

Syrian people defy U.S. missiles

By John Catalinotto

The U.S. president has led a Gang of Three into an aggressive assault on Syria. The attack by the Pentagon, Britain and France violated international law. In Donald Trump's case, it also violated the U.S. Constitution and flouted the War Powers Act.

For a few days starting April 11, anyone who was paying attention was worried not only that many Syrians would die, but that the assault might unleash a military confrontation between the world's two major nuclear powers, the U.S. and Russia.

The crisis began after charges were made that the Syrian army used chemical weapons in Douma, a suburb of the capital. Syrian troops at the time were on the eve of liberating Douma from occupation by reactionary forces. Aside from claims made by enemies of the Damascus government, no evidence was presented of the alleged attack.

Both the Syrian and Russian governments denied any use of chemical weapons. Others pointed out that it was not in the interest of Damascus to risk using such weapons when the government was on the verge of another big victory. The missile attack also occurred right before a delegation from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was due to arrive to inspect the area.

On the morning of April 11, Trump began to tweet threats of a strike against Syria. After a back and forth, one read: "Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and 'smart!'" (ABC News, April 11)

The next day, however, Defense Secretary James Mattis reinterpreted the tweets. "On a strategic level, it's how do we keep this from escalating out of control, if you get my drift on that," said the retired Marine general. (Wall Street Journal, April 12)

It's not that the Pentagon generals had suddenly turned into peacemakers. No, they would carry out the illegal strike. But at least in this case, they would try to avoid provoking battles that the U.S. Armed Forces might not be ready for.

While details of discussions in the Pentagon have not yet been made public, the "drift" of Mattis' comments was that the generals considered the president's tweets to be those of a dangerous fool.

'Mission accomplished'

U.S. ships and planes, with Britain and France joining the crime, launched 107 missiles early on April 14 toward three targets in Syria. The Pentagon charged that

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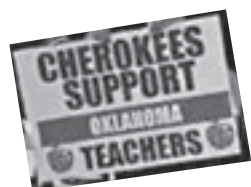
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MAY DAY: Stop war on immigrants! 3

Johns Hopkins students protest CIA recruitment

By Rhys Williams and Ben Anderson
Baltimore

Ten Johns Hopkins University student activists from Tzedek (a U.K.-based charity that aims to provide a Jewish response to global poverty) and Students for a Democratic Society, plus members of Workers World Party-Baltimore and Baltimore People's Power Assembly, protested on April 10 outside the last of three CIA recruitment events held that week at the university's career center.

For about half an hour, the activists blocked the door with a bright yellow banner reading, "CIA Out of Schools, Stop the U.S. War Machine." Chants such as "Hey, hey, hey, CIA, how many people did you kill today?" and "No Justice, No Peace, U.S. out of the Middle East!" echoed across the third floor of the administrative building, drawing the attention of employees working there.

It also drew security officers, who were unable to dispel the protesters. After protesting in front of the event, the activists moved the banner outside, where their chants of "Hopkins Builds Nukes!" were heard by groups of prospective students touring campus. The chants referenced a \$934 million, five-year contract that Hopkins' Applied Physics Laboratory recently received from the Department of Defense to build bases for nuclear weapons.

Youth Against War and Racism founded

This was the inaugural action of Youth Against War and Racism, a mass organization whose goal is to increase and mobilize anti-war and anti-imperialist sentiment among youth and students in the Baltimore area. Although anti-war organizations already exist here, YAWR's founders recognized a distinct lack of concern among young people, who have been integral to the most famous and successful anti-war movements of the past.

Since their very inception, the U.S. government and ruling class have sought to expand their sphere of influence over the entire globe. The rulers first expanded their territory from the East Coast to the West by gradually stealing land, through violence and terror, from Indigenous peoples.



WW PHOTO: RASIKA RUWANPATHIRANA

JHU also has a huge nuclear weapons contract with the Pentagon.

After spreading its control across continental North America, the U.S. set its sights overseas. From the annexation of Hawaii in 1898 to today's U.S.-backed wars for regime change across the Middle East, the imperialist U.S. war machine has the sole purpose of protecting the assets and interests of the ruling class — not the people and not the principles of "freedom" and "democracy." U.S. intervention only serves to destabilize entire areas of the globe and destroy the lives of the most vulnerable people in these regions.

The ongoing Syrian war is a classic example of U.S. intervention in a foreign nation — beginning with a covert CIA operation to back rebels attempting to overthrow the government and then casting that government in an unfavorable light to gain public support for that war. YAWR saw the need to respond forcefully to the recruitment events at Hopkins because it is clear that the CIA has no qualms about meddling in the affairs of other countries.

The ongoing attempts to secure U.S. world dominance affect the people here as well as those abroad. Hundreds of billions of dollars are siphoned away every year to fund the military, money that could pay teachers higher salaries, improve crumbling infrastructure and provide

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

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

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MAY DAY CALL TO ACTION

End the U.S. war on immigrants

By Teresa Gutierrez

As May Day approaches, migrants and refugees in the U.S. and around the world remain in a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. President Donald Trump's continued move to the right is exacerbating this situation.

In the U.S., raids at courthouses and workplaces have increased. The National Guard has been sent to the southern border to further militarize the area. The U.S. attorney general has strengthened repressive legal measures to terrorize immigrant workers and divide the working class.

Now more than ever, the struggles for migrant and refugee rights must be linked to the struggle against state police terror and to win workers' rights.

It is easy to turn away from the spectacle that is the Trump administration or to laugh Trump off as no more than a no-talent, orange clown in a cheap circus. But Trump is extremely dangerous. In league with an ultraright faction, he has made his administration into a militaristic, white supremacist regime.

This has disastrous consequences for the workers and oppressed everywhere. This must be fought tooth and nail.

Hardline racist agenda

This month, Trump once again decreed his anti-immigrant agenda through a series of "Easter tweets," in a nod to his white-supremacist "Christian nation" base. (CNN, April 5)

He called for new laws to make it even harder for immigrants to obtain refugee status. He acquired a whopping \$1.6 billion from a willing Congress to build his racist wall on the Mexican border — and demanded more. He asked right-wing governors to send their National Guard troops to the border. He also declared he would assign U.S. military troops to patrol there, though that action requires congressional approval by law.

To fan the flames against immigrants, Trump again stated that immigration policies "have weakened the country" and "led to public safety risks." (Washington

Post, April 3) But that racist rhetoric is really a smokescreen to confuse white workers about where the real assault on their wages, health and education is coming from.

For instance, the total estimated cost for Trump's white-supremacist wall would be about \$25 billion — money that could and should be earmarked instead for health care, teachers' salaries, and other needs of working and oppressed people.

The truth is that migration into the U.S. is at some of the lowest levels in years. The anti-immigrant climate that has grown since 2006 means fewer and fewer Mexican workers are coming into the U.S. while more are leaving to go back home.

In early April, Trump verbally targeted a caravan of migrants who were traveling from Central America through Mexico, aiming to reach the Tijuana border. Covered on Fox News with fear mongering rhetoric, the caravan was portrayed as a horde of dangerous criminals "snaking" and sneaking their way into the U.S.

Many such righteous caravans have made their way through Mexico for decades, as migrant rights advocates built support for the millions of displaced workers in the region. Every year, caravans travel throughout Mexico. They are not just for Central Americans but also for families in Mexico who have lost touch with their emigrating children or other relatives and are trying to find out what happened to them.

These families do not know if their loved ones made it into the U.S. or are in detention. Perhaps they lost their lives riding "La Bestia" (The Beast), the freight train that migrants jump on to make their way north, and where hundreds fall to their deaths or lose limbs in the attempt.

Trump specifically demonized a caravan organized by Pueblo Sin Fronteras (People Without Borders). Highlighting the concerns of Central Americans — many from Honduras, Guatemala or El Salvador — the caravan began with more than 1,000 people. The logistics of arranging transportation, food and accommodations on that scale shows the courage and determination of the movement for migrants in Mexico.

Growing U.S. militarization

Why are so many caravanning north? Not to do ill, as racists rant, but because U.S. militarism and imperialism have destabilized their homelands, destroyed their homes and taken away their livelihood. For example, Honduras has become the scene of widespread instability and repression since the 2009 coup, when the progressive regime of President Mel Zelaya was overturned. That illegal coup had U.S. fingerprints all over it, particularly those of then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

For Trump and his ilk to deny the racism they aim at these migrants is calculated hypocrisy. To deny political asylum to the hundreds of refugees forced to flee their region is not only wrong — it is a death sentence.

U.S. imperialism has militarized the beleaguered countries of Mexico and Central America, and now Trump aims to further militarize the U.S. border.

Los Angeles

Massive rallies in September 2017 defended immigrants, seen here in Los Angeles and

Houston.

WW PHOTOS:
MAGGIE VASCASSEN
GLORIA RUBAC



Houston



Not the northern border with Canada, of course, but the U.S. border with Mexico.

In the wake of Trump's call for troops at the border, conservative governors from Arizona and Texas deployed their National Guard units (Newsweek, April 7), although still at numbers lower than called out under both Republican President George W. Bush and Democrat President Barack Obama. Arizona deployed 150 members and Texas promised 250. The total from all border states is predicted to reach 4,000 eventually.

California Gov. Jerry Brown announced April 11 that he would send troops to the border. This is alarming, as the migrant rights movement has been very strong in California. That a so-called liberal governor felt the pressure to go along with reactionary governors shows the Trump anti-immigrant hype is gaining momentum. Brown's announcement is also an example of how the Democrats continue to sell out immigrants and their advocates.

Workplace raids increasing

Trump's summoning of the soldiers is meant to send a chill through migrants and activists alike. This follows other policies to terrorize the migrant and refugee community. On April 5, Trump issued a directive that U.S. immigration enforcement agencies cease any "catch and release" practices. In this degradingly nicknamed procedure, undocumented immigrants who had been arrested at the border were released while their cases were processed.

In addition, the Department of Justice, run by archracist Attorney General Jeff Sessions, will now set quotas for immigration judges in an effort to speed up deportations. According to National Public Radio, "to get a satisfactory rating on their performance evaluations, judges

will be required to clear at least 700 cases a year and to have fewer than 15 percent of their decisions overturned on appeal."

Immigration lawyers criticized the plan. "Decisions in immigration court have life-or-death consequences and cannot be managed like an assembly line," said Jeremy McKinney, secretary of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. (NPR, April 3)

Meanwhile, in what may be the biggest workplace raid under Trump's assault, 97 people were taken into custody and processed for deportation or detention on April 7, following an Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid at a Tennessee meat-processing plant.

This follows synchronized ICE raids at over 100 7-Eleven stores in early January. On one day alone, ICE agents stormed into 100 stores searching for undocumented workers. (Newsweek, Jan. 10)

The ICE acting executive associate director boasted at the time that they were just getting started: "It's not going to be limited to large companies or any particular industry, big, medium and small. ... This is what we're gearing up for this year, and what you're going to see more and more of."

Nowhere to go

Immigrants and refugees in the U.S. are living under a state of siege right now. Whether out shopping or going to religious services, whether in school, at court or at work, while driving or walking anywhere, migrants and their families are living in sheer terror. The risk of post-traumatic stress is real, especially among children of migrant families, with long-standing consequences.

Migrants are forced to leave their homelands and migrate into the U.S. because of intolerable conditions, resulting directly from U.S. imperialist militarism. Only by shutting down this country's predatory, racist system once and for all will this war on migrants end.

May Day 2018 must once again be dedicated to the struggle of migrants and refugees — whether they come from Honduras or Haiti, Syria or Somalia.

There are no borders in the workers' struggle!

Teresa Gutierrez is a longtime immigrant rights activist.

Continued from page 2

health care for the people. Instead, this money goes toward contracts such as the one the Department of Defense just gave Johns Hopkins to develop new military technology.

As police presence and surveillance are always higher in communities of color, and because the police are dangerous to these communities, people of color in this country are most directly impacted by the U.S. war machine, as are people of color abroad. Since the 1990s the government has been selling military grade surveillance equipment, automatic weapons and even armored vehicles to police departments across the country, including the Baltimore Police Department.

Youth Against War and Racism intends to keep the fire burning with a rally and march on May 5 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Catonsville 9. They were nine clergy members who at the height of the Vietnam War in 1968 burned draft cards with homemade napalm outside the draft board in Catonsville, Md. To commemorate the legacy of these anti-war activists and to commit to reigniting anti-imperialist sentiment among youth, young people will say, "No to racism, no to war, no to war on Syria, and no to U.S. imperialism!" □



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Oklahoma and the school strike surge

By Ben C. and Sara C.

The valiant fight of Oklahoma teachers and school staff for long overdue raises and education funding culminated in a nine-day walkout in April, with active support from working-class communities around the state.

The walkout was declared over on April 12 by the Oklahoma Education Association's executive board. The state American Federation of Teachers then held a conference call and polled their members.

By April 13, most districts expected teachers back to prepare for opening on Monday. Yet hundreds of teachers and supporters showed up at the Capitol to demonstrate. Over the weekend, the Oklahoma City AFT voted 64 percent to continue, leading that local to ask the large OKC district to keep schools closed on Monday. The district school management refused to support the teachers by closing schools, but the union sent a large delegation of members to the defiantly held Capitol rally.

Teachers statewide who are not ready to return to "business as usual" had varied reactions. Social media reflected determination by some not only to lobby with district permission, but to press the legislature by all means, including withholding their labor.

Some parent groups proposed boycotting the state tests and/or demonstrating even if schools are open. The Oklahoma Parent Teacher Association ran a Facebook poll April 12-13 asking: "Do YOU want to protest at the Capitol, in support of Oklahoma teachers, on Monday?" Some 84 percent of the 2,500 voters responded "Yes."

Referring to walk-out marches of 50,000 educators and supporters, Oklahoma City AFT member Jesse Jackson told Workers World he is "happy we finally got Oklahoma to do something on that scale!

Last May during the budget process, there were just 50 of us at the Capitol. ... Teachers don't have a lobby like the oil and gas interests do. The only thing that gets [legislators'] attention is the rank and file staying out. I'm glad we did it."

Jackson confirmed that "the same forces that stood against teachers are for private prisons — the fastest-growing industry in Oklahoma — and it ties in with

'New Jim Crow' mass incarceration and with Immigration [ICE] detaining migrant workers." He concluded, "Many are disappointed in what seems like an arbitrary ending. We want to keep the momentum going. ... We were able to get something, but the fight is never over."

Activist Camille Landry asserted that educators are "traditionally underpaid and undervalued because they are predominantly female." Thus, there was "absolutely" solidarity from women's organizations. In addition, "teachers at the legislature raised woman power among other intersections. Some talked about how school cuts hurt low-income, bilingual, immigrant and disabled students the hardest."

Landry told WW of others, beside teachers, who mobilized, including Teamsters construction workers who refused to cross picket lines to renovate the Capitol, and food bank volunteers who made meals or "backpacks full of snacks" for students. She said, "The community overall did a super job of feeding kids," noting that Oklahoma is one of the most "food insecure" states despite being an agricultural area. According to state data from 2017, more than 60 percent of Oklahoma students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches.

Many who participated in the walkout and rallies described being told last week that "we are done talking about education" by legislators who refuse to support further taxes to close the budget gap. They reported being falsely labeled as threatening by politicians and media, but expressed excitement that dozens of teachers, with union encouragement, have filed to run for office in November.

One creative approach by the rank and file in struggle was a seven-day, 110-mile march from Tulsa to Oklahoma City. Led at one point by a high school marching band and greeted along the road with cheers, food and help, this action enabled grassroots community supporters to express their solidarity.

Class lessons from the struggle

The education workers' struggle exposed how Oklahoma's governor and legislature serve Big Oil. Energy industry capitalists in this resource-rich, people-poor state pay mere single-digit taxes on gross production.

of a large stage, chanting and holding their signs aloft, stopping the band's music. While there were some negative responses, many in the crowd raised their fists in solidarity.

The long-awaited trial of the cop who killed a naked Anthony Hill, a young Air Force veteran suffering a mental breakdown outside his apartment, is scheduled to begin on April 23. Hill was shot by Robert Olsen on March 9, 2015. Olsen was finally indicted on multiple murder counts by a DeKalb County grand jury in January 2016.

Activists from the Black Lives Matter movement and disability community are mobilizing for a rally on April 21, and will pack the court for the motions hearing on April 23. □



PHOTO: BETTY EACRET WRIGHT

Marching into mass rally at Capitol building, April 9.

Oklahoma education funding has been cut to the bone since 2008, dropping almost 24 percent over six years. But under the state's anti-union "right-to-work" law, public workers, including teachers, are denied collective bargaining to fight back against assaults on wages, benefits, working conditions and the welfare of their students.

The recent walkout places education workers in direct conflict with powerful capitalist interests and shows the unreliability of politicians from both parties. What remains to be exposed in this struggle is that the heavy blow to education spending is due to runaway military spending and U.S. wars.

The growing wave of education strikes, plus widespread community support for these actions, is frightening big bosses across the country. An April 12 Guardian article revealed that the right-wing State Policy Network had just released a step-by-step guide on how corporate elites could damage popular support for the spreading teacher strikes. The SPN is an alliance of organizations that promote policies to weaken workers' power. (tinyurl.com/y8b2rvc8)

Billionaires such as the Koch brothers and U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos' family are among SPN's top financial and ideological backers.

Rank-and-file teachers and school workers in Oklahoma and elsewhere are building relationships, using social media and town meetings to discuss demands and plans. Collectively they are moving union leadership that's more focused on politicians into responding to the will of the membership and devoting resources to the fight against class enemies.

The Democratic Party is also attempting to divert the struggle away from rank-and-file militancy and into the ballot box. The effort to funnel actions by education workers and other social movements into a mobilization around the 2018 elections may be even greater than in years past.

Going forward, Oklahoma educators deserve solidarity to consolidate their gains, to make their unions more militant and to confront new efforts by right-wing politicians. Punitive legislative moves include a ballot proposal to reverse the tax increases that the struggle won, as well as anti-strike measures.

But given the historic and continuing stranglehold of big business, purely electoral struggle is not the answer. For education workers, keeping a focus on building independent social and worker power will be decisive.

Education workers' movement still growing

The Oklahoma actions, like those in West Virginia and Puerto Rico, are in-

spiring education workers in other localities, including Kentucky, Arizona, Colorado and Wisconsin.

Kentucky's governor, Matt Bevin, is a hedge fund owner who appointed hedge fund directors to the teachers' already insecure pension system. (tinyurl.com/yafnjup9) The Kentucky Education Association responded to Bevin's recent veto of school funding bills HB 200 and 366 by calling a Day of Action on April 13 in Frankfort, the capital.

Demands reflecting the rank-and-file #120Strong movement included restoration of funding for preschool through college education and protection of pensions. About 30 counties canceled school, citing either the need to "advocate for our students and public education" or "the high number of teacher and staff requests for sick leave." (tinyurl.com/y8ephy3v)

Some 10,000 school workers, students and supporters, including the Poor People's Campaign, chanted and cheered speakers outside the Capitol on April 13 and spoke their mind to legislators inside. By evening, KEA informed members that the governor's veto of school funding bills had been overridden, providing "much needed P-12 funding for the next biennium."

But the KEA acknowledged continuing "serious concerns" such as regressive taxation. Other legislation attempted to restore the earlier sneak attack on teachers' pension benefits, leaving them unresolved for current and future Kentucky teachers. (facebook.com/KEAmembers)

Teachers, school workers and community supporters in Arizona have launched the #RedforEd movement, an initiative of the rank-and-file-led Arizona Educators United. This movement is encouraging the Arizona Education Association to provide greater support for demands being put forward, including a 20 percent raise and the return of education state funding to its 2008 level.

Over 1,000 schools in Arizona held walk-ins April 11 — rallying outside before walking into schools — by teachers and school workers, who received broad community support. Two days later, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey — who had earlier called the teachers' organizing "political theater" — announced he would raise their salaries by 20 percent within two years. Education workers were skeptical of this vague promise backed by no commitment to funding sources. The #RedforEd movement is calling for action by teachers to keep up the pressure on politicians.

In Colorado, Englewood schools announced their closure on April 16, as education workers there said they would walk out and convene at the state legislature to rally for higher wages and in-

Continued on the next page

BLM blocks streets over police killings

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

A bold Black Lives Matter march took Atlanta's main downtown artery, Peachtree Street, on April 15 to demand justice for Stephon Clark, Saheed Vassel, Alton Sterling, Jamarion Robinson and Anthony Hill — to name just a few of those killed by police in Atlanta and across the country.

Protesters blocked intersections of this central thoroughfare on their way to Piedmont Park, where tens of thousands were gathered for the annual Dogwood Festival. The festival features an extensive array of arts and crafts booths and food vendors, as well as live performances.

The marchers moved directly in front

Albright not welcome in Brooklyn, N.Y.

By Milos Raickovich
Brooklyn, N.Y.

“War criminal! You belong in jail! Mass murderer! Fascist!” and “Fascist Albright, you can’t hide! We charge you with genocide!”

Protesters addressed these words loud and clear to Madeleine Albright, former secretary of state in the Clinton administration, during a speech she gave in Brooklyn, N.Y., on April 10. Albright was interrupted six times by six different protesters speaking truth to power and holding banners reading “Albright is a war criminal!”

Albright is promoting her new book, “Fascism: A Warning.” The promotion tour started on April 9 in Manhattan at a Barnes & Noble bookstore, where she was also confronted with the same accusing words. After Brooklyn, her tour continues to other major cities in the U.S. Albright is using her well-advertised national speaking tour to oppose Trump — but how? By promoting new U.S. wars and threatening Russia, China, Venezuela, Syria and Iran.

Albright’s appearance in Brooklyn, organized by the Community Bookstore, took place at the Congregation Beth Elohim in the affluent neighborhood of Park Slope. The event’s moderator, Brooke Gladstone of WNYC radio, displayed an unusually hostile attitude toward the



Sara Flounders of IAC calls out Madeleine Albright.

protesters, reflecting her so-called “public” station’s policy of suppressing anti-war voices.

The protest, called by the International Action Center on short notice, was attended by some two dozen activists — a lively, multigenerational and multinational group that included a number of City University students and professors. After picketing in front of the Community Bookstore, the group marched to the entrance of Beth Elohim, where they gave out flyers detailing Albright’s misdeeds. Many of the attendees — who paid \$32 for the ticket and the book — did not know some basic facts about her.

As secretary of state, Albright, who now poses as an opponent of the crimi-

nal Trump administration, has publicly defended policies that caused countless deaths and suffering around the globe, including the continuation of genocidal sanctions on Iraq that killed more than half a million children. Albright helped orchestrate sanctions and 78 days of bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, as well as promoted sanctions and threats against Iran and Korea.

Barry Lituchy, an adjunct assistant professor of history at Medgar Evers College, called the synagogue’s honoring of Albright “a despicable disgrace.” Lituchy added: “Albright orchestrated the break-up and bombing of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, employing fascist and terrorist forces who killed and tortured thousands

of men, women and children. Albright supported Franjo Tudjman in Croatia, a well-known racist, and Alija Izetbegovic in Bosnia, a man who had been in the political wing of the Bosnian Muslim SS (Handjar) Division during World War II.”

Lituchy’s 2006 book, “Jasenovac and the Holocaust in Yugoslavia,” deals with the genocides committed by Germany and Croatia in World War II. Lituchy added: “It is also outrageous that Albright should be posing as an anti-fascist and defender of free speech when she not only brought fascists to power, but was responsible for the murder of 16 journalists and staff at Radio-Television Serbia in 1999 when they had the temerity to report on the bombing of their country by Albright. When she doesn’t like what you have to say, she has you murdered. That’s her idea of free speech — free only for fascists like her.”

In 1999, three Chinese journalists who reported on the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia were killed when their room in the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was targeted by a U.S. missile.

The protests against war criminal Albright will continue, wherever she pops up, from Prague and Bratislava to cities across the U.S. Never forget! Stop the war!

For videos of the disruption, see tinyurl.com/ycrdcy9p. □

Week two of ‘Don’t Orchestrate Apartheid’

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

For the second time, demonstrators gathered outside the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia on April 12 to denounce plans by the city’s philharmonic orchestra to tour and perform in Israel this June. This time, people attending an evening concert were greeted with musicians outside playing protest songs while carrying a 40-foot-long scroll showing pictures, with the names and ages, of 31 Palestinians murdered by Israeli snipers just since March 30.

The Philadelphia Don’t Orchestrate Apartheid (PDOA) campaign is calling on the musicians to stop legitimizing Israeli oppression and apartheid against Palestinians. They see the planned tour as part

Continued from page 4

creased education funding by the state.

In **Milwaukee** — where workers and oppressed people have been suffering massive austerity attacks since 2011 by Gov. Scott Walker and the banks — the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association packed an April 10 school board meeting with hundreds of angry members, supporters, parents and students to fight back against severe cuts to city schools. Wide support is mounting for an April 24 picket to defend public schools. The MTEA will also be joining Voces de la Frontera’s May 1 mobilization, Day Without Latinxs and Immigrants, in Waukesha. (mtea.weac.org)

In **Los Angeles**, nonteaching staff, represented by Service Employees International Union Local 99, voted 94 percent for their bargaining team to call a strike if necessary.

All signs point to the wave of strikes and actions by education workers continuing and spreading.

The writers were part of a WWP Strike Support contingent on the ground in Oklahoma from April 1 to April 4.

of Brand Israel, the Israeli government’s propaganda strategy to use international artists and athletes to draw attention away from their oppression of Indigenous Palestinians.

The planned tour is especially abhorrent in light of Israeli snipers intentionally murdering and wounding thousands of unarmed Palestinian demonstrators taking part in the Great Return marches in Gaza. “For the Philly orchestra to participate in a foreign government’s propaganda campaign is not okay, particularly when Israel is committing war crimes as we speak,” said PDOA spokesperson Susan Abulhawa.

Other speakers at the demonstration included Abdul-Aliy Muhammad with the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative, Phil Gregory with Workers World Party, University of the Arts student Stephen Davies, Mike Wilson from Philly REAL Justice, and Kareema Abusaab with Philly Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions.

Ted Kelly, who played guitar and sang Bob Dylan’s “Masters of War,” described performing at the Kimmel Center as a young violinist. Kelly noted that the planned trip to Israel would tarnish the image of the city’s music community. “I was 17 when I performed here — the same



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Picket of concert to protest Israel’s murder of Palestinians.

age as some of those murdered last week in Gaza.” The rally, which included a candlelight vigil, ended with the reading of the names of the Gaza martyrs.

In an indication that PDOA’s campaign is being felt, a day after an April 6 demonstration that denounced the orchestra’s planned meeting with Israeli Minister of Culture and Sports Miri Regev, she was dropped from the itinerary. Regev has

made blatantly racist and offensive comments about African asylum seekers, as well as Palestinians.

However, a plan for orchestra members to tour an Israeli military base has been added to the orchestra’s schedule. This move is equally disgusting, considering the Israeli Defense Forces’ mass-scale, intentional shootings of unarmed Palestinians in Gaza. □

San Diego solidarity with Palestine

On April 14, a large crowd answered the call of the Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans and gathered in San Diego’s famous Balboa Park to rally and march in solidarity with the Transnational Great Return March in Occupied Palestine. Participating organizations included Southwest Asian/North African Alliance, Islamic Center, Khaled Bakrawi Center, Palestinian Youth Movement, Students for Justice in Palestine-UC San Diego, Unión del Barrio, Workers World Party and Answer-San Diego.

— Caption and photo by Bob McCubbin



FROM COAST

By Kathy Durkin

When the United States, Britain and France launched 107 missiles against Syria on April 14, an angry outcry followed in many countries, including anti-war protests in the U.S. The Trump administration claimed to be “punishing” President Bashar Assad’s government for allegedly using “chemical weapons” in Syria. But the truth is that the U.S. and its allies are smearing the Syrian leader as part of their long-range plan to oust him and assert imperialist control of the country.

In protest, hundreds of Syrians gathered at sites in Damascus, the capital, denouncing the Pentagon’s airstrikes and cheering their army’s defense system, which they said successfully shot down or derailed two-thirds of the missiles fired.

Solidarity with the Syrian people and outrage at the imperialists’ assault were expressed in many countries. Demonstrations took place in Jordan and Occupied Palestine. Hundreds from the Arab community marched with banners reading, “Hands off Syria!” to the U.S. Consulate in Haifa, Israel. Protests took place in Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey, and at the gates of the RAF Akrotiri, a British military base in Cyprus, and in Kolkata, India.

In Europe, protests were held in Berlin and Rome, while thousands, led by the Greek Communist Party, marched in Athens and picketed the U.S. Embassy, condemning the U.S. Among other actions, the Stop the War Coalition organized a rally in London on April 13 and in that city and Bristol on April 16, decrying their government’s complicity in the air strikes.

In Latin America, protests were held at U.S. embassies in Santiago, Chile, where some demonstrators were arrested, and in Mexico City, where people draped banners demanding rights for everyone, regardless of country of origin.

U.S. protesters: End all U.S. wars!

From coast-to-coast, activists took to the streets to proclaim “End U.S. Wars at Home and Abroad!” and demand that the Pentagon stop bombing Syria and end repression against Palestinians. A national coalition coordinated anti-war protests on April 14-15. Endorsers included Black Alliance for Peace, Coalition against U.S. Foreign Military Bases, Code Pink, International Action Center, U.S. Peace Council, United National Antiwar Coalition, United for Peace and Justice, Vets for

Peace, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Workers World Party and 300 other organizations.

The IAC’s press release explained the mobilization’s aims: to oppose intensified U.S. militarism in Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria; drone attacks; threats against north Korea, Iran and Venezuela; and the appointment to Trump’s administration of super-hawks Mike Pompeo and John Bolton. Other demands were to end racist police killings and fund jobs and social programs, not war.

The coalition condemned U.S. aid to Israel, oppressor of the Palestinian people. The government has not uttered one word of criticism about Israeli soldiers’ horrific shooting of unarmed Gazans protesting the blockade — showing once again that Washington supports Israeli atrocities against Palestinians.

Workers World activists sent in reports from the following cities.

BOSTON

Groups, including the Syrian American Forum, WWP-Boston, Answer Coalition-Boston, and the Boston Hands Off Syria Coalition, gathered at Park Street on April 12 to oppose threatened U.S. intervention. Following the missile attack on April 14, these same groups again mobilized, joined by the immigrants’ rights group Cosecha and anti-war veterans. The weekly Peace Vigil held by anti-war veteran organizations denounced the airstrikes. A rally at Roxbury’s Dudley Square transit station was followed by a march to Ruggles station in downtown Boston.

Event speakers denounced the continued imperialist destruction of the Middle



BOSTON

WW PHOTO: STEVE GILLIS

East, pointing to the U.S. devastation of Libya and the continued occupation of Iraq. They highlighted the wars’ effects inside the U.S., including the dismantling of social programs to fund the Pentagon’s budget and boost arms manufacturers’ profits. Syrian-Americans expressed their opposition to any U.S. intervention in their homeland. Many feared for their families there. A young Syrian woman recited her poem about the war.

— Sam Ordóñez

BUFFALO, N.Y.

An ad-hoc anti-war coalition with representation from various local groups and organizations demonstrated April 15 against U.S. wars at home and abroad, focusing on the bombing strikes in Syria. Protesters gathered at Niagara Square and marched to a rally at Naval Park. Speakers were from Black Lives Matter, Democratic Socialists of America, Green Party, IAC, WW, Buffalo Forum, Veterans for Peace, Friends of the Soviet People and local student groups.

— Garrett Dicembre

ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Sixty people held a press conference at a homeless shelter, then marched through downtown Rochester to the federal build-

ing to oppose U.S. wars at home and abroad on April 13. Protesters connected U.S. wars and the bloated military budget to the war against the poor at home. The House of Mercy homeless shelter, Peace Action and Education, and the IAC initiated the event. Other participating organizations included Veterans for Peace, Jewish Voice for Peace, Christians Witnessing for Palestine and Metro Justice.

— Gene Clancy

NEW YORK CITY

A multinational, multigenerational crowd of hundreds packed midtown Manhattan’s Herald Square on April 15 for a rally called as part of coordinated national actions. Speakers from nearly 40 organizations represented the range of nations targeted by U.S. imperialism, along with social justice, union, community, youth and antiwar groups in solidarity with all peoples under attack. Indigenous and Korean drumming punctuated the speeches and chants.

The rally was followed by a march to Trump Tower led by Syrian, Yemeni, Palestinian, Korean and Puerto Rican activists flying flags, drumming and chanting. A popular sign was: “They lied about Iraq; they lied about Libya; they’re lying about Syria!” Besides the many people of Middle Eastern origin who took part, the protest was well attended by Black and Latinx organizations fighting racism and attacks on immigrants, as well as veterans of the Vietnam antiwar movement and other progressives.

— Deirdre Griswold



BALTIMORE

WW PHOTO: STEVEN CECI



Syrian people defy U.S. missiles

Continued from page 1

the targeted buildings were complicit in chemical warfare and that they had been destroyed.

Syria reported that its Pharmaceutical and Chemical Industries Research Institute, which prepared the chemical components for cancer drugs, was destroyed in the attack and provided photos of the damaged building.

Following the attack, Trump declared, “Mission accomplished.” The last president to utter those words, George W. Bush, looked ridiculous for saying them in 2003. Soon after Bush’s comments, the U.S. conquest of Iraq devolved into a decade-long catastrophe for the Iraqis and a near debacle for the U.S. military.

Syrian government defenders say they shot down or diverted 71 of the 107 missiles. Three people were wounded. Syria said it used anti-aircraft weapons provided before 1991 by the Soviet Union, not

newer weapons from Russia.

Mattis said it was a one-time action and was over for now.

Democratic Party complicity

The president remains under strong assault from Democratic Party politicians and others in the state establishment investigating some of his crimes. Still, no major Democratic Party spokesperson called the attack the international war crime that it surely was. Rather, they cheered it on.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi joined the Republicans in the verbal assault on the Syrian government, then demanded in a tweet that the president ask Congress for a new authorization. She wrote, “One night of airstrikes is not a substitute for a clear, comprehensive Syria strategy.” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said on Twitter that “a pinpointed, limited action to punish and

hopefully deter Assad from doing this again is appropriate.”

Only Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawai’i reflected some of the fears of many people: “President Trump has ... escalated our illegal regime change war to overthrow the Syrian government. This escalation is shortsighted and will lead to more dead civilians, more refugees, the strengthening of al-Qaida and other terrorists, and a direct confrontation between the United States and Russia — which could lead to nuclear war.” (gabbard.house.gov)

While the manner in which the strike was carried out avoided an immediate escalation, neither the Pentagon generals nor the Democratic Party leadership can be relied on to prevent a wider war. Nor have any of the forces that make up the U.S. imperialist establishment taken any real interest in defending the people of Syria, despite their crocodile tears about the alleged use of chemical weapons.

The U.S. is a prime user of chemical weapons in warfare. One need only point out that, over a decade, the U.S. dumped 13 million gallons of Agent Orange on Vietnam, denuding the forests and poisoning the population. Even now, 43 years after the end of that U.S. war of aggression, the Vietnamese are still dying and carrying defective genes from this poisoning, along with U.S. war veterans. The hypocrisy on this issue by Washington and other imperialist capitals joins the other big lies used to justify aggression.

Trump, May, Macron under fire

The three imperialist leaders who signed on to the latest war crime are themselves fighting for their political lives at home. Trump faces possible criminal charges and persistent scandals. Teresa May’s Conservative Party in Britain shows a minority in the polls. Emmanuel Macron faces a determined public-sector working class fighting



ROCHESTER, N.Y.

ROCHESTER WW PHOTO: LYDIA BAYONETA BAY AREA WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY, DURHAM PHOTO: STEPHANIE LORMAND

PHILADELPHIA

Some 100 people rallied outside City Hall on April 14 to demonstrate against the U.S. attack on Syria. Then they marched past the French and British consulates to protest those governments' participation in the airstrikes. Speakers and chants identified the attacks as an extension of racist violence against people of color at home and internationally. By uniting activists from many communities, the event demonstrated that solidarity between political movements is essential to building a strong anti-imperialist coalition. Onlookers responded positively to the activists' message, showing the unpopularity of imperialist war.

Endorsers included the IAC, REAL Justice, Black and Brown Workers Collective, WWP, Temple University Students for Justice in Palestine, Comité Boricua Filadelfia-Camden, Philadelphia South Asian Collective, Organizing Committee for a Maoist Communist Party, Party for Socialism and Liberation, South Jersey Revolutionary Collective, and Philly Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions.

— Stephen Davies

BALTIMORE

Demonstrators, mostly young, came out in response to an emergency call put out by the newly formed group Youth Against War and Racism, WWP and the Peoples Power Assembly to protest imperialist military action against Syria on April 14. The protest was spirited, with folks chanting, "1, 2, 3, 4, We don't want your racist wars! 5, 6, 7, 8, Stop the kill-

ing, stop the hate!" "No justice, no peace!" and "U.S. out of the Middle East."

Mekdes, a young woman of Ethiopian descent, emphasized that money being spent by the U.S. to bomb countries in which people of color live, killing and maiming innocent civilians, should instead be spent at home to provide education and health care. While folks were chanting against the bombing and calling for the end of U.S. imperialism, many passersby beeped their horns or gave thumbs-up to show their support.

— Steven Ceci

DURHAM, N.C.

An emergency downtown rally of 100 demonstrators April 15 protested the airstrikes on Syria and the massacre of Palestinians in Gaza. They and passersby cried out, "Free Palestine" and "From Syria to Palestine, occupation is a crime!" Speakers from anti-imperialist groups included WWP member Qasina, who read a poem by June Jordan, "Apologies to All the People in Lebanon." Stressing that these wars mean less funding for needed programs at home, community organizer Raul said, "All the money that can be used for us is gone; we are all affected by this."

Participating organizations included WWP's Durham branch, Muslims for Social Justice, Duke Students for Justice in Palestine, Triangle Area Green Party, Triangle Veterans for Peace, Triangle NC PSL, Answer Coalition and NCSU Young DSA.

— Enzo Niebuhr

ATLANTA

The plaza of Little 5 Points was decorated with dozens of banners and signs bringing a message of "No U.S. war at home and abroad" to the popular shopping district on April 14. On all four corners of the busy intersection, demonstrators held placards denouncing the attack on Syria and hostile threats against People's Korea and Venezuela. Support for Palestine; demands for housing, health care, jobs and education; and declarations of solidarity with immigrants and the Black Lives Matter movement were plentiful.

Passing pedestrians and drivers honked and waved at the sight of the anti-war message. Rally speakers included representatives of Black Alliance for Peace, Black Lives Matter, Jewish Voice for Peace, SOAWatch, Vets for Peace — as well as an undocumented youth, an anti-fascist organizer and a housing activist. The Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition and the IAC's Atlanta chapter organized the rally.

— Dianne Mathiowetz

HOUSTON

Outraged demonstrators protested at the busiest intersection in Houston April 14. They held signs and banners demanding, "U.S. Out of Syria and the Middle East." For more than two hours, they chanted over the sound system, attracting the attention of thousands of drivers and their passengers. Many honked their horns in support and shouted thanks to protesters. Participants included the Na-

TO COAST

BAY AREA, CALIF.



DURHAM, N.C.

tional Domestic Workers Alliance, Fe y Justicia Workers Center, the Brown Berets de TejAzatlan, WWP, Houston Socialist Movement and Socialist Alternative.

— Gloria Rubac

SALT LAKE CITY

The Students for a Democratic Society chapter at the University of Utah held a rally in front of the federal building in Salt Lake City on April 15 to demand "No war on Syria." Speakers included representatives from SDS, WWP, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Utah Against Police Brutality and Teamsters Local 222.

— Joanna Straughn

LOS ANGELES

Hundreds of demonstrators carried Syrian flags and placards demanding an end to the war on Syria and calling President Trump a war criminal at a march and rally April 14, which began at Pershing Square in downtown Los Angeles. The event was led by Arab Americans for Syria, and various anti-war and social justice organizations participated, including the IAC, Hands off Syria Coalition, Union del Barrio, Answer Coalition, and Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador.

— John Parker

BAY AREA, CALIF.

Over 600 people demonstrated on April 15. The spirited crowd, representing the diversity in the Bay Area, rallied first at the Lake Merritt Amphitheater. Meagan Whelan, chairperson of GABRIELA Oakland, emceed that rally. Speakers included Chairman Fred Hampton Jr., the Prisoners of Conscience Committee; Pierre Labosierre, Haiti Action Committee; Lara Kiswani, Arab Resource and Organizing Center; Io Sunwoo, Hella Organized Bay Area Koreans; and Gerry Condon, president, board of directors, Veterans for Peace.

Calpulli Huey Papatlotl, a cultural Nahuatl circle and dance group, led the

march to Oscar Grant Plaza where another rally was held, emceed by Kim Serrano of Speak Out Now. Speakers and artists included Cat Brooks of the Anti Police-Terror Project; Francisco Herrera, Miguel Govea, Chris Nauman and Friends group; Trabajo Cultural Caminante; Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist; Judy Greenspan, WWP; Rhonda Romiro, vice-chair, BAYAN USA; Jeff Mackler, UNAC; Nidia Quintero, leader of FENSUAGRO of Colombia; and Richard Becker, PSL.

— Terri Kay

PORTLAND, ORE.

Over 50 people rallied at Portland's waterfront park to protest the bombing of Syria and say, "Stop U.S. wars of aggression." Speakers addressed the U.S. media's lies and propaganda about Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, north Korea, Venezuela and Honduras. Those who traveled from WWP's Federal Way, Wash., branch waved large flags as each of the speakers addressed the crowd.

The International League of Peoples' Struggle, Portland Central American Solidarity Committee and the May 1 Coalition were among the many groups that spoke and denounced U.S. imperialism. WWP-Portland called and sponsored the event.

— Lyn Neeley



SALT LAKE CITY

PHOTO: GABRIELLA KILLPAK

for its life in France.

Many in the U.S. believe Trump was only too ready to look tough by making a military move in order to distract from his own scandals. That May and Macron were ready to ally with the unpredictable U.S. president exposed them as toadies running second-rate imperialist powers, accepting crumbs from the master's table. They deserve any anger they may face in their own countries.

In the U.S., protests took place in dozens of cities against this latest move toward a wider war. Similar actions took place in other parts of the world. The exposed criminal actions of these imperialist gangsters make it possible and necessary to build the kind of fighting movement that can stop them. Here in the U.S., this movement must be independent of the Democratic Party, whose leaders are just as war-prone as the Republicans and Trump. □



HOUSTON

NEW YORK CITY WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN; HOUSTON WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC



NEW YORK CITY

Syrian trade unions appeal for solidarity

The following appeal was issued by the Executive Bureau of the General Federation of Trade Unions of the Syrian Arab Republic right before the U.S. bombing of Damascus.

Dear comrades, brothers and sisters,

The United States and its followers from European countries, such as France, Britain and their proxies in the region such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and others, have been staging provocations against Syria to carry out their agendas on Syrian territory since their terrorist war against Syria began eight years ago.

These days we are witnessing the fabrication of alleged evidence, the latest example of which is the fabricated fiction of the Eastern Ghouta hit by chemical weapons used by the Syrian Arab Army. These colonial powers have always used the U.N. Security Council and its instruments to strike sovereign states by using illusory and fabricated pretexts to achieve their goals, such as the famous fiction of Colin Powell in the U.N. Security Council used to strike Iraq.

The chemical fiction was staged in Douma when the terrorists experienced the victories of the Syrian Arab Army that liberated eastern Ghouta, which contributed to the safety and tranquility of the people of Damascus, who had suffered a lot from the terrorists raining the capital, Damascus, with dozens of missiles and rockets.

The more the Syrian Arab Army achieves victories on the ground, the more the terrorists urge their paymasters to save them, as happened when they fabricated

the chemical incident in Khan Sheikhoun.

This time, U.S. President Trump, French President Macron, and British Prime Minister May accuse the Syrian government of using chemical weapons in Douma on the basis of evidence and fabricated false videos of the so-called White Helmets, who are the medical wing of the fascist terrorists Al-Nusra in Syria.

They have held meetings of the U.N. Security Council in order to issue resolutions to strike the only legitimate Syrian government, one that fights terrorism in the world, despite the assertion of a member state in the Security Council, Russia, that the Douma area was free of any chemical traces after the Russian experts entered Damascus, refuting their claims.

The Syrian government has asked the experts of the International Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to enter and verify the incident, but Trump and his assistants from European and Gulf Arab countries blocked their ears and decided to proceed with their lies and threats.

We at the General Union of Trade Unions in Syria declare our stand with our Syrian government and Syrian Arab Army under the leadership of President Bashar al-Assad, alongside whom we have faced terrorism and its sponsors for eight years. We affirm that we are confident of victory. These American and Eu-



ropean threats constitute a flagrant violation of the U.N. Charter.

We call upon all honorable people from the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions and all Arab and international organizations to speed up the campaign of defending Syria by sending messages of solidarity and support to Syria and organizing marches and sit-ins in front of the American embassies in the world, condemning this blatant American aggression, to save the world from

Trump's ruthlessness.

We ask you to send letters to officials of the United Nations and the United States of America, stressing that the American president will lead to a new world war that will drag the whole world to further chaos, destruction and poverty and increase the number of refugees from the wars waged by the United States against sovereign states in the world.

Long live the Syrian people in their war against terrorism! Long live international solidarity with Syria! □

From Damascus

Syrians react to threats to bomb their country

The following article, published in the German daily newspaper Junge Welt on April 12, was translated by Workers World managing editor John Catalinotto.

Karin Leukefeld
Damascus, Syria

The night before April 12 was calm. An expected attack by the U.S. Armed Forces and their allies on Syria had not yet taken place. But many people in Damascus and across the country expect that the hos-

tile and threatening language of Western government leaders — as spouted by President Donald Trump — and their diplomats on the United Nations Security Council, will be followed by missiles, bombs and destruction.

"They have already published lists of targets they want to attack," Nabil M., a

retired agricultural engineer, told us. His neighbor Hussam, who formerly worked for Mercedes-Benz in Syria, assumes that the U.S. Armed Forces "could bomb telecommunications, Syrian television, the presidential palace, ministries, bridges and military installations" in and around Damascus.

Hussam, shrugging his shoulders in response to the comment that most of the targets he named are civilian institutions whose bombing is prohibited under international law, said: "What did they do in Mosul in Iraq, in Deir ez-Zor and in Rakka here? The United States Army has no regard for international law."

Heike W. is a businesswoman from Germany who has lived in Syria for more than 30 years. She says that an imminent war will be "an American-Russian confrontation," located in Syria. This is international, she stresses, and is about controlling trade routes and resources, pointing out that China's New Silk Road project challenges the West. Heike is convinced that "the U.S. and the other Western powers will not permit this region to be outside their control."

Opponents of the Syrian government do not talk about it, but may silently hope that an attack by the West could "cut the head off" the Assad regime they hate. Others, however, shake their heads and fear further destruction and an extension of war and chaos.

The Syrian military, government and president are on alert, although the details [of their plans] are unknown. On April 12, Foreign Ministers Walid Muallem and Ali Akbar Welajati met in Damascus to discuss closer cooperation between Syria and Iran. Welajati is the foreign policy adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's religious leader.

Israeli missiles kill 14 on Syrian base

At least four Iranian soldiers [and 10 other people] were killed in an Israeli attack on a Syrian military base in Palmyra in Homs province on April 10. Israel's fighter jets attacked the base from Lebanese airspace, in violation of international law. Syrian air defense systems destroyed six of the eight missiles fired by Israeli fighter jets.

The Israeli Security Cabinet met on April 12 to discuss the situation in Syria and possible Western military operations against the country. Cabinet members said Israel should be as much a part of a joint Western attack as Saudi Arabia.

Germany is likely to have already marked and documented possible targets, using its reconnaissance Tornado aircraft and AWACS surveillance aircraft under the U.S.-led "anti-IS alliance." Syria is like an open book to NATO monitors.

A Syrian government representative in Aleppo, who wants to remain anonymous, expressed incomprehension about the German government's attitude in an interview with Junge Welt. He said that Germany is a beacon culturally and economically — and in giving humanitarian aid. But in the Middle East, he emphasized, Berlin follows the U.S. and Israel.

The economic sanctions against Syria, the official said, harmed not only the Syrians, but also the German economy. Yet German leaders are sowing hostility towards Syria. He asks: "What do they want from us? You want my table, my jacket? I can give them both if they need them. As far as I have heard, the German population does not want war, not even in Syria. Why does the German government do the opposite of what the people want?" □

Poor People's Campaign: Building for action

By Anne Pruden
New York

Over a hundred people showed up to discuss and work on the growing Poor People's Campaign on April 7 at Harlem's Union Theological Center. A flier describing the PPC said, "50 years later, don't just commemorate Dr. King's work ... complete it," referring to the assassination of activist for social and economic justice, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in April 1968.

The Poor People's Campaign focuses on three key demands of Dr. King — ending systemic racism, poverty and the war economy — while adding a call against ecological devastation. The PPC is launching 40 days of action this spring, from May 12 to June 21.

The April 7 Harlem session focused on nonviolent direct action training. The May actions will include civil disobedience and direct action meant to confront racism and other forms of discrimina-



tion, poverty, militarism and assaults on the environment.

The Poor People's Campaign is co-chaired by the Rev. Dr. William Barber and the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis. Local sponsors for the meeting were the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State, Repairers of the Breach and the Kairos Center.

For more information:
poorpeoplescampaign.org.

'On the March' toward a new May '68?

By Rémy Herrera
Paris

April 13 — President Emmanuel Macron is right: “France is back!” But not postcard France — angry France! Its anger broods at the foundation of French society and has its reasons, plenty of them. There is no need to review them all; one article would not be enough.

But one factor dominates all others: for decades, the continued, stubborn pursuit of neoliberal policies has torn apart the social fabric, impoverished the working class, made jobs more precarious, compressed wages, thrown masses of people out of work, shredded ties of solidarity, sharpened selfishness, glorified the despicable values of capitalism, promoted the crude reflexes of consumerism and promoted an attitude of submission.

And we would expect the people not to react?

Appointed by Macron, the current government, led by Prime Minister Édouard Philippe, supposedly “neither right nor left” (but then what? “extreme-center”?) has eliminated the tax on extreme wealth and increased fees paid by employees and retirees. He has offered astronomi-

cal grants to transnational corporations that lay people off, but compressed public service budgets. Day-by-day, drop-by-drop, he pushes the country toward a Europe that is anti-social, authoritarian and subordinate to U.S. hegemony.

Although Macron has a parliamentary majority under his total control, he is pushing through his employer-dictated program by a parliamentary maneuver that enacts a bill without a vote. Such ordinances bypass the deputies even of his own new party, La République en Marche (On the March). Macron also has announced new privatizations, as if neoliberalism had not long proven its universal failure.

This is why a revolt is growing in France.

The backdrop to the rising conflicts lies in defeats suffered by workers in recent years. One was the fight against pension “reform,” which the disunited unions lost in 2010. Then came the fight against labor law “reform,” which started out as the “Macron law” and then was renamed the “El Khomri law,” which likewise lost last year. [El Khomri was minister of labor in the last Hollande government.] This battle to defend the rights and interests of workers was led by the CGT (General Confederation of

Labor) until late 2017.

Because it fought alone, or almost alone, the CGT could not prevail, especially since some of its leaders are less than combative. The unions had to resist the repression directed at these struggles. This repression extended to the “criminalization” of such trade union actions as the “sequestration of executives” at Good-year, the “tearing of executives’ shirts” at Air France, and resistance at Peugeot and in other companies where activists have been discriminated against and even condemned to suspended prison sentences.

This is why struggle is intensifying.

For the moment, these struggles are scattered: railway workers’ strikes (currently two days out of five, until June), Carrefour retail store staff (April 13), Air France (March 30), education and research (March 10), territorial medical and social services (Feb. 14), hospitals (Jan. 31), institutions serving the elderly (Jan. 30) and postal workers (Jan. 9). In addition, workers in social service organizations, the gas and electricity company, the chemical and oil sectors, the civil service. ...

Even temporary workers were able to lead strikes — which is unprecedented — including those in fast food outlets and

Afro hairdressing salons. In no particular order, the unemployed, homeless, undocumented, retirees, pacifists, anti-fascists, ecologists and other activists have also protested.

All over France on March 22, nearly half a million protesters were in the streets for a big day of action against the “Macron reforms.”

For weeks, students have been mobilizing. Many of them oppose the government’s education “plan” to make university entrance more selective. They have totally blocked several university centers, including those at Paris 1 (Tolbiac), Paris 8 (Saint-Denis), Montpellier and Toulouse. The authorities responded to the student uprising by sending in the CRS national police brigades on April 9 to club young rebels on the Nanterre campus!

The university at Nanterre is where the May 1968 revolt began. At the entrance to one of the occupied universities, one can read this banner: “May ‘68, were they afraid? 2018, we will make them more so!”

Herrera is a Marxist economist, a researcher at the Centre National Recherche Scientifique, who works at the Centre d’Économie de la Sorbonne, Paris. WW staff translated.



By Christian Noakes

The year 1968 was one of great turmoil and unrest. It was a time when revolution seemed to be bubbling up in countries all around the world. Giving thorough attention to all the events of that explosive year and what lessons they might offer us today would take a great deal of time and ink. As such, the following takes just a brief look back at a single event to consider some of the lessons it may offer us today.

The May ‘68 movement in France, although short-lived, was a radical reimagining of the potentially revolutionary role of students, and their relation to the working class and capitalist society as a whole. By effectively bringing France to a halt, students and workers showed a new, more humanistic world is possible. Fundamentally anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, the actions of the masses temporarily neutralized the paternalistic state power of the regime led by President Charles de Gaulle and suggested what a truly democratic and anti-imperialist France might look like.

The movement began at Nanterre — a U.S.-style university that was characterized by increased competition and decreased leisure and intellectual exploration, features that had long characterized the country’s intellectual culture. Being in an industrial, working-class neighborhood, students attended classes amid factories and rubbed shoulders with workers on the streets. The combination of business or factory-oriented education and the bleak surroundings of capitalist exploitation sparked widespread discontent among the students. It was not just the university’s atmosphere and practices, but also capitalist society and culture — which they saw as the root problem — that the students sought to overthrow.

On May 2, after months of unrest and organizing, students seized control of the university’s loudspeaker and occupied a lecture hall as they played the “Internationale” overhead. In response to the disruption, the dean closed the university. This was followed the next day by a mass meeting at another Parisian university — the Sorbonne — which was attacked by the police. As the students and police clashed, it was decided to shut the Sorbonne down as well.

Police occupied the campus, which galvanized large numbers of students to take direct action. Barricades were erected using overturned cars, newspaper stands, cobblestones and anything else with which they could improvise. In the struggles of the following days, students would take control of the Sorbonne and the Latin Quarter of the city.

Residents provided support for the insurrection in the form of food, blankets and enthusiasm. When the Sorbonne was reopened, students claimed it for the people, and worker-student action committees were set up to coordinate the daily operations of the revolution.

The General Confederation of Workers (CGT) called for a one-day general strike and demonstration with the students on May 13. To many, this did not go far enough. Moved by the militancy of the students, over 100,000 workers went on strike and occupied 13 different factories throughout the country within a matter of days. First to be occupied was Sud Aviation — the manufacturer of the Caravelle jetliner.

The scale of the strike continued to grow as more workers from across the country stopped operations and took control of their places of work. This nationwide wildcat strike remains one of the largest in world history. At its height,

The struggle continues

more than 50 factories were occupied and 10 million workers from virtually all industries were on strike in both urban and rural areas. This action included many of the 2 million immigrant workers in France at the time, whose lot was even worse than that of the workers born in France. Belgian and German train conductors also participated by stopping their trains at the border with France. It stands as a modern testament to the power of worker militancy and solidarity.

As the recent revolt on the part of both students and workers in France attests, the revolutionary movement of 1968 failed to overthrow the capitalist order. Through time and concessions, the masses slowly filed back to work, and police took back control of the Sorbonne on June 16. The issue of time highlights the need for political power to be seized in order to maintain a general strike. With reformist Communist Party and union leaders who were not only ill-prepared but fearful of the consequences should the workers attempt to seize power, their hesitations gave opportunity for the bourgeoisie to reassert power.

De Gaulle called for elections, which, as Workers World Party founder Sam Marcy pointed out at the time, was “merely a maneuver calculated to divert the attention of the masses and make them oblivious to the fact that they already [had] power in their hands and [to] oblige them to transfer it back to the bourgeoisie.” (Workers World, June 6, 1968)

While De Gaulle managed to divert power away from direct democracy and back to bourgeois representative or illusory democracy, the masses succeeded in showing working people all around the world a glimpse of their true collective power. The events of May ‘68 stand as a historical testament to the revolutionary potential of people when they stand together to reject the divisions on which capitalism relies — be they racial, national, intellectual-physical or urban-rural.

Neoliberalization of the university

It shouldn’t be hard for students in the U.S. to identify with the students at Nanterre. Within the belly of the beast

from which they revolted, our universities have become laboratories for neoliberalism and austerity. Intellectual rigor and exploration have, in many places, been overrun by the business model of education. The increasing cost of tuition and the lack of funding are insults when one considers the lucrative business operations in which many universities take part. Our schools have become effective partners in gentrification — weapons of displacement. Students are not immune from the consumer-based urban development. They feel acutely the strain of affordability and the pains of homelessness. (NPR, April 3)

All of this is, of course, exacerbated by the student debt industry. A college education is no longer a one-way ticket to upward mobility. In many cases, students are lucky if they can maintain the class standings of their parents.

The necessity of taking out loans for working-class and middle-class students has created a generation with little to their name other than debt. Where many gain in status through their degrees, the predominant pattern is that cultural capital is not easily converted into economic mobility — or stability, for that matter. The condition of students in the U.S. today mirrors the condition of students in Paris in 1968 and the precarious condition of the working class more generally.

As one student committee proclaimed shortly after the occupation of the Sorbonne: “We are no longer assured of our future role as exploiters. This is the origin of our revolutionary force. We must not let it slip away. ... The student has become the ‘proletarian’ of the bourgeoisie, and the worker, the ‘bourgeois’ of the underdeveloped world.” (Quoted in “When Poetry Ruled the Streets” by Andrew Feenberg and Jim Freedman.)

We must utilize the instability and exploitation foisted on us by the system as a basis for solidarity and revolutionary action. The conditions of existence under capitalism must be made a unifying force to undermine bourgeois culture and society. In the spirit of ‘68, the struggle continues. Long live the revolution! □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Trump and the neocons

Just hours before he ordered the missile strikes on Damascus on April 13, President Trump granted a pardon to Lewis “Scooter” Libby. It was a signal to all those in his administration now complicit in war crimes that Trump has their backs.

Libby never served time, but was convicted of a complicated scheme involving the neocons in the George Bush/Dick Cheney administration. While anti-war protests were erupting in hundreds of U.S. cities and around the world over the invasion and occupation of Iraq, Libby attempted to discredit a former U.S. deputy chief of mission to Iraq, Joseph Wilson, who had written an op-ed in the New York Times debunking Bush’s claim that the Saddam Hussein government had amassed uranium for “weapons of mass destruction.”

But Libby’s plan backfired. He was convicted by a D.C. jury in 2007 of obstruction of justice and perjury and sentenced to 30 months in jail. Bush then commuted Libby’s sentence, but refused to pardon him, angering Cheney and the rest of the Iraq war hawks. Now Trump has exonerated this pro-war fanatic.

Another extreme hawk from the Bush White House now in Trump’s favor is John Bolton, who wants to expand the war into Iran.

During his 2016 campaign, Boss Trump carried favor with voters, but angered the neocons by calling the trillions spent on the Iraqi occupation a “waste.” He proposed instead that the Pentagon should just have seized all Iraqi oil wells and allowed Big Oil to extract Iraq’s petroleum — bluntly revealing what the war was really all about.

Once elected, Trump openly toyed with the idea of replacing all the occupying U.S. troops in Afghanistan with mercenaries to guard the properties of U.S. mineral corporations, while they robbed the wealth of one of the poorest countries on the planet.

But now Gangster Trump, under siege from a large portion of Wall Street and the media, has decided to enlist the support of the neocon faction so intent on regime change in Syria, Iran and Yemen. So on March 29, Trump made Bolton his new national security advisor. And on April 13, just hours before launching more than a hundred missiles on Syria, Trump pardoned Scooter Libby.

Of course, just as in the Iraq war, the Trump regime’s pretext for its attack was the charge that Syria possessed and used “weapons of mass destruction” — in this case, chemical weapons. And just as in the Iraq war, this is a complete fabrication. Why would the Syrian government want to attack a “rebel” sector when they already had an agreement in hand that these U.S.-supported rebels would withdraw from the area?

One key difference between the Trump attack and the Iraq invasion is that this time the U.S. made sure to launch its missiles just before an international inspection team, welcomed by the Syrian government, was due to arrive in Damascus to uncover the truth.

The corporate media and Democratic Party politicians have been bashing Trump daily — but not for carrying out military aggression without the smallest shred of legality, or for asserting the im-

perialists’ “right” of regime change. No, their chorus is that Trump is colluding with the Russians. Almost all have fallen in line behind the Syria attack and don’t even question the chemical weapons claim. Instead, they dutifully repeat ad nauseam the “evidence” of Syria’s chemical weapons, just as they headlined the “evidence” for Iraq’s nonexistent nuclear arsenal.

While some may caution against “deeper involvement” and call for “legislative approval,” the big business media and politicians stand united against the right of the Syrian people to determine their own leadership and government.

And while screaming about civilian casualties in Syria, they stand by in stony silence as thousands of unarmed Palestinians, including children, are shot and teargassed protesting against the Israeli fence that imprisons them in Gaza.

The rift between the Trump regime and the “liberal” capitalist faction may afford some openings for genuine struggle against imperialism and racism. But in general the working class must strive to win its independence from both sides and struggle against the entire capitalist establishment. U.S. imperialist wars have killed, wounded and displaced millions of poor people around the globe, killing and wounding thousands of U.S. soldiers and depressing the wages of millions of workers here and abroad — even as health care, pensions and education are all on the chopping block, while the banks, weapons makers and Wall Street rake in huge profits.

Stop the war against Syria! U.S. out of the Middle East!

WINNIE MADIKIZELA-MANDELA (1936-2018)

This commentary was posted April 2 and downloaded from Prison Radio.

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

She was born in 1936 and named Nomzamo Winifred Madikizela, but the world would come to know this South African beauty as Winnie Mandela, the wife of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela.

Their lives, their struggles for freedom, dignity and liberation from the racist ignominy known as apartheid, filled most of the 20th century. He, Nelson, labored under the harsh apartheid sun, breaking rocks in the prison yard while she, Winnie, labored under the white state’s total surveillance, while she raised their children.

While not widely known, her suffering included not only separation from her husband, but the cruel legality called “banning,” or South African censorship, that outlawed her speech — not allowing her to quote her husband’s words.

Winnie, a lifelong rebel, ignored such law and proudly quoted Nelson, and she suffered her own imprisonment as well. She was banished to Bloemfontein, a white Afrikaner district, where the only Blacks she saw were servants or cooks for white families.

She continued to resist the racist government. The African National Congress was banned, and she wore the ANC colors

Solidarity between French and U.S. workers!



French rail workers on strike.

Message to striking French workers from Workers World Party (U.S.), translated and distributed to the unions through the PRCF (French communists).

Workers World Party in the United States wants to express its great admiration and total solidarity for the current struggle of French workers against their government’s intention to destroy gains French workers have won over decades of protests and mass movements, through the imposition of austerity and the laying off of 120,000 public service employees.

While workers in France do have a constitutional right to strike, the administration of the former Rothschild banker Emmanuel Macron and his prime minister Edouard Philippe have made it clear that they do not intend to bargain. They intend to break the railroad unions: the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), National Union of Autonomous Trade Unions (UNSA), French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) and SUD-Rail. In that process, they also want to sweep away unions representing sanitation and sewerage workers (éboueurs et égoutiers), the employees of Air France

and Electricity of France, and students whose status is being challenged.

Workers in the U.S., especially teachers and other workers in education, have been confronting austerity for decades. Teaching in the U.S. is a high-skill, low-pay job. In most states, teachers do not have the legal right to strike and to bargain collectively. U.S. public sector workers and their unions are increasingly under attack.

But a successful, albeit illegal, statewide education strike in West Virginia and ongoing teacher walkouts in Oklahoma and Kentucky, indicate a rising sentiment against government-imposed austerity in the U.S.

There is an objective basis for solidarity between French and U.S. workers in the current struggles against austerity and for higher wages, better pensions and better working conditions.

Long live the solidarity between French and U.S. workers! On to final victory!

Workers World Party, USA
April 2018



Winnie Mandela in Brandtford, 1976, where she was banished by the South African apartheid government

as a headdress.

And when, after Nelson’s freedom, the marriage ended, she remained a powerful presence in South African life, loved by the nation’s poor and dispossessed. For they knew, in their heart of hearts, that their struggle was her struggle.

In her 1984 book, “Part of My Soul Went with Him,” Winnie Mandela wrote: “I have ceased a long time ago to exist as an individual. The ideals, the political goals that I stand for, these are the ideals and goals of the people in this country.

They cannot just forget their own ideals. My private self doesn’t exist. Whatever they do to me, they do to the people of this country.”

Several years ago, when Nelson was being laid to rest, his third wife, Graca Machel Mandela, slumped in grief, was given a hug and a kiss to console her by his second wife, Winnie.

Nomzamo Winnie Mandela Madikizela, a class act to the very end and a lifelong revolutionary.

Amandla!

Puerto Rico Teachers Federation: 'a fighting instrument'

The Puerto Rico Teachers Federation (FMPR) held a successful one-day strike March 19 against legislative attacks on teachers and students. FMPR has been in the vanguard of the class struggle for decades. The FMPR is working tirelessly to provide hurricane relief in the absence of U.S. government assistance.

On April 8, FMPR President Mercedes Martínez addressed the 3,000-plus unionists and activists attending the Labor Notes conference in Chicago. Workers World contributing editor Martha Grevatt interviewed President Martínez and Vice President Edwin Morales.

Martha Grevatt: Tell us about the history of the FMPR.

Mercedes Martínez: We were founded in 1966. Teachers were upset with the Association of Puerto Rican Teachers (AMPR), the AFL-CIO affiliate. It was a bosses' union, not a class-struggle union. Puerto Rican teachers needed a union that fought for them. Teachers tried to change the union, believing that teachers are workers and deserve the right to bargain, negotiate, protest and strike to better their interests. At that time, the school bosses were in the same association as teachers. We needed an association of only teachers. The AMPR was like a ministry, saying you have to sacrifice and not protest.

We had a 30-day strike in 1974. At that time, the class struggle was in a process of mobilization, with 1,400 strikes in one year. The first strike was by the FMPR, as a rank-and-file union linked to anti-imperialist political organizations. The union was trying to transform the teacher sector.

MG: How has the FMPR been fighting austerity?

MM: We have been resisting in a lot of ways, with organizational work and giving communities a political context of why it is happening. To build a country we want to live in, it is not just being against charter schools, privatization and layoffs, but for a mass mobilization of the community.

Our union has been in the front lines for many years. When the capitalist colonial crisis got worse in 2006, bosses started eliminating rights and destroying contracts. In 2008, we went on strike when there was a deficit and the government shut down. Teachers were fired and a sales tax was imposed. This was to accelerate the neoliberal agenda. But the strike stopped charter schools.

Law 35 prohibits strikes. FMPR was decertified in 2008 [even before the strike], but members had decided to go forward with the strike because the rights of workers were more important. FMPR was an instrument of fighting.



PHOTO: GFR MEDIA

Mercedes Martínez Padilla, president of the Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico.

We were recertified in 2009. We had a strike in 2011 and were decertified again. We could not collect dues and the executive board was fired. We worked for a year without a salary. We were recertified again in 2013.

FMPR has continued fighting. We have faced the repression of the state, but we have the respect of the Puerto Rican people.

MG: What has been the union's response to the hurricanes?

Edwin Morales: Irma was just devastating to us: our own individual losses — family, community, schools — a huge panorama. Solidarity was the saving part. People from all over came, many union activists. We handed out \$525,000 to school workers. We rebuilt schools and homes, reopened roads, provided food and shelter, and organized against school closures.

MG: Tell us about the recent strike and upcoming struggles.

MM: The [one-day] strike was held

March 19 by 60,000 teachers. Of the students, 90 percent were absent. We announced the strike on a Wednesday and struck Monday. We pre-organized. We gave talks in communities to explain new legislation and organize against charters, school closings, layoffs and the neoliberal agenda. Law 85, passed March 29, allows 10 percent of schools to be charters, 3 percent of students to get vouchers [for private or parochial schools] and allows schools to be closed.

On April 15, we are going to hold a general assembly of teachers and community members in San Juan. We are going to be discussing the government's plans, the necessity of a strike and how many days to stay out. It is going to be a democratic process and will include members of other organizations. Other school union members will also be invited so they will know what is happening. All workers can come in.

Donate to help FMPR's hurricane relief efforts at tinyurl.com/y8gx4kul.

WW PHOTO: THOMAS TELLGREN-LENG

Chicago:

'No monuments to racism'

By Katherine Cavanaugh

Near a busy corner on Chicago's South Side, on April 7, cars slowed and passers-by honked or raised their fists in support at the sight of a small group holding a banner proclaiming, "Honor Black Lives — No Monuments to Racism."

Chants of "You can't stop the revolution! Black women bring the solution!" rang out as more activists and community members gathered to demand the removal of a monument to Confederate soldiers known as the Confederate Mound. The 50-foot marker dominates Oak Woods Cemetery in the Black working-class neighborhood known as Grand Crossing.

Since last September, members of Smash White Supremacy-Chicago, led by Black Youth Project 100 and the local branch of Workers World Party, have gone door-to-door in Grand Crossing to investigate the impact of the Confederate monument on the people who live in its shadow. They were also promoting BYP 100's #HonorHerLabor campaign to replace the monument with a statue of anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells. The grave of that legendary African-American journalist, newspaper editor and anti-lynching activist rests just yards from the Confederate Mound.

Canvassing extensively throughout the area, the volunteers also made sure community members were aware that the federal government spends \$250,000 annually on restoration and upkeep for

the monument, and that a racist organization known as "Sons of Confederate Veterans" rallies there regularly. Many of those canvassed hadn't been aware of the nature of the monument, but expressed outrage that such a racist presence would be allowed to exist in their neighborhood.

Those who were aware of the statue's meaning pointed out the insult of its proximity to the graves of Black freedom fighters such as Ida B. Wells and Harold Washington, the first Black mayor of Chicago. This author spoke to a few residents who stressed that the monument is a slap in the face to the descendants of Black Southsiders who escaped slavery-like conditions in the South by coming to Chicago in the period known as the "Great Migration."

Another resident referred to the "little parties" that Sons of Confederate Veterans hold every spring. These rallies feature the flying of the pseudo-historical Confederate flag, now used as an international white supremacist symbol. Most alarmingly, in a city fraught with gun violence, guns are fired in a "military salute."

SCV members and other supporters of the monument say the rallies are nothing more than memorial rituals for over 4,000 soldiers buried around the Confederate Mound. These were casualties of Chicago's Civil War era Camp Douglass, where prisoners of war were kept. Conditions there became crowded after the



Activists and community members speak out against white supremacy across the street from the Confederate Mound in Oak Woods Cemetery in Chicago, April 6.

Confederacy refused to treat captured Black Union soldiers as prisoners of war, instead selling them back into enslavement. As a result, the Union stopped participating in prisoner exchanges.

But after Reconstruction, the white ruling classes of the South and North joined forces to fund the construction of the monument as a symbol of national unification under the banner of racism.

The April 7 rally across from the cemetery was small but impactful, prompting extensive media coverage — including a full-page article in the Chicago Sun Times — and angry reaction from supporters of the failed Confederacy.

Remarks from organizers reframed the growing national debate over monuments that glorify the racist and genocidal roots of the U.S. Speakers focused on the social, psychological and economic impact of racism on people who fight to survive in a society that does not honor their history of struggle for liberation or, indeed, their lives.

With support from the Grand Crossing community, Smash White Supremacy-Chicago plans to protest the next rally by Sons of Confederate Veterans at the Mound, scheduled for April 22 at 11 a.m. This will be the next step in addressing ways white supremacy still lives on in Chicago — the next step in opposing the glorification of racist fantasy at the expense of living Black people. □

WORKERS WORLD
MUNDO OBRERO

Sirias/os reaccionan a amenazas de bombardeo

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una entrevista con Junge Welt. Dijo que Alemania es un faro cultural y económico, y que presta ayuda humanitaria. Pero en el Medio Oriente, enfatizó, Berlín sigue a Estados Unidos e Israel.

Las sanciones económicas contra Siria, dijo el funcionario, perjudicaron no solo a los sirios, sino también a la economía alemana. Sin embargo, los líderes alemanes están sembrando hostilidad hacia Siria. Él pregunta: "¿Qué quieren de nosotros? ¿Quieres mi mesa, mi chaqueta? Puedo darles ambas si las necesitan. Por lo que he oído, la población alemana no quiere guerra, ni siquiera en Siria. ¿Por qué el gobierno alemán hace lo contrario de lo que quiere el pueblo? □

Gas venenoso, pretexto para ataque de EUA

Por Sara Flounders

Las guerras estadounidenses se basan en mentiras y falsas provocaciones. Esto no es noticia.

Ahora viene la acusación de que el 7 de abril alguien - los imperialistas dicen que fue el gobierno sirio, aunque no hay pruebas de ello - mató a decenas de sirias/os en un ataque con gas venenoso en la ciudad de Duma, que recientemente había sido liberada de las fuerzas antigubernamentales.

La brutal guerra que por siete años han dirigido contra Siria se había ido apaciguando luego de que todos los esfuerzos del imperialismo estadounidense por derrocar al gobierno sirio habían fracasado.

Los últimos grupos de unidades militares reaccionarias respaldadas por Arabia Saudita fueron derrotadas este mes. Ellos habían bombardeado implacablemente a la población civil de Damasco, la capital siria, durante años. Miles de estos combatientes finalmente se rindieron y se vieron obligados a abandonar las colinas de la provincia de Guta oriental cerca de Damasco. Se espera que sean trasladados fuera del área a Idlib, una zona controlada por los rebeldes en el extremo norte de Siria.

El gobierno sirio también ha establecido corredores humanitarios que permiten que sus fuerzas asistan en el desalojo de más de 150.000 civiles.

La ciudad de Duma, donde tuvo lugar el supuesto ataque con gas, fue la última en ser liberada. El Ejército del Islam o Jaysh al-Islam acordaron una evacuación. La Fuerza Aérea Árabe Siria había destruido más de 300 posiciones del Jaysh al-Islam en el distrito de Duma, incluidas sus sedes principales, redes de comunicación y depósitos de municiones, durante las últimas 24 horas antes del supuesto ataque con gas.

Siria no tiene motivo

La idea de que el gobierno sirio eligiera este momento de victoria para desatar repentinamente un ataque con gas es increíble y ridícula. Pero es una acusación que sirve como excusa para que EUA y la OTAN renueven sus bombardeos, especialmente dado que solo una semana antes Trump había hablado de sacar a EUA de Siria.

El ataque con gas, que se dice que mató al menos a 42 personas, tuvo una cobertura primordial en primera plana en los medios de Estados Unidos junto con los tuits de Trump. Mientras la acusación de que Siria lo hizo fue recibida con desprecio y burla en la mayor parte del mundo, los miembros de la OTAN, Francia y Bretaña, intervinieron diligentemente con amenazas inmediatas de bombardear a Siria.

El régimen israelí se adelantó e inmediatamente aprovechó la oportunidad para atacar a Siria. Dos aviones de combate F-15 israelíes dispararon misiles contra la base aérea militar Tiyas de Siria en la provincia de Homs antes del amanecer del 9 de abril.

Es increíble aceptar que Israel - cuyas tropas han matado a 28 civiles palestinos desarmados y ha herido a más de 1.500 en las últimas dos semanas, además de las/os miles que ha matado en los bombardeos de Gaza en el pasado - estaba atacando a Siria por la muerte de civiles.

Cargos sin prueba

La descarada afirmación de la culpabilidad siria por parte de los imperialistas no solo es totalmente infundada, es indemostrable y totalmente inverosímil.

Siria ha negado reiteradamente las alegaciones de uso de armas químicas, subrayando que no tiene armas de destrucción masiva. Esto fue confirmado

por la Organización para la Prohibición de Armas Químicas.

El Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Siria señala que denuncias similares surgen cada vez que el ejército sirio avanza en su lucha contra los grupos terroristas.

El año pasado, el 7 de abril, el Pentágono, sin esperar alguna evidencia, atacó la base siria de la Fuerza Aérea Shuayrat con 59 misiles de crucero Tomahawk, supuestamente en respuesta a unas armas químicas utilizadas en Khan Shikhoun, una ciudad en el suroeste de Siria. El repentino ataque, orquestado con fotos instantáneas y una campaña de propaganda bélica coordinada realizada por medios sumisos, hizo subir el nivel beligerante.

Proteger civiles es el discurso dado por los imperialistas para justificar sus bombardeos masivos, sus campañas desestabilizadoras y sus sanciones provocadoras de hambruna, que resultan en la muerte de cientos de miles de civiles.

Amenaza de guerra extensa

Una guerra más amplia surgida de un enfrentamiento en Siria es un peligro creciente. Lo más peligroso en este momento es que coincide con la instalación del halcón de guerra de extrema derecha John Bolton como el nuevo asesor de seguridad nacional de Trump.

Cuando la clase dominante estadounidense quiere guerra, los medios corporativos se apuntan. Ya sea como el falso alegato de que Irak tenía armas de destrucción masiva en 2002 - lo que los funcionarios estadounidenses sabían que era una mentira - o el falso "ataque" de barcos PT vietnamitas a un buque de guerra estadounidense en el Golfo de Tonkin en 1964, los medios estadounidenses han repetido las mentiras del gobierno para justificar sus guerras.



Esto se remonta al hundimiento del acorazado Maine en 1898, que se utilizó para justificar la guerra hispanoamericana. Una investigación de la Armada de EUA en 1974 encargada por el almirante Hyman Rickover concluyó que el Maine se hundió, no debido a una mina española, sino porque las municiones almacenadas a bordo se incendiaron y explotaron.

Las corporaciones militares estadounidenses tienen un gran interés en continuar la guerra. Pero va más allá de eso. Las grandes corporaciones y bancos imperialistas temen la derrota de todos los planes estratégicos de EUA para la región. Así que una vez más las fuerzas militares, corporativas y mediáticas continúan el mismo guión que han usado una y otra vez para mantener a las tropas estadounidenses en Afganistán, Corea del Sur, Siria y en las más de 1.000 bases militares estadounidenses en todo el mundo.

Es especialmente siniestro que inmediatamente, Rusia fue culpada junto con Siria. La asistencia de Rusia e Irán a Siria ha ayudado a frustrar los planes de EUA de derrocar el gobierno sirio. En su constante ritmo de demonización ininterrumpida, los moldeadores de opinión de EUA ni siquiera se molestan en presentar los hechos o la motivación cuando presentan cargos contra el presidente ruso Putin.

También pintan una terrible imagen de que la retirada militar de EUA de la región provocaría un caos y beneficiaría a Rusia, Irán o China, y también provocaría el resurgimiento del grupo Estado Islámico en Siria. A lo que los planificadores de guerra realmente se oponen es a un estado sirio soberano y unificado.

Las fuerzas progresistas opuestas a las interminables guerras de EUA deben enfrentar estos cargos criminales contra Siria y exigir a Estados Unidos: ¡Manos fuera de Siria! □

Sirias/os reaccionan a amenazas de bombardeo

Por Karin Leukefeld
Damasco, Siria

La noche antes del 12 de abril estaba en calma. Un esperado ataque de las Fuerzas Armadas de EUA y sus aliados en Siria aún no había ocurrido. Pero muchas personas en Damasco y en todo el país esperan que el lenguaje hostil y amenazante de los líderes de gobiernos occidentales - como lo expresó el presidente Donald Trump - y sus diplomáticos en el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU, sea seguido por misiles, bombas y destrucción.

"Ya han publicado listas de objetivos que quieren atacar", nos dijo Nabil M., un ingeniero agrícola retirado. Su vecino Hussam, quien trabajó para Mercedes-Benz en Siria, asume que las Fuerzas Armadas de EUA "podrían bombardear las telecomunicaciones, la televisión siria, el palacio presidencial, los ministerios, los puentes y las instalaciones militares" en Damasco y sus alrededores.

Hussam, encogiéndose de hombros en

El siguiente artículo, publicado en el diario alemán Junge Welt el 12 de abril, fue traducido por el editor general de Workers World-MO, John Catalinotto.

respuesta al comentario de que la mayoría de los objetivos que citó son instituciones civiles cuyo bombardeo está prohibido por el derecho internacional, dijo: "¿Qué hicieron en Mosul en Irak, en Deir ez-Zor y en Rakka aquí? El ejército de EUA no respeta el derecho internacional".

Heike W. es una empresaria de Alemania que ha vivido en Siria durante más de 30 años. Ella dice que una guerra inminente será "una confrontación estadounidense-rusa", ubicada en Siria. Esto es internacional, enfatiza, y se trata de controlar las rutas comerciales y los recursos, señalando que el nuevo proyecto Ruta de Seda de China desafía a Occidente. Heike está convencida de que "EUA y las demás potencias occidentales no permitirán que esta región quede fuera de su control".

Los opositores al gobierno sirio no hablan de eso, pero silenciosamente po-

drían esperar que un ataque de Occidente pueda "cortarle la cabeza" al régimen de Assad que odian. Otros, sin embargo, temen una mayor destrucción y una extensión de la guerra y el caos.

El ejército, el gobierno y el presidente sirio están en alerta, aunque los detalles [de sus planes] son desconocidos. El 12 de abril, los ministros de Asuntos Exteriores, Walid Muallem y Ali Akbar Welajati, se reunieron en Damasco para discutir una cooperación más estrecha entre Siria e Irán. Welajati es el asesor de política exterior del ayatolá Ali Khamenei, el líder religioso de Irán.

Misiles israelíes matan a 14 en la base siria

Al menos cuatro soldados iraníes [y otras 10 personas] murieron en un ataque israelí contra una base militar siria en Palmyra, en la provincia de Homs, el 10 de abril. Los aviones de combate de Isra-

el atacaron la base desde el espacio aéreo libanés, en violación del derecho internacional. Los sistemas de defensa aérea sirios destruyeron seis de los ocho misiles lanzados por aviones de combate israelíes.

El gabinete de seguridad israelí se reunió el 12 de abril para analizar la situación en Siria y las posibles operaciones militares occidentales contra el país. Los miembros del gabinete dijeron que Israel debería ser tan parte de un ataque conjunto de Occidente como lo es Arabia Saudita.

Es probable que Alemania ya haya marcado y documentado posibles objetivos utilizando su avión de reconocimiento Tornado y los aviones de vigilancia AWACS, bajo la "alianza anti-EI" liderada por EUA. Siria es como un libro abierto para los observadores de la OTAN.

Un representante del gobierno sirio en Aleppo, que quiere permanecer en el anonimato, expresó su incompreensión sobre la actitud del gobierno alemán en

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