Despite government attacks

Workers, students in France stay strong

By G. Dunkel

Since President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Élisabeth Borne rammed through the “reform” of France’s pension system March 16—an attack which will require workers to work longer to obtain a full pension—the class struggle has grown more intense.

Millions of workers struck on March 23 to protest this new law, which extends their retirement age to 64 from 62. The law must still be reviewed by the Constitutional Council, which can reject or modify it.

The new pension law provides fewer protections for workers who have arduous jobs and/or dangerous working conditions. These include sanitation workers, who collect garbage and are exposed to traffic, inclement weather and do heavy, repetitive lifts. It includes refinery workers who need to handle dangerous chemicals and heavy equipment in any weather.

Women, whose careers may be interrupted by child or elder care, get no relief from the new law. Women’s pensions currently average 40% less than men’s.

On March 23 nearly 3.5 million people protested in over 200 locations, according to the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which does the counting for the unions. Police estimated the participation at 1 million.

The demonstrations involved many students, inspired by their teachers, and were in small cities and towns, like Besançon near the Swiss border. Student unions said that over 300,000 youth participated in March 23 protests.

Demonstrators held signs that called for the following: full retirement at 60; higher minimum wages, as a step for the following: full retirement at 60; higher minimum wages; and an end to police violence, which has grown sharper since the protests began in January.

The workers’ determination has already affected French diplomacy. France and England had spent months negotiating for prison reform. The absence of a red carpet would have illustrated the power of the working class.

Sanitation workers
Sanitation workers in Paris went out on strike March 23. Sanitation pickups in Paris are divided by zones; in many of the zones, the workers didn’t strike. Strikes were concentrated in the wealthier and tourist-oriented districts of the city.

Not only the collectors who load the garbage trucks are on strike, but the incinerator workers who dispose of it also went out.

Class consciousness is so high these days that when three National Guard members were noticed picking up garbage around their headquarters, the public outcry forced the Minister of Interior to step in and explain that the soldiers were only trying to clear a path in case they had to respond.

When the garbage piled up on Paris sidewalks near 10,000 tons, the precinct of the Police for Paris—the official directing the national police in Paris—demanded that the Socialist Party mayor send him a list of sanitation workers, so he could “requisition” them and force them back to work. Anne Hidalgo, the mayor, refused because she supported the strike. The Ministry of the Interior managed to get a copy of the list, and it forced 674 workers back.

The amount of sidewalk garbage after a...
Vive la classe ouvrière de la France!

Long live the working class of France!

The working class of France is in the streets, with millions of people striking and demonstrating.

The proverbial straw — more like a whole big bundle of straws — was French President Emmanuel Macron’s decision to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64. Macron, who imposed this attack on pensions by presidential edict, also raised by two years the length of time a worker must work (old-age) for maximum benefits. For most retirees in France, in both the public and private sectors, the state pension is their only source of income.

Why is this so important? A fight over pensions is essentially a fight over deferred wages. Part of the compensation a worker receives is paid out in the form of a regular paycheck, while another portion is set aside to be paid at a later date as a pension and/or social security. It’s money already earned, usually over a period spanning decades.

To extract more of what Marx called surplus value — unpaid labor realized in the form of profit — without paying more wages, it would be hard for capitalists to do in 2023 what they did in the 19th century. Back then they just made the workday longer without raising pay. That would provoke a hell of a revolt today!

So instead, the French bourgeoisie is attempting to squeeze another two years worth of value from the hides of the workers — without paying one euro more for it! But if they thought there would be no fight-back, it was a gross miscalculation.

The class battle lines could not be clearer. For workers in the rest of the world, including the U.S., the question is simply, “Which side are you on?” The labor movement here should be calling actions in solidarity with the workers in France fighting to hold the line on pensions. An injury to one is an injury to all! And a win for one is a win for all.

Not only should U.S. workers join in unity with workers across the ocean, they should emulate them. There are but a few examples in U.S. labor history of mass, unified strikes: 1919 in Seattle; 1934 in San Francisco, Minneapolis and Toledo, Ohio; the May Day 2006 strike of immigrant workers across the country; and a handful of others.

Imagine if the AFL-CIO were to call out its ranks, along with the ranks of unorganized workers, to demand a halt to union-busting by Amazon and Starbucks! It’s time for workers everywhere to start talking along those lines. Workers rights are human rights! ☐

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

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future.

No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education, 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, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

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

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

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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Workers World welcomes the participation of all workers, students and oppressed of every race, gender and generation in the struggle for freedom and socialism.

Solidarity with workers in France stay strong. Austin: Vigil to demand no war, no way. Tear Down the Walls! Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly

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Workers, students in France stay strong. Workers rights are human rights! ☐

Join in the fight for socialism!
they receive more monetary incentives. A $3 million-$4 million contract was made with a company in Florida to scan our mail, then fax it to our prison. State elites have invested in this company and others, such as the phone and email systems that charge our families outrageous amounts of money to communicate with us. An electronic cigarette company charges $6 for a dangerously made cigarette.

I am asking that we all stand together and refuse to work, beginning June 03, until prison and education reform have been accomplished.

This is a call to action for all Pennsylvania prisoners and supporters. We are being exploited throughout the country to join us in solidar- ity to combat our nation’s judicial injustices and oppression of the lower class. Our nation’s elite have been prof- iting from the incarceration of those who can’t afford to defend themselves in the court of law. The state of Pennsylvania has become a paragon example of how state officials take advantage of and incarcerate people for profit.

Private officers are rec- ognized for abuse and ignoring people’s rights in order to arrest and convict our brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers and children. The courts are known to pro- tect this fraternal brotherhood that is made up by a majority of corrupt officers. Judges in this state are aiding and abetting the increase of discernable injustices against humanity and have been lacking away the lower class and innocent people at an exorbit- ant rate.

An example of this became public after a poor child committed suicide during the “cash for kids” scheme the courts had going on, where they [judges] were paid by the [private] prisons to throw chil- dren into prison. Prisons also have been cashing in on their own list of few examples have been made public. In 2019, a prison superintendent was given the opportunity to resign as opposed to being arrested, when he was caught stealing money from inmates and paying off parole board members so that they deny people their freedom. The more people incarcerated, the more profit is made by these few elites. This all happens as a result of making money, and the victims of this are our schools and children.

We have had enough of sitting silently in our cells. We watch as the teachers in this country struggle to get children proper support to succeed, because all the money is being wasted on incarcer- ation for profit, and they are continuing to make money from us. The prison has cut food portions and increased commis- sary prices. We are forced to beg our fam- iles for money so that we are no longer hungry. Our jobs, which run the prison, only pay 10 to 42 cents an hour. Some state prisoners are forced to work for no money.

The state pays million-dollar contracts to companies that extort inmates, so that the pathetic manufacturing.

1. Reduce prison funding and allot that money into public schools and education for children. A simple audit of prison funding will show how much money is wasted and abused, which could/should be going to our state’s schools. Find a way to invest into educa- tion programs.

2. Eliminate mandatory life without parole in and implement sentence reduction procedures. Offer things like good-time and incentive. Rehabilitation should be a priority for all.

3. Implement a new impartial grand jury that investigates the parole proce- dure, so that issues could be resolved and not ignored. There is too much abuse and assaults by prison staff that gets swept under the rug. People are being thrown into solitary confine- ment just to fill bed space. Misconductions are being used as a form of intentional harm to land people in solitary con- finement. There should be alternatives to solitary confinement for people. Have we not evoluted from the days of cruel and unusual punishment? Are we not better than Caligula and Adolf Hitler?

4. A better and more efficient way for parole. There are thousands in Pennsylvania alone [who] are being denied parole for years based on neglectible reasons. Many of these people have offered to serve time, now serving many years in prison for things like mis- conduct. If the parole board is to deter- mine if a person is ready for society, then they need to come out of their offices and get to know the people they are adjudicating. You cannot know a person’s character based on things that happened in the past.

5. Medically treat addiction with adequate Medicated Assisted Treatment, now filled with people who suffer from addiction and are being released back to society in the same or worse condition when they were received. Many people need to be allocated without prejudice to pris- oners, long before they are released, in order to properly rehabilitate and reduce recidivism.

6. Better tobacco products, food and increased pay for employment. We should not be forced to beg our families and friends for support. A plain soup should not cost 40 cents, when we are making 19 cents an hour. The e-cigs offer us the same conditions and tumultuous environment, because of the pathetic manufacturing.

We should be focusing on reforming the judicial system for our sur- vival. This should be a priori- ty to our country just as it is to the people we support and release back to the com- munity. Do you not recog- nize the increase in crime? People are being treated as animals, then released. These are not arduous or unreasonable requests and should be a priority for all.

We are doing this because we love our country, and we want our country to love us back. Please help pass this message and join in our movement. Email, post on social media, send to the news or media: This is for everyone, and everyone may join in our stand for reform on June 03, 2023. We will stand until these issues are amended in Pennsylvania and through- out the country.

This is an anonymous message, cre- ated anonymously for those voices that are suppressed by the razor wire and the guilty conscience. Keep in mind that no one has been inaudible but wish to have a voice, and for those who want to help others but don’t have the abil- ity or means, you can do this. You don’t need to shout anymore; just stand and refuse the work on June 03, 2023.

United in solidarity, A.T.I.K.O.R. ☐
The banking crisis

Continued from page 1

lending and exposed the magnitude of the systemic debt crisis, will bring bank lending gridlock that exacerbates the dreaded “liquidity” crisis.

When that happens, the dominos begin falling even faster, and a global collapse of the financial system and a worldwide economic superstorm become harder and harder to avoid. The contradiction is that the capitalists themselves lit the fire that morphed into this new bank crisis by raising interest rates, in order to bring the economy to a halt. The central bankers were following the old playbook.

When the economic system is descending into deeper crisis and threatens profit-making, the solution throughout the history of capitalism has been to slow or even stop the economy, throw tens of millions of workers out of their jobs and attack the workers and the oppressed in a thousand ways, until the system is returned to profitability. The problem now with the save-capitalism playbook is that the working class can’t stop or control the fire that they’ve started and the slide toward unprecedented catastrophe.

What must revolutionaries do?

Discussing the dimensions of the banking crisis and where it’s headed is essential, but it’s not enough. It is vital that revolutionaries, socialists and communists understand and respond to the dangerous political crisis that all of this creates for the working class. Either the working class can’t stop or control the fire that they’ve started and the slide toward unprecedented catastrophe.

As Zelensky speaks, Austrians demand neutrality

Workers, students in France stay strong

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In militant nighttime demonstrations following union marches, protesters built barricades from this trash and set them ablaze to compel pursuit by cops on motorcycles.

Refinery workers

Refinery workers, who also face requisitions, have held numerous strike days since this struggle over pensions began Jan. 19. Refinery workers have other special grievances and have been on strike since October 2022.

Combined with strikes in fuel depots where the tanker trucks are loaded, some of the refinery shutdowns led to temporary shortages in gas stations in western and southern France. Lines for fuel have stretched for miles.

We demand:

- no support of NATO;
- no military support of Ukraine, not even indirectly;
- no support of NATO;
- no support of NATO;
- the good news is that, over the last two years, we have seen the beginnings of a young worker rebellion that holds the potential of pushing the working class forward to a higher level of organization and class struggle. Starbucks workers, Amazon workers and countless other workers at chain stores, hospitals, factories and tech companies, along with gig workers and migrant workers, have created the biggest opening for mass revolutionary progress in the working class in almost a century.

The labor movement has noted this development and offered it some support. But that support is a drop in the bucket when it comes to stopping one of the biggest union-busting wars in recent history, led by the corporate leaders of Amazon and Starbucks.

Unions must break with the Democrats

Some interesting things are happening in the labor movement. Older unions like the Teamsters and the UAW are undergoing rank and file-based change. But corporate, top-down unionism that is tied to the Democratic Party is still the norm. It’s time to open up a new political struggle inside the labor movement, a struggle that brings in the energy and militancy of the young workers, who are on the move.

We have watched the French workers strike and take to the streets by the millions to stop Macron’s and the French bourgeoisie’s attack on their hard-won rights. We have to ask: Why hasn’t the U.S. labor movement organized a protest in front of the French mission to the United Nations to show their support for the French workers? U.S. workers could learn a lot from the French workers, and that is how it should be. After all, we are in the same class, a global class that should recognize no boundaries.

Last summer Liz Shuler became the president of the AFL-CIO. Probably the overwhelming majority of workers who are not in unions, or even many who are in unions, don’t even know her name. It is likely that more workers have heard of Chris Small, the president of the Amazon Labor Union, who won the first union victory against the transnational behemoth, which in many ways is the most powerful capitalist corporation in the world.

Why is it that the labor movement has not called a major, serious march on Amazon or Starbucks, in support of the workers and against union busting? This has to change, and we must understand that it is our duty as revolutionary fighters for the working class to find the ways to become the agents of that change.

Workers World received this petition and call for a vigil from the Austrian group, the Social Alliance for Peace and Neutrality. Translation: John Catlinotto.

Vigil: Building peace without weapons

March 30, Parliament building

The Ukrainian war President [Volodymyr] Zelensky is scheduled to speak virtually to the deputies of the Parliament on March 30. What he will say is already clear. He wants more weapons, more sanctions, more war.

Pushed by the political-media elites, this will add up to another step in dismantling neutrality, as does the constant NATO military transports through Austria; delivery of helmets, vests or fuel for the Ukrainian army; co-financing of arms supplies via the European Union; and for — what for the time being was — a failed test balloon for training, Ukrainian tank drivers, etc. But together with the vast majority of the Austrian population, we are firmly convinced that NATO endangers our security and that only neutrality can keep us safe.

As Zelensky speaks, Austrians demand neutrality

Workers World

Vienna protest of German decision to send tanks to Ukraine, Jan. 30, 2023.
Education workers in Los Angeles, Oakland strike for a fair contract

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, California

When education workers are under attack, what do they do? They rise up and go on strike! And that’s exactly what these workers in both Los Angeles and Oakland did.

On March 21, 30,000 members of Service Employees International Union Local 959 — the bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, paraprofessionals and other education workers in the Los Angeles Unified School District — went on a three-day Unfair Labor Practices (ULP) strike for a living wage. They were joined by 35,000 teachers and other educators in the United Teachers of Los Angeles, who held a sympathy strike with their sibling union. UTLA announced that they would not cross the SEIU picket line.

SEIU Local 99 members earn incredibly low wages, are forced to work part-time and are forced to pay for their own holidays. The SEIU Oakland workers went on strike demanding a 30% raise over four years, paid holidays, health care benefits and an immediate $2-an-hour raise for the lowest-paid workers.

Then on March 24, just a day after SEIU workers returned to work in L.A., Oakland teachers and other educators went on a one-day unsanctioned wildcat strike. Led by rank-and-file members of the Oakland Education Association, teachers from the high schools and middle schools set up morning picket lines in front of their schools, organized marches and eventually rallied at the empty school district building in downtown Oakland.

These teachers are in the midst of bartering with the Oakland Unified School District. According to OEA bargaining team members, the district has been absent at most organized bargaining sessions. OEA has been working on an extended contract for the past year, and the Oakland teachers are the lowest-paid educators in Alameda County.

Bargaining demands include increasing funding for community public schools, benefits for substitute teachers and the hiring of more librarians and therapists. Teachers are demanding a pay raise of 22%, which would bring their salary to the middle range of teacher pay in the Bay Area. The regressive district counteroffer of 8% over two years, with a longer workday and work week, infuriated teachers and sparked the one-day Oakland wildcat action. OEA also filed an ULP claim on March 23.

Low wages lead to Oakland strike vote

Education workers both in L.A. and the Bay Area are suffering from soaring housing costs. In L.A., SEIU members earn an average of $25,000 a year working for LAUSD, and the median price of a one-bedroom apartment is nearly $20,000 a year. (LA Times, March 24) Many of these workers are forced to take an additional part-time job to make ends meet.

At a rally at Oscar Grant Plaza in downtown Oakland, several hundred secondary school teachers, students and supporters came together for a rally as part of their wildcat action. Several speakers pointed out that low educator salaries combined with the high cost of living in the Bay Area are responsible for the exodus of young teachers from the Oakland public schools.

Other speakers pointed out that OUSD spends far more on administrators than any other district in the state. The gap between teacher and administrator pay has increased exponentially.

What effect do strike actions have? Well, the day after the 3-day strike by L.A. education workers, a tentative agreement guaranteeing raises of 30% was reached between SEIU Local 99 and the district. Of course, the members of the union still have to approve it, and UTLA is currently in contract negotiations with LAUSD.

In Oakland, there is no indication that OUSD will begin to bargain fairly with OEA. With its ULP filed, the teachers’ union will now move forward with strike readiness plans, which include polling the membership for a strike vote.

This spring began with tens of thousands of education workers in the streets in L.A., including the inspirational sympathy strike by teachers. The school year may well end with additional strikes and job actions by education workers, who are fighting for their very survival and for the future of public education in California.

By Jim McManahan
Seattle

Starbucks Workers United (SBWU) struck the coffee giant March 22 at numerous stores across the U.S. Outside corporate headquarters in Seattle that day, over 400 Starbucks workers and allies marched protesting the bosses’ union busting. Representing a broad spectrum of labor in Seattle and beyond, they loudly chanted: “Baristas Yes, Bosses No!”

Although a rainy, windy day forced the cancellation of an outdoor march, 50 activists packed a room in the base of an apartment building in the Bronx, New York, to hold a three-hour meeting of an apartment building in the Bronx, New York, to hold a three-hour meeting. Gwen, from Atlanta’s State Capitol March 25, with their hands raised and palms inward with red X’s on the backside, to indicate where some of the 14 bullet wounds pierced Manuel Parez Teran’s body.

The autopsy commissioned by the Teran family revealed that the young Forest Defender, aka Tortuguita, had been sitting cross-legged in their tent with hands up when killed by a team of Georgia Patrol officers participating in an armed raid on the Weas lane Forest on Jan. 18. Manuel’s mother, Belkis Teran and Manuel’s brother, Pedro Santema were inspired by the enthusiasm of Union

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By Monica Moorehead

Women activists meet in Bronx, New York

Although a rainy, windy day forced the cancellation of an outdoor march, 50 activists packed a room in the basement of an apartment building in the Bronx, New York, to hold a three-hour meeting. The rally outside featured SBWU speakers and supporters, many of whom attacked the capitalist system. Gwen, from Atlanta, a Bellingham store, told of her experience when her apartment was so flooded she had to move out. She had to take four days off work, and it cost her thousands of dollars, but Starbucks wouldn’t accommodate her. They soon fired her. Then she won a successful union organizing drive at her store.

Workers from at least 10 unions were on the picket line. Homegrown sandwich workers, who led a successful organizing drive of 200 workers with UNITE HERE, spoke. Sam described how they had to fight the racism and misogyny of the bosses to win. Another Homegrown worker, Zane, said, “You can draw a direct line from the murder of George Floyd to the mass organizing of workers across the country!”

Latinx workers organizing against sexual harassment at McDonalds in California addressed the crowd. Marchers were inspired by the enthusiasm of Union

of Southern Service Workers members, who helped lead the march to Starbucks’ front door.

The next day the company held its shareholders meeting, where more SBWU supporters challenged Starbucks. When asked if Starbucks would commit to a labor neutrality agreement with SBWU, the company’s chief communications officer and executive vice president Aranthan (AJ) Jones said, “No.” He also said the company wouldn’t agree to a basic union “card check” agreement.

But the many actions on March 22 demonstrated Starbucks workers’ resolve to keep fighting for their rights on the job. A protest over police murder of Forest Defender

More than 100 people sat cross-legged at Atlanta’s State Capitol March 25, with their hands raised and palms inward with red X’s on the backside, to indicate where some of the 14 bullet wounds pierced Manuel Parez Teran’s body.

The autopsy commissioned by the Teran family revealed that the young Forest Defender, aka Tortuguita, had been sitting cross-legged in their tent with
El ciclón Freddy pone de relieve las desigualdades

States Unidos tiene el 3% de la población mundial, pero es responsable del 28% de las emisiones anuales de carbono del mundo: unas 45 toneladas per cápita al año. En el caso del 10% más rico, las emisiones ascienden a aproximadamente el 80% de la existencia del planeta. Los habitantes de la antigua colonia británica están pagando el precio por la explotación de los trabajadores, incluidos los niños, no sólo dentro de Estados Unidos sino en todo el mundo.

Ningún niño debería tener que sufrir un nivel tan alto de abuso y estar “sólo y explotado”. Los sindicatos tienen la responsabilidad de enfrentarse frontalmente a este brutal ejemplo de racismo y xenofobia. Los sindicatos que representan a los trabajadores de las empresas que se benefician ilegalmente del trabajo infantil deben hacer de esta cuestión un tema de negociación colectiva, como en el caso de las empresas automovilísticas, cuyos contratos con United Auto Workers expiran este año. Los sindicatos de maestros deben asegurarse de que sean los niños a los que enseñen sus miembros. La lucha de clases en los años 30 consiguió la Ley de Normas Laborales Justas que, entre otras cosas, limitaba el trabajo infantil. Habrá falta un movimiento global y de clase para detener “la acuñación de la sangre de los niños en capital”. 

El mundo es posible y necesitado. 

Argentina

A 47 años del golpe criminal del 1976

Resumen Latinoamericano

24 de marzo de 2023 — Decenas de miles de manifestantes se concentraron en Plaza de Mayo este 24 de marzo por la tarde. La movilización independiente convocada por el Encuentro Memoria, Verdad y Justicia unificó la pelea contra la impunidad de ayer con la lucha contra las políticas de ajuste del presente. En la Plaza de Mayo se dio lectura a un documento consensuado por todas las organizaciones que integran el Encuentro Memoria, Verdad y Justicia. Allí se denunció que la dictadura militar desapareció, torturó y asesinó a miles de miles de militantes populares; que robó cientos de bebés; que organizó más de 600 centros clandestinos de detención, tortura y exterminio; ejecutando además los llamados “vuelos de la muerte”. En el texto también se denunció la relación entre la represión del régimen genocida y el ajuste en curso. Allí se planteó que “la dictadura fue alentada por el imperialismo norteamericano y en todo el Cono Sur, financiada por el FMI y apoyada por las multinacionales, los capitalistas locales y las cúpulas de la Iglesia. Su objetivo fue bien claro: derrotar la lucha obrera y popular e imponer un modelo económico de entrega total de nuestro país. A sangre y fuego, cayeron a pieles saladas y aumentaron los ritmos de trabajo. Multiplicaron la deuda externa de 7.000 millones de dólares en 1976 a 47.000 millones en 1983. Y estatizaron la deuda privada de los mismos grandes grupos caprichos a los que hoy se sientan sentando con exenciones fiscales, el dólar-soja o son formadoras de precios. Todos los gobiernos post dictadura pagaron esa deuda fraudulenta e ilegítima a costa de ajuste, privatizaciones y entrega”.

El artículo y fotos aquí: tinyurl.com/jegez7zv