

Democrats’ War on Unions, Public Education

L.A. Teachers: Strike to Win!

JANUARY 15—Yesterday, tens of thousands of striking United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) members began picketing outside the city’s public schools and held a mass rally downtown. The strike is widely popular among working people and in Latino and black neighborhoods, with some members of other unions in the schools and the area joining the picket lines. Management has kept the schools open, but large numbers of students are standing by their teachers in solidarity with the fight for better conditions and more resources for the schools.

Today, UTLA-represented teachers at three charter schools also launched a strike against their employer. With teachers and other public employee unions under the gun across the country, these battles could very well help ignite wider strike action, including by Oakland teachers, who are gearing up to strike as early as next month.

At a press conference this morning, American Federation of Teachers head Randi Weingarten proclaimed that charter schools were originally “supposed to be places where teachers and parents could create community.” No. Charters were conceived from the start as a sledgehammer against public schools and organized labor, and have been promoted by Democrats and Republicans alike for that very reason. The goal should be to get rid of the charter industry, bringing teachers and staff into the public school system. The way to achieve this is through unionizing all charters and providing union protections, wages and work conditions.

The UTLA leadership likes to make a distinction between “good” Democrats like California governor Gavin Newsom and “bad” Democrats like former L.A. mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, but *all* Democrats

are representatives of the class enemy. With union members now out, Newsom complains that the strike is “disrupting” lives and is strongly urging “all parties to go back to the negotiating table”—that is, stop the strike. Beware such false “friends of labor”! Build mass picket lines that no scab dares cross!

We print below a leaflet issued and distributed yesterday by the Los Angeles Spartacist League.

* * *

The battle lines are drawn for 30,000 teachers in the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), on strike for the first time

in three decades. In recent years, UTLA members have faced relentless attacks by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) board, its billionaire superintendent Austin Beutner and Democratic Party politicians who have long starved education funding in the city. The aim is to crush the UTLA and to open the road to K-12 privatization schemes, centrally through expanding charter schools. A lot is riding on this fight for educators across the country. Earlier school strikes in West Virginia and Arizona were directed against Republican state governments; but the Democrats are also in the forefront of the assault on public education and teach-

ers unions, including in California, a focal point of the anti-Trump “resistance.” *Victory to the teachers strike!*

Having gutted public education, the city rulers and their kept media, such as the *Los Angeles Times*, blame overworked and underpaid teachers for the miserable state of the schools, trying to pit parents against the unions. The UTLA’s demands, which focus on addressing student needs, are very modest: a 6.5 percent wage increase retroactive to July 2016 (which barely accounts for inflation); smaller class sizes in a district where 30, 40 or even 50 students are packed into a classroom; and more funding for librarians, nurses, counselors and other essential support staff. L.A. has one of the highest costs of living in the U.S., and teachers are forced to shell out enormous sums of their own money on supplies. Meanwhile, the LAUSD, while hoarding a massive reserve of nearly \$2 billion, cries poverty.

In a vastly unequal city where extreme wealth meets drastic destitution, the LAUSD is the second-largest school district in the country. More than three-fourths of the students in the highly segregated district live in poverty, including thousands who are homeless. Over 73 percent of LAUSD students are Latino and 8 percent are black; many tens of thousands have undocumented parents under threat of deportation. America’s racist capitalist rulers see no need to pay teachers union wages or to invest in schools to educate these minority and working-class youth. The same ruling class that is going after UTLA teachers consigns millions of workers, Latinos, black people and immigrants to low-wage jobs and inferior housing and health care.

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WV Photo

January 14:
UTLA teachers picketing on first day of popular strike.

14 de enero:
maestros de UTLA marchan en los piquetes el primer día de la popular huelga.

Demócratas en guerra contra sindicatos y educación pública

Maestros de L.A.:

¡A la huelga para vencer!

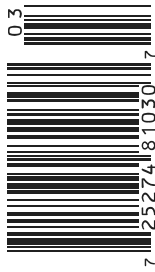
15 de enero—Ayer, decenas de miles de maestros en huelga, miembros de United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), formaron piquetes afuera de las escuelas públicas de la ciudad y llevaron a cabo una marcha masiva en downtown. La huelga es muy popular entre la gente trabajadora, en los barrios latinos y negros, y hay trabajadores de las escuelas (organizados en otros sindicatos) y de la zona que se han unido a los piquetes. Los patrones han mantenido las escuelas abiertas pero un gran número de estu-

diantes se mantienen en solidaridad con sus maestros en la lucha por mejorar las condiciones de las escuelas y por más recursos. Hoy, los maestros de tres escuelas chárter representados por UTLA también se fueron a huelga contra la patronal. Dado que los maestros y otros sindicatos de trabajadores públicos están bajo ataque en todo el país, estas batallas bien podrían ayudar a encender acciones huelguísticas más amplias, incluyendo por parte de los maestros de Oakland quienes se están alistando para irse a huelga posiblemente el próximo mes. En una conferencia de prensa esta mañana, Randi Weingarten, la dirigente de la

American Federation of Teachers, declaró que al principio las escuelas chárter “eran supuestamente lugares donde los maestros y padres crearían una comunidad”. No. Las escuelas chárter desde el principio fueron diseñadas como un arma contra las escuelas públicas y el movimiento obrero sindicalizado. Por esa razón, los demócratas y los republicanos por igual las han promovido. El objetivo debe ser eliminar la industria chárter al incorporar a los maestros al sistema público escolar. Para lograrlo hay que sindicalizar a todas las escuelas chárter y brindar protección, salarios y condiciones de trabajo sindicales. A la dirección de UTLA le gusta hacer

una distinción entre los “buenos” demócratas, como el gobernador de California Gavin Newsom, y los “malos” demócratas, como el ex alcalde de Los Ángeles Antonio Villaraigosa. *Todos* los demócratas son representantes del enemigo de clase. Dado que los miembros del sindicato están en huelga, Newsom se queja de que la huelga está “perjudicando” vidas y alienta enérgicamente a que “todos los partidos regresen a la mesa de negociaciones”; es decir, que pongan fin a la huelga. ¡Cuidado con estos falsos “amigos de los trabajadores”! ¡Construir líneas de piquete masivas que ningún esquirol se atreva a cruzar!

sigue en la página 7





Partisan Defense Committee

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

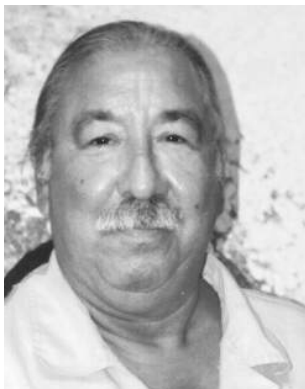
CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Support the Class-War Prisoners

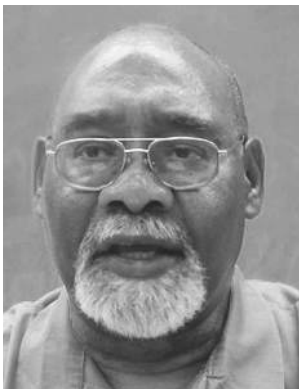
This year's Holiday Appeal marks the 33rd year of the Partisan Defense Committee's program of sending monthly stipends as an expression of solidarity to those imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression and imperialist depredation. This program revived a tradition initiated by the International Labor Defense under James P. Cannon, its founder and first secretary (1925-28). The PDC currently sends stipends to eleven class-war prisoners.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." Framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Federal and state courts have repeatedly refused to consider evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed the policeman. In 2011, the Philadelphia District Attorney's office dropped its longstanding effort to

PDC Holiday Appeal



whoisleonardpeltier.info
Leonard Peltier



Michael Richardson
Ed Poindexter



El Nuevo Día
Nina Droz

legally lynch Mumia, condemning him to life in prison with no chance of parole. In 2016, attorneys for Mumia filed a petition under Pennsylvania's Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) seeking to overturn the denial of his four prior PCRA claims

by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. On December 27, Judge Leon Tucker of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas granted Mumia's petition, allowing him to argue before an appellate court for reversal of his frame-up conviction (see article, page 8).

Leonard Peltier is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier's incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its Native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier was

framed up for the 1975 deaths of two FBI agents marauding in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation. The lead government attorney has admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents," and the courts have repeatedly denied Peltier's appeals while acknowledging blatant prosecutorial misconduct. Before leaving office, Barack Obama rejected Peltier's request for clemency. The 74-year-old Peltier is not scheduled for a parole hearing for another six years. Peltier suffers from multiple serious medical conditions including a heart condition which led to triple bypass surgery in 2017. He is incarcerated far from his people and family.

Five MOVE members—**Chuck Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa and Eddie Africa**—are in their 41st year of prison. After the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, they were sentenced to 30-100 years, having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops when a bomb was dropped on their living quarters. Collectively known as the MOVE 9, two of their number, Merle Africa and Phil Africa, died in prison under suspicious circumstances. After over four decades of unjust

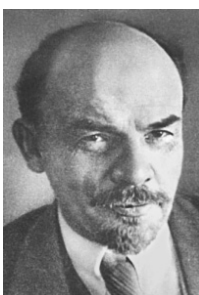
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TROTSKY

For the Communism of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg

One hundred years ago, on 15 January 1919, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered in Germany at the behest of the capitalist government run by the Social Democrats, which unleashed the fascist Freikorps to crush a workers uprising. After receiving news of the assassinations, V.I. Lenin, leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, heaped further scathing condemnation on the social-democratic betray-



LENIN

ers of the proletariat, including the wing led by Karl Kautsky, in the letter excerpted below. Upholding the revolutionary tradition of the early Communist International, this month we commemorate the "Three L's"—Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Lenin himself, who died in January 1924.

The *foundation* of a genuinely proletarian, genuinely internationalist, genuinely revolutionary Third International, the *Communist International*, became *a fact* when the German Spartacus League, with such world-known and world-famous leaders, with such staunch working-class champions as Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin and Franz Mehring, made a clean break with socialists like Scheidemann and Südekum, social-chauvinists (socialists in words, but chauvinists in deeds) who have earned eternal shame by their alliance with the predatory, imperialist German bourgeoisie and Wilhelm II. It became a fact when the Spartacus League changed its name to the Communist Party of Germany. Though it has not yet been officially inaugurated, the Third International actually exists....

Against Liebknecht are the Scheidemanns, the Südekums and the whole gang of despicable lackeys of the Kaiser and the bourgeoisie. They are just as much traitors to socialism as the Gomperses and Victor Bergers, the Hendersons and Webbs, the Renaudels and Vanderveldes. They represent that top section of workers who have been bribed by the bourgeoisie, those whom we Bolsheviks called (applying the name to the Russian Südekums, the Mensheviks) "agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement," and to whom the best socialists in America gave the magnificently expressive and very fitting title: "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class."...

The foregoing lines were written before the brutal and dastardly murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg by the Ebert and Scheidemann government. Those butchers, in their servility to the bourgeoisie, allowed the German whiteguards, the watchdogs of sacred capitalist property, to lynch Rosa Luxemburg, to murder Karl Liebknecht by shooting him in the back on the patently false plea that he "attempted to escape" (Russian tsarism often used that excuse to murder prisoners during its bloody suppression of the 1905 Revolution). At the same time those butchers protected the whiteguards with the authority of the government, which claims to be quite innocent and to stand above classes! No words can describe the foul and abominable character of the butchery perpetrated by alleged socialists. Evidently, history has chosen a path on which the role of "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class" must be played to the "last degree" of brutality, baseness and meanness. Let those simpletons, the Kautskyites, talk in their newspaper *Freiheit* about a "court" of representatives of "all" "socialist" parties (those servile souls insist that the Scheidemann executioners are socialists)! Those heroes of philistine stupidity and petty-bourgeois cowardice even fail to understand that the courts are organs of state power, and that the issue in the struggle and civil war now being waged in Germany is precisely one of who is to hold this power—the bourgeoisie, "served" by the Scheidemanns as executioners and instigators of pogroms, and by the Kautskys as glorifiers of "pure democracy," or the proletariat, which will overthrow the capitalist exploiters and crush their resistance.

The blood of the best representatives of the world proletarian International, of the unforgettable leaders of the world socialist revolution, will steel ever new masses of workers for the life-and-death struggle. And this struggle will lead to victory.

—V.I. Lenin, "Letter to the Workers of Europe and America" (21 January 1919)

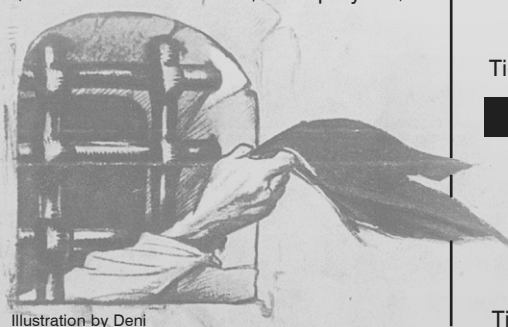
33rd Annual Holiday Appeal Fundraisers

Free All Class-War Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

OAKLAND

**Saturday, January 19
3 to 7 p.m.**

Oakstop, 1721 Broadway
Information: (510) 839-0852
\$10 Donation • students/unemployed \$5



NEW YORK CITY

**Saturday, January 26
3 to 6 p.m.**

131 E. 10th St., Manhattan
(St. Mark's Church in the Bowery,
Parish Hall, entrance on 11th St.
near 2nd Ave.)
Information: (212) 406-4252
Tickets \$10 • students/unemployed \$5

CHICAGO

**Sunday, January 27
3 to 7 p.m.**

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Tickets \$5 in advance, \$10 at the door

**This is not charity—it's an act of solidarity
with those in prison. Their fight is our fight!**

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WORKERS VANGUARD



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The closing date for news in this issue is January 15.

No. 1147

18 January 2019

For Workers Revolution in Indonesia!

Independence for West Papua!



Reuters photos

Left: Papuan student protest in Indonesian capital of Jakarta demands West Papuan self-determination, December 2016. Two hundred were arrested when police attacked with water cannon. Right: Cops attack workers from U.S.-based Freeport's massive Grasberg mine in Papua during three-month strike in 2011.

Australasian SPARTACIST

We reprint below the first part of an article from Australasian Spartacist No. 236 (Summer 2018/19), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League.

PART ONE

Next year [2019] marks 50 years since the 1969 “Act of Free Choice” that formalised West Papua’s incorporation into Indonesia. The former Dutch colonial rulers had ceded control seven years earlier. Under this cynically named Act, just over 1,000 Papuan leaders were selected by the Indonesian regime and threatened and coerced into voting unanimously in favour of integration. The rigged outcome was rubber-stamped by the United Nations, with Australia playing a leading role in having it rammed through. Faced with the indigenous population’s just strivings for self-determination, the Indonesian regime has carried out a brutal military occupation from the outset.

Between 1963 and 1969, it is estimated that as many as 30,000 Papuans were killed by the Indonesian military (TNI), with many more tortured and terrorised. Today, the estimated number of Papuans slaughtered ranges from 100,000 to 500,000. Simply raising the Morning Star flag, the symbol of West Papuan independence, is a crime that carries a 15-year jail sentence or worse. The 1998 Biak massacre is but one example of the countless atrocities carried out by the Indonesian state. In a coordinated action, Indonesian police, navy and military forces attacked, tortured, sexually abused and killed some 150 people following pro-independence gatherings. Mutilated bodies dumped at sea washed up on shore for days afterwards. Twenty years on, the Indonesian president, Joko Widodo, seeks to lull the populace with talk of giving “special attention to West Papua” while overseeing the continued military suppression of Papuan separatism. According to an article in the *Asia Times* (13 March), 8,000 Papuan independence activists have been imprisoned in the last two years.

Such repression is carried out with the

assistance of Australian and other imperialist forces [including the U.S.], who help train and supply the ruthless Kopassus special forces killers and the “anti-terror” squad known as Detachment 88 linked to the widespread torture and extra-judicial killings in West Papua. One Papuan activist summed up the Australian government’s role: “You give money for Indonesia to kill people in West Papua—you are the perpetrators of violence in West Papua” (ABC News online, 29 August 2012). We oppose all military ties between the Australian imperialists and the Indonesian regime.

With its vast wealth of natural resources, West Papua is a place of brutal exploitation where largely tribal subsistence farmers have been driven off their land without compensation. West Papua’s per capita GDP is more than 40 percent above the Indonesian average, yet the poverty rate among the indigenous population is nearly triple the country’s average. The region has the highest infant, child and maternal mortality rates in Indonesia as well as the worst literacy rates. A study in 2013 reported the occurrence of HIV/AIDS was almost 20 times the national average.

Despite dire hardship and the ferocious repression meted out against men, women and children, the Melanesian Papuans have been fighting tenaciously for decades for their independence, defiantly protesting, convening independence congresses, and waging a protracted low-level guerrilla insurgency by the armed wing of the Free Papua Movement (OPM), the National Liberation Army of West Papua. The Papuans’ struggle for independence must be championed by workers around the world, including in Australia. As a Leninist tribune of the people, we oppose the hideous oppression of indigenous Melanesians and link that opposition to a

program for socialist revolution. We stand for the military defence of the independence fighters against the Indonesian military, while giving no political support to bourgeois nationalist forces. We demand: **Indonesian troops out! Australia hands off! Independence for West Papua!**

We fight for a workers and peasants government centred on the indigenous Melanesians. However, our support for Papuan independence is not contingent upon socialist revolution. As Marxists, we recognise that the struggle for the rights of oppressed nations can be a motor force for revolution. Our stand for West Papuan independence is part of our perspective for socialist revolution in the Indonesian prison house of peoples. Indonesia’s multinational population, brought together under colonial rule, is predominantly Muslim. Today, with the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, religious minorities and the small ethnic Chinese population are targets for persecution. From Aceh to West Papua, oppressed national minorities have struggled against the stranglehold of the Javanese-chauvinist bourgeoisie and its military machine.

In suppressing the struggles of workers and the myriad oppressed minorities, the Indonesian bourgeoisie act as compradors for the Australian, U.S. and other imperialists. Enforcing capitalist stability, they ensure the imperialists’ continued plunder of the archipelago’s rich natural resources and super-exploitation of its toiling masses. This is sharply seen in West Papua with the currently majority U.S.-owned Freeport-McMoRan Grasberg mine. One of the world’s largest gold and copper mines, it is Indonesia’s largest taxpayer. While the Indonesian capitalists, corrupt governmental bodies and TNI all take their cut of the prof-

its, the mining conglomerates take the lion’s share under the protection of the imperialist-funded military.

Reasserting Leninism on the National Question

It is over 30 years since we have raised the correct demand for West Papuan independence in our Trotskyist press (see “Australia’s Indonesia Jitters,” *ASp* No. 109, Summer 1984/85). While we have opposed the murderous Indonesian military, demanding the TNI get out and Australian imperialism keep its bloody hands off, the call for independence for West Papua as for East Timor was dropped following the publication of a letter in *ASp* No. 110 (March/April 1985). Titled “East Timor/West Papua: The National Question,” and published without reply, the letter conflated political independence and national emancipation. In doing so, the conclusion was that, as these were largely tribal, pre-national societies, their independence could only be achieved by “breaking the grip of imperialism through region-wide socialist revolution.”

The premise of the letter was consistent with an anti-Leninist assimilationist framework for oppressed nations in multinational states then adhered to by the International Communist League (ICL). By concluding that these societies would be incapable of forging independent states under capitalism this letter served to denigrate the just fight of the East Timorese and West Papuans for national liberation. Despite the talk of “socialist revolution,” this attitude could only be to the benefit of the brutal Indonesian regime and its imperialist overlords.

As Lenin wrote in 1916:

“It would be no less mistaken to delete any of the points of the democratic programme, for example, the point of self-determination of nations, on the ground that it is ‘infeasible,’ or that it is ‘illusory’ under capitalism....

“...all the fundamental demands of political democracy are ‘possible of achievement’ under imperialism, only in an incomplete, in a mutilated form and as a rare exception (for example, the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905). The demand for the immediate liberation of the colonies, as advanced by all revolutionary Social-Democrats, is also ‘impossible of achievement’ under capitalism without a series of revolutions. This does not imply, however, that Social-Democracy must refrain from conducting an immediate and most determined struggle for *all* these demands—to refrain would merely be to the advantage of the bourgeoisie and reaction.”

—*The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*
(January-February 1916)

continued on page 4



NOTICE

**Workers Vanguard skips
an issue in January.
Our next issue will
be dated February 8.**

(continued from page 3)

While it is true that national emancipation cannot be won short of socialist revolution, it is false that independence cannot be achieved under capitalism.

Through an internal political fight in the mid-1990s, with key contributions from international cadre, the SL/A re-established the call for independence for East Timor. This was a qualitative step forward in taking a Leninist approach to the national question in Indonesia. It also put us in good stead when the chauvinist campaign for Australian troops to East Timor erupted in 1999 in response to the terror unleashed by TNI-sponsored pro-Indonesian death squads following the vote for independence. The SL/A was almost alone on the left in opposing the pro-imperialist campaign. Demanding independence for East Timor, we motivated the need for workers revolution in both Australia and Indonesia (see "Australian/UN Imperialist Troops Out of East Timor," *ASP* No. 170, Autumn 2000).

While reinstating the call for East Timor's independence, our internal fight did not draw broader programmatic conclusions and the question of West Papua was left untouched. In 2012, an attempt by the SL/A to restore the demand for independence was shelved following international discussion. The question was finally put on a Leninist foundation in the context of our recent international fight against adaptation to great power chauvinism and the concomitant longstanding perversion of Leninism on the national question. The outcome of this internal fight was codified at the Seventh International Conference of the ICL (see *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 65, Summer 2017).

An SL/A motion re-establishing the call for independence for West Papua was endorsed by the 2017 International Conference. Pointing to the convulsive 2011 Grasberg miners' strike that united Melanesian and non-Melanesian workers in struggle, and galvanised support from West Papuan independence fighters, the motion concluded, "This [strike] illustrates our perspective of linking the emancipation of the deeply exploited working class of the archipelago with the struggles of its minority peoples, and the necessity of linking the fight for workers revolution in Indonesia with the fight for workers revolution in the advanced imperialist countries."

West Papua and Dutch Colonialism

West Papua was one of three colonies carved out by the imperialists on the island of New Guinea in the 19th century. The eastern half of the island was divided between Germany and Britain. In 1906 Australia took over administration of the British colony and then seized the German colony with the outbreak of the first imperialist world war. The League of Nations (precursor to the UN) granted “trusteeship” to Australia in 1920. Thus

Australia got its very own colony as a result of World War I. With little prospect for major profits until mining opened up around the 1960s, Australia developed little infrastructure and ran a grotesquely racist, paternalistic colonial regime. Renamed Papua New Guinea (PNG), the country gained independence in 1975 and became a neo-colony of Australian imperialism.

The western half of New Guinea, now West Papua, was claimed by the Netherlands and known as Dutch New Guinea. It became part of the lucrative Netherlands East Indies that extended across the islands of the Indonesian archipelago. The indigenous Melanesian people, however, are distinct from the largely Austronesian ethnic groups of Indonesia. Made up of hundreds of ethnolinguistic groups, the Melanesians are more closely linked to the populations of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Kanaky (New Caledonia).

The Dutch government had little interest in developing Dutch New Guinea and little impact. Far greater inroads were made by Dutch and German missionaries, such that today most Papuans identify as

their surrender in August 1945, whereupon the Indonesian nationalists declared independence. When the Dutch subsequently attempted to reassert control, they were met with determined, widespread resistance by independence fighters. This struggle was supported by unions in India, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere, including Holland. Workers successfully fought together to black ban [refuse to handle] Dutch shipping to Indonesia, including preventing the transport of military equipment and personnel. Known as the Black Armada, these international proletarian solidarity actions played a vital role in stopping the Dutch from recolonising Indonesia, helping to open the way for independence.

Indonesian Nationalists Demand West Papua

It took four years of fierce armed struggle before the Dutch finally conceded Indonesian independence in late 1949. However, the Dutch refused to relinquish their New Guinea province to the new Indonesian bourgeois-nationalist regime, who claimed the territory as part of the old colonial Dutch East Indies. The Dutch



Melbourne 1997: Spartacists oppose Australian imperialism, call for independence for East Timor and workers revolution in Indonesia.

Christian. Government posts established around 1900 served mainly to assert territorial claims against the British, Germans and Americans. The almost impenetrable highlands remained largely unexplored until the Second World War. One thing the Dutch did establish in the inhospitable jungles of West Papua was the notorious disease-ridden Tanah Merah internment camp, built to hold Indonesian nationalist and Communist anti-colonial militants. Opened in 1927, the first prisoners, numbering more than 2,000, were survivors of two abortive uprisings in 1926-27 which were led by the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) and ruthlessly crushed by the Dutch.

During World War II, with the advance of the Japanese army into the Netherlands East Indies in 1942, the Dutch colonial administration fled to Australia. After three centuries of being under the boot of the Dutch, many Indonesians initially welcomed the Japanese imperialists as a liberating force. This illusion was soon shattered by the brutality of the new occupying power. In Dutch New Guinea, Papuans reportedly aided the Allied imperialist forces. Contrary to Australian nationalist mythology, in neighbouring PNG many inhabitants had little choice. Dragooned into service, those who rebelled or simply wanted to leave were kept by force. The Second World War in the Pacific, as in Europe, was an imperialist war between rival powers for markets and colonies. Australia's "war effort" was fuelled by vile anti-Japanese racism. Trotskyists fought for revolutionary defeatism of the imperialist combatants while standing for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state, and for the liberation of the colonies.

By mid-1944, U.S.-led forces under General MacArthur had defeated the Japanese military in western New Guinea and the Dutch oppressors returned to the region. However the Japanese remained in control of Java and other islands until

hoped to turn the province into a profitable neo-colony. (The discovery of a huge oil field was kept under wraps.) Making a show of having broken from the old forms of colonialism, they began to prepare the Papuan population for independence. West Papuans welcomed the moves to increased self-governance and the prospect of sovereignty.

Ongoing negotiations over West Papua between the Dutch and Indonesians completely broke down in 1952. By the following year, the dispute was the central political issue in Indonesia, with all parties, including the PKI, backing President Sukarno's strident determination to bring West Papua under Indonesian control. During the anti-colonial struggle, Dutch New Guinea had been promoted as an intrinsic part of the future nation—"Indonesia free—from Sabang to Merauke" was a popular slogan. It was also woven into the folklore of the independence struggle as many Indonesian martyrs had been interned and had died at the Tanah Merah prison camp. The capitalist state that emerged with independence was dominated by the Javanese majority, whose political representatives opposed autonomy or independence for the various peoples of the former Dutch colony.

Over the next decade, Sukarno used the continuing Dutch administration of West Papua to whip up nationalism and hold together the multitude of competing ethnic, religious and political groups within Indonesia. His “anti-colonial” rhetoric demanding Indonesian sovereignty over West Papua helped to harness potential political rivals to his leadership and divert attention from deteriorating economic conditions, including skyrocketing inflation. By 1957, growing bitterness towards the Javanese-centred government erupted in open revolt. Outer islands which were the major wealth producers (from oil, rubber, tin and copra) resented that the greater share of revenue went to the main, most populous island of Java.

In 1957-58, rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi, led by disgruntled regional army commanders in collusion with the imperialists, attempted to break from Jakarta. Faced with insurrections and economic chaos, Sukarno imposed a "State of War and Siege" and set about crushing the revolts. This was followed by a campaign whipping up a frenzy against the Dutch over West Papua and leading to the nationalisation of Dutch-owned companies. Sukarno also proclaimed the basis of government to be "Nasakom," the union of nationalist, religious and communist organisations (*nasionalisme-agama-komunisme*). Sukarno's bloc with the PKI was an attempt to both prop up his fragile bonapartist regime and to co-opt the Communists. By then the PKI had become the largest Communist Party in the capitalist world, with three million members, and over fifteen million in affiliated unions and peasant, women's and other associations.

Imperialist Cold War Machinations

In the 1950s, the imperialists' anti-Communist Cold War against the Soviet Union was in full swing. While the United States had emerged from World War II as the preeminent imperialist power, the Soviet Union had also gained enormous international prestige through its leading role in defeating Nazi Germany. U.S. imperialism and its Australian junior ally watched developments in Indonesia with growing concern. Already revolutionary upheavals in the rest of Asia had seen peasant-based guerrilla armies in China and North Korea sweep away capitalist rule, consolidating bureaucratically deformed workers states modelled on the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. Communist-led forces in Vietnam had defeated the French colonialists at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and were now fighting against a U.S.-backed puppet regime in the South. Communist-led insurgencies had erupted in Burma (Myanmar), Malaya and elsewhere. Capitalist Indonesia's professed "non-alignment" with either Washington or Moscow and, above all, the growth of the PKI was of major concern to the imperialists, who wanted to ensure that the toiling masses of Indonesia did not take the Communist road. To that end, they began developing closer ties with the Indonesian military, fostering anti-communist elements within the officer corps.

By the early 1960s, escalating tension over control of West Papua led the Indonesians and Dutch imperialists to the brink of war. Sukarno played the two camps of the Cold War off against each other, anticipating that the substantial military aid received from the Soviets would force Washington's intervention into the dispute over West Papua. In 1961, newly elected U.S. president, John F. Kennedy, spearheaded a drive to stop Sukarno moving closer to the Soviet Union by pressuring the Dutch to abandon their claim on West Papua. The Dutch finally ceded West Papua to Indonesia in a 1962 "New York Agreement" overseen by Washington. Jakarta was "obligated" under the agreement to conduct a referendum on self-determination no later than 1969. However, once in control, the Indonesian military acted to stamp out any political dissent.

By 1967, General Suharto and his military dictatorship had risen to power in Indonesia through the slaughter of over a million Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese. One of the most savage massacres in modern history, the white terror that raged throughout the archipelago from late 1965 through early 1966 was perpetrated by an alliance between the army and Islamic fanatics mobilised in a holy war against Communism with the direct support of the imperialists. The killings were so ferocious that rivers were choked with human corpses. Hundreds of thousands more were arrested and thousands interned for years, including the renowned anti-colonial novelist, Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

WORKERS VANGUARD

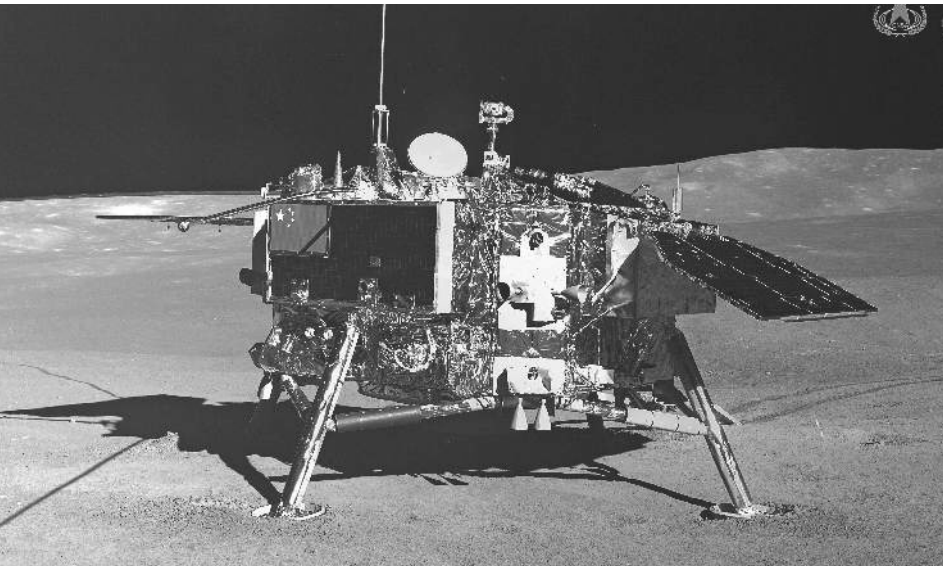
China...

(continued from page 8)

technological development, which was spectacularly shown by the recent landing of the Chang'e-4 lunar probe, the first-ever on the far side of the moon. One of the imperialists' preoccupations is making sure that advanced technology primarily remains their domain. Trump has stepped up measures begun in the Obama administration to thwart Chinese investments in American firms that provide access to advanced technology. Germany has also become paranoid about Chinese takeovers, particularly following the acquisition of German robotics manufacturer KUKA by the Chinese conglomerate Midea. Huawei is the world leader in next-generation "5G" mobile network technology and is the global No. 2 smartphone maker (ahead of Apple). Meng, whose father is the former People's Liberation Army engineer who founded the company, is the public face of Huawei.

U.S. officials fret that Huawei's dominance in the development of 5G technology gives Beijing vast powers of global surveillance. That is rich coming from the masters of government snooping in Washington. Six years ago, Edward Snowden released documents exposing the U.S. government's all-pervasive spying on its own citizens, foreign nationals and even allied heads of state. As Snowden revealed, the National Security Agency has routinely planted "backdoors" in Cisco routers and other network equipment being shipped overseas. It also hacked Huawei's internal computer network and accessed its email archive, customer list and source code for its software products.

Australia and New Zealand have joined the U.S. in attempting to prohibit Huawei products from being used in the rollout of



China National Space Administration

January 11: China's Chang'e-4 mission is the first ever to explore the far side of the moon from its surface.

5G technology. Last month, Japan banned Huawei from being awarded government contracts. British Telecom has announced that it will remove existing Huawei equipment from its networks and not deploy Huawei 5G switching, despite the fact that Britain's spy center GCHQ has repeatedly signed off on Huawei products. At the same time, a number of wireless providers in Europe that hold agreements with Huawei have continued to test its products for a future 5G rollout.

Last week, after U.S. officials had fanned out over Europe to bully governments as well as Huawei's parts suppliers, Polish authorities arrested a Huawei sales director and another telecom employee on espionage charges. In conjunction with the arrests, Poland's internal affairs minister proclaimed that the EU and NATO should consider jointly excluding Huawei from their markets. Beijing countered Meng's arrest by detaining two Canadian nation-

als on charges of undermining national security. Now, on January 14, a Canadian was sentenced to death for drug smuggling in China, notorious, like the U.S., for its use of the barbaric death penalty.

China's impressive development in recent decades is used by CCP leaders to promote the false notion that they can transform China into the global superpower of the 21st century by trading and collaborating with the imperialists, who dominate the world market. It is a binding article of faith of Stalinist bureaucrats going back to Stalin himself that "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists is achievable. A December 18 article in China's state-run *Global Times* insists that "China's high-technology sector is not vulnerable" due to the extensive economic ties between the two countries.

Contrary to such illusions, the U.S. imperialists have demonstrated their ability to cripple Chinese tech giants. For a period

of time last year, the Trump administration cut off export of advanced microprocessors manufactured by U.S. companies to another Chinese telecom, ZTE, threatening its very existence. Some 90 percent of chips used in China are either imported or manufactured by foreign-owned firms in China, even while China manufactures 90 percent of the world's IT hardware. Advanced chip technology is an engine of today's global economy and a key to military prowess. Trump only dropped the ban on ZTE in order to use its fate as a bargaining chip in his strong-arming of China over trade.

China is a concentrated expression of the contradictions inherent to a workers state ruled by a privileged bureaucratic caste. On the one hand, it has become the second-largest economy in the world, creating a massive, militant proletariat. Testifying to the superiority of a collectivized economy, China's output continued to grow while the capitalist world plunged into economic meltdown a decade ago.

On the other hand, China has a much lower overall level of labor productivity than the advanced capitalist countries. This is glaringly seen in the countryside, where nearly half the population lives, supplying the bulk of the country's army of migrant workers. Decades of CCP market reforms have vastly increased inequality. To maintain their rule, the Stalinist bureaucrats vigorously repress any independent political expression by Chinese workers, who continue to engage in widespread protests and strikes.

The ruling CCP bureaucracy must be ousted by a proletarian political revolution in order to institute a regime of workers democracy. The rule of workers and peasants councils would fight to preserve and extend the working-class property forms and pursue the struggle for socialism worldwide. The all-sided, egalitarian modernization of China hinges on the sharing, allocation and further development of world resources that will be made possible through socialist revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries.

Only the establishment of an international planned economy can unleash the productive forces necessary to abolish want and lay the foundation for a socialist society. To bring that consciousness to the proletariat and provide leadership in struggle requires an international revolutionary party, with sections in countries across the globe. Such a party must be based on the lessons of the October 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, the first four Congresses of the Communist International, and Trotsky's later struggle to build the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. This is the perspective of the International Communist League. ■

Mumia...

(continued from page 8)

(PCRA) in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The judge is concerned that "the slightest appearance of bias or lack of impartiality undermines the entire judiciary." The whole capitalist state is irrevocably biased against the working class and the oppressed, and the racist attacks faced by Mumia in the courts are legion.

Presiding over Mumia's trial was Judge Albert Sabo, a retired member of the Fraternal Order of Police that has led a frenzied campaign for Mumia's execution. Sabo was known to Philadelphia attorneys as a "prosecutor in robes" and the "king of death row." He ejected Mumia from critical portions of the trial, assisted the prosecution in excluding all but one black person from the jury and was overheard by a court reporter vowing to help the prosecution "fry the n----r." Even before Castille ascended to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, that tribunal endorsed Sabo's open bias, as have the federal

courts, which turned down Mumia's petitions for *habeas corpus* relief.

Mumia's PCRA appeals, which are up for review, document the overwhelming evidence of his innocence. This includes not only physical evidence but the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. Beverly explained that he "was hired, along with another guy, and paid to shoot and kill Faulkner." He added: "I had heard that Faulkner was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen." At the time, virtually the entire chain of command for the "investigation" of Faulkner's death was under suspicion in federal corruption probes.

As we go to press, current Philadelphia D.A. Larry Krasner has not yet announced whether he will appeal Tucker's ruling. Krasner has been embraced by liberals and reformists like the International Socialist Organization, Socialist Alternative and Workers World Party as a "progressive" prosecutor. There can be no such thing. Following his election in 2017, Krasner tapped Castille for his transition team and, like his adviser, has been fighting to

keep Mumia incarcerated. On December 28 and again a few days later, Mumia's supporters rallied outside Krasner's office, calling on him to "do the right thing." From the Confederacy-loving former attorney general Jefferson Sessions to liberals like Krasner, prosecutors are an arm of the racist capitalist state for whom doing "the right thing" is repressing those deemed to pose a threat to capitalist law and order.

Whether or not Krasner appeals, Tucker's ruling opens up what will likely be years of litigation, including a return to the federal courts. While we welcome Mumia's opportunity to once again challenge his frame-up conviction, we have no illusion that the courts today will be any less biased against him than they have been in the past decades.

Mumia was recently deprived of access to phone and mail under the pretext of his having too much mail and newspapers in his cell. The vendetta against Mumia exemplifies the racist rulers' determination to silence through state terror those fighting for black freedom. In this society built and maintained on black oppression, the first line of repression is directed at the besieged black population, with the ultimate aim of dividing the working class along racial and ethnic lines to prevent joint struggle against the capitalist oppressors.

The Partisan Defense Committee took up Mumia's case in 1987 at a time when it was little known. The PDC and SL publicized his case, raised critically important funds for his legal defense and fought to mobilize the social power of the multi-racial labor movement in his defense, including through labor-centered united-front protests demanding Mumia's freedom and abolition of the racist death penalty. These efforts brought his case to trade unions representing millions around the world, from the U.S. to South Africa.

We urge our readers to donate to Mumia's legal defense. Checks payable to the National Lawyers Guild should be sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, Johanna Fernandez, 158-18 Riverside Drive W., Apt. 6C-50, New York, NY 10032, earmarked "For Mumia Abu-Jamal's Legal Defense." ■

Partisan Defense Committee

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Teachers...

(continued from page 1)

UTLA teachers and the city’s working people and oppressed face a common enemy and are natural allies in the fight for decent wages and better working conditions, which goes hand in hand with the fight for free, quality, integrated and secular public education for all. Central to this fight is expanding bilingual education in a district where some 25 percent of students are not proficient in English, and over 90 different languages are spoken. Bilingual education is vital for Spanish-speaking and all immigrant communities. Not only could young people retain their native language but also U.S.-born students could become fluent in more than one language.

Superintendent Beutner, a former investment banker, and other financial titans are pushing a sinister “portfolio district” model that would break up LAUSD into 32 competing networks—a plan that amounts to wholesale privatization and union-busting. In other cities like Detroit, Newark and New Orleans, such schemes have targeted so-called “failing” schools, resulting in mass firings of teachers and staff and the proliferation of non-union private and charter schools. For more than two decades, corporate education reform has been pushed by both capitalist parties. The Obama administration and its education secretary, Arne Duncan, victimized teachers whose students did not score well on tests, clobbered teachers unions and enforced school closures, with devastating impact in cities like Chicago.

Over the last decade, UTLA membership has shrunk by one-quarter due to the spread of charters, which serve to undermine public education and smash the unions. Today, LAUSD has more charters than any other U.S. school district. Charters were given a boost in 2000 with Proposition 39, which mandated that California public schools make their facilities, from science and computer labs to art and special education rooms, available to charter schools colocated on the campus. Since 2008, nearly \$600 million annually has been stripped from state education funds to bolster the charter industry. Charter schools, which include for-profit and religious ventures, increase racial segregation and class inequality in education and must be opposed.

Significantly, the UTLA has succeeded in unionizing ten charters, and is currently trying to organize L.A.’s largest charter school group. In what would be the first charter school strike in the district (and the second ever in the U.S.), UTLA members at three South L.A. charters operated by The Accelerated Schools may walk out this week. This presents a golden opportunity to forge unity in action between public and charter school educators. They should strike



WV Photo

January 15: UTLA-organized teachers at South L.A. charter school operated by The Accelerated Schools launch strike coinciding with union’s districtwide work stoppage.

15 de enero: maestros sindicalizados de UTLA en una escuela chárter en South L.A., operada por The Accelerated Schools, estallan huelga coincidiendo con la de todo el distrito.

together in a fight for an equal wages and benefits package at the highest level.

More broadly, the UTLA should mobilize during the strike to organize *all* the non-union charters, starting with the colocated schools. Bringing charter school teachers en masse into the UTLA and winning equal pay and work conditions would seriously undercut this union-busting tool. The union should appeal to charter teachers to honor its picket lines, while demanding no reprisals against those who do. A commitment to fight retaliation by the charter bosses would go a long way with non-union charter school teachers, who face onerous conditions in their own schools. *Picket lines mean don’t cross!*

Leading up to the strike, LAUSD pulled out all the stops to intimidate teachers, claiming that the schools will be kept open and threatening to punish absent students for truancy. The district has authorized \$3 million to fund a massive strike-breaking effort, offering scabs up to \$385 a day to cross picket lines. The district is also beefing up security by deploying campus cops, backed by other police, at picket locations. Campus police and security guards are not workers! These are the same racist forces that criminalize black and Latino students by subjecting them to random searches and police-state conditions. Their job is to victimize students and regiment teachers; during a strike, they protect scabs.

Mass pickets must be built to stop scabbing and *to shut the schools down*. Teachers should enlist other school workers and the rest of city labor to reinforce the picket lines. There is significant support for the UTLA strike among the ranks of SEIU Local 99, which represents janitors, cafeteria workers, bus

drivers and teacher assistants. Local 99 members at ten schools overwhelmingly signed on to engage in sympathy strikes. This is an important act of elementary union solidarity, especially given that the SEIU leadership has made no attempt to mobilize systemwide. Instead, the SEIU tops are encouraging members to report to work—that is, to scab—while wearing ribbons and joining pickets before and after work!

Officials of the California School Employees Association, which represents clerical, professional and technical staff, have simply left it up to members to honor the UTLA picket lines as individuals, setting them up for victimization. The UTLA teachers must demand: No reprisals against sympathy strikers! There needs to be coordinated struggle together with the teachers in order to maximize the collective strength of the unions. Such joint struggle, with other school workers and charter school teachers alike, would be advanced by setting a common contract expiration, paving the way to eventually consolidating one single union in the school system.

An effective class-struggle fight in defense of the teachers unions and for quality public education requires going up against the labor bureaucracy’s embrace of the capitalist Democratic Party. Even as the Democrats wage war against the unions, the trade-union leadership preaches a strategy of reliance on these so-called “friends of labor.” Bigwig bureaucrats like Randi Weingarten, head of the American Federation of Teachers, are key cogs in the Democratic Party establishment. The Democrats represent the interests of big business no less than the Republicans. Their occasional pro-worker rhetoric and empty promises

serve to sow illusions in this brutal profit system. All the better to stab the working class in the back when it counts.

Case in point: Antonio Villaraigosa, former UTLA organizer, was elected L.A. mayor in 2005 with the backing of the teachers union and went on a rampage against it as “the largest obstacle to creating quality schools.” Seizing control of the school board, Villaraigosa fired teachers and attacked seniority under the guise of fixing “low performing” campuses. After being stung by Villaraigosa, the labor bureaucrats have continued to back “progressive” Democrats, keeping workers chained to the class enemy.

The UTLA endorsed new California governor Gavin Newsom, praising him for his supposed commitment to public education. Since his election, Newsom’s recurring message has been one of fiscal discipline and the need to “live within our means.” His new budget includes additional spending on social programs, but when state coffers are less flush, as in 2012 when he was lieutenant-governor, Newsom is right there pushing austerity and cutbacks to those very same programs.

The current UTLA leadership under President Alex Caputo-Pearl won election on the Union Power slate in 2014 and again in 2017 by adopting a militant posture; in office, though, Caputo-Pearl and Union Power have proved anything but. Teachers have been on the job for over a year and a half without a contract, as the UTLA tops have conceded to multiple rounds of mediation and “fact-finding” as well as to other legal straitjackets that hobble strikes. Their losing strategy to fight charter schools is to get their favored Democrats, like Jackie Goldberg, elected to the school board, an administrative body whose very purpose is to keep teachers in line.

Such class collaboration by the union misleaders is responsible for the decades-long decline in labor struggle that has allowed the ruling class to push through its attacks on education and public employee unions. What is needed is a class-struggle leadership of the unions—one based on the understanding that the interests of workers and the oppressed have nothing to do with those of the ruling class.

A leadership committed to a program of *independence* from the bosses’ state and political parties would transform the unions into battalions of struggle, not only to improve the livelihoods of their members but also to address the felt needs of all the oppressed. Such a leadership would support the building of a workers party dedicated to the fight for socialized medicine, for quality, integrated housing and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, as part of the struggle to overthrow this decaying capitalist order. Only socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers government can rebuild society anew. ■

PDC...

(continued from page 2)

incarceration, only two of these innocent prisoners, Debbie Africa and Mike Africa, have been released on parole.

Jaan Laaman and **Thomas Manning** are the two remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank “expropriations” and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and ’80s. Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. Laaman and Manning face prison torture, having been isolated in solitary confinement for extended periods. Both have been deprived of necessary medical attention. The Ohio 7’s politics were once shared by thousands of radicals but, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the “respectable” left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not crimes. They should not have served a day in prison.

Ed Poindexter is a former Black Panther supporter and leader of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. He and his former co-defendant, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, who died in prison in 2016, were victims of the FBI’s deadly COINTELPRO operation, under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. They were railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and Poindexter has now spent more than 48 years behind bars. Nebraska courts have repeatedly denied Poindexter a new trial despite the fact that crucial evidence, long suppressed by the FBI, proved that testimony of the state’s key witness was perjured. (For more, see “The Frame-Up of the Omaha Two—Free Ed Poindexter!” WV No. 1145, 30 November 2018.)

Nina Droz Franco was arrested while participating in a mass rally in San Juan during a Puerto Rican general strike on May Day 2017. She has been in prison ever since. She was indicted by federal prosecutors based on outrageous claims that she had tried to burn down a bank. The main piece of “evidence” was video footage of a small piece of paper burn-

ing on a marble walkway outside the building. Facing decades in prison, Nina took a plea deal on the lesser charge of conspiracy and has been sentenced to over three years. Nina Droz Franco is the victim of a transparent frame-up by the U.S. colonial overlords, who have bloodily repressed and starved the Puerto

Rican people for more than a century.

Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeal events will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not charity but an elementary act of solidarity. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252. ■

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Maestros...

(viene de la página 1)

Reimprimimos aquí un volante publicado y distribuido ayer por la Spartacist League de Los Ángeles.

* * *

Se ha trazado la línea de batalla para los 30 mil maestros de United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), en huelga por primera vez en tres décadas. En años recientes, miembros de UTLA han enfrentado ataques constantes por parte de la junta del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Los Ángeles (LAUSD, por sus siglas en inglés), su multimillonario superintendente Austin Beutner y políticos del Partido Demócrata quienes llevan mucho tiempo privando de fondos a la educación en esta ciudad. Su meta es aplastar a UTLA y abrir el camino para planes de privatización del sistema escolar K-12 [desde el kínder hasta el 12° grado], principalmente a través de la extensión de las escuelas chárter. El resultado de esta lucha tendrá mucha importancia para los educadores a lo largo del país. Previas huelgas escolares en los estados de West Virginia y Arizona enfrentaron a gobiernos estatales republicanos; pero los demócratas también han estado a la vanguardia en la arremetida contra la educación pública y los sindicatos de maestros, incluso en California, un foco de la “resistencia” anti-Trump. **¡Victoria a la huelga de maestros!**

Ya que destrozaron la educación pública, los gobernantes de la ciudad y sus medios comprados, como *Los Angeles Times*, culpan a los maestros —con sobrecarga laboral y mala remuneración— por el estado pésimo de las escuelas. Así intentan incitar a los padres de familia contra los sindicatos. Las reivindicaciones de UTLA, que se centran en satisfacer las necesidades de los alumnos, son muy modestas: un aumento de salario de 6.5 por ciento, retroactivo a julio de 2016 (que apenas refleja la inflación); grupos más pequeños en un distrito en que 30, 40 o hasta 50 estudiantes están metidos en un salón; y más fondos para el personal de apoyo esencial, bibliotecarios, enfermeros y orientadores. El costo de la vida en Los Ángeles está entre los más altos de EE.UU. y los maestros se ven obligados a gastar cantidades grandes de su propio dinero en papelería y otros materiales. Mientras tanto, el LAUSD, que ha acumulado una reserva masiva de casi 2 mil millones de dólares, dice que no tiene dinero.

En una ciudad con muchísima desigualdad, donde la riqueza extrema contrasta con la indigencia total, el LAUSD es el segundo distrito escolar más grande del país. Más de tres cuartos de los alumnos en este distrito altamente segregado viven en la pobreza, incluyendo a miles que no tienen hogar. Más de 73 por ciento de los alumnos en el LAUSD son latinos y 8 por ciento son negros; decenas de miles tienen padres indocumentados que viven bajo la amenaza de ser deportados. Los racistas gobernantes capitalistas de Estados Unidos no ven razón para pagarles a los maestros salarios sindicales, ni para invertir en escuelas para la educación de estos jóvenes de grupos minoritarios y de clase obrera. La misma clase gobernante que ataca a los maestros de UTLA relega a millones de trabajadores, latinos, negros e inmigrantes a empleos con bajos salarios y a viviendas y servicios de salud inferiores.

Los maestros de UTLA y los trabajadores y los oprimidos de la ciudad enfrentan a un enemigo común, y son aliados naturales en la lucha por salarios decentes y mejores condiciones laborales, la cual va de la mano con la lucha por educación pública gratuita, de calidad, integrada y laica para todos. Algo fundamental para esta lucha es extender la educación bilingüe en un distrito en que un 25 por ciento de los alumnos no domina el inglés y donde se hablan más de 90 idiomas diferentes. La educación bilingüe es de vital importancia para las comunidades que hablan español y de migrantes. Los jóvenes podrían retener su lengua nativa, y además los alumnos nacidos en EE.UU. podrían dominar más de un idioma.

El superintendente Beutner, previamente un banquero de inversión, junto con otros titanes financieros están impulsando un siniestro modelo llamado “portfolio district” en que se dividiría el LAUSD en 32 redes que compiten entre sí —un plan que equivale a la privatización sistemática y la destrucción de los sindicatos—. En otras ciudades, como Detroit, Newark y Nueva Orleans, tales planes tenían a las llamadas “escuelas fallidas” en la mira, y esto resultó en el despido masivo de maestros y personal y la proliferación de escuelas privadas y chárter sin sindicatos. Por más de dos décadas, ambos partidos capitalistas han impulsado la reforma corporativa de la educación. El gobierno de Obama y su secretario de educación, Arne Duncan, victimizaron a maestros cuyos alumnos no salieron bien en los exámenes, atacaron a los sindicatos de maestros e impusieron cierres de escuelas, con un impacto devastador en ciudades como Chicago.

A lo largo de la última década, la membresía de UTLA se ha reducido un cuarto dada la propagación de las escuelas chárter, que sirven para minar la educación pública y aplastar a los sindicatos. Hoy día, el LAUSD es el distrito escolar de EE.UU. con más escuelas chárter. Las escuelas chárter recibieron un estímulo en el 2000 cuando la Propuesta 39 obligó a las escuelas públicas de California a compartir sus instalaciones —desde laboratorios de ciencias y salones de cómputo hasta talleres de arte y aulas para educación especial— con las escuelas chárter ubicadas en el mismo lugar. Desde 2008, cada año se le han restado casi 600 millones de dólares a los fondos estatales para la educación pública para reforzar la industria chárter. Hay que oponerse a las escuelas chárter, que además de incluir empresas con fines de lucro y religiosas, aumentan la segregación racial y la desigualdad clasista en la educación.

UTLA ha logrado sindicalizar diez escuelas chárter, lo cual es significativo, y actualmente está intentando sindicalizar el grupo más grande de escuelas chárter de Los Ángeles. Puede ser que miembros de UTLA en tres escuelas chárter de South L.A. administradas por The Accelerated Schools se vayan a huelga; si es así, sería la primera huelga de escuelas chárter del distrito (y sólo la segunda en Estados Unidos). Ésta es una oportunidad excelente para forjar solidaridad en la acción entre educadores de escuelas públicas y chárter. Deben irse a huelga juntos en una lucha por los mismos salarios y prestaciones al nivel más alto.

En general, UTLA debe movilizarse durante la huelga para sindicalizar a ***todas*** las escuelas chárter no sindicalizadas, empezando con las escuelas ubicadas en el mismo lugar. Organizar masivamente a los maestros de las escuelas chárter como parte de UTLA y ganar pago y condiciones laborales iguales debilitaría fuertemente a estos instrumentos antisindicales. El sindicato debe llamar a los maestros de las escuelas chárter a respetar sus líneas de piquete, a la vez exigiendo que no haya represalias contra aquellos que lo hagan. Un compromiso de lucha contra cualquier sanción tendría un impacto importante entre los maestros no sindicalizados en las escuelas chárter, quienes están sujetos a condiciones onerosas en sus propias escuelas. **¡Los piquetes de huelga significan no cruzar!**

En la antesala de la huelga, el LAUSD hizo todo lo que pudo para intimidar a los maestros, afirmando que las escuelas se mantendrían abiertas y amenazando a los alumnos que no asistan con castigarlos por ausencia escolar. El distrito ha autorizado el uso de tres millones de dólares para pagar un esfuerzo masivo rompesindicatos, en que ofrecen hasta \$385 por día a los esquiroles por cruzar líneas de piquete. El distrito está también reforzando la seguridad al desplegar policías escolares, apoyados por otros policías, en los lugares donde hay piquetes. ¡Los policías y vigilantes escolares no son trabajadores! Son las mismas fuerzas racistas que criminalizan a los alumnos negros y latinos al someterlos a inspecciones y condiciones de estado policiaco. Su trabajo es vic-

timizar a los alumnos y regimentar a los maestros; durante una huelga, protegen a los esquiroles.

Se debe organizar piquetes masivos para detener a los esquiroles y ***cerrar las escuelas***. Los maestros deberían reclutar a otros trabajadores escolares, y de la ciudad en general, para reforzar las líneas de piquete. Hay apoyo importante para la huelga de UTLA entre las filas del Local 99 de SEIU, que representa a trabajadores de limpieza y de cafetería, choferes de autobuses y asistentes de maestros. Una abrumadora mayoría de miembros del Local 99 en diez escuelas se apuntaron para llevar a cabo huelgas de solidaridad. Esta es una muestra importante de solidaridad sindical elemental, especialmente dado que la dirección del SEIU no ha movido un dedo para movilizar al sindicato en su conjunto. Al contrario, ¡los dirigentes del SEIU están alentando a sus miembros a ir al trabajo —es decir esquirolear— al mismo tiempo que porten moños y se unan a los piquetes antes y después de su trabajo!

Los funcionarios de la California School Employees Association, que representa a personal administrativo, profesional y técnico, han simplemente dejado a juicio de sus miembros como individuos decidir si respetan las líneas de piquete de UTLA, lo cual tiende una trampa para que los victimen. Los maestros de UTLA deben exigir: ¡Ninguna represalia contra los huelguistas solidarios! Se necesita una lucha coordinada con los maestros para maximizar la fuerza colectiva de los sindicatos. Una lucha conjunta, con otros trabajadores escolares y maestros de las escuelas chárter, avanzaría con el establecimiento de una fecha común de vencimiento de contrato, lo cual pavimentaría el camino hacia la consolidación finalmente de un sindicato único para todo el sistema escolar.

Una lucha clasista efectiva en defensa de los sindicatos de maestros y por educación pública de calidad requiere enfrentarse a la burocracia sindical en su apego al Partido Demócrata capitalista. Incluso mientras los demócratas libran la guerra contra los sindicatos, la dirección de los sindicatos predica una estrategia de confiar en estos supuestos “amigos de los trabajadores”. Los caudillos sindicales como la burócrata Randi Weingarten, líder de la American Federation of Teachers, son piezas clave en el establishment del Partido Demócrata. Los demócratas, no menos que los republicanos, representan los intereses del gran capital. Su esporádica retórica proobrero y promesas vacías sirven para sembrar ilusiones en este salvaje sistema de ganancias, con el fin de poder darle una puñalada por la espalda a la clase obrera en momentos clave.

Un buen ejemplo: Antonio Villaraigosa, antiguo organizador de UTLA, fue electo como alcalde de Los Ángeles en 2005 con el apoyo del sindicato de maestros, y luego hizo una campaña en su contra diciendo que era “el principal obstáculo

para poder crear escuelas de calidad”. Al tomar control de la junta directiva escolar, Villaraigosa despidió a maestros y atacó el sistema de antigüedad con el pretexto de arreglar las escuelas de “bajo desempeño”. Después de este ataque de Villaraigosa, los burócratas sindicales han seguido apoyando a demócratas “progresistas”, manteniendo así a los obreros encadenados al enemigo de clase.

UTLA endosó al nuevo gobernador de California, Gavin Newsom, y lo elogió por su supuesto compromiso con la educación pública. Desde que fue elegido, el mensaje recurrente de Newsom ha sido acerca de la disciplina fiscal y la necesidad de “vivir dentro de nuestras posibilidades”. Su nuevo presupuesto incluye gasto adicional para programas sociales; pero cuando las arcas del estado están menos llenas, como en 2012 cuando era lugarteniente del gobernador, Newsom le entra con todo para impulsar la austeridad y los recortes para esos mismos programas.

La dirección actual de UTLA bajo el presidente Alex Caputo-Pearl ganó la elección con la planilla Union Power en 2014 y otra vez en 2017 al adoptar una postura combativa; sin embargo, ya ejerciendo Caputo-Pearl y Union Power han sido cualquier cosa menos combativos. Los maestros han estado trabajando por más de un año y medio sin contrato, mientras los líderes de UTLA han aceptado múltiples rondas de mediación e “investigación de los hechos” así como otras camisas de fuerza legales que obstaculizan las huelgas. Su estrategia perdedora para luchar contra las escuelas chárter es lograr que sus demócratas favoritos, como Jackie Goldberg, ganen las elecciones para la junta directiva escolar, un cuerpo administrativo cuyo mismo propósito es mantener a raya a los maestros.

La colaboración de clases por parte de los falsos dirigentes sindicales ha causado el deterioro de lucha obrera durante décadas, lo cual ha permitido que la clase gobernante pueda atacar la educación y los sindicatos de trabajadores públicos. Lo que se necesita es una dirección clasista de los sindicatos —una dirección basada en el entendimiento de que los intereses de los obreros y los oprimidos no tienen nada que ver con los de la clase gobernante—.

Una dirección entregada al programa de ***independencia*** obrera respecto al estado y los partidos políticos de los patrones transformaría a los sindicatos en batallones de lucha, no sólo para mejorar el sustento de sus miembros, sino también para satisfacer las necesidades que sienten todos los oprimidos. Una dirección como ésta apoyaría la construcción de un partido obrero dedicado a la lucha por servicios de salud socializados, vivienda de calidad y racialmente integrada y por plenos derechos de ciudadanía para todos los inmigrantes, como parte de la lucha por derrocar este orden capitalista en decadencia. Sólo la revolución socialista y el establecimiento de un gobierno obrero puede construir una nueva sociedad. ■

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Imperialist Provocation Against China

On December 1, Canadian police in Vancouver arrested Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Chinese telecom giant Huawei, on the pretext that she had supposedly committed “bank fraud” in connection with the criminal U.S. sanctions against Iran. Canada, a junior imperialist partner to the U.S., acted at the behest of Washington. Out on bail, Meng now faces possible extradition to the U.S. Part of a broad imperialist offensive against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, the arrest of Meng is a sinister provocation against China. The Spartacist League/U.S. and our comrades of the Trotskyist League in Quebec and Canada demand: **Drop the charges now!**

The U.S. is ramping up its counter-revolutionary drive against China, today the most powerful of the countries in which capitalism has been overthrown. On a military level, Trump is implementing Obama’s “pivot to Asia,” which has been stymied by U.S. entanglements in the Near East. Long-standing efforts by the U.S. imperialists to militarily encircle China have heated up with a series of confrontations in the South China Sea, where China has taken important steps to fortify its defenses, as well as ongoing arms sales to Taiwan. On an economic level, Trump’s tariffs threaten a broad trade war.

The ultimate aim behind these measures is to restore capitalist rule in China and make it one giant sweatshop under the imperialist boot. The Democrats and Republicans fully agree on such fundamentals, for all the squabbling between the two capitalist parties currently on display



CTV News

11 December 2018: Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou exits Canadian court in Vancouver following release on \$7.5 million bail.

Huawei Executive Arrested Drop the Charges!

in Washington. The trade-union bureaucracy, with its “America First” protectionism and anti-Communist China-bashing, plays right into this reactionary campaign.

Workers in the U.S. and around the world have a fundamental class interest in defending China against the imperialists. The 1949 Chinese Revolution, carried out

by Mao Zedong’s peasant-guerrilla army, overturned the rule of the capitalists and landlords and created a workers state, liberating the country from brutal imperialist domination. With an economy centrally based on collectivized property forms, hundreds of millions were lifted out of poverty, mass literacy was achieved, and women made huge strides over their miserably oppressed past symbolized by footbinding. As Trotskyists, we stand for unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution.

However, the workers state was deformed from its inception by the rule of a parasitic bureaucracy fundamentally like the one that governed the Soviet Union under Stalin and his successors. From Mao’s time to today, the policies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have expressed the nationalist Stalinist dogma that socialism—a society of material abundance marked by the disappearance of classes—can be built in a single country. This program is utterly counterposed to the Marxist program of world proletarian revolution, the prerequisite to creating an internationally planned economy that would eliminate scarcity, including by harnessing the most sophisticated technology. We are for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with the rule of workers and peasants councils committed to the fight for world socialism.

While several U.S. allies complain about Trump’s trade war, they are all united with Washington on blocking China’s continued

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Mumia Wins Right to Appeal Frame-Up Conviction

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent Free Him Now!

After 37 years behind bars—30 of them on death row—class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has won the right to challenge his frame-up conviction for the killing of Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. On December 27, Judge Leon Tucker of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas threw out the Pennsylvania Supreme Court decisions from 1998 to 2012 that rubber-stamped Mumia’s frame-up on the basis that one of its justices, Ronald Castille, refused to recuse himself. Castille had been Philly district attorney during Mumia’s first appeal of his conviction and death sentence in the late 1980s.

Judge Tucker was ruling on Mumia’s appeal based on the 2016 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Williams v. Pennsylvania*. In the Williams case, Castille as D.A. authorized his prosecutors to seek the death penalty. When Terrance Williams later appealed, Castille was among the judges on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court who affirmed the conviction and sentence. The U.S. Supreme Court held that Castille’s “significant, personal involvement as a prosecutor in a critical decision

in the defendant’s case” raised “the risk of actual bias in the judicial proceeding.”

In his decision, Tucker cites Castille’s boasting of being a “law and order” prosecutor who put 45 men on death row and his efforts to expedite execution of convicted “police killers,” including Mumia. Tucker also alludes to Castille’s endorsement by the Fraternal Order of Police. Nonetheless, Tucker rejected Mumia’s claim that Castille had “significant personal involvement” in his appeal, not only inviting an appeal by the D.A.’s office but also gift-wrapping the core legal argument.

As Tucker notes, Mumia’s case “has become one of the most polarizing criminal cases in Philadelphia history, the nation, and perhaps worldwide.” Mumia has been in the crosshairs of the capitalist state since he was a teenage Black Panther Party spokesman in the 1960s. The Philly cops’ venom toward Mumia only

grew in the 1970s when, as an award-winning journalist known as the “voice of the voiceless,” he exposed the racist Philly police vendetta against MOVE, the largely black back-to-nature group he came to support. His trial and conviction were a textbook frame-up involving close collaboration of cops, lying prosecutors and hanging judges; racist jury-rigging; terrorization of witnesses; concealment of evidence; phony ballistics and other manufactured “evidence”; and a “confession” concocted by cops and prosecutors.

At his 1982 trial, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. In December 2011, following a federal court decision rescinding the death penalty and ordering a new sentencing hearing, state authorities contented themselves with condemning him to the “living death” of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Tucker states that “justice would best be



L’Humanité

Mumia Abu-Jamal

served” by allowing Mumia to re-argue his four prior applications under Pennsylvania’s Post Conviction Relief Act

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