

El Paso: Democrats Exploit Racist Horror



Following massacre of 22 people in El Paso, Texas, on August 3, Democratic presidential contenders seek to capitalize on tragedy to promote gun control. Left: Bernie Sanders at August 10 “Presidential Gun Sense Forum.” Right: August 4 vigil mourning victims of atrocity.

Capitalist Rulers
Set Sights on Your Rights

Raving against a “Hispanic invasion” of the U.S., a fascist gunman strode into a Walmart in El Paso on August 3 and let loose a barrage of bullets that murdered 22 people, overwhelmingly Latino, and wounded 24 others. Hours later, nine people, six of them black, were gunned down outside a bar in Dayton, Ohio, by another white man, who was killed on the spot. These bloodbaths came on the heels of a shooting rampage by a white-

supremacist at the annual garlic festival in the majority-Latino town of Gilroy, California, that killed three people, including a six-year-old child. As if to celebrate the carnage, hundreds of fascists led by the Proud Boys rallied in Portland, Oregon, on August 17 under police protection. Democratic Party presidential candidates are cynically wielding these murder sprees as well as an earlier attack on a synagogue in Poway, California, to pos-

ture as defenders of black people, Mexican Americans, immigrants and others lined up in the sights of the genocidal killers. The Democrats send up a collective howl against Donald Trump for fanning the flames of racial bigotry, while seizing on widespread public fear in the wake of the attacks to ram through measures that would strengthen the capitalist rulers’ repressive powers and assault on democratic rights, particularly the right to bear arms.

That the Republican Trump is a raving racist who has emboldened white-supremacist killers and other racist psychos is hardly news. The fascists mobilizing in Portland cheered his call to label antifa “terrorists,” an ominous threat against anti-fascist activists. But what Trump shows is simply the raw face of U.S. capitalist rule, which is rooted in the racial subjugation of black people, the oppression

continued on page 4

Self-Determination for Kashmir!

Indian Troops
Out of
Kashmir Valley!

The following statement was issued on August 14 by the International Secretariat of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

In a calculated escalation of a decades-long war on Kashmir, on

August 5, the Hindu-chauvinist government of Narendra Modi, suddenly and without so much as a word to the Kashmiris, dissolved the local assembly and stripped the state of the limited autonomy it has exercised since 1948. In the weeks prior, the Indian government had dispatched upwards of 40,000 troops to the Kashmir Valley to beef up the 500,000 already there, including the Central Reserve Police Force. The oppressed Kashmiri Muslims, who are

overwhelmingly concentrated in the Valley, live under relentless subjugation by this massive occupying army in one of the world’s most militarized zones.

For over a week, the Kashmir Valley and its main city, Srinagar, have been under complete lockdown and isolation, with cell phone and internet communi-

cations cut off. Despite a virtual news blackout, reports have emerged of troops blasting people with shotgun pellets and using tear gas against protesters who courageously defied the curfew. Untold numbers of Kashmiri Muslims have been arrested and detained, including

continued on page 5



Honoring a Class-War Prisoner

Tom Manning

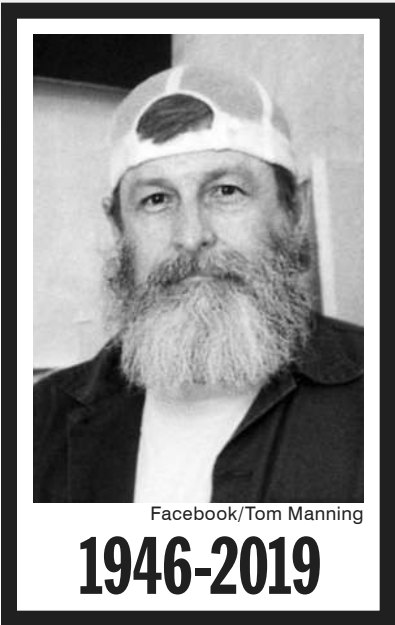
After more than three decades of torment in America’s dungeons, class-war prisoner Tom Manning died on July 30 at the federal penitentiary in Hazelton, West Virginia. The official cause of death was a heart attack, but it was the sadistic prison authorities who were responsible for the death of Manning, one of the last two incarcerated Ohio 7 leftists. In retaliation for his unwavering opposition to racial oppression and U.S. imperialism and his continued political activism, the jailers treated his medical needs with deliberate indifference and delayed necessary medication. His comrade and former prisoner Ray Luc Levasseur bitterly remarked, “Supporters scrambled to get a lawyer in to see him, but death arrived first.” Although we Marxists do not share the political strategy of the Ohio 7, we have always forthrightly defended them against capitalist state repression.

Born in Boston to a large Irish family, Manning knew firsthand the life of working-class misery. In a short autobiographical sketch appearing in *For Love and Liberty* (2014), a collection of his

artwork, he described how his father, a longshoreman and a postal clerk, worked himself to death “trying to get one end to meet the other...he always got the worst end.” A young Tom shined shoes and sold newspapers, while roaming the docks and freight yards looking for anything that could be converted into cash or bartered. Later, he worked as a stock boy and then as a construction laborer. After joining the military in 1963, he was stationed in Guantánamo Bay and then Vietnam.

After returning to the U.S., Manning ended up in state prison for five years. “Given the area where I grew up, and being a ‘Nam vet,” he wrote, “prison was par for the course.” There he became politicized, engaging in food and work strikes and reading Che Guevara. As Levasseur observed in 2014, “When Tom Manning and I first met 40 years ago, we were 27 years old and veterans of mule jobs, the Viet Nam war, and fighting our way through American prisons. We also harbored an intense hatred of oppression and a burning desire to organize resistance.”

Moved by these experiences, Man-



ning joined with a group of young leftist radicals in the 1970s and ’80s. Early on, they participated in neighborhood defense efforts in Boston against rampaging anti-busing racists and helped run a community bail fund and prison visitation program in Portland, Maine. They also ran a radical bookstore, which the cops targeted for surveillance, harassment, raids and assault.

The activists, associated with the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit in the 1970s and the United Freedom Front in the ’80s, took responsibility for a series of bombings that targeted symbols of South African apartheid and U.S. imperialism, which they described as “armed propaganda.” Some of these actions were directed against Mobil Oil and U.S. military installations in solidarity with the struggle for Puerto Rican independence by the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (Armed Forces of National Liberation). For these deeds, the Feds branded them “terrorists” and “extremely dangerous”—that is, issuing a license to kill.

As targets of a massive manhunt, the young anti-imperialist fighters went underground for nearly ten years and were placed on the FBI’s ten most wanted list. Manning was captured in 1985 and sen-

tenced to 58 years in federal prison. He was also sentenced to 80 years in New Jersey for the self-defense killing of a state trooper in 1981.

The Ohio 7 became the poster children for the Reagan administration’s campaign to criminalize leftist political activity, declaring it domestic terrorism. In 1989, three of them—Ray and Patricia Levasseur and Richard Williams—were tried on trumped-up charges of conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government under the RICO “anti-racketeering” law and a 1948 sedition act. With Ray Levasseur and Williams (who died in prison in 2005) already sentenced to enough years to be locked up for the rest of their lives, the prosecution served no purpose other than to revive moribund sedition laws, which have been used historically to imprison and deport reds and anarchists. Despite the fact that the government spent nearly \$10 million on the trial, the jury refused to convict.

Manning spent half a lifetime in prison hell, marked by his torturers as a cop killer and brutalized for his left-wing political views. Stun-gunned, tear-gassed and dragged around by leg irons, he was kept in solitary for extended periods. Shortly after his arrest, he was body-slammed onto a concrete floor while cuffed to a waist chain and in leg irons, resulting in a hip fracture that was not repaired until years later. On a separate occasion, his right knee was permanently injured when five guards stomped on it. Yet another beating with his hands behind his back severely injured his shoulders. All in all, he had a total of 66 inches of scar tissue. But Manning remained unbroken. Among other things, he spoke out on behalf of other class-war prisoners, and he was also an accomplished artist behind bars.

The actions of the Ohio 7 were not crimes from the standpoint of the working class. However, their New Left strategy of “clandestine armed resistance” by a handful of courageous leftists despaired of organizing the proletariat in mass struggle against the bourgeoisie. The multiracial working class, under the leadership of a revolutionary party fighting for a socialist future, is the central force capable of sweeping away the capitalist system and its repressive state machinery, not least the barbaric prisons.

The Ohio 7 differed from the bulk of 1960s New Left radicals by their working-class origins and dedication to

continued on page 6



TROTSKY

Lenin on WWI: For Revolutionary Defeatism

In August 1914 at the onset of World War I, a bloody interimperialist war to redivide the world, the Second (Socialist) International collapsed as the leaders of its national sections, with few exceptions, supported their own capitalist governments. In response, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin launched a fight to split those parties and win subjectively revolutionary elements to proletarian internationalism. Lenin’s program of revolution-

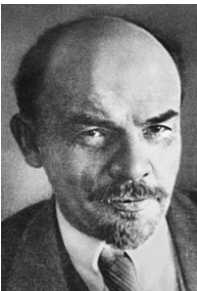
ary defeatism, which saw the defeat of one’s “own” imperialist bourgeoisie as a motor force for the proletarian seizure of power, was strikingly confirmed in the October 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party.

Is it not treachery to Social-Democracy when we see the German socialists’ amazing change of front (after Germany’s declaration of war); the false phrases about a war of liberation against tsarism; forgetfulness of German imperialism, forgetfulness of the rape of Serbia; the bourgeois interests involved in the war against Britain, etc., etc.? Chauvinist patriots vote for the Budget!...

Even given the total *incapacità* and impotence of the European socialists, the behaviour of their leaders reveals treachery and baseness: the workers have been driven into the slaughter, while their leaders vote *in favour* and join *governments*! Even with their total impotence, they should have voted *against*, should *not have joined* their governments and uttered chauvinistic infamies; should *not* have shown solidarity with their “nation,” and should *not* have defended their “own” bourgeoisie, they should have unmasked its vileness.

Everywhere there is the bourgeoisie and the imperialists, everywhere the ignoble preparations for carnage; if Russian tsarism is particularly infamous and barbarous (and more reactionary than all the rest), then German imperialism too is monarchist: its aims are feudal and dynastic, and its gross bourgeoisie are less free than the French. The Russian Social-Democrats were right in saying that *to them* the defeat of tsarism was the lesser evil, for *their* immediate enemy was, first and foremost, *Great-Russian* chauvinism, but that in each country the socialists (who are not opportunists) ought to see their main enemy in their “own” (“home-made”) chauvinism.

—V.I. Lenin, “The European War and International Socialism”
(late August-September 1914)



LENIN

Clarification

PEDs, Sports and Socialism

In the article “Let Caster Semenya Run Her Race!” (WV No. 1156, 31 May), we wrote: “A rational socialist society would seek to improve human athletic performance, including through performance-enhancing drugs, which can help athletes train harder and recover faster, while also conducting scientific studies of the potential medical dangers.” This sentence is misleading. It suggests that sports under socialism will be fundamentally the same as today, only bigger, faster and better, including by wrongly presenting athletic activity as the domain of specialists, that is, athletes. Similarly, the use of performance-enhancing drugs would not be limited to a selected group, but rather PEDs would be put at the disposal of the population as a whole, so that everyone could safely enjoy the benefits of this scientific progress.

A socialist future can be realized only through a series of proletarian revolutions all across the globe. Unfettering production from the profit motive and establishing an international planned economy will usher in a society of material abundance without classes, social inequality or coercive institutions like the state. The progressive achievements of civilization will be fully harnessed, made accessible to all and vastly expanded. People will be truly free to do what they want in every sphere of human endeavor, whether cultural, artistic, scientific or any other.

We are in no position to project what sports will be like under socialism. However, Leon Trotsky, who along with V.I. Lenin was a co-leader of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, offered some general considerations in his classic work *Literature and Revolution* (1924):

“The powerful force of competition which, in bourgeois society, has the character of market competition, will not disappear in a socialist society but, to use the language of psychoanalysis, will be sublimated, that is, will assume a higher and more fertile form. There will be the struggle for one’s opinion, for one’s project, for one’s taste....

“All forms of life, such as the cultivation of land, the planning of human habitations, the building of theaters, the methods of socially educating children, the solution of scientific problems, the creation of new styles, will vitally engross all and everybody. People will divide into ‘parties’ over the question of a new gigantic canal, or the distribution of oasis in the Sahara (such a question will exist too), over the regulation of the weather and the climate, over a new theater, over chemical hypotheses, over two competing tendencies in music, and over a best system of sports. Such parties will not be poisoned by the greed of class or caste. All will be equally interested in the success of the whole. The struggle will have a purely ideologic character. It will have no running after profits, it will have nothing mean, no betrayals, no bribery, none of the things that form the soul of ‘competition’ in a society divided into classes.”■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon
EDITOR: Michael Davisson
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jeanne Mitchell (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Edie Goldberg (letters editor), Mónica Mora (Spanish-language editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, Paul Cone, Walter Jennings, Michael Joyce, Jane Kerrigan, Alan Wilde, Laura Zamora

The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) is published biweekly, except skipping issues in January, June, July, August and December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. Email address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscription: \$10/21 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is August 20.

No. 1159

23 August 2019

Democrats Are Also Guilty As Hell!

Flint's Poisoned Water: Five Years of Cover-Up



May/Flint Journal

June 28: Angry Flint residents confront prosecutors from the Democratic Attorney General's office, including Solicitor General Fadwa Hammoud (inset), who had dropped charges against officials responsible for poisoned water supply.

“This news today is like being hit in the back of the head with a two-by-four.” That’s how one black Flint activist in late June expressed the deep anger against prosecutors from the Democratic Attorney General’s office who had dropped charges against eight government officials for deliberately poisoning the municipal water supply beginning in 2014. The prosecutors were trying to sell their whitewash investigation of the Flint water crisis and were shamefully offered the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 659 union hall by the labor bureaucrats for a community forum. The meeting was yet another chapter in a massive bipartisan cover-up of a completely man-made public health disaster visited on an impoverished, majority-black city of nearly 100,000 people. A long trail of lies cannot hide the fact that this population, including an entire generation of children, suffered serious damage from extremely high lead levels—and Flint still does not have safe water.

The culprits include former Republican governor Rick Snyder and his crew, as well

as Democrats, from the local level on up to the Obama White House. However, the problem is not simply one of bad actors. This racist atrocity is a searing indictment of a capitalist system based on the profit drive and built on a foundation of black oppression. Flint’s plight is an outcome of the workings of that system; the birthplace of General Motors was once truly Vehicle City, although it has long since been ravaged by deindustrialization. Back in the day, it boasted one of the highest per capita incomes in the nation—now 40 percent of its residents live in poverty, surrounded by shuttered factories and foreclosed homes. The crimes committed against the people of Flint underscore how we need a whole new ruling class: the workers.

Bourgeois politicians from both parties have had blood on their hands from the outset. In April 2014, with a Snyder-appointed “emergency manager” at the helm, the city began drawing water from the polluted Flint River rather than Lake Huron, its water source for a half-century. Democratic mayor Dayne Walling, a vocal

advocate of the project, literally flipped the switch. The purported rationale for going off the Detroit water network and onto a source that had been a longtime industrial dumping ground for GM was to save cash-strapped Flint a few million dollars per year. Yet again, working people were expected to bear the brunt of “balancing” the city budget.

Every corner was cut in the process. Perhaps the most egregious: the water was not treated with corrosion control chemicals. River water, which is often acidic, will leach lead from pipes unless these chemicals are added to it. So, when the water source was changed, the untreated water supply became contaminated with lead, a dangerous neurotoxin. As the Centers for Disease Control has concluded, there is “no safe blood lead level.”

Immediately, residents complained about the foul water and the illnesses, rashes, nausea, hair loss and headaches it caused. That’s when the cover-up kicked into high gear. So-called experts were trotted out who pronounced the brown water pouring

out of faucets to be perfectly fine. Four months after the switch, researchers found harmful bacteria in the water. Meanwhile, an outbreak of Legionnaires’ disease killed 12 people. The campaign of deception picked up steam, with government officials swearing up and down that there was no problem and dismissing mounting evidence of widespread lead poisoning.

In September 2015, Mona Hanna-Attisha, a pediatrician at the city’s public hospital, faced a backlash after releasing a study demonstrating a dramatic elevation in blood lead levels among children. A Michigan health department spokeswoman attributed the study results to “seasonal spikes” having nothing to do with the water supply. The governor’s office complained that whistle-blowers were turning the lead issue into a “political football.” No government body gave a damn about Flint. Or as Obama’s Environmental Protection Agency regional water branch chief stated: “I’m not so sure Flint is the community we want to

continued on page 5

Workers Vanguard Subscription Drive

August 15 to October 9

2019 Quotas (in points)

Bay Area.....300	Los Angeles...200
Chicago.....200	New York.....700
National Total 1,400	

Subscribe Now!

- ☐ \$10/21 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) International rate: \$25/21 issues
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist* and, in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, *suplementos en español de Workers Vanguard*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$_____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Apt. # _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Purchase *Workers Vanguard* subscriptions online at: icl-fi.org/subscribe/wv

1159

(continued from page 1)

Invoking Republican president George W. Bush's call to "defend freedom" following the 9/11 attacks, the Democrats hark back to the bipartisan unity behind the imperialist mass murder of the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq and the onslaught against democratic rights at home. Washington's war against "Islamic terrorism" vastly expanded the powers of the secret police to tap phones, data-mine computers, scour financial records, set up entrapment operations, and arrest suspects based on their associations and beliefs, without evidence of any crime committed.

Now everyone from Democratic Party politicians to FBI agents is demanding that the spying, harassment and surveillance of U.S. citizens be legally codified and expanded, including through a sinister drive to further censor the internet. While ostensibly aimed at 8chan and other sites teeming with racists, in reality these powers would mainly be used to silence leftists, anti-racist organizers and others, such as the Palestinian journalists and publications that were shut down by Facebook in recent years.

The image shows the front cover of a book. At the top, a black banner contains the title 'Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.' in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below the banner is a small, stylized graphic of a hammer and sickle. The main title of the book, 'For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!', is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below this, the subtitle 'For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!' is printed in a larger, bold, black, sans-serif font. A small line of text, 'SEE PAGE 2', is centered below the subtitle. The book is published by the 'Organizational Rules and Guidelines of the Spartacist League/U.S.', as indicated by a line of text below the subtitle. Another line of text, 'SEE PAGE 30', is centered below this. The book is published by the 'Opponents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Movement', as indicated by a line of text below the subtitle. A final line of text, 'SEE PAGE 37', is centered below this. At the bottom of the cover, a line of text provides the publication details: '52 November 2000 \$2.25 Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116'. The book is bound in a dark cover with a white border.

A black and white photograph showing President Bill Clinton seated at a wooden table, signing a document. He is surrounded by a group of men and women, some of whom are looking on. The setting appears to be outdoors, with trees visible in the background.

WORKERS VANGUARD

(continued from page 3)

go out on a limb for.” The bourgeois rulers have nothing but contempt for black people, who in the majority are forcibly segregated at the bottom of U.S. society. Poor whites and Latinos in Flint are also deprived of clean water, demonstrating how the structural oppression of the black masses profoundly impacts all working people in capitalist America.

When the polluted water impacted General Motors, the reaction of the city bosses was very different. The river water was so corrosive to precision motor parts that the GM engine plant in the city was churning out a lot of duds. The automaker, not about to tolerate lost profits for any length of time, had the city switch the water source for the plant back to Lake Huron in October 2014. The rest of Flint, though, was not switched back for *another year*. Here is revealed a basic truth: the capitalist government, whether administered by Democrats or Republicans, serves only the interests of the owners of industry and the banks.

Today, well after the return to Lake Huron water, the nightmare is not over. Some 2,500 lead pipes are still in the ground, even with a replacement effort launched over three years ago. Flint residents still have to shell out for tap filters and bottled water to curtail risks.

The residents of other heavily black and Democrat-run cities, notably Newark, New Jersey, are also plagued by lead-tainted water, while other pollutants have made the water unsafe from West Virginia to California. For many decades, the high-profit lead industry sold large quantities of pipes and paint as cheap alternatives for construction especially in working-class and black neighborhoods, while openly disputing lead's toxicity, which scientists had well established. To this day, millions of lead pipes are part of water networks across the country, and authorities regularly cheat when testing water to fudge lead levels. Any number of Flint-like public health disasters could be set off by an austerity scheme or one bad management decision.

No Illusions in the Democrats!

Democrats today blame Snyder and his emergency managers for the Flint disaster. Presidential contenders and the new crop of “progressives,” including U.S. Con-

gresswoman Rashida Tlaib from Detroit, feign shock and horror at the events in Flint in order to score cheap points against the Republicans. Current Democratic mayor Karen Weaver and governor Gretchen Whitmer are doing what politicians from the “lesser evil” bourgeois party do: attempting to dampen discontent and “restore trust” in government officials.

In fact, the very legislation granting the Michigan governor the power to hijack local governments in the event of an “emergency” was signed by Democrat James Blanchard in the 1980s. Over the years, Democrats and Republicans alike have decreed such takeovers in order to impose cuts in social services and as a club against public workers unions. Snyder’s Democratic predecessor put the Detroit Public Schools into this form of receivership in order to rob the pensions of union teachers and staff. By the end of 2013, most of the majority-black cities in Michigan were under the control of emergency managers, a tool of racist disenfranchisement.

At the time, Michigan, and most other states, had seized on budget crises following the 2007-08 financial meltdown of U.S. capitalism to squeeze working people and the poor for every last penny. The standard-bearer for this offensive was the Obama White House, which bailed out the banks and the auto industry. Massive concessions, including the extension of the low-wage tier for new hires, were wrested from the UAW, with the complicity of the union tops, in order to restore the profitability of the auto giants. Tens of thousands of UAW members were thrown out of their jobs; black workers, as always, were particularly hard hit.

In a high-profile publicity stunt, Obama visited Flint in May 2016, toward the end of his presidency. Grotesquely, he put a glass of city water to his lips (likely drinking nothing) to “prove” that it was safe, before reminiscing about eating lead paint chips as a child. The message to Flint residents was crystal clear: shut up and stop causing trouble.

Capitalism Must Go!

Over the decades, General Motors brought in wave after wave of labor to toil on the assembly lines, only to throw workers on the scrap heap beginning in the 1980s when the plants were no longer sufficiently profitable. A deindustrialized Flint was left to rot, as the auto bosses pulled up stakes.

From the early 20th century, Flint was shaped by the guiding influence of GM, which took an “apartheid approach to city building” in the words of Anna Clark, author of *The Poisoned City* (2018). For example, the company’s “Modern Housing Corporation” prohibited any of its properties from being “leased to or occupied by any person or persons not wholly of the white or Caucasian race.” GM promoted racial and ethnic antagonisms to pit workers against one another and forestall union organization.

At the time of the great sit-down strike of 1936-37 that forged the UAW, all GM's Flint operations were strictly segregated, with only a few hundred black workers on the payroll. That victorious strike saw auto workers occupy the factories and hold them for over 40 days, as the Democratic governor conspired with the company to oust them with machine-gun-toting National Guardsmen. In the course of subsequent struggles, black workers were fully brought into the union. While they were the last hired and first fired by the auto bosses, their entry into the proletariat and later the Congress of Industrial Organizations marked a great advance for both the black population and the working class as a whole.

Today, the union is a far cry from what it once was. UAW membership in Flint has plummeted to some 7,000 workers, from around 80,000 in the late 1970s. Nonetheless, these auto workers still have significant social power—the 1998 strike at the GM Metal Center and East Delphi shut down the automaker’s production across North America. There is no lack of outrage among union members at what has happened in Flint—what’s lacking is leadership.

Where were the “labor statesmen” of the UAW throughout the water debacle? These bureaucrats, who identify with the capitalist profit system and are stalwarts of the Democratic Party, limited the union response to passing out bottled water, including to promote campaign appearances by Democrats. The devastation of Flint owes much to the role of the craven UAW tops in subordinating workers to the class enemy. As revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky explained in his 1940 article “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” monopoly capital “demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy, who pick up the crumbs from its banquet table, that

they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class.”

A fight inside the unions is required to oust these political police, whose allegiance to the Democrats is not simply an impediment to labor struggle but also to the fundamental task of the working class: the shattering of the capitalist order. It is crucial to forge a new union leadership armed with a class-struggle program, one aimed at breaking labor's chains to the Democrats. This fight is linked to building a workers party dedicated to ending capitalist wage slavery altogether. Under a class-struggle leadership, the labor movement would fight for the highest-quality health services and public education, including the remedial programs essential to mitigate the impact of child lead poisoning. It would also fight for union safety committees to enforce safety standards and practices in order to protect the well-being of workers, as well as the general public.

The Flint River project is a prime example of socially *unnecessary* public works—and it still would have been even if its implementation had adhered to basic safety protocols. Any water infrastructure overhaul in Flint should have begun by replacing all the lead pipes. A labor movement with a class-struggle leadership would demand a full mobilization of resources to locate, excavate and swap out such pipes, in Flint, Newark and elsewhere, including by hiring those thrown out of factory jobs and the rest of the unemployed to perform the work under union control at union-scale wages.

Since capitalism cannot meet basic human needs, like providing clean water, it deserves to perish. But for that to happen requires forging a revolutionary workers party that will rip power out of the hands of the exploiters and create a society organized to meet human needs, not private profit. This party would champion black freedom, immigrant rights and the cause of all the oppressed, striving to win to its banner a core leadership component of black and Latino workers. The only way to guarantee good living conditions, jobs for all and an end to capitalist exploitation and racist oppression is by expropriating the bourgeoisie through socialist revolution. A workers America will waste no time in cleaning up the deadly legacies of rapacious capitalism. ■

(continued from page 1)

prominent politicians. *Free all victims of Indian repression in Kashmir!*

As Leninists, the International Communist League stands for the right of self-determination for Kashmir, and that includes independence. Since 1989, the Indian military has slaughtered well over 80,000 Kashmiris and subjected the population to unending terror. This includes some 8,000 “enforced disappearances,”

as Kashmiris call them, in which the state denies all knowledge of the victims' whereabouts. The army has a track record of heinous atrocities, including mass rapes. We unequivocally demand: *All Indian troops out of the Kashmir Valley!*

We also oppose the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35a, which codified the limited autonomy of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. These articles included a provision preventing the sale of land to non-Kashmiri residents and one determining who is a permanent resident. Those articles enabled the state to control its borders and prevent the forcible displacement of Muslims. Scrapping the measures, which Modi had long promised to do, is intended to open the floodgates for Israeli-style settlement of the Valley by Hindu-Brahmin Pandits, undoubtedly to be accompanied by stepped-up murderous communal violence against Muslims.

The Modi government's latest assault on Kashmir has fueled tensions with Pakistan, against which India has already fought three wars for control of the territory. Fanning the flames of Hindu-Muslim communalism, the hostility between the two countries is the poisonous legacy of British colonial divide-and-rule, which culminated in the 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent and its mass-scale communal slaughter. In the aftermath of Partition, one-third of Kashmir went to Pakistan. Almost all of the remainder, including the Kashmir Valley, the heavily Hindu Jammu district and the Buddhist Ladakh area, went to India, which offered the carrot of autonomy along with its military boot.



Capitalist rule in India, under both Congress-led governments and Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, has been based on Hindu-chauvinist, upper-caste supremacy, including violent repression of Kashmir, its only Muslim-majority state. Like India, Pakistan is a "prison house of peoples," with Punjabis dominating oppressed nationalities such as the Baloch. Women are brutally oppressed throughout the region. Both India and Pakistan are dependent on imperialist powers, with the U.S., Britain and other advanced capitalist countries reaping vast profits from exploiting the working masses in South Asia and elsewhere around the world.

The way out of the enormous injustices

heaped upon Kashmir lies in forging a proletarian vanguard party in India that links struggles for national liberation with the revolutionary fight of the working class against capitalist exploitation. Heavily composed of and led by Dalits, women, national and ethnic minorities and others from specially oppressed layers, such a party would imbue the proletariat with the understanding that the struggle against all forms of oppression, not least caste oppression, is in the interest of the entire working class. The ICL seeks to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties, as sections of a reformed Fourth International, that are dedicated to proletarian revolution from India and Pakistan to the imperialist centers. ■

[illegible]

Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 8)

House representative has no official Congressional vote) but held hostage to federal plenary powers, including the FBI and military. We demand: *All U.S. troops and federal agents out of Puerto Rico now!*

Hoping to quell the recent upheaval and return to business as usual, Democrats and Republicans called for Rosselló to step down. On August 2, the White House announced it would punitively suspend over \$8 billion in federal aid to Puerto Rico due to political unrest. While Trump is an open embodiment of racist arrogance and capitalist greed, the Democrats represent the same imperialist ruling class. It was Barack Obama who implemented the 2016 PROMESA law that appointed the fiscal control board of bankers and CEOs—drawn from companies that have directly profited from decades of financial swindles—to further bleed and starve Puerto Rico. Proclaiming some \$74 billion in bond debt alone, the junta is a tyrannical collection agency for vulture creditors, and makes its decisions behind closed doors.

While some calm has returned to the streets for now, Puerto Ricans are beyond fed up. What is vital is for the working class to emerge as the leader of the country’s unemployed, students and all the oppressed, particularly women, who suffer violence and degraded status. The working class is the one force with the social power and historic interest to put an end to both colonial oppression and capitalist misery through socialist revolution.

Workers in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico share a common class enemy: the U.S. capitalist rulers. There is also a link of flesh and blood—Puerto Ricans make up a key component of the organized working class in many U.S. cities, where they are subjected to racist abuse by the forces of the capitalist state. The U.S. working class must take a side with its class brothers and sisters and demand: *Cancel Puerto Rico’s debt!* Opposing the entire system of debt peonage would speak to the righteous anger of Puerto Ricans over the secret machinations of the junta, which refuses to divulge its austerity plans.

We advocate independence for Puerto Rico as part of our opposition to U.S. imperialism. At the same time, we are aware that most Puerto Ricans feel ambivalent about independence. While they detest their colonial status and have a strong sense of nationhood, they are legally allowed to live and work in the U.S., as over five million do, without the same threat of deportation or I.C.E. detention faced by Latino immigrants. It should be up to the Puerto Rican masses to decide how they want to exercise their national self-determination. Therefore, we stress the *right* of independence for Puerto Rico.

Our aim is to build a Leninist vanguard party in Puerto Rico that can intervene into the struggles against colonial oppression, fighting to direct them against not only the U.S. masters but also their local bourgeois lackeys, with the goal of establishing working-class rule. Only the proletariat in power can begin to lay the material basis for emancipating the Puerto Rican masses from imperialist subjugation.



Reuters

September 2018: One year after Hurricane Maria, many homes remained devastated, like this one near Barceloneta.

Septiembre de 2018: a un año del huracán María, muchas viviendas permanecían devastadas, como ésta cerca de Barceloneta.

A Puerto Rican workers republic would face enormous obstacles and powerful enemies, centrally the U.S. bourgeoisie. Proletarian rule in Puerto Rico would have to be extended internationally. What is posed is the forging of Leninist parties in the imperialist heartland and throughout the Caribbean as part of a revolutionary international. A multiracial workers party in the U.S. would win American workers to helping advance the national liberation struggles of Puerto Rico, which are indispensable to tearing down the capitalist order at home.

For a Class-Struggle Perspective

The popular protest slogan “que se vayan todos” (all of them must go) was an expression of the intense mistrust toward Washington’s loyal stooges, including both the governing, pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP) as well as the historically pro-“commonwealth” Popular Democratic Party (PPD). The PPD mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulín Cruz, participated in the demonstrations, declaring her opposition to corruption and the junta. But for over six years as the chief executive of the capital, she has overseen austerity measures and commands the repressive police force in San Juan. Cruz, a target of Trump’s wrath and a co-chair for the Bernie Sanders campaign, is plugging herself as a populist to capitalize on widespread discontent in her electoral bid for governor in 2020.

Many politicians from the two main parties in Puerto Rico are directly affiliated with the U.S. bourgeois parties that preside over their colonial “backyard.” (Rosselló and Cruz are both Democrats.) In the U.S., “progressive” Democrats like Sanders aim to refurbish the party’s image so that they can run the same machine of imperialist domination. A major obstacle to the working class mobilizing in its own interest is the lie that Democrats—who uphold the same profit-driven order as the Republicans—can be pressured to act on behalf of the exploited and the oppressed. This strategy is promoted by much of the left and the trade-union bureaucracy, which makes up a layer of the Democratic Party.

In Puerto Rico over the last several years, mass mobilizations of students,

teachers and others, as well as labor strikes, have been carried out against privatization threats, school closures, pension theft and budget slashing. Unions like the UTIER electrical workers and the FMPR teachers have been in the front line of protests against union-busting and cutbacks, and both played a role in the July 22 one-million-strong work stoppage to oust Rosselló. But rather than standing at the head of the oppressed and dispossessed masses, the proletariat was dissolved by union misleaders into the “people,” which serves to disappear the unique social power of the working class, whose labor makes society run.

The union tops saddle the combative working class with the nationalist notion that “we are all Puerto Ricans,” which translates to unity with the local capitalists and their political representatives. Following the swearing-in of Vázquez as governor, an array of Puerto Rican unions, including UTIER and FMPR, issued a formal appeal to the administration. A 17 August press release describes how union leaders called on the new government to “take a stand in defense of the interests of the Puerto Rican people against the fiscal control board” and “address the demands for labor and social justice.”

The laboring masses have nothing in common with the capitalist government. What is needed is a class-struggle leadership of the unions that proceeds from this standpoint, opposing all politicians and parties that support capitalism—from the PNP and the PPD to the petty-bourgeois Puerto Rican Independence Party. Such a leadership would be committed to help build a revolutionary workers party.

A nationalist outlook can also be seen in the frequent appeal to the cops as fellow workers and victims of budget cuts. The police, known as *la uniformada*, are not workers or potential allies, but rather a

Tom Manning...

(continued from page 2)

their principles; they never made peace with the capitalist order. Unlike most of the left, which refused to defend the Ohio 7 against government persecution, the SL and the Partisan Defense Committee have always stood by them, including through the PDC’s class-war prisoner stipend program.

In an August 2 letter to the PDC, Manning’s lifelong comrade-in-arms Jaan Laaman (the last remaining Ohio 7 prisoner) eulogized:

“Now Tom is gone. Our comrade, my comrade, who suffered years of medical neglect and medical abuse in the federal prison system, your struggle and suffering is now over brother. But your example, your words, deeds, even your art, lives on. You truly were a ‘Boston Irish Rebel,’ a life long Man of and for the People, a warrior, a person of compassion motivated by hope for the future and love for the common people, A Revolutionary Freedom Fighter.”

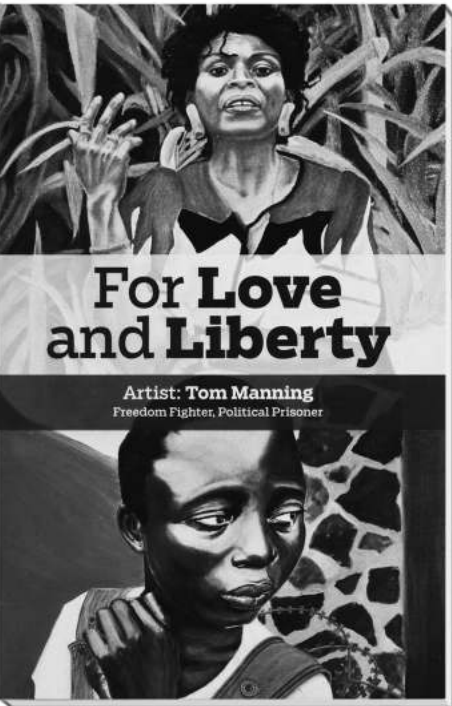
All honor to Tom Manning! Free Jaan Laaman! ■

core part of the bourgeois state. Their role is as strikebreakers, and their associations have no place in the union movement. Even if they come from poor or working-class backgrounds, the cops are the violent enforcers of the system of colonial subjugation and the hired guns of the bosses. When the cops mobilize for pay and pensions, it is to be better able to mete out all-sided repression. From its origins in 1899, the year after the U.S. military invaded and took possession of the country, the Puerto Rican police have helped keep Washington’s colonial subjects under its heel, including in the decades-long bloody war against *independentistas*.

Amid the current crisis, some leftists have put forward alternatives that merely seek to tinker with the colonial arrangement and capitalist rule. Such is the case with the reformists around the U.S. publication *Left Voice*, affiliated to the Trotskyist Fraction-Fourth International. While claiming to oppose the colonial regime and to be for socialist revolution, *Left Voice* argues to convene a “free and sovereign Constituent Assembly” that “would allow the working class, in the heat of the struggle, to develop its own bodies of self-organization” (“A Revolutionary Perspective for Puerto Rico,” 3 August). They claim that a constituent assembly “must discuss and make democratic decisions on the great structural transformations required by the country to win its national liberation, end imperialist plunder and rebuild its economy.”

In fact, the call for a constituent assembly is a barrier to the working class developing the kind of revolutionary class consciousness and organization necessary for its own emancipation. A constituent assembly is a bourgeois government, and the call for it has historically been used to *derail* proletarian revolution. Only after the working class has seized state power and established a workers government will it be able to decide how to rebuild society to the benefit of the vast majority of the population, including the provision of jobs, as well as quality housing, education and health care.

In the end, only socialist revolution extended internationally can satisfy the basic needs of the masses: the end of poverty, freedom from the yoke of imperialism, and social equality for women and other deeply oppressed layers like gay and trans people. For us in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast, the fight for the national liberation of Puerto Rico is especially important. As was emphasized in the “21 Conditions” for membership in the then-revolutionary Communist International, adopted in 1920, it is the duty of communists “to support every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds.” This task includes instilling “in the hearts of the workers of its country a truly fraternal attitude toward the laboring people in the colonies and toward the oppressed nations.” ■



Manning’s book includes artwork from his years in prison.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Workers Vanguard suplementos en español

WORKERS VANGUARD

Manifestante puertorriqueña falsamente
incriminada por el gobierno federal

¡Libertad para Nina Droz!

El siguiente artículo fue publicado en Workers Vanguard No. 129 (27 de febrero de 2019).

El Primer de Mayo, Día del Trabajo, es una gran fiesta para los trabajadores de todo el mundo. En Puerto Rico, los estudiantes de secundaria y los trabajadores de la industria textil se unieron en una manifestación en el Centro de Estudios de la Historia de la Isla, en San Juan, para celebrar el Día del Trabajo. La policía puertorriqueña se enfrentó a la manifestación y usó la fuerza para dispersar a los manifestantes. La policía usó la fuerza para dispersar a los manifestantes y los manifestantes se enfrentaron a la policía. La policía usó la fuerza para dispersar a los manifestantes y los manifestantes se enfrentaron a la policía.

Nina Droz, quien es autora de este artículo, fue arrestada por su participación en la manifestación del Día del Trabajo. Ella es una activista de los derechos humanos y una defensora de la libertad de expresión. Ella es una activista de los derechos humanos y una defensora de la libertad de expresión.

No. 4 • March 2018

Available online at: icl-fi.org/espanol/wvsupl/archives/

Supplements included with subscription to *Espartaco* (publication of the Grupo Espartaquista de México) in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Suplemento en español

**Ola de huelgas sacude
maquiladoras en México**

El siguiente artículo se publicó en Workers Vanguard No. 129 (27 de febrero de 2019) en español y inglés.

El 15 de marzo de 2019, una ola de huelgas sacudió a las maquiladoras en México. Los trabajadores de las maquiladoras se enfrentaron a la policía y a la fuerza. Los trabajadores de las maquiladoras se enfrentaron a la policía y a la fuerza.

El 15 de marzo de 2019, una ola de huelgas sacudió a las maquiladoras en México. Los trabajadores de las maquiladoras se enfrentaron a la policía y a la fuerza. Los trabajadores de las maquiladoras se enfrentaron a la policía y a la fuerza.

No. 11 • 25 March 2019

6

Puerto Rico...

(viene de la página 8)

colonial es una versión actual de *white man’s burden* [la carga del hombre blanco], por la cual la potencia imperialista blanca domina a sus súbditos de piel oscura con la excusa de “civilizarlos”. Los puertorriqueños son ciudadanos estadounidenses de segunda clase, y aquellos que viven en Puerto Rico están privados de voto en las elecciones federales (incluso su representante en el congreso no tiene voto oficial) pero son mantenidos por completo como rehenes del poder federal, incluyendo al FBI y el ejército. Exigimos: *¡Todas las tropas y agentes federales de EE.UU. fuera de Puerto Rico ahora!*

Esperando apaciguar la agitación reciente y volver a la normalidad, demócratas y republicanos llamaron a Rosselló a dimitir. El 2 de agosto, la Casa Blanca anunció que suspendería, a manera de castigo, 8 mil millones de dólares en ayuda federal a Puerto Rico debido a los disturbios políticos. Mientras que Trump es una personificación abierta de la arrogancia racista y la avaricia capitalista, los demócratas representan a la misma clase imperialista dominante. Fue Barack Obama quien implementó la ley PROMESA de 2016 mediante la cual se nombró al consejo de control fiscal de banqueros y directores de empresas, extraídos de compañías que se han beneficiado directamente de décadas de estafas financieras, para seguir desangrando y matando de hambre a Puerto Rico. Declarando cerca de 74 mil millones de dólares sólo en bonos de deuda, la junta es una agencia tiránica de recaudación para los acreedores buitres y toma sus decisiones a puerta cerrada.

Aunque algo de calma ha regresado a las calles por ahora, los puertorriqueños están más que hartos. Lo que es vital es que la clase obrera emerja como líder de los desempleados, los estudiantes y todos los oprimidos del país, particularmente las mujeres quienes sufren de violencia y un estatus degradado. La clase obrera es la fuerza con el poder social y el interés histórico para poner fin tanto a la opresión colonial como a la miseria capitalista mediante la revolución socialista.

Los obreros en EE.UU. y en Puerto Rico comparten un enemigo de clase en común: los gobernantes capitalistas estadounidenses. También hay un vínculo de carne y hueso: los puertorriqueños constituyen un componente clave de la clase obrera organizada en varias ciudades de EE.UU., donde son sujetos a abuso racista por las fuerzas del estado capitalista. La clase obrera estadounidense debe tomar lado con sus hermanos y hermanas de clase y exigir: *¡Cancelar la deuda de Puerto Rico!* El oponerse al sistema entero de peonaje de deuda respondería a la ira justificada de los puertorriqueños sobre las maquinaciones secretas de la Junta, la cual se rehúsa a divulgar sus planes de austeridad.

Favorecemos la independencia de Puerto Rico como parte de nuestra oposición al imperialismo estadounidense. Al mismo tiempo, estamos conscientes de que la mayoría de los puertorriqueños se sienten ambivalentes sobre la independencia. Al tiempo que detestan su estatus colonial y tienen un fuerte sentido de nacionalidad, se les permite vivir y trabajar legalmente en EE.UU., como lo hacen más de 5 millones, sin la misma amenaza de deportación o detención por el I.C.E. que enfrentan los inmigrantes latinos. Debería ser decisión de las masas puertorriqueñas decidir cómo quieren ejercer su autodeterminación nacional. Por tanto, insistimos en el *derecho* a la independencia de Puerto Rico.

Nuestro objetivo es construir un partido leninista de vanguardia en Puerto Rico que pueda intervenir en las luchas en contra de la opresión colonial, luchando por dirigirlas no sólo contra los amos estadounidenses, sino también contra sus lacayos burgueses locales, con la meta de establecer el dominio de la clase obrera. Sólo el proletariado en el poder puede comenzar a sentar las bases materiales para emancipar a las masas puertorriqueñas de la subyugación imperialista.

Una república obrera puertorriqueña

enfrentaría enormes obstáculos y enemigos poderosos, centralmente la burguesía estadounidense. El dominio proletario en Puerto Rico tendría que ser extendido internacionalmente. Lo que se plantea es forjar partidos leninistas en el centro imperialista y en todo el Caribe como parte de una internacional revolucionaria. Un partido obrero multirracial en EE.UU. ganaría a los obreros estadounidenses a avanzar las luchas por la liberación nacional de Puerto Rico que son indispensables para derribar el orden capitalista en casa.

Por una perspectiva de lucha de clases

La consigna popular de protesta “que se vayan todos” era una expresión de la intensa desconfianza hacia los títeres leales a Washington, incluyendo tanto al gobernante Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP), partidario de la anexión como estado, como al históricamente partidario del “estado libre asociado” Partido Popular Democrático (PPD). La alcaldesa de San



Reuters

Cops detain demonstrator during anti-government protest in San Juan, July 17. La policía arresta a un manifestante durante protesta contra el gobierno en San Juan, 17 de julio.

Juan del PPD, Carmen Yulín Cruz, participó en las manifestaciones, declarando su oposición a la corrupción y a la Junta. Pero por más de seis años como jefa del ejecutivo de la capital, ella ha supervisado las medidas de austeridad y comanda la fuerza policial represiva de San Juan. Cruz, quien ha sido blanco de la cólera de Trump y copresidenta de la campaña de Bernie Sanders, está promocionándose como una populista para capitalizar el descontento generalizado hacia su aspiración electoral para ser gobernadora en 2020.

Muchos políticos de los dos principales partidos en Puerto Rico están directamente afiliados a los partidos burgueses estadounidenses que dominan lo que consideran su “patio trasero” colonial. (Rosselló y Cruz son ambos demócratas.) En EE.UU. los demócratas “progresistas” como Sanders apuntan a renovar la imagen del partido y con eso manejar la misma maquinaria de dominación imperialista. Un obstáculo importante para que la clase obrera se movilice en su propio interés es la mentira de que los demócratas —quienes mantienen el mismo orden dirigido por las ganancias como los republicanos— pueden ser presionados para actuar en nombre de los explotados y los oprimidos. Esta estrategia es promovida por gran parte de la izquierda y la burocracia sindical, esta última constituye un estrato del Partido Demócrata.

En Puerto Rico durante los últimos años las movilizaciones masivas de estudiantes, maestros y otros, así como las huelgas obreras, han sido llevadas a cabo en contra de amenazas de privatización, cierre de escuelas, robo de pensiones y recortes presupuestales. Los sindicatos UTIER de trabajadores electricistas y FMPR de maestros han estado en la primera línea de las protestas contra la destrucción de los sindicatos y los recortes, y ambos jugaron un papel en el paro de un millón de personas el 22 de julio para destituir a Rosselló. Pero en vez de colocarse a la cabeza de las masas oprimidas

y desposeídas, el proletariado fue disuelto en “el pueblo” por sus falsos líderes sindicales, lo cual sirve para desaparecer el poder social único de la clase obrera, cuyo trabajo hace funcionar a la sociedad.

Los dirigentes sindicales contienen a la clase obrera combativa con la noción nacionalista de que “todos somos puertorriqueños”, lo que se traduce en unidad con los capitalistas locales y sus representantes políticos. Después de la toma de protesta de Vázquez como gobernadora, una formación de sindicatos, que incluía a UTIER y FMPR, publicó una apelación formal al gobierno. Un comunicado de prensa del 17 de agosto describe cómo los líderes sindicales llamaron al nuevo gobierno a “definir una posición de defensa de los intereses del pueblo puertorriqueño frente a la Junta de Control Fiscal” y “se atiendan los reclamos de justicia laboral y social”.

Las masas trabajadoras no tienen nada en común con el gobierno capitalista. Lo que se requiere es una dirección de lucha de clases de los sindicatos que actúe con

esta perspectiva, oponiéndose a todos los políticos y partidos que apoyan al capitalismo —desde el PNP y el PPD hasta el Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño pequeñoburgués—. Tal dirección estaría comprometida con ayudar a construir un partido obrero revolucionario.

Una perspectiva nacionalista también se puede ver en las apelaciones frecuentes a los policías como compañeros trabajadores y víctimas de los recortes presupuestales. La policía, conocida como “la uniformada”, no es un conjunto de trabajadores o de aliados potenciales, sino una parte central del estado burgués. Su papel es el de rompehuelgas, y sus asociaciones no tienen lugar en el movimiento sindical. Incluso si vienen de un origen pobre u obrero, los policías son los violentos encargados del funcionamiento del sistema de subyugación colonial y los ma-

tones de los patrones. Cuando los policías se movilizan por salarios y pensiones, lo hacen para estar en mejores condiciones para reprimir. Desde sus orígenes en 1899, el año después de que el ejército de EE.UU. invadió y tomó posesión del país, la policía puertorriqueña ha ayudado a mantener a los súbditos coloniales de Washington bajo su bota, incluyendo la guerra sangrienta de décadas contra los independentistas.

En medio de la crisis actual, algunos izquierdistas han impulsado alternativas que simplemente buscan reformar el orden colonial y el dominio capitalista. Tal es el caso de los reformistas alrededor de la publicación estadounidense *Left Voice*, afiliada a la Fracción Trotskista-Cuarta Internacional. Aunque afirman oponerse al régimen colonial y estar por la revolución socialista, *Left Voice* plantea la convocatoria por una “asamblea constituyente libre y soberana” que “permitiría a la clase obrera, al calor de la lucha, desarrollar sus propios cuerpos de autoorganización” (“A Revolutionary Perspective for Puerto Rico” [Una perspectiva revolucionaria para Puerto Rico], 3 de agosto). Ellos afirman que una asamblea constituyente “debe discutir y tomar decisiones democráticas sobre las grandes transformaciones estructurales que requiere el país para imponer su liberación nacional, terminar con el saqueo imperialista y reconstruir su economía”.

De hecho, el llamado por una asamblea constituyente es un obstáculo para que la clase obrera desarrolle el tipo de conciencia y organización revolucionaria de clase necesarias para su propia emancipación. Una asamblea constituyente es un gobierno burgués, y su llamado ha sido usado históricamente para *descarrilar* la revolución proletaria. Sólo después de que la clase obrera haya tomado el poder estatal y establecido un gobierno obrero podrá decidir cómo reconstruir la sociedad para beneficio de la vasta mayoría de la población, incluyendo la provisión de empleos, así como de vivienda, educación y servicios de salud de calidad.

En última instancia, sólo la extensión internacional de la revolución socialista puede satisfacer las necesidades básicas de las masas: el fin de la pobreza, libertad del yugo imperialista, igualdad social para las mujeres y otros estratos profundamente oprimidos como los gays y los transexuales. Para nosotros en las entrañas de la bestia imperialista estadounidense, la lucha por la liberación nacional de Puerto Rico es especialmente importante. Como enfatizan las “21 condiciones” de membresía en la entonces revolucionaria Internacional Comunista, adoptadas en 1920, es el deber de los comunistas “apoyar todo movimiento de liberación nacional en las colonias no sólo en palabras sino en los hechos”. Esta tarea incluye infundir “en los corazones de los trabajadores de su país una actitud verdaderamente fraterna hacia el pueblo trabajador en las colonias y hacia las naciones oprimidas”. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

Website: www.icl-fi.org • Email address: vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

ChicagoBox 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (312) 563-0441

Los AngelesBox 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (213) 380-8239

New YorkBox 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (212) 267-1025

OaklandBox 29497, Oakland, CA 94604
slbayarea@fastmail.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (510) 839-0851

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE IN QUEBEC AND CANADA

MontréalCP 83 Succ. Place-d’Armes, Montréal, QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578
trotskyiste.montreal@gmail.com

TorontoBox 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
trotskyist.toronto@gmail.com

VancouverBox 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
tl.vancouver.bc@gmail.com

WORKERS VANGUARD



WV Photo

Demonstrators at governor's mansion on July 25, day after Ricardo Rosselló announced he would step down amid widespread protests. Manifestantes en La Fortaleza el 25 de julio, un día después de que Ricardo Rosselló anunciara su renuncia tras protestas masivas.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party

Down With the Colonial Junta!

After some of the largest protests in Puerto Rican history forced the resignation of despised governor Ricardo Rosselló last month, Puerto Rico is confronting an ongoing political crisis. The match in the powder barrel was the leaked cache of private chat messages between Rosselló and his cronies, which oozed bigotry, misogyny and derision for the poor. For the 3.2 million citizens residing on a territory under the boot of U.S. colonial domination, the grievances run much deeper: brutal austerity, massive unemployment and deteriorating schools, hospitals and transportation. Now, the American overlords, with the help of Puerto Rican bourgeois politicians, are openly plotting to intensify their iron grip on their colony. First and foremost is enforcing the diktats of Wall Street's fiscal control board, known as the "junta," to make the impoverished masses pay billions of dollars in debt to the same U.S. capitalists who wrecked the country's economy.

Following a five-day gubernatorial stint by Rosselló's handpicked successor Pedro Pierluisi, a lawyer for the junta, the new occupant of the governor's mansion La Fortaleza is former justice secretary Wanda Vázquez, another Rosselló crony. Washington has its eyes on Jenniffer González, a Trump supporter and resident commis-

sioner to the U.S. House of Representatives, in the event that Vázquez meets with widespread opposition. Vázquez, notorious for covering up government corruption in her previous position, is reviled for having refused to investigate diverted Hurricane Maria relief funds and aid. That 2017 disaster was marked by the U.S. rulers' criminal and chauvinist contempt for Puerto Ricans—over 4,000 were left to die in Maria's wake and whole swaths of the island chain remain devastated to this day.

Ever since seizing the Caribbean territory during the Spanish-American War 121 years ago, U.S. imperialism has looted Puerto Rico's land, exploited its labor and then laid it to waste. While Puerto Rico has been euphemistically designated a "commonwealth" since 1952 to give the illusion of self-government, to this day the U.S. government calls all the shots, controlling everything from currency and communications to trade relations and shipping. This colonial subjugation is a modern-day version of "white man's burden," whereby the white imperialist power lords over its darker-skinned subjects in the name of "civilizing" them. Puerto Ricans are second-class U.S. citizens, and those living in Puerto Rico are barred from voting in federal elections (even their

continued on page 6

Por un partido obrero revolucionario

¡Abajo la Junta colonial!

Puerto Rico enfrenta una crisis política después de que algunas de las protestas más grandes en su historia forzaron la renuncia del odiado gobernador Ricardo Rosselló el mes pasado. La chispa que encendió la llama fue la filtración del registro de mensajes privados entre Rosselló y sus compinches, los cuales exudaban intolerancia, misoginia y burla hacia los pobres. Para los 3.2 millones de ciudadanos que residen en un territorio que se encuentra bajo la bota de la dominación colonial estadounidense, los agravios van más allá: austeridad brutal, desempleo masivo; y escuelas, hospitales y el sistema de transporte en deterioro. Ahora, los amos estadounidenses, con la ayuda de los políticos burgueses puertorriqueños, están planeando abiertamente intensificar su férreo control sobre su colonia. En primer lugar, están imponiendo los dictados del consejo de control fiscal de Wall Street, conocido como la "Junta", para hacer pagar a las masas empobrecidas miles de millones de dólares de deuda a los mismos capitalistas estadounidenses quienes arruinaron la economía del país.

Después de cinco días de gobierno del sucesor designado por Rosselló, Pedro Pierluisi, un abogado de la Junta, la nueva ocupante de la mansión del gobernador, La Fortaleza, es la antigua secretaria de

justicia Wanda Vázquez, otra compinche de Rosselló. Washington tiene en la mira a Jenniffer González, una partidaria de Trump y comisionada residente de Puerto Rico en la Cámara de Representantes de EE.UU., en caso de que Vázquez encuentre oposición generalizada. Vázquez, notoria por encubrir la corrupción del gobierno en su puesto previo, es repudiada por haberse rehusado a investigar el desvío de fondos y ayuda para aliviar los estragos del huracán María. Ese desastre en 2017 estuvo marcado por el desdén criminal y chovinista de los gobernantes estadounidenses hacia los puertorriqueños: más de 4 mil fueron abandonados para morir en la secuela de María y sectores completos de la cadena de islas permanecen devastados hasta ahora.

Desde que se apoderó del territorio caribeño durante la Guerra Hispano-Estadounidense hace 121 años, el imperialismo de EE.UU. ha saqueado Puerto Rico, explotado a sus trabajadores y luego, devastado. Aunque Puerto Rico ha sido designado eufemísticamente desde 1952 como un "estado libre asociado" para dar la ilusión de autogobierno, hasta el día de hoy el gobierno de EE.UU. lleva la batuta, controlando todo desde la moneda y las comunicaciones hasta las relaciones comerciales y los embarques. Esta subyugación

sigue en la página 7

For the Right of Independence!

¡Por el derecho a la independencia!