less that tens of millions of people

suffer from the infrastructure crisis. He represents the interests of Wall Street bankers and investors. They consider infrastructure a “risky investment,” as it generates nothing like the superprofits from weapons manufacturing, corporate mergers and acquisitions, stock and currency manipulations and home foreclosures.

Only the mass struggle can ensure that the wealth generated by the workers is used to better people’s lives instead of enriching corporate parasites. □

Pentagon threatens Peoples’ Korea with aggression

By Deirdre Griswold

April 9 — Yesterday, the Pentagon rerouted the aircraft carrier Carl Vinson, along with three guided-missile destroyers and cruisers headed to Australia, and ordered them instead to waters off the Korean peninsula.

The redeployment of the warships comes one week after the conclusion of a monthlong, massive military exercise, called Foal Eagle by the Pentagon, that involved some 30,000 troops from the U.S. and up to 300,000 from south Korea in a simulated invasion of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (north Korea). Its openly stated goal was to rehearse the destruction of the north Korean government — in other words, “regime change.”

This is the kind of intense military pressure U.S. imperialism has exerted on the leaders of the DPRK ever since a revolutionary guerrilla army there liberated the northern half of Korea from Japanese colonial rule at the end of World War II.

Korea, which traces its history back 5,000 years, has been divided ever since 1945 by the U.S. military occupation of the south.

From 1950 to 1953, the U.S. imperialists tried to destroy the socialist government in the north, sending almost 6 million U.S. soldiers and dropping more bombs on Korea than it had in the entire war against Japan. The Koreans took terrible losses, but they fought the U.S. to a standstill — the first country to ever do so.

Now, Washington is talking once again of a war on Korea. The excuse? The DPRK has been arming itself with nuclear weapons and missiles — precisely in order to ward off another U.S. attack.

Resistance to imperialist ‘regime change’

The lessons of the last 15 years have not been lost on the Koreans. They have seen how the U.S. has targeted country after country for “regime change,” making phony allegations in order to cover its totally illegal aggressions.

Remember the claims that Iraq had “weapons of mass destruction” leading up to the U.S. invasion and takeover of that country? Total lies, as even the politicians here have had to admit. The same was true of Libya, once the most prosperous country in Africa and today in ruins. And Yugoslavia, torn into small states because it didn’t have the weapons to defend itself.

Now Syria is the target, and the Trump administration just broke international law by firing cruise missiles into that country with no warning, no evidence for its claims that Syria had attacked its own people with nerve gas, no chance for an investigation and not even a fig leaf authorization from Congress to launch a

military attack.

The Koreans are determined not to let what has happened to these countries happen to them. If anyone has a right to nuclear weapons, it is the DPRK. After what the U.S. did to them in the 1950s, they would be foolish indeed not to arm themselves against another devastating war.

They have seen the U.S. just complete the installation of an anti-missile system in the south of Korea that is touted as a “defensive” measure, but is in fact another sign that the Pentagon wants to be able to attack the north without the DPRK being able to retaliate.

The people of south Korea realize the dangers inherent in the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile system and have been demonstrating every day against it.

What imperialism is afraid of

What are the U.S. imperialists really afraid of? It is that the people of both north and south Korea are moving to overcome the pressures from abroad that have divided them.

Right now, the former president of south Korea, Park Geun-hye, is sitting in a jail cell after massive demonstrations by millions of south Koreans succeeded in having her impeached and removed from office for taking bribes from south Korea’s biggest corporations. She is the daughter of an earlier president, Gen. Park Chung-hye, who seized power through a military coup. They both have had the blessings of the U.S. occupiers while earning the hatred of the people, especially the working class.

In one month, south Korea is slated to hold an election for a new president, and the front runner, Moon Jae-in, wants to ease tensions with the north. He also says he will review the validity of the decision to install the U.S.’s THAAD missile-defense system, which threatens China as well as the DPRK.

That the warmakers chose the very moment of Trump’s meeting with China’s President Xi Jinping to carry out the missile attack on Syria has already been interpreted by the capitalist media here as a warning to China not to interfere if the U.S. treats the DPRK in the same way.

But the DPRK has nuclear weapons. And it is telling the U.S. in no uncertain terms that it will use them if attacked.

The many millions who have demonstrated against Trump and his reactionary politics must be made aware of this highly dangerous situation — especially because Trump is now being praised by both Republicans and Democrats for his criminal attack on Syria.

U.S. out of Korea! □

ALL OUT FOR MAY DAY

Build Workers World!

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- 🌐 Invite all workers to come out of the shadows
- 🌐 Take our rightful place as the creators of all things
- 🌐 Stand in solidarity against all forms of repression and exploitation
- 🌐 Say that capitalist greed, austerity, misery & war be banished forever
- 🌐 Affirm the need for a revolutionary socialist future

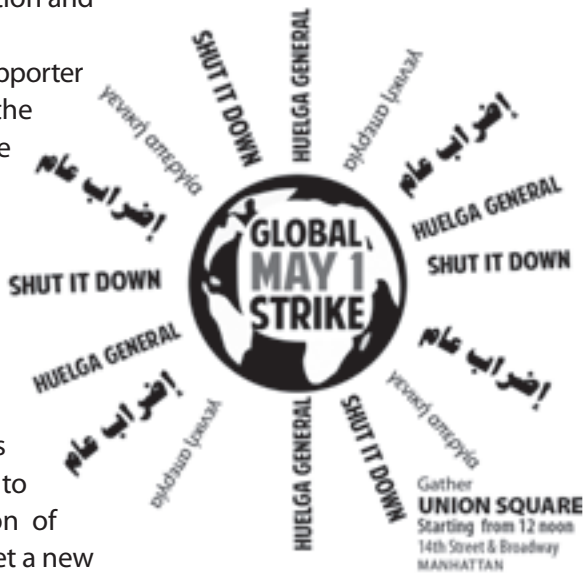
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Tribute to Ahmed Kathrada, anti-apartheid leader

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Funeral services were held March 29 for Ahmed Mohamed “Kathy” Kathrada, a longtime member of the South African Communist Party and the African National Congress. He died at the age of 87. Hundreds of family members and friends paid tribute at the memorial to the veteran of the national liberation struggle that brought the ANC to power in 1994.

Born on Aug. 21, 1929, to Indian immigrant parents in the Western Transvaal (now North West Province), Ahmed Mohamed Kathrada was discriminated against by the British-dominated racist system. The Boers played a supplementary role.

In the former Union of South Africa’s settler-colonial state, Kathrada was instrumental in forming coalitions among oppressed national groups during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1941, 12-year-old Kathrada joined the Young Communist League, a Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) affiliate.

Kathrada was heavily influenced by Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, a leader of the Indian Congress movement and the CPSA. Dadoo co-founded the Non-European United Front (NEUF), which initially opposed African and Indian military involvement during World War II.

After Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, Dadoo and other Communists supported the war, saying that European fascism was a greater threat to oppressed peoples and Moscow. However, many NEUF members staunchly opposed Africans and Indians fighting in Britain’s military.

Nonetheless, the CPSA campaigned against racism inside the country during the war and founded the Anti-Segrega-

tion Council, which opposed the Pegging Act, which discriminated against the Indian population. Later, Dadoo and other leftists pushed back more moderate forces in the Indian Congress movement. After World War II, cooperation between the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses and the African National Congress intensified.

The ANC Youth League, formed in 1943, drafted its Program of Action in 1949. The post-war atmosphere among Africans and larger sections of South Africa’s Indian population became decisively militant and confrontational against the racist state.

Kathrada and others more closely cooperated with Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders. In 1947, the national liberation movement advanced with the Dadoo-Naicker-Xuma Pact, solidifying the ANC/South African Indian Congress (SAIC) alliance. Kathrada coordinated joint actions among the ANC and SAIC youth wings.

In 1948, the National Party won the all-white elections, making the Boer ruling elites the Union of South Africa’s leading force. “Apartheid,” a renewed system of colonial occupation, was formally instituted.

Mass struggle and the Congress Alliance

During the early 1950s, the National Party passed the Suppression of Communism Act, the Pass Laws, the Group Areas Act, the Separate Representation of Voters Act and the Bantu Authorities Act. (The banned CPSA was reconstituted underground as the South African Communist Party.) These laws were designed to thwart the burgeoning unity among Indian, African, “Colored” and progressive white forces. The Defiance Against Unjust Laws Campaign began in

Nelson Mandela and Ahmed Kathrada



1952, bringing thousands into the anti-apartheid struggle.

By 1954, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) was created, uniting political forces — African, Indian, Colored, left-wing whites and labor unions. FEDSAW mounted demonstrations against the pass laws, which required Africans to always carry documentation — or face detention.

The movement advanced after 2,000 women, mainly African, from the Johannesburg region, demonstrated at Pretoria’s Union Buildings on Oct. 27, 1955. The ANC Women’s League and FEDSAW organized the action, intended to deliver a statement demanding the repeal of pass laws. Cabinet ministers refused to receive their delegation and the documents. (tinyurl.com/ltw3klh)

On Aug. 9, 1956, 20,000 women from throughout South Africa staged a second march on the Union Buildings, marking a turning point in the struggle. No officials met with them.

Revolution’s armed phase

Despite banning orders for political activities, Kathrada was heavily involved in forming the ANC-SACP’s military wing: Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). In July 1963, after going underground, Kathrada and other MK leaders were arrested in Rivonia, a suburb of Johannesburg. Mandela had been arrested the year before — with the CIA’s assistance — and charged with leaving the country illegally. Mandela had traveled from 1961 to 1962 to Ethiopia and Morocco for military training.

In 1964, Kathrada, along with Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Dennis Goldberg, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni, was tried and all eight were found guilty of treason in an apartheid court. Although they faced the death penalty, this racist court sentenced the ANC-SACP leaders to life in prison without parole and hard labor. Mandela, the last to be released, served over 27 years in prison.

By the time these leaders were released, support and membership within the national liberation movement had grown exponentially. Under ANC leadership, MK formally suspended the armed struggle in preparation for negotiations in August 1990. Apartheid-regime-backed violence and targeted assassinations killed thousands more people as attempts were made to sabotage the transition process.

Finally, the ANC won the right to hold democratic elections on April 27-28, 1994, winning nearly two-thirds of the vote in favor of constituting a coalition government with the National Party (NP) and other small groupings. The NP withdrew from the government in 1995. The ANC has controlled the state’s executive and legislative branches since then.

Post-apartheid South Africa

Kathrada was elected to Parliament in 1994. Five years later, he ended his involvement in electoral politics. South Africa has undergone tremendous reforms since then. However, basic aspects of capitalist rule have not been fundamentally altered.

Land ownership and control of mining and finance are still major sources of debate and struggle. Factionalism within the ANC, which has always existed to a limited degree, has taken on wider dimensions in recent years.

Mentioned at Kathrada’s memorial was an open letter he wrote to President Jacob Zuma, ANC leader, suggesting he resign in light of accusations of constitutional violations. Former interim President and then Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe praised Kathrada’s contributions, but said, “It would be disingenuous to pay tribute to the life of comrade Ahmed Kathrada and pretend that he was not deeply disturbed by the current post-apartheid failure of politics.” □

Newark Mayor Baraka leads trade delegation to Cuba

By Dolores Cox
New York City

Newark, N.J., mayor Ras Baraka shared Newark’s concrete steps to overcome the economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed on Cuba by the U.S. government on March 25 at the National Conference for the Full Normalization of U.S.-Cuban Relations held here in Fordham



Ras Baraka

University School of Law. It was initiated and hosted by the New York-New Jersey Cuba Si! Coalition to mobilize to end all U.S. economic, financial and travel sanctions against Cuba; to get the U.S. out of illegally occupied territory in Guantanamo; and stop all regime-change programs against Cuba.

Baraka announced that the next day, March 26, he would lead a delegation of elected officials, medical personnel, educators, activists and social scientists to Cuba. The purpose of the trip is to establish trade relations between Cuba and Newark. The city, which has the largest seaport on the East Coast, is the number 2 seaport in the U.S. However, the port is struggling for jobs, goods and services.

All U.S. systems have not worked for

Black and Brown people, Baraka added. Hospital emergency rooms are being utilized because of the high cost of and limited access to health care. And hospitals are closing, replaced by unaffordable housing in Black and Brown communities. Gentrification is not just about buildings, but about displacement and the lives of people in existing communities. U.S. cities are overrun with homelessness and racialized poverty, said Baraka.

Social changes made by Cuba can benefit Newark, stated Baraka, referring to Cuba’s nearly 100 percent literacy rate, free access to education and health care, and lower infant mortality than that in the U.S. In the city of Newark, he added that four times more babies die in their first year of life than in New Jersey as a whole. The comparison between Cuba’s health care and educational systems and those of the U.S. are embarrassing and atrocious, Baraka stated.

Newark is doing things, and its relationship with Cuba may ultimately mean a matter of life and death for Newark residents, said Baraka. □



Continúa de página 12

nerales de Estados Unidos”. (elnuevo-dia.com, 30 de marzo) Esta aseveración fue en respuesta a las masivas críticas luego que la junta nombrara a Natalie Jaresko como su directora ejecutiva. La Jaresko es nada menos que una mujer ucraniana que nació en Chicago y que el Departamento de Estado de EUA envió a Ucrania donde fungió como Ministra de Finanzas, ejerciendo un papel predominante en el esfuerzo de EUA para controlar el gobierno de Ucrania, según un artículo de Claridad, ‘Jaresko: ¿Por qué llegó al Caribe?’ del 29 de marzo.

Jaresko está íntimamente asociada además con la infame USAID, y según el mismo artículo “Sobre el manejo que Jaresko (junto a su entonces marido) hizo del fondo (de la USAID) hubo imputaciones de corrupción porque se auto asignó sumas millonarias a modo de “bonos”, muy superiores a su salario básico”.

Mientras la JCF reduce las pensiones de boricuas, les aumenta los impuestos y toda clase de contribuciones, les recorta beneficios y acceso a servicios de salud, le regala a Jaresko un sueldo de nada

Huelga estudiantil responde a ataques

menos que \$650.000 al año, además de viajes a Kiev, chófer, vivienda, etc. ¡Todo pagado por el empobrecido pueblo de PR!

A esta contratación se suma la de una ‘oficial de ética’ de la JCF. “Junto al salario que estará ganando la nueva Directora Ejecutiva de la Junta de Control Fiscal (Jaresko), se sumará también la compensación de \$750 la hora por las labores de la oficial de ética, Andrea Bonime Blanc”. (noticel, 1 de abril)

El pueblo tiene la última palabra

Mientras el imperio con su criminal Junta intentan decidir el futuro de Puerto Rico, la juventud estudiantil, unida a otros sectores, sindicales, ambientalistas, sociales, y otros, incluyendo a las y los boricuas en exilio — la llamada diáspora — se aprestan a arreciar la lucha. Es un tiempo crucial para Boriké, y sus hijas e hijos lo sienten en sus venas. Y se están preparando. Desde Estados Unidos, unamos nuestras voces y acciones en repudio a la Junta dictatorial y en defensa y solidaridad del pueblo boricua.

¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre! □



Huelga estudiantil responde a ataques de la Junta de control Fiscal en Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El pasado viernes 31 de marzo, la Junta de Control Fiscal – la agencia de cobro - que bajo la ley PROMESA (Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act of 2016) impuso el Congreso estadounidense al pueblo boricua para cobrar la ilegítima deuda producto de la venta de bonos municipales, se reunió por sexta vez desde su inicio. Ésta vez en PR, para pasivamente “recibir ponencias y presentaciones sobre el tema de desarrollo económico de parte de diversos representantes de entidades de gobierno, privadas y del tercer sector”, según lee su página juntasupervision.pr.gov.

Como parte de su solución al pago de la deuda, la JCF impone un recorte de \$450 millones a la Universidad de Puerto Rico, conllevando además el cierre – o “consolidaciones” de algunos de los 11 recintos de la universidad. Este gigantesco recorte supone un grave golpe a la educación superior y además hará perder las acreditaciones a la institución.

Fuera del edificio donde se reunía la junta, sin embargo, se encontraban cientos de estudiantes y organizaciones

solidarias que activamente exponían la criminalidad de dicha junta y exigían el cumplimiento de sus demandas. Habían marchado temprano en la mañana desde el conocido Parque Muñoz Rivera hacia el Centro de Convenciones donde estaba la Junta, caminando incluso por dentro de la fuente a la entrada del Centro, que estaba fuertemente resguardado por centenares de policías y bomberos.

En su mayoría, las/os manifestantes eran estudiantes de la UPR, y exponían lo que en estos momentos es la verdadera misión de la JCF – destruir a PR como país. La UPR, siendo la única institución pública de enseñanza superior, encarna el futuro mismo del archipiélago. Allí se preparan las y los futuros maestros y científicos, las y los profesionales que pueden llevar al desarrollo del país para el provecho de su pueblo.

De hecho, la UPR está catalogada como una de las más prestigiosas del Caribe, y de ahí se han nutrido importantes entidades de los Estados Unidos, incluyendo educativas e incluso la NASA, entre muchas otras. La UPR, al ser subsidiada por el gobierno, le brinda más posibilidad de obtener una carrera

a las/os estudiantes sin recursos.

Huelga estudiantil

Ese último día de marzo era ya el cuarto día de la huelga decretada por las/os estudiantes el 21 de marzo. En asamblea general, las/os estudiantes del Recinto de Río Piedras habían aprobado con 1.312 votos a favor y 253 en contra, un paro de las labores académicas desde el 28 de marzo hasta el 5 de abril.

El día 5, se reunirán en Asamblea Nacional las/os estudiantes de los 11 recintos de la UPR más las/os del Conservatorio de Música de Puerto Rico y de la Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico. Después, el 6 de abril, el Recinto de Río Piedras estará en huelga indefinida. Esta decisión de huelga indefinida se hizo el 21 de marzo y no está sujeta a los resultados de la Asamblea Nacional del 5 de abril.

Los reclamos de las/os estudiantes en huelga son primeramente que se audite la deuda. Esta no ha sido auditada e incluso el gobernador actual, Ricardo Roselló del Partido Nuevo Progresista que aboga por la estadidad y quien por tanto tiene una relación de subordinación a la Jun-

ta, eliminó la junta independiente para la auditoría. Los otros reclamos son que no haya recortes en el presupuesto de la UPR ni aumento de matrícula, y que se haga una reforma universitaria.

Contrataciones obscenas de la JCF

La JCF – léase el imperio estadounidense – ha decidido destruir a su colonia, Puerto Rico y convertirla en su patio para la diversión y sitio de inversiones de sus multimillonarios, que reciben en PR una enorme exención contributiva. Más que antes. Al mismo tiempo que decreta hondos recortes educativos para estudiantes boricuas, además de otras medidas de austeridad como el alza de impuestos a granel, cierre de 300 escuelas públicas, y una larga lista de recortes y “ajustes” que empobrecerán aún más a la población, la JCF derrocha impune y obscenamente el dinero del pueblo puertorriqueño en contratos millonarios.

Con lágrimas de cocodrilo, José Carrión, presidente de la JCF dijo: “Debido a la crisis en que está el país, “cada cheque que firmo me da vergüenza”, afirmó en un mensaje ante el capítulo de Puerto Rico de la Asociación de Contratistas Ge

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¡EUA, fuera de Siria!

Declaración del Partido Workers World-Mundo Obrero

El bombardeo estadounidense contra la nación soberana de Siria es una acción agresiva y criminal. Su justificación oficial - que el ejército sirio utilizó gases nerviosos contra la población - es una mentira similar a las utilizadas para justificar otras agresiones estadounidenses en el pasado.

Por ejemplo, en agosto de 1964, el falso incidente del Golfo de Tonkín fue utilizado para expandir la guerra en Vietnam hasta que murieron 3 millones de vietnamitas y 58.000 soldados estadounidenses - más tarde, la mentira fue expuesta por Los papeles del Pentágono.

En 2003, el falso pretexto de las armas iraquíes de destrucción masiva condujo a la destrucción de Irak, con millones de personas muertas y desplazadas — más tarde se admitió la falsedad.

En 2011, el gobierno de Obama utilizó acusaciones falsas de que el gobierno libio estaba a punto de matar a la población de Benghazi para justificar el bombardeo de Libia y el derrocamiento del gobierno, lo que provocó la caótica situación actual.

Sobre la agresión actual, el gobierno de Trump revirtió su posición del 3 de abril de que viviría con el gobierno de Assad. Ahora, el secretario de estado Rex Tillerson dijo el 6 de abril que no había “ningún papel” para el presidente sirio Bashar al-Assad y lanzó un ataque contra un aeródromo sirio el 7 de abril.

Esto siguió a la noticia de que una descarga de armas químicas en Idlib, Siria, el 4 de abril dejó decenas de personas muertas. Antes de que la polvareda se hubiera diseminado, los belicistas de Washington y sus aliados británicos y

franceses - ambos antiguos poderes coloniales en esa región – culparon sin pruebas al gobierno sirio y a sus aliados rusos del ataque.

La retórica de los políticos imperialistas, de la prensa burguesa y de la gran variedad de fuerzas pro-guerra inmediatamente olía a otra invasión estadounidense y a una guerra más amplia.

Las insidiosas mentiras del imperio siempre se utilizan para dirigir los ataques coloniales contra las naciones oprimidas. Trump, el auto-proclamado aislacionista, se ha transformado ante nuestros ojos en el Clinton intervencionista.

La postura estadounidense apesta a hipocresía, dado que en el último mes los bombardeos dirigidos por Estados Unidos en Mosul, Irak y en Raqqa, Siria, han matado a 700 civiles, incluyendo a cientos de niñas/os, según informes de esos países.

Después de una tensa situación en 2013, Rusia negoció la eliminación de las armas químicas de Siria, un proceso supervisado por observadores internacionales. El estado sirio ya no tiene armas químicas. Sin embargo, los medios casi cuatro años después siguen repitiendo el argumento del Pentágono, como si esto nunca hubiera sucedido.

Los mensajes de Trump evolucionan ... hacia la guerra

Los mensajes de la administración Trump sobre Siria fueron mixtos durante unos meses. Trump se concentró en culpar al gobierno de Obama de replegarse en 2013. Pero las acciones de la nueva ad-

ministración hablan por sí mismas.

Con el grupo del Estado Islámico (EI) en sus últimas zancadas, quedó claro que el papel de EUA sobre el terreno en Siria evolucionaría. El 30 de marzo, Nikki Haley, el embajador de EUA en la ONU, dijo: “Nuestra prioridad ya no es sentarnos y concentrarnos en sacar a Assad”.

El 5 de abril, un día después del ataque con armas químicas de Idlib, Trump dijo: “Mi actitud hacia Siria y Assad ha cambiado mucho. ... Ahora hablamos de un nivel completamente diferente”.

Quienes creyeron erróneamente que Trump sería anti-intervencionista, pueden encontrar este cambio chocante. Sin embargo, Washington nunca cambió sus objetivos en Siria, sólo su estrategia a corto plazo.

Cuando el gobierno de Estados Unidos no pudo liquidar directamente al estado sirio, la OTAN, incluida Turquía, Arabia Saudita y otras monarquías del Golfo, armaron a escuadrones de la muerte como Al Qaeda y el Estado Islámico. Estas fuerzas reaccionarias supervisaron la meta estadounidense de destruir la sociedad secular y pluralista de Siria con bombas.

Una vez que estas fuerzas de contra habían destruido bastante a Siria en 2014, los EUA las usaron como excusa para comenzar a bombardear a Siria. Los ataques aéreos liderados por EUA destruyeron en su mayor parte la infraestructura vital. A menudo, la coalición liderada por EUA golpeó a soldados sirios, allanando el camino para los avances de EI.

La persona en el podio puede cambiar, pero la clase dominante debe asegurar

sus ganancias de una manera u otra para sobrevivir.

Siria está hoy en la línea del frente, defendiéndose contra un ataque imperialista masivo. Es el último estado árabe verdaderamente independiente.

¡Detengan la guerra! ¡Fuera EUA!

Es deber de quienes viven en el vientre de la bestia, en los Estados Unidos, exigir inequívocamente que las fuerzas imperialistas abandonen Siria. Tenemos que combatir la propaganda burguesa hasta que nuestras cuerdas vocales queden agotadas. Los mismos medios que justifican los linchamientos policiales de niñas/os negros en los Estados Unidos están utilizando la muerte de niñas/os sirios para justificar la guerra.

Las guerras contra Afganistán, Irak y Libia fueron todas genocidios coloniales contruidos sobre mentiras. Siria no es diferente. Las ocupaciones de todos esos países continúan. La intervención en Afganistán es la guerra más larga en la historia de los EUA. Una ocupación estadounidense de Siria no sería diferente.

Debido a que Irán y Rusia no permitirán que Siria se convierta en un “estado fallido”, la “represalia” estadounidense promete hacer de esta guerra regional una guerra mundial. La liberación de las/os trabajadoras y los pueblos oprimidos en los Estados Unidos depende de nuestra habilidad para unir nuestras luchas con las luchas de independencia de las naciones oprimidas.

Estados Unidos, Turquía, Arabia Saudita, Israel, OTAN, contras: ¡Fuera de Siria! □