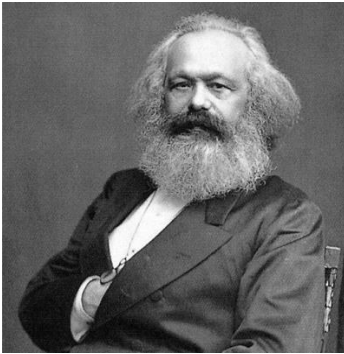


Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity



A Journal of Discussion and Debate



Vol. 3, No. 1

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To see the reasoning behind publication of TMLU, please see the article “Why ‘Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity’” in the first issue on the web-site below. Though we believe that a Party must have ideological unity, we include progressive articles from groups with varying views.

Please note that we reprint many articles without our asking for permission. Clearly the authors are in no way responsible for other views in this publication.

Comments, criticisms and articles are welcome. The next issue of TMLU should appear by mid-September, 2021, so material should be sent in by the end of August. Comments and criticisms on the article on China are particularly requested.

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The Class Nature of China Today¹

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It was formed on July 1, 1921 in Shanghai, as a result of China's long history of democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism, and under the influence of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 and the formation of the Communist International in 1919. The CCP has a long, glorious and complex history, including unity with the progressive national bourgeoisie under Sun Yatsen, the betrayal of this united front by Chiang Kaishek, the revolutionary civil war and Long March, a new united front with the Kuo Mintang against the invasion by imperialist Japan, and another civil war against Chiang. This led to the seizure of power by the working class leading the peasantry and other social classes and strata in 1949 and the beginning of people's democracy and socialism. This was an earth-shaking revolution, second only in importance to the October Revolution. It led to the liberation of the country with the largest population on earth from feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism and the strengthening of the socialist camp.

We will not go into the strengths and weaknesses of the People's Republic of China since 1949, since this is not the subject of this article.

The U.S. is Still the Main Imperialist Power

First, regardless of one's view on China today, we must point out that in the U.S., we are in the "belly of the beast." The U.S. is still the strongest imperialist power economically (though it is in steady decline), politically and militarily. Its GDP as of 2019 was \$21.43 trillion, or about \$64,743 per capita. China's GDP was \$14.34 trillion, but only \$9,924 per capita, as its population of 1,434 million is more than four times as great as that of the U.S., which has 331 million people.

The U.S. has the largest military budget of any country, \$649 billion, making up 3% of its GDP, not including billions more in military expenditures on space, and especially on private military contractors such as Academi (formerly Blackwater). China's military budget is second, with only \$261 billion, or 1.8% of its GDP. The U.S. has a stockpile of 5,800 nuclear warheads, compared to 294 in China, although Russia supposedly has 6,375 warheads. The U.S. has 7 fleets all over the world, compared to 3 for China and 5 for Russia, most of which are in waters neighboring their countries. The U.S. is currently engaged in wars in Syria, Afghanistan (from which it is being forced to withdraw after almost 20 years), and continues to take part in fighting in Iraq. It gives billions in

military support to Israel each year in its fight against the Palestinian people, to Saudi Arabia in its war against Yemen, and is threatening the Democratic People's Republic of (north) Korea, Iran, Venezuela and others. It has sanctions against 29 countries. It has almost 800 military bases in more than 70 countries, compared to China with one base (in Djibouti) and Russia with one in Syria, five in Africa and nine in other former Soviet Republics.

The U.S. has 1.4 million people in its armed forces (again not including those in private mercenary groups), compared to 2.2 million in China and about 1 million in Russia. It also has a prison population of almost 2.2 million compared to 1.5 million in China (again with a population more than four times as large) and under 900,000 in Russia.

Lenin always pointed out the need to concentrate our fire on "our own" bourgeoisie. Thus, we are always willing to unite politically with forces such as UNAC (United National Anti-War Coalition) and others that take up the struggle against U.S. imperialism, regardless of their position on China.²

Is China Still Socialist?



That having been said, we need to take up the question of China, particularly for those forces who consider themselves Marxist but still think that China is a socialist country, not imperialist or even capitalist. We consider this view to be a major misunderstanding of both the nature of socialism and of imperialism.

Sixty percent of China's industry is still state owned, but this sector generates only 40% of GDP, while 40% is privately (including foreign) owned, but it generates some 60% of GDP. Workers World Party and others claim that, since the majority of its industry is state owned, China is

¹ This article may be expanded into a future pamphlet with new material. Here we have omitted many non-controversial references, which the interested reader can look up on the internet themselves.

² In other countries, particularly in China itself, those in China's sphere of influence or where China has important capital investment, the situation is clearly different.

still socialist. As Marxist-Leninists, we do not see state ownership as the determining factor as to whether a country is socialist, but rather which class controls the state. But today, state-owned industry is no longer decisive.

Lenin dealt with this question in fighting certain opportunists who supported Bismarck's "state socialism". He stated: "Lassalle and his followers, in view of the poor chances for the proletarian and democratic way, pursued unstable tactics and adapted themselves to the leadership of the Junker Bismarck. Their mistake lay in diverting the workers' party on to the Bonapartist-state-socialist path. Bebel and Liebknecht, on the other hand, consistently supported the democratic and proletarian path and struggled against any concessions to Prussianism, Bismarckism or nationalism."¹ More recently, apartheid South Africa had a large percentage of state-owned industry (including steel and airlines), which of course did not make it socialist.

A variant of the argument that state-owned industry is decisive is that China's private capitalism is similar to the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s. This argument is incorrect for two reasons. First, the NEP was established only for a few years, shortly after the October Revolution, and the commanding heights of the economy were held by the socialist state. Second, NEP took place at the beginning of the revolution, while in China it is now over 70 years since the revolution and the privatization has been going on for almost 45 years.

There is another argument that China cannot be imperialist since it is not constantly fighting imperialist wars. But first, this is not a condition of imperialism, and the fact that it is not (yet) fighting such wars is a reflection of the fact that it is still much weaker *militarily* than the U.S. It has come on a world that has already been divided among other imperialist countries. In this sense, its position is somewhat similar to that of Germany before World War I, which had few colonies, mostly in Africa including Tanganyika, and fought few wars against the colonial peoples – with the exception of the genocidal war against the Herero and Nama people in Namibia from 1904 to 1908.

China is a member of all the international imperialist economic institutions, including the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. (It had to fight to join this latter, which it did in 2001, because the U.S. did not want to let it in.)

China has 388 billionaires, compared to 614 in the U.S. China has a Gini coefficient² of .385 compared to .411 in the U.S. Strictly speaking, having billionaires and an unequal distribution of income do not define a country as capitalist, however it is an insult to workers to consider such a country as socialist.

The CCP has an influx of "red capitalists." Since 2001, it has allowed capitalists to join the Party, and also encouraged members of the CCP to start their own business operations. One of these is Jack Ma, one of China's multi-billionaires, honored at the CCP's 19th Congress as one of the "main architects of socialism with Chinese characteristics". He is notorious for promoting the 9-9-6 program, saying that workers and other employees should work from 9 AM to 9 PM, 6 days a week.³ It is clear that the CCP is "Communist" only in name.

The Concrete Features of China Today

To determine the class nature of China today, we must examine its concrete features. This has been done quite comprehensively in the book: *Is China an Imperialist Country?*⁴ This book analyzes the five main features of imperialism that Lenin describes and shows clearly how China meets each of these.

China's role on the imperialist world scene is growing. Of the 50 largest monopoly corporations by revenue (both private and state-owned), 12 are Chinese (including #2, the oil and gas group Sinopec). Of the 50 largest banks, 12 are Chinese owned (including the three largest). If one calculates GDP based on equivalent purchasing power, or Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), as opposed to official currency exchange rates, in 2012 China's GDP was already over \$12 trillion, compared to less than \$16 trillion for the U.S. Already by 2009, China's manufacturing had almost reached that of the U.S.⁵

Export of Capital

One of the characteristic features of imperialism is the export of capital. Since China joined the world imperialist system, it has been both an importer and exporter of capital. In earlier decades, when Chinese imperialism was still much weaker than it is today, it was primarily an importer. A large percentage of clothes, toys and other goods were "Made in China" by major U.S. corporations taking advantage of cheap Chinese labor. But as China became relatively stronger, it became a net capital exporter and

¹ Lenin, "August Bebel," *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, pp. 297-298.

² The Gini coefficient is a measure of income inequality, where 1 would mean total inequality, and 0 would mean total equality.

³ See the article: "The betrayal by the Communist Party of China (CPC) of the working class and the 1949 Revolution," by the Revolutionary Communist Party of Brazil, in

Unity & Struggle #41, available at www.RevolutionaryDemocracy.org/icmlpo/US41/U&S41.pdf, pp. 12-24.

⁴ Available for free download as a pdf from Red Star Publishers, at: <https://redstarpublishers.org/IsChinaAnImperialistCountry.pdf>.

⁵ See *Is China an Imperialist Country?*, figures 7.2 and 7.3 on pp. 22 and 23 respectively.

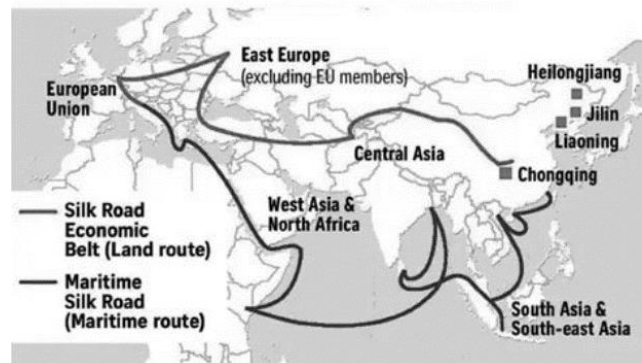
exporter of industrial commodities. For example, many of the large cranes used to load and unload container ships in the U.S. and around the world are made in China.¹ China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment has grown from almost nothing in 1979 to over \$16 billion in 2006.²

China even has investments in U.S. These include the purchase by the WH Group of Smithfield Foods for \$4.72 billion in 2013, the purchase of Ford's Volvo division by the Zhejiang Geely Holding Group for \$1.5 billion in 2010, and even the purchase of the AMC movie theater chain for \$2.6 billion in 2012.³ This is not to show that China is somehow a worse imperialist country than the U.S., just that it is growing stronger.

But China's investments in the oppressed countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East are even more important compared to the size of the economies of these countries. As of June, 2013, China was purchasing over half of Iraq's oil production, 1.5 million barrels per day; China is stripping Laos of its timber and mineral resources.⁴ It has bought up and opened mines in Ecuador. For example, "the Chinese company CRCC-Tongguan took on the operation of the Mirador copper mining project in Zamora Chinchipe for the final phase of exploration, this time buying the rights from Canada's Corriente Resources. In 2012, the Chinese company signed the first large-scale mining contract; meanwhile the Junefield Company acquired the Rio Blanco gold project in the province of Azuay."⁵ In Peru, "the mega-mining projects Constancia, the Tia Maria mining project in Arequipa, Las Bambas, the expansion of the Cerro Verde Mining Project, the expansion of the Toromocho 5 mining project, [were] granted to the Aluminum Corporation of China (Chinalco), at the source of the Rimac River that supplies water to the more than 10 million people of Lima."⁶ These projects depleted the resources of the countries concerned, contaminated the water there and caused resistance among the indigenous peoples and other peasants in the areas, just as happened with the Western imperialists. Sometimes it makes deals with so-called "progressive" governments, such as when it bought the rights to 80% of Ecuador's oil output under President Correa, which China was allowed to resell anywhere it could. China is also involved

in mining investments in Africa, particularly the Congo. Both Huawei and Huayou are involved in the mining of cobalt there, necessary for cellphones and other high-tech equipment, including in electric-powered automobiles. Also, "China Molybdenum Co said on Sunday [December 13, 2020] it had acquired a 95% stake in the Kisanfu copper-cobalt mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from U.S.-based Freeport-McMoRan Inc for \$550 million."⁷ (See article on p. 12 of this issue of TMLU.)⁸

One Belt One Road



The export of capital has particularly increased since Xi Jinping's One Belt One Road initiative. Under this proposal, China has been buying up ports, including the deep-water port of Gwadar near Karachi, Pakistan, and Trieste in northeast Italy, to expand trade and investment in the Indian sub-continent and Europe respectively. China is also involved in the attempt to build a railroad between Peru and Brazil, thus facilitating trade between Latin America's Pacific and Atlantic Coasts. This project involves immense technical difficulties (not to mention the destructive effects it would have on the Amazon basin). It remains to be seen whether it will actually come to fruition or go the way the earlier failed attempt by a private Chinese company to build an inter-oceanic canal through Nicaragua. For more details on OBOR, see the article by Communist Platform of Italy: "The 'New Silk Road' (OBOR) in Italy."⁹

China has also been getting into contradictions over the South China Sea with its neighbors there, particularly Vietnam and the Philippines. (Of course, the U.S. is trying

¹ <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/these-giant-cranes-show-why-the-next-fight-in-the-u-s-china-trade-war-could-be-so-damaging/>.

² See *Is China...*, Figure 15.2, p. 53.

³ These and many other Chinese investments in the U.S. are detailed in *Is China...*, p. 55.

⁴ See *Is China...*, p. 46, footnote, and pp. 56-58, respectively.

⁵ <https://mltranslations.org/Ecuador/Ecuador19eng.pdf>. This article contains many more details on China's investments, loans and free trade agreements with countries in Latin America.

⁶ <https://mltranslations.org/Peru/Peru19eng.pdf>.

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/cmoc-congo-m-a/china-moly-buys-95-of-drc-copper-cobalt-mine-from-freeport-for-550-million-idINKBN28N0D9>.

⁸ For two maps on China's investments and oil and mineral rights in Africa, see *Is China...*, Figures 17.2 and 17.3 on pp. 68 and 69 respectively.

⁹ <https://revolutionarydemocracy.org/icmlpo/US40/U&S40.pdf>, pp. 72-81.

to take advantage of this.) This area is of importance not only for fishing stocks, but also shipping lanes and under-sea sources of oil and gas. Vietnam and the Philippines, and more recently China, have been involved in the building of floating islands to lay claims to the region.¹

All this is not to say that China was on a correct socialist course before Mao's death in 1976. One should examine China's "theory of the three worlds," which considered governments such as that of Pinochet in Chile and the Shah of Iran as "third world allies." Also, see Mao's talks with Kissinger, Nixon and Ford, with whom he had the friendliest of conversations on the need to unite with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union.² But this is not the subject of this article.

The Workers' Movement in China Today

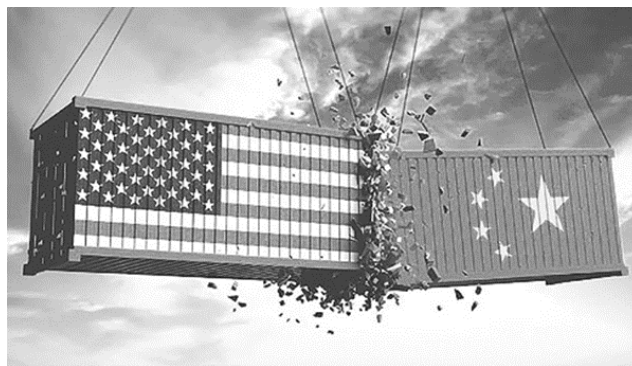
Finally, as in any capitalist country, there is a growing spontaneous workers' movement in China. We will not go into detail on this here. One good source is the book by Prof. Immanuel Ness: *Southern Insurgency: The Coming of the Global Working Class*³. Many of the early protests and demonstrations stemmed from the large numbers of low-paid workers who, with the dissolution of the collective farms and communes under Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, flocked to the cities looking for jobs. There were also protests against the closing and privatization of state-owned enterprises, with the consequent loss of wages and benefits. Prof. Ness points out that, "from 1995 to 2006, official labor disputes increased 12-fold from 33,030 to 447,000 per year" (p. 130). As a later example of increased labor militancy, he goes into some detail about the 2014 strike at the Yue Yuen shoe factory in Dongguan (see pp. 135-144). Yue Yuen is a subsidiary of a Taiwanese-based company that is the world's largest manufacturer of athletic shoes, including for Adidas, Nike, Timberland and other companies. The strike lasted from April 5 to 25, and at its height involved about 30,000 workers. One of the main demands was that the company make the legal payments for social security, which the company was finally forced to accept. Over the coming months workers' unrest spread to other factories in the area (the Pearl River delta).

There is also a core of revolutionary Marxist intellectuals, mostly Maoists, both in China and among Chinese abroad, who recognize that China is not socialist. A progressive U.S. professor who had been invited to speak in

China was asked by students taking him to his speaking venue whether he thought China was socialist. He replied diplomatically that as a visitor he was not in a position to judge, but he asked them what they thought. They replied that it was definitely not.

This situation of the Chinese working class has some similarities to that in the U.S., with a socialist movement separated from the spontaneous workers' movement. But in China this movement is more advanced, largely due to the revolutionary traditions of China's workers and peasants that led to the seizure of power in 1949. Though a movement independent of the CCP may be subject to crackdowns by the government, there are many laws that allow workers to organize against the monopoly capitalists. The next years will see where this leads, especially with the increased threat of inter-imperialist war. And as stated in the beginning of this article, our primary task will be to fight our "own" imperialist ruling class.

Inter-Imperialist Contradictions



Meanwhile, the danger of an actual war with both Russia and China is growing, even if it is not yet imminent. At this stage it is mainly a trade war and a war of words. At Biden's recent summit meeting with Putin, he complained about the arrest of Russian "dissident" Alexei Navalny. Apparently, Putin did not respond by raising the case of revolutionary Afro-American journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, nor the case of Julian Assange, who is still locked up in a British jail facing possible extradition to the U.S. Of course, Biden's criticism has nothing to do with "human rights," but everything to do with inter-imperialist contradictions.

Lenin long ago pointed out: "Finance capital and the trusts do not diminish but increase in the rate of growth of the various parts of the world economy. Once the relation

¹

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_disputes_in_the_South_China_Sea

²

<https://revolutionarydemocracy.org/archive/index.htm#capchina>. Although these are from the U.S. State Department, they are likely to be basically accurate since they are mainly for U.S. government bureaucrats,

not for mass propaganda.

³ In his introduction to this book, Prof. Ness tends to downplay the struggles of the multinational working class in the imperialist countries, which of course includes immigrant workers from the oppressed countries as well as oppressed nationality workers within the imperialist countries. However, this does not in any way negate the importance of his book.

of forces is changed, what other solution of the contradictions can be found *under capitalism* than that of *force*?”¹ As China and Russia get relatively stronger, the U.S. gets relatively weaker. This can lead not only to trade wars, but to military force.

The stepped-up contradictions with China led to the U.S. “Pivot to Asia” strategy that began under Pres. Obama. It continued in a particularly nasty way under Pres. Trump, who not only constantly talked about the “Chinese virus,” but increased tariffs on imports from China. It is continuing in a new form under Pres. Biden.

Finally, we need to at least mention the difference between the position of “our” opportunist parties today and that of the opportunist parties during World War I. In that war, the opportunists supported “their own” bourgeoisie in an inter-imperialist war. Today, our opportunist parties support the Chinese (and Russian) bourgeoisie. Though this difference is clear, it is somewhat superficial. In both cases, it reflects a lack of faith in the U.S. working class to fight the U.S. bourgeoisie, and if possible to “turn the imperialist war into a civil war.” This analysis must be deepened in the future.

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¹ *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Chap. VII

Overall, this article is a good review of Biden's policies. However, we must definitely disagree with the call for a mask mandate mentioned here.

A Socialist Autopsy on Biden's First Hundred Days

By Evan Nesbitt, June 9, 2021



The first 100 days of an American president's term can set the tone of the entire administration, it can be a crucial litmus test to repair or continue the work of the former president and redress key policy issues especially in a time of crisis. In such a crisis as the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent recession as well as waves of police brutality and right-wing extremism, the eyes of the entire nation eagerly watched President Joseph Biden's arrival in the White House after the anti-democratic four-year blunder that was Donald Trump's presidency. The first 100 days have shown us what a Biden presidency will look like—abandoned promises, and the continuing separation of American political life from the desires of working people.

Immediately after a clear electoral victory (though still denied by the petty-bourgeois and renegade Trumpites), Biden immediately, like Obama, abandoned all left-leaning campaign rhetoric for that of national "unity" and of "reaching across the aisle." On the campaign trail, Biden put forward several policies from the progressive playbook to appeal to predominantly younger voters blighted with student debt and underemployment, who in great numbers voted for Bernie Sanders. Among these

quick concessions, Biden also announced his opposition to several reforms too far-reaching for the ruling class to permit, declaring "I am not a socialist, I defeated the socialist." Even these paltry, abandoned reforms do not come close at all to having excised the deepening inequality and poverty in American society in the era of pandemic capitalism.

The rejection of a federal decriminalization of cannabis for recreational use came as no surprise for the presidential candidate who, as Senator, sponsored an infamous Crime Bill that increased mandatory minimum sentences for drug use, increased funding for national police departments, and incentivized incarceration over rehabilitation. This stance flies in the face of the 68% of Americans who favor legalization. Thirty-four states have passed some form of legalization of cannabis for either recreational or medicinal use, but full legalization to all states is denied due to the absence of federal legislation and the resistance put up by Democratic and Republican politicians. It is yet another example of the will of the overwhelming majority of American people being entirely excluded from our supposed democratic institutions.

The question of single-payer healthcare is much the same: 63% of Americans support some form of single-payer as of 2020, up from 59% in 2019. With record unemployment and Newt Gingrich's brainchild, Obamacare, which requires recipients pay back premium discounts during tax season, the iniquities of for-profit healthcare have been utterly exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, when thousands died without coverage, many faced bankruptcy, and hospitals buckled under high demand.

Biden also declared his opposition to the Green New Deal, days before his running mate denied that fracking would be banned in a Biden/Harris administration. Here the "Democrat" is once again at odds with his party's namesake, as 60% of voters polled in 2020 denoted their support for the Green New Deal in some capacity, with only 11% with an undecided view. It must be stressed that this reflects only the voting body, a mere 66.2% of eligible voters; a number that excludes millions that have been disenfranchised on felony charges or by failed democratic promises in the past. On foreign policy as well, Biden's administration is far too akin to his predecessor, with his support for the unelected Juan Guaido as president of Venezuela, ordering new airstrikes in Syria, continuing to provide assistance to Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, and approving more support for Israel's genocidal campaign into Palestine with a \$700 million dollar sale of arms in the midst of the bombing campaign. President Biden fulfills at least one promise from the campaign trail, "Nothing will fundamentally change."

American workers have grown accustomed to the promises of the campaign trail quickly evaporating. In early and mid-January, Biden favored \$2,000 third stimulus checks to be released as an emergency measure to address the record income disparities, increasing costs of living, and record unemployment in the middle of a pandemic. Yet only a week into his administration Biden had already reneged on his pledge and supported an amendment to his relief bill that called for \$1,400 stimulus payments instead. Observing the policy's popularity from Bernie Sanders' campaign, Biden also pledged support for an increase to the federal minimum wage to \$15 and in the drafted relief bill, that measure was included, until red

democrat Joe Manchin blocked the measure, preventing the 51 votes necessary. Such is the result of "vote blue no matter who."

Biden also supported a mask mandate to combat the upswing in COVID-19 cases and no such legislation has been passed. On immigration, Biden proposed a moratorium on deportations, claiming that no one would be deported in his first 100 days and yet, by day 29, an estimated 26,248 people had been deported with no moratorium or restriction issued since. Biden's VP, Kamala Harris, in an address in Guatemala, told victims of American imperialism "don't come, I believe you will be turned back." Finally, one key reform swapped from Sanders as forgiving federal student loan debt which can easily be accomplished via executive order was given a great deal of lip service but Biden has not lifted a finger in that regard and slowly walked back the amount to be forgiven from all, to \$20,000, to \$5,000.

The pundits and supporters of Biden deflect all criticism behind arguments of time, "realism," and dreaded Republican obstruction, even though they hold a majority in both houses with the VP's tie-breaking vote. What a gift it is to the ruling class to have all these tricks and fall backs and excuses to confuse, appease, and divide the working class, but all this bluster is over the incontrovertible fact that American capitalism is in crisis. Biden backed his way into the candidacy after the DNC machine churned Sanders out with its strawmen, superdelegates, closed primaries, skewed fundraising, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The simple truth after 100 days is that workers in the US will increasingly face economic difficulty, working multiple jobs just to survive and will find no true solutions in the more "civil," moderate government of Joe Biden. From the other side, the insurrectionist fascists will not be held back by ice-cream chewing dawdler who surf into office on name recognition, identity politics, and the virtue of not being a Republican. For the workers of the US, and for the victims of US imperialism around the world, the need for a workers' revolutionary alternative, outside of capitalism, has never been greater. Only working democracy that erodes class and class antagonisms is capable of providing a consistently prosperous society and the answers to climate change.

JOURNAL

July 16 Newsletter

Two weeks ago, the Supreme Court upheld two Arizona laws that make it harder to collect and count mail-in-balls. A week and a half later, the Texas Senate passed a monster voter suppression bill that would, among other things, ban 24-hour and drive-through voting, add new ID requirements, and further criminalize election workers who don't follow the onerous new rules. The bill would also grant new powers to partisan poll watchers, raising the specter of far-right paramilitary groups legally monitoring polling stations.

Texas House Democrats fled the state before the vote could start in their chambers, flying to D.C. just before President Biden gave a national address on voting rights in Philadelphia. The rhetoric was soaring and impassioned, but also rather toothless. He spoke about the historic attack on voting rights and voiced support for new voting legislation, but offered little in terms of strategy. Notably, he avoided any discussion of the need to end the filibuster, the key procedural tool being used to block voting rights and a whole range of other policies.

Earlier this week, in response to the obstructionism in Congress and the inertia of the White House, the Poor People's Campaign launched a season of action calling for immediate action on the filibuster, voting rights, and living wages. Every Monday for the next three weeks, poor folks, low-wage workers, labor and religious leaders, and more will be joining together in D.C. and dozens of states.

This is the kind of action necessary to counter the coordinated assault on voting rights, which is aimed squarely at people of color, young people, people in rural areas, and the poor as a whole, and is an expression of a political system in crisis. Indeed, the policies demanded by the rich are increasingly unpopular, while the policies demanded by the poor and dispossessed are growing in popular support. One way through this crisis, for the rich, is to eat away at the franchise, and democracy more broadly, and to do it in a way that shores up the ideology of all-white, all-class unity.

In the long-term fight to build the unity of the poor across lines of division and difference, this is a battle the poor and dispossessed can and must lead on.



https://www.workers.org/2021/07/57471/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=alabama-coal-miners-solidarity-forever

Alabama coal miners: Solidarity forever!

By Minnie Bruce Pratt, posted on July 9, 2021



Members of the United Mine Workers (UMWA) Local 2245, in Brookwood, Ala., entered the fourth month of their strike against global coal company Warrior Met July 1. That day they were joined by local activists from federal workers' union American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), who came to show solidarity at the weekly community rally at Tannehill State Park. Credit: AFGE National

In June, the union reported incidents of vehicular assault on the picket line on three consecutive days. Picketing continues around the clock seven days a week. On June 22, the coal miners came to New York City to picket Warrior Met's megacapitalist hedge fund investors on Wall Street, denouncing giants like BlackRock for union-busting tactics.

For more, see Workers World, April 2, April 20, June 2 and July 1.

U.S. Military, C.I.A. Out of Haiti

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Change of Presidents Carried Out to Intensify Repression Against the People



A professional hit team made up of Colombian military personnel assassinated Haitian president Jovenel Moïse on July 8. The U.S. armed and trained Colombian military mainly takes its orders from Washington. This was the aim of Biden and Clinton's "Plan Colombia," which was put into effect in 2000. For decades the Colombian military and paramilitaries have assassinated hundreds of trade unionists and social organization leaders.

In only the last few months, millions have taken part in country-wide rebellions against the murderous regimes of Duque in Colombia and Moïse in Haiti. Like Colombia's military, the Haitian National Police have been responsible for murders of protestors and assassinations of social leaders.

The U.S. government, through both Republican and Democratic administrations, has never hesitated to carry out or attempt assassinations of revolutionary leaders, especially in Africa. They have also assassinated once friendly heads of state as soon as they moved to break free of U.S. imperialist economic domination. And as with the case of Diem of then-South Vietnam or Park of South Korea, they've assassinated their puppets once they've deemed them ineffective for their ends.

Biden's. C.I.A. Director Burns Visits to Crush Uprising of the People



The assassins of Moïse, reportedly wearing U.S. Drug Enforcement jackets and possessing inside information on the compound, are likely instructed by the U.S. CIA. Biden's Director of the CIA, William Burns, visited Haiti and Colombia just weeks ago to coordinate increased repression in Colombia and Haiti and to plan attacks on Venezuela.

What would compel the U.S. to act so decisively to intensify repression at this time—even to the point of assassinating their former puppet Moïse? A major step forward in the Haitian struggle had begun. A citizen's armed militia had formed to unite dozens of neighborhoods to

resist the Haitian National Police and effectively turn the activity of desperate youth towards the revolutionary struggle.

Representing the masses, these unified forces demanded an end to the Moïse regime, which was attempting to change the constitution to keep him in power. More importantly, they're fighting to end the super-exploitation and poverty caused by U.S. government on behalf of corporations who have sucked the life-blood of the Haitian people for their profits. France and Canada are junior partners in this exploitation and death.

The Haitian Masses Fight for Self Determination



Since 2010, the Clintons and their Foundation have used the guise of earthquake relief to enact programs to open Haiti to even more brutal exploitation by U.S. corporations. While profits for corporations like Nike have soared, the Haitian masses face increased poverty and a lack of food, water, and employment.

Headed by the U.S., the compliant U.N. has declared the next Haitian president without even a semblance of choice by the people. This new puppet with a changed face has already asked for U.S. troops. These troops will be used to repress the people's movement for self-determination, sovereignty, and a revolutionary solution to their misery.

The racist U.S. and French ruling classes have never forgiven Haiti for the heroic 1791 revolution which was carried out by the formerly enslaved ancestors of the Haitian people. This spirit of resistance will prevail again. Here in the U.S. "progressives" need to end their love affair with Biden, who is carrying out an aggressive, murderous militarization around the world to build up U.S. empire. No modest reform will bring lasting benefit to the U.S. working class when the U.S. government drives the global masses into starvation and death.

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High Tech and Auto Giants Make Super-Profits off Child Labor in the Congo

Smart phones, other consumer electronics and electric vehicles all use lithium-ion batteries. One of the key ingredients in these batteries is cobalt, 70% of which comes from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The Congo is one of the richest countries in terms of mineral resources, having in addition to cobalt a wealth of gold, copper, tin, magnesium, etc. However, the strip mining of these minerals leads to increased deforestation and the pollution of the atmosphere and water resources. Moreover, the Congo's population is one of the world's poorest, with some 73% of the people living on less than \$1.90 a day,¹ largely due to the super-exploitation by monopoly corporations world-wide. Much of the cobalt in the



Congo is mined by children, many of whom are too poor to go to school and have to work to support their families.

The cobalt is found in soft rock, and the mines are basically small holes in the ground with almost no support beams. They are subject to frequent collapse, causing many of the children to be killed or maimed.

On June 17, the group Friends of the Congo (which is of course in no way responsible for this article) held an informative webinar (recorded at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXgLCs9l3Fs>). The talks discussed a lawsuit by the group International Rights Advocates (www.IRAdvocates.org) against five major high-tech and automobile companies for profiting from child labor. The companies are: Apple, Alphabet (parent company of Google), Microsoft, Dell and Tesla.

Despite the fact that IR Advocates is relying on lawsuits and consumer boycotts, their exposure of the role of these monopoly corporations is very useful.

There is a similar exploitation of child slave labor in the cocoa plantations of the Ivory Coast, which corporations such as Nestle, Mars and Hershey make super-profits from. However, these corporations are nowhere near as important to U.S. imperialism as those involved in the Congo.

Police Use Drones to Spy on Demonstrators

On May 15, there were at least two NYPD drones spying on demonstrators at a rally for Palestine in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Liberals in the City Council had put forth a bill, the POST (Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology) Act, that would compel the police to reveal their surveillance of demonstrators.² We would like to know what they said they were using the drone pictures for. This clearly shows that demands to reform the police

will not lead to any serious changes to the nature of the police.

One good reason to wear face masks at demonstrations is that it makes it harder for police to use facial recognition software to identify demonstrators (presumably they can get much better pictures from low-flying drones than from relatively high-flying helicopters).



¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/drc/overview>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/nyregion/nypd-police-surveillance-technology-vote.html>

Book Review: *The Truth about the Drug Companies*, by Dr. Marcia Angell¹

This book is not very new, having been written in 2004 (and so of course has nothing about Covid-19). The author is also not a leftist, simply an honest writer who is knowledgeable about the manipulations by Big Pharma. She worked for the *New England Journal of Medicine* for some two decades (p. xxvi), and for several years was its editor-in-chief.

Dr. Angell points out that Big Pharma is one of the most profitable sectors of monopoly capital (of course she does not use that term). Overall, the 9 largest U.S. drug companies had an average profit of 16% of sales in 2004 (with the largest, Pfizer, making 22%), as compared to about 5% for all large monopolies (p. xv).

Of the top ten pharmaceutical monopolies worldwide, five are from the U.S., two are British, two Swiss and one French (p. xxv). People in the U.S. spend \$200 billion on prescription drugs a year, with the average price for the 50 drugs most used by seniors costing almost \$1,500 for a year's supply in 2002 (p. xxvi). (This is part of the reason that so many unions have a main fight with the employers over rising costs of health care.) At this average cost per drug, seniors taking 6 prescriptions would have to pay \$9,000 just for these, before Medicare added in its prescription drug benefit in 2006 (p. xxii). (This comes out of social security as well as our taxes.)

This is an example of how reforms used to benefit patients (particularly seniors) actually benefit Big Pharma even more. As prescription drug prices increased, there was a demand to include a prescription drug benefit in Medicare, which was added in 2003 (p. 193). But the bill specifically forced Medicare to pay what the drug companies demanded, specifically not allowing Medicare to bargain with the drug companies over prices.

Other laws prohibited people in the U.S. from buying drugs in Canada or Mexico. (This is of course impossible to enforce, as anyone who has gone to Tijuana can testify – particularly seeing the ads all over for Viagra, available in Mexico without a prescription.) Although this law was later relaxed, Big Pharma tried to retaliate in particular against Canadian pharmacies ordering more than what

they needed for local customers (p. 223-224). The U.S. is the only major capitalist country that does nothing to control drug prices.

Although this analogy may seem a little far-fetched, one could compare this to the U.S. blockade of Cuba. For almost 60 years, since shortly after the Cuban Revolution, the U.S. government made it almost impossible to trade with Cuba. But here, the government is making it difficult for people in the U.S. to get cheaper pharmaceutical products from abroad, effectively blockading “its own” people.



Public research – private profit

While the drug companies praise their research that they claim has led to the development of new drugs, this is in general not true. For example, Dr. Angell cites a 1997 study showing that of the 21 most effective new drugs approved between 1965 and 1992, public research was responsible for 15 of them (p. 65). She gives the example of Taxol (used for the treatment of certain cancers). It was developed by research funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) (paid again by our tax dollars) through scientists at Florida State University. The results were then licensed to Bristol-Myers Squibb, which made from **\$1 to 2 billion per year** from sales of this drug alone (p. 59). The bipartisan Bayh-Dole Act (named after Sen. Birch-Bayh, D – Indiana, and Sen. Robert Dole, R – Kansas, allowed for such licensing agreements (p. 7).

Restrictions on generic drugs

In 1984 Congress passed another bipartisan act, the Hatch-Waxman Act (sponsored by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R – Utah, and Rep. Henry Waxman, D – California) (p. 178-180), which was supposed to stimulate the generic drug industry. This act had some effect, as generics made up

¹ This book is *not* available from Red Star Publishers (I bought a copy for \$5 on the street). It is available at high prices through the internet (over \$16 from Amazon), and there is one copy at the 42nd St. research library in New York City. All page numbers refer to pages in the Random House paperback edition of 2005.

20% of prescriptions in 1984 but increased to 50% in 2004, when the book was written. However, generics still represent only 10% of total sales, since the brand-name drugs are much more expensive. But the act also granted all sorts of extensions to the period of brand-name exclusivity (the length of time before generics are allowed to compete with them) through various machinations, thus providing further giveaways to Big Pharma. Further, when companies develop a “new” drug, they must only compare it to a placebo, so there is no check to see whether it is better or worse than another drug already on the market (p. xxvi), and these drugs are again protected from competition with generics.

Big Pharma corrupts the whole medical establishment

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is how it shows the corruption of the whole medical establishment, from hospitals to individual doctors. In 2001, drug companies gave doctors nearly **\$11 billion** worth of “free samples” (p. 115). (This is like illegal drug dealers giving addicts a first “free fix.”) This is of course meant to get their patients “hooked” on their drug, whether these drugs are useful to their patients or not. Doctors are also given free junkets to luxury resorts. This would be considered illegal “kickbacks” if they were directly tied to the doctors giving prescriptions to their patients for these drugs, but the companies claim that they are only “educating” doctors on their drugs (p. 129).

The drug companies take advantage of changes in the definition of medical problems

As one example, high blood pressure (hypertension) was for years defined as blood pressure (bp) above 140 over 90 (p. 85). But a “panel of experts” came up with a new definition of “prehypertension,” with bp above 120 over 80. This led to a large increase in sales of bp drugs.

Dr. Angell points out that most clinical research on prescription drugs is sponsored by the drug companies that make them (pp. 99-100). But doesn’t the FDA itself test the drugs that it approves? *No*, it relies on the company’s own test results: “When a drug company applies to the FDA for approval of a new drug, it is required to submit results from every one of the clinical trials it has sponsored. But it is not required to publish them. The FDA may approve the drug on the basis of minimal evidence” (pp. 111-112).

There are many more details in this book of the influence of Big Pharma on the health care system that we cannot go into in this brief review. But there is one aspect that Dr. Angell glosses over, particularly because it involves

the role of the state, which even the best-intentioned reformers tend to ignore.

The Relation between Big Pharma and the FDA

The FDA is part of the state bureaucracy, the first regulatory agency in the U.S., established as an outgrowth of the Food and Drug Act of 1906 (p. 33). It is a well-known fact that there is a revolving door between the U.S. armaments industry and the “Defense” Department. But there is a similar relation between the FDA and Big Pharma. We will give only two examples.

In 2019, Scott Gottlieb resigned as Commissioner of the FDA to take a lucrative job with Pfizer, still the largest drug company in the U.S. This move doubled his income to about \$330,000. Pfizer is making billions of dollars through sales to the U.S. government of its Covid-19 vaccines (again paid by our tax dollars and approved under an Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA). Further, “current Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar – Gottlieb’s former boss – used to be president of Lilly USA, the U.S. branch of pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly... during his time there the company raised the brand’s insulin prices threefold creating a crisis and drawing public outrage.”¹

Such interchange between the government bureaucracy and private corporations is normal under monopoly capitalism. One can no more prevent this than one can take corporate money out of electoral politics under capitalism.

Reforms, single payer and medical care under socialism.

Dr. Angell proposes a series of reforms of the pharmaceutical industry so that “it should be made to carry out its original purpose of developing important drugs and selling them at reasonable prices” (p. 237). Unfortunately, her viewpoint limits her to small changes that would have only minor effects. For example, she says that the FDA should require new drugs to be compared with other drugs for the same condition, not just with placebos. While this could have the effect of eliminating a “new” drug that was no more effective than an old one, it would just mean that the total sales of the old drug would continue, instead of being split with the sales of the “new” drug. She also suggests that the FDA should be strengthened as an agency independent of the drug companies. But how can one stop, for example, the “revolving door” between Big Pharma and the FDA mentioned above. Such reforms, however well-intentioned, are utopian under capitalism. Her other reforms are along similar lines. She does not even propose a “single payer” health system under which health care

¹ <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/452654-for-big-pharma-the-revolving-door-keeps-spinning>

(including prescription drugs) would be free, paid for through general taxes. Such a system has existed for decades in Canada and many European countries. This would at least be a step forward.

However, even this is insufficient, as can be seen especially in times of capitalist crises. Many countries with such a system are dismantling it little by little, cutting back funding and increasing wait times even for simple procedures. This is to encourage privatization and instill in people the idea that “socialism doesn’t work.”

But this has nothing to do with genuine socialized medicine. This can only exist in a socialist society where there is no private health care, including private pharmaceutical companies. This would mean a greatly expanded public health care system, set up to meet the needs of the whole population, not the maximum profit of a few monopoly corporations. And this could only be established after a socialist revolution.

CDC Acknowledges thousands of deaths from Covid-19 vaccines, but refuses to publicize them

Every day on television and elsewhere one sees ads to “Get the vax,” and how it is “Safe, Effective and Free,” as part of the attempt by the government to get everyone in the United States vaccinated against Covid.

However, it turns out that for many people, the vaccine is not safe at all. Thousands have died from the vaccine, and tens of thousands have been hospitalized or had other serious reactions.

This is not information from any “anti-vax” group¹, but from the CDC itself. It has a site called VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System), which keeps a regularly updated list of adverse reactions to various vaccines, including the ones for Covid-19. The table below reflects the figures from the site as of 7/10/2021.

Event Outcome	Count (All Locations) ²	Count (The United States/Territories/Unknown)
Death	9,535	5,734
Life Threatening	8,377	7,298
Permanent Disability	7,961	5,950
Congenital Anomaly / Birth Defect	266	239
Hospitalized	28,898	25,268
Existing Hospitalization Prolonged	283	235
Emergency Room / Office Visit	57	57
Emergency Room	59,748	58,446
Office Visit	84,653	84,094
None of the above	300,037	284,977
Recovered	161,328	154,777
Serious	44,074	34,985
Not Serious	407,324	391,343
All Events	451,398	426,328
Total Events	438,441	413,391

Some items may have more than one occurrence in any single Event Outcome. (This is why All Events is larger than Total Events.)

The site is somewhat complicated to use, so I give detailed instructions below.

One could say that if there are over 5,000 deaths (I am purposely using the lower figure) and tens of thousands of other serious adverse reactions among the over 150

million fully-vaccinated people in the U.S., that is a small percentage. But first, that is no consolation to the families of those who died from the vaccine, or to the tens of thousands of others who suffered serious adverse reactions.

¹ I was originally led to the site by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s Children’s Health Defense Fund, at <https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/cdc-vaers-injuries-400000-following-covid-vaccines/>. I was not able to reproduce the exact figures in the table at his site, and anyway I wanted to provide the information directly from the CDC. Kennedy is not an “anti-vax”-er but one who wants better

vaccines and is skeptical of the role of Big Pharma in health care.

² There is no explanation given of the difference between “All Locations” and “The United States/Territories/Unknown” (although this clearly does not mean worldwide, since the figures would then be much higher). That is why I have given a separate column for each.

But primarily this shows the dishonesty of the CDC and others who knowingly promote the notion that the vaccines are “safe, effective and free.” No wonder that

there is a large degree of skepticism of people towards the vaccine and the health policies of the U.S. government generally.

To find the figures in the table above, follow these instructions.

- 1) Go to: <https://wonder.cdc.gov/vaers.html>
- 2) Click “I Agree” to the Disclaimer
- 3) Go to VAERS Data Search
- 4) In 1. Organize table layout, change Group Results By to Vaccine (if you leave it at Symptoms you get dozens of table rows instead of only 4 by Vaccine
- 5) In 2. Select Symptoms, leave it at “All”
- 6) In 3. Select vaccine characteristics, change All Vaccine Products to Covid-19, and leave Vaccine Manufacturer at All Manufacturers and Vaccine Dose at All Doses
- 7) In 4. Select location, age, gender, change State/Territory to All Locations or The United States/Territories/Unknown (it is not clear what the difference is, so I have given two separate columns in the table above), leave Age at All Ages and Sex at All Genders
- 8) In 5. You must run a separate search for each Event Category, or you will just get figures that are lumped together. You should then leave Event Category at All Events and change Recovered to Yes, and then once more leave Event Category at All Events, Recovered at All Events and change Serious to Yes.
- 9) Leave everything else in 6. to 12.
- 10) Click Send

Note that, depending on when one checks the figures, they are likely to be higher since the figures are cumulative and the site is updated regularly.

Local elections and other issues

In New York City, 2021 is the year for elections for mayor and the whole City Council, as well as other city and borough-wide positions. There were a few “progressive” candidates (mainly liberal reformers who are relatively new to political issues). None of them won the primary elections, especially in the race for mayor.¹ We could try to get the winning candidates to pledge to abide by demands such as those below.

Jobs: Working people are still suffering from the high levels of unemployment in the current Great Depression 2. We should demand that major corporations that want to set up in New York City (as Amazon tried to do in 2019) be given **no subsidies** (they demanded nearly **\$3 billion** for a promise of 25,000 jobs), and then they must agree to something like a local version of the Employee Free Choice Act). This would mean that, if over half of employees sign union cards, they must be allowed to form a union. This would avoid what happened in the Amazon facility in Bessemer, Alabama, where some 3,000 of the 5,800 employees signed union cards, but the company frightened people with months of enforced anti-union propaganda so that the union was defeated for now.

Housing: New York is one of the cities that still has some forms of rent regulations; but these are gradually but steadily being undermined. We should call for an end to vacancy decontrol and co-op conversions. New buildings should have 80% low-income rentals (let us say, under \$1,000 a month), and the remaining 20% could go for market rate. It is not enough to call for “affordable housing”; affordable for whom? After all, who would say that they are for “unaffordable” housing?

Schools: It is good that public schools will be re-opened in the fall with full-time in-person classes. But there has been so much fear-mongering by the bourgeoisie that so far only 48% of parents have enrolled their children even in “blended” learning (half in-person and half virtual). With no option for virtual learning, this will push many parents into enrolling their children in “charter” schools. There have been an increasing number of articles and ads for charter schools in the New York City bourgeois media (particularly in amNew York). Also, there will be a push for vaccination for all school-age children.

Note that Democratic Party Governor Cuomo and the Democratic-led State Legislature made it much harder for “third party” candidates to get on the ballot, and they are almost always shut out of the debates, often with the excuse that they did not raise enough funds (a clear example of how bourgeois democracy is a bought and paid-for system). The Party for Socialism and Liberation is running Cathy Rojas for Mayor in New York City. If she is actually on the ballot, we should call on people to vote for her regardless of secondary differences. But otherwise, we should call for a blank ballot. This would mean that we do not want any of the candidates in the November general election. If the machines reject a blank ballot, all one has to do is to add a write-in (now easier in New York) marked “none of the above”². In the past, some small left parties have called for a write-in vote for their candidate, but this makes no sense since no one even knows the results of such write-ins. (New York 1, however, does give the results for “minor party” candidates on election night.) There should also be a ranked choice voting system in the general elections, which would erase the fears (unrealistic in New York City, where Republicans have almost no chance of winning city-wide offices) that a vote for a “third party” candidate would allow the “more reactionary” of the two major parties to win.

On a national scale, we should demand that the rent moratoriums be converted into rent cancellations. Many states are already eliminating the moratoriums, and in most states they will soon come to an end. This will mean that hundreds of thousands, or millions, or people will soon face evictions or foreclosures.

We should make a national demand for unemployment compensation to continue until people have found a job. The federal pandemic extension will currently come to an end on September 6, and many states have already eliminated the unemployment extension.

¹ Dianne Morales’s campaign was sabotaged by members of her staff calling for a “union” for campaign workers, and Maya Wiley undermined her own campaign when she admitted taking money from Soros’s foundation.

² The blank ballot was used successfully in Ecuador in the presidential election in April of 2021, when the first round of voting left only two reactionary candidates in the final round.

We reprint a translation of an article from Communist Workers and Students for Social Change, from Puerto Rico. Again, we would like to point out that it is idealist to speak of *communist* revolution instead of *socialist* revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat. We add after the article a short quote from Lenin that we think is relevant.

The University of Puerto Rico (UPR): Victim of Capitalism, Colonialism and Neoliberalism

Academia in general represents the interests of the ruling class in every society, and Puerto Rico is no exception. Being a colony academia represents the interests of the lackeys of the empire and the academic system represents the interests that that empire wants to perpetuate. On the other hand, the university is a center of research, teaching, creation and dissemination of knowledge. It produces the knowledge that the ruling class needs and spreads the ideology of the ruling class. But it contains the contradiction that, while it serves the ruling class, by its functions of creating knowledge that this class needs and of research, it has the ability to maintain some independence necessary for the debate and development of knowledge. **At the same time that it legitimizes the power, it maintains a certain independence that provides the space for certain components of the university community to assume critical and, sometimes, oppositional positions.**

For more than two decades the University of Puerto Rico has been undergoing changes in its financing that have negatively affected its operations. It has also undergone changes in its institutional and administrative orientation and ideology. Since 1966, most of the funds received by the UPR have come from the general budget of the government of Puerto Rico, based on the formula of 9.6% of the general funds. With the creation of the imperial Fiscal Control Board in 2016, this body created by the US government made the decision not to apply the formula and to impose drastic cuts on the UPR budget. For the 2021-22 budget, it proposes an additional \$94 million in cuts. The total reduction will amount to about \$427 million over the last four years. To this we add the increase in the cost of a college credit, which in the last decade rose from \$49 in 2009 to \$145 for this year.

Under the capitalist system, the ruling class manages to realize its profits by selling products in the market. One of the trends of capitalism is commodification. There is a market for everything.

One of the characteristics of the current stage of capitalism is the importance of knowledge. Knowledge is a **commodity**. Especially the knowledge contained in the products and services that generate profits. The university comes to play an important role at this stage. Given the importance of knowledge to generate profits, it is necessary to adapt the university to the needs of private companies. Capitalism today does not need a university at the

service of society that is fairer, more diverse, universal, ethical, and more equitable. What it needs is a university adapted to the markets and the needs of private companies. This is achieved not only through the rampant commodification of the university, but also through an institutional ideology that sees the university as a private enterprise.



This affects the production of knowledge and the training of people. According to neoliberal ideology, the role of the state is one of supervision of markets, not providing goods and services that can create profits for private companies. This includes education. For example, in Puerto Rico we see this now with the privatization of electric power services provided by a State Public Corporation. It is now in the hands of a private company, LUMA. We saw the same thing with the privatization of the telephone company, the airport and the country's highways.

This perspective of the university as a business, shared by the current government and the ruling Fiscal Control Board, is reflected in the recent statements of the current Secretary of the Interior, Noelia García, when she said the following:

“What has the UPR done to reduce its operating expenses? Why do we have eleven campuses, and why shouldn't there be four and we sell three of them to raise money? I'm here thinking desperately, as if this was my company.”

It is clear that university education should be at the service of society, responding to social demands and needs. The arts, sciences and education should be at the disposal of humanity, not to serve the needs and profit of a handful of individuals. But the current interpretation of this argument boils down to the fact that education must

be at the service of the companies, that it must train the professionals needed by the companies.

As for the research carried out in the universities, following neoliberal thinking, it must be at the service of private companies. According to them, that research should be funded more from “external resources”. One of these sources is the sale of patents resulting from the research. But the patents that can be sold are the ones that have the potential of creating profits. Faced with the reduction of the university budget, and the austerity policies of the governments, researchers and administrators increasingly see that it is necessary to seek private donations.

The result of this neoliberal transformation of the university will be a more expensive, elitist university, more aimed at the labor market, with fewer programs, especially for careers in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and of lower educational quality. A university that will be less and less an institution where knowledge is circulated for its own value and will increasingly be an instrument of private companies. This process already began before the recent cuts. Today this is more evident with the accumulation of experiences, damages, and the acceleration of these processes.

The University of Puerto Rico has become a victim of neoliberal policies, of colonialism reflected in the power of the imperial Fiscal Control Board, both of which are products of the capitalist system.

This has been seen in the drastic budget cuts, increases in the costs of studies, the reduction in academic offerings, the elimination of services, the reduction and elimination of labor rights of the teaching and non-teaching workers, an increase in teachers with partial work (who receive very low incomes, without fringe benefits and in a precarious position), violations of the collective bargaining agreements negotiated by non-teaching workers and threats of changes harmful to the retirement system.

We the Communist Workers and Students for Social Change demand not only no cuts, but also the restoration of the funds taken from the University of Puerto Rico and autonomy and co-governance to make it a more democratic and participatory university. We frame our struggle for free education and free access under the slogan “Education is not a commodity”. But the fight must not be limited to these reforms. The current situation of the university is the result of capitalism, its current neoliberal version, and colonialism. We are fighting against neoliberalism, capitalism and colonialism. We are fighting for a communist society, where the exploitation of the working class no longer exists. Where profits no longer occupy the center of human activity and where production and activities respond to the needs of all human beings.

**Join and organize the communist revolution!
Shoulder to shoulder, with a militant and combative attitude, until the final victory!**

Communist Workers and Students for Social Change



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From Lenin, “Left-Wing” Communism, An Infantile Disorder, Chapter II

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by its overthrow (even if only in one country), and whose power lies not only in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie, but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of small production. For, unfortunately, *small production* is still very,

very widespread in the world, and small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate war of life and death, a war demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, indomitableness and unity of will.

Conclusions of the Meeting of Marxist-Leninist Parties of Latin America

June 2021

1. Starting in 2018, important expressions of the struggle of the working masses and youth have been developing in most Latin American countries.

2. Among the protagonists of these struggles, the working class stands out in some countries, as in Ecuador in 2019, where the class-struggle union federations were part of the leadership and in the successive expressions of the general struggle in Colombia, particularly in the strike of 2021. In other countries, the working class does not play a relevant role.

3. In these struggles, women and youth are taking an important part, raising their own demands, but also taking part in the general struggle and proposals, in political confrontation.

4. In Ecuador, Chile and Colombia, one of the prominent protagonists is the indigenous movement that, in addition to raising its specific demands, is raising the general slogans.

5. These mass mobilizations are aimed at the neoliberal policies (packages set up by the IMF, taxes, elimination of subsidies); soon they become general, they add to those who are discontented, dissatisfied; they become massive, they take on a political character, they confront the governments.

6. Objectively, the mass movement is developing in a sustained manner in all the countries of the continent, but it is seen at different levels. The true perspective is that the social and political movement of the workers and peoples will reach new stages towards a new upsurge of the struggle and that, probably, in some countries it will develop into a new revolutionary wave.

7. The nature and goals of the mass movement are aimed against capitalism. However, in the general proposals, in the slogans and banners, the objective of social change, the struggle for revolution and socialism is not put forward.

8. Our parties are taking part in this movement, but our presence is limited, it has difficulties to overcome and problems to resolve.

9. The most prominent popular leaders in these combats do not belong to our ranks.

10. In the construction of the programs of struggle, in the development of the battles of the masses, the unity of the working masses and the peoples, of women and youth, is being forged. Our Parties are taking up the responsibility of joining with their forces, raising unitary banners and making themselves visible as combative and consistent. We must work so that unity in action becomes political and programmatic unity that transcends the struggles in the streets to the daily political confrontation with capitalism and its ringleaders. The Leninist slogan to go where

the masses are fighting is becoming a command for our parties to be carried out immediately.

11. The moments of direct struggle, of confrontation with repression, whether we win victory or suffer setbacks, must be turned into a space for debate, for the unmasking of the class enemy, for the affirmation of our platform, for the strengthening of unity, for the spreading of ideas, proposals and paths of revolution and socialism; they must become stepping stones for forging a democratic, popular and revolutionary political project.

12. In the electoral political struggle that is unfolding in different countries, the confrontation between liberal positions and the policies of progressivism is generally becoming polarized.

This is an electoral political confrontation in which the workers and peoples are coming together to seek alternatives. The policies of progressivism, in the absence of a significant force from the left positions, is receiving support due to the dissatisfaction, discontent and desire for change of the masses.

These circumstances must be confronted by the Marxist-Leninists from class positions, taking into account the concrete analysis of the concrete situation.

The class independence that characterizes our proposals and activities must mark the positions of our parties in the elections and the anti-neoliberal fronts that are underway.

13. We must work as parties for the formation of political and organizational instruments that open the perspective of the building of alternative popular and left-wing electoral blocs.

14. This new stage of the popular struggle poses a great challenge for the Marxist-Leninist parties.

– How we get involved in the mass movement to carry out revolutionary policies?

– How to gain positions in the leadership of the popular movement?

– How to unmask the positions of social democracy and opportunism within the mass movement?

– How to make revolutionary popular leaders stand out in the mass movement and in the political struggle to contest for social leadership?

15. The tools of revolutionary communication and propaganda must be rationalized and enhanced.

– The Party newspaper must ensure its regularity and fulfill, in fact, the role of propagandist, agitator and organizer.

– Flyers, manifestos, print media are still valid and must be used.

– Social networks are a space that must be turned into instruments for revolutionary propaganda: we must insist

on the use of its various mechanisms and tools: web pages, blogs, digital newspapers, etc.

– It is necessary to take into account the new elements of technology and take advantage of them.

Banners

Let us put ourselves in an offensive mode to promote the banners of the revolution and socialism in the workers' and popular movement.

The ideological and political struggle against imperialism and capitalism, against reaction. To denounce the evils of capitalism: unemployment, misery, the policies of aggression of imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism, and the penetration of Chinese imperialism. Understand that inter-imperialist contradictions do not benefit the peoples and even less the revolution, but that they must be taken into account in the elaboration of policy.

The struggle for democracy, the validity of public liberties, repression and authoritarianism, the unmasking and combatting of fascistic policies.

To demarcate positions with the various ideological and political expressions that affect the popular workers' movement: social democracy, the various manifestations of opportunism, 21st century socialism, progressivism. In the face of the positions and proposals of sectors of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, we must strive to understand their nature and, through debate, work so that they advance to consistent positions.

Fight neoliberal policies: the adjustments proposed by the IMF: privatizations, labor flexibility, the elimination of subsidies, free trade agreements.

Combat extractivism, the exploitation of natural resources developed by the international monopolies.

Raise the opposition to foreign debt.

Support for popular struggles inside and outside our countries.

Promote solidarity among social fighters, the peoples of Latin America and the rest of the world.

Reimprimimos el siguiente artículo de Trabajadorxs y estudiantes comunistas por el cambio social, de Puerto Rico. Una vez más, nos gustaría señalar que es idealista hablar de revolución *comunista* en lugar de revolución *socialista*, la dictadura del proletariado. Agregamos a continuación una breve cita de Lenin que creemos relevante.

La Universidad de Puerto Rico: Víctima del capitalismo, colonialismo y el neoliberalismo

La academia en general representa los intereses de la clase dominante en toda sociedad y Puerto Rico no es la excepción. Siendo una colonia la academia representa los intereses de los lacayos del imperio y el sistema académico representa los intereses que ese imperio quiere perpetuar. Por otro lado, la universidad es centro de investigación, enseñanza, creación y divulgación del conocimiento. Produce el conocimiento que la clase dominante necesita y divulga la ideología de la clase dominante. Pero contiene la contradicción de que a la misma vez que sirve a la clase dominante, por sus funciones de crear conocimiento que esta clase necesita y de investigación, tiene la capacidad de mantener cierta independencia necesaria para el debate y el desarrollo del conocimiento. **A la misma vez que legitima el poder, mantiene cierta independencia que provee el espacio para que ciertos componentes de la comunidad universitaria puedan asumir posiciones críticas y, en ocasiones, contestatarias.**

Hace más de dos décadas la Universidad de Puerto Rico ha estado sufriendo cambios en su financiación que han afectado negativamente sus operaciones. También ha ido sufriendo cambios en su orientación e ideología institucional y administrativa. Desde 1966 la mayor parte de los fondos recibidos por la UPR provenían del presupuesto general del gobierno de Puerto Rico, basados en la fórmula de 9.6% del fondo general. Con la creación de la imperial Junta de Control Fiscal en 2016, este cuerpo creado por el gobierno de los EEUU toma la decisión de no aplicar la fórmula e impone unos recortes drásticos al presupuesto de la UPR. Para el presupuesto del 2021-22 propone un recorte adicional de \$94 millones. La reducción total ascenderá a cerca de \$427 millones en los últimos cuatro años. A esto le añadimos el aumento del costo del crédito universitario, que en la última década subió de \$49 en 2009 a \$145 para este año.

Bajo el sistema capitalista, la clase dominante logra realizar sus ganancias mediante la venta de productos en los mercados. Una de las tendencias del capitalismo es la mercantilización. Hay un mercado para todo.

Una de las características de la actual etapa del capitalismo es la importancia del conocimiento. El conocimiento es **mercancía**. Especialmente el conocimiento contenido en los productos y servicios que generan ganancias. La universidad viene a jugar un papel importante en esta etapa. Dada la importancia del conocimiento para



generar ganancias, se hace necesario adecuar la universidad a las necesidades de las empresas privadas. Para el capitalismo actual, no se necesita una universidad al servicio de la sociedad para hacerla más justa, con más conocimientos diversos, universal, ética y más equitativa. Lo que se necesita es una universidad adaptada a los mercados y las necesidades de las empresas privadas. Esto no solo se logra mediante la mercantilización rampante de la universidad, sino también mediante una ideología institucional que ve a la universidad como una empresa privada.

Esto afecta la producción de conocimiento y la formación de las personas. Según la ideología neoliberal, el rol del estado es una de supervisión de los mercados, no el proveer bienes y servicios que puedan generar ganancias para empresas privadas. Esto incluye la educación. Por ejemplo, en Puerto Rico lo vemos ahora con la privatización de servicios de energía eléctrica que proveía una Corporación Pública del Estado. Ahora está en manos de una empresa privada, LUMA. Lo mismo vimos con la privatización de la compañía telefónica, el aeropuerto y las carreteras del país.

Esta perspectiva de la universidad como negocio, compartida por el gobierno actual y la gobernante Junta de Control Fiscal, se refleja en las expresiones recientes de la actual Secretaria de la Gobernación, Noelia García, cuando dijo lo siguiente:

“¿Qué ha hecho la UPR para reducir sus gastos operacionales? ¿Por qué tenemos once recintos, y por qué no hay cuatro y vendemos tres, y recaudamos dinero? Yo estoy aquí pensando como a lo loco, como si esto fuera mi compañía.”

Es claro que la educación universitaria debe estar al servicio de la sociedad, respondiendo a las demandas y necesidades sociales. Las artes, las ciencias, la academia

deben estar a la disposición de la humanidad no para servir a las necesidades y el lucro de un puñado de individuos. Pero la interpretación actual de este argumento se reduce a que la educación debe estar al servicio de las empresas, que debe preparar los profesionales solicitados por las empresas.

En cuanto a las investigaciones realizadas en las universidades, siguiendo el pensamiento neoliberal, éstas deben estar al servicio de las empresas privadas. Se considera que las investigaciones deben ser más financiadas con “recursos externos”. Una de las fuentes es la venta de patentes resultado de las investigaciones. Pero las patentes que son vendibles son las que tienen el potencial de generar ganancias. Ante la reducción del presupuesto universitario, y las políticas de austeridad de los gobiernos, investigadores y administradores ven cada vez más que es necesaria la búsqueda de donaciones privadas.

El resultado de esta transformación neoliberal de la universidad será una universidad más cara, elitista, muy dirigida al mercado laboral, con menos programas, especialmente para las carreras de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales, de menor calidad educativa. Una universidad que será cada vez menos una institución donde se transmiten conocimientos por su valor propio y cada vez más será un instrumento de las empresas privadas. Este proceso ya comenzó antes de los recientes recortes. La diferencia es que hoy se percibe más fuerte por la acumulación de experiencias y daños, y la aceleración de estos procesos.

La Universidad de Puerto Rico ha sido víctima de las políticas neoliberales, el colonialismo reflejado en el

poder de la imperial Junta de Control Fiscal, ambos productos del sistema capitalista.

Esto se ha manifestado en los drásticos recortes presupuestarios, aumentos en los costos de estudios, la reducción en la oferta académica, eliminación de servicios, la reducción y eliminación de derechos laborales de los/las trabajadores/as docentes y no docentes, aumento de docentes con tarea parcial (que reciben bajísimos ingresos, sin beneficios marginales y en posición precaria), violaciones a los convenios colectivos negociados por los/las trabajadores/as no docentes y amenazas de cambios perjudiciales al sistema de retiro.

Trabajadores/as y Estudiantes Comunistas por el Cambio Social exigimos, no tan solo cero recortes, sino también la restitución de los fondos quitados a la Universidad de Puerto Rico y la autonomía y el cogobierno para que sea una universidad más democrática y participativa. Bajo la consigna “La educación no es una mercancía”, enmarcamos nuestra lucha por la gratuidad y el libre acceso. Pero la lucha no debe limitarse a estas reformas. La situación actual de la universidad es el resultado del capitalismo, su actual versión neoliberal, y el colonialismo. Luchamos contra el neoliberalismo, el capitalismo y el colonialismo. Luchamos por una sociedad comunista, donde ya no exista la explotación de la clase trabajadora. Donde las ganancias ya no ocupen el centro de la actividad humana y que la producción y actividades respondan a las necesidades de todos los seres humanos.

¡Únete y organicemos la revolución comunista!
¡Hombro con hombro, con actitud militante y
combativa, hasta la victoria final!

Trabajadorxs y Estudiantes Comunistas por el Cambio Social



De Lenin: *La enfermedad infantil del “izquierdismo” en el comunismo*, Capítulo II

“La dictadura del proletariado es la guerra más abnegada y más implacable de la nueva clase contra un enemigo *más poderoso*, contra la burguesía, cuya resistencia *se halla decuplicada* por su derrocamiento (aunque no sea más que en un solo país) y cuya potencia consiste, no sólo en la fuerza del capital internacional, en la fuerza y la solidez de las relaciones internacionales de la burguesía, sino, además, en *la fuerza de la costumbre*, en la fuerza *de la pequeña producción*. Pues, por desgracia, ha quedado todavía en el mundo mucha y mucha pequeña producción y ésta *engendra* al capitalismo y a la burguesía constantemente, cada día, cada hora, por un proceso espontáneo y en masa. Por todos estos motivos, la dictadura del proletariado es necesaria, y la victoria sobre la burguesía es imposible sin una lucha prolongada, tenaz, desesperada, a muerte, una lucha que exige serenidad, disciplina, firmeza, inflexibilidad y una voluntad única.”

Conclusiones de la reunión de los partidos marxistas-leninistas de América Latina

Junio 2021

1. A partir de 2018 se vienen desarrollando en la mayoría de los países de América Latina importantes expresiones de la lucha de las masas trabajadoras y la juventud.

2. Entre los protagonistas de esas luchas destaca en algunos países la clase obrera, como en el Ecuador en 2019, donde las centrales sindicales clasistas fueron parte de la dirección y en las sucesivas expresiones de la lucha general en Colombia, de manera particular en el paro de 2021. En otros países, la clase obrera no juega un rol relevante.

3. En esas luchas se expresan de manera importante las mujeres y la juventud, levantando sus propias demandas, pero también incorporados a la lucha y las propuestas generales, a la confrontación política.

4. En Ecuador, Chile y Colombia uno de los protagonistas destacados es el movimiento indígena que además de levantar sus demandas específicas se empodera de las consignas generales.

5. Esas movilizaciones de las masas apuntan a las políticas neoliberales (paquetazos dispuestos por el FMI, impuestos, eliminación de subsidios); pronto cobran generalidad, suman a los descontentos, a los inconformes; se vuelven masivas, adquieren carácter político, enfrentan a los gobiernos.

6. Objetivamente, el movimiento de masas se desarrolla de manera sostenida en todos los países del continente, pero, se expresa en diferentes niveles. La perspectiva cierta es que el movimiento social y político de los trabajadores y los pueblos alcance nuevos estadios hacia un nuevo auge de la lucha y que, probablemente, en algunos países se califique hasta una nueva oleada revolucionaria.

7. La naturaleza y los objetivos del movimiento de masas apunta contra el capitalismo. Sin embargo, en las propuestas generales, en las consignas y banderas pero no se plantea el objetivo del cambio social, la lucha por la revolución y el socialismo.

8. Nuestros partidos están incorporados en ese movimiento, pero nuestra presencia es limitada, enfrenta dificultades a sobrepasar y problemas a resolver.

9. Los dirigentes populares más destacados en esos combates no pertenecen a nuestras filas.

10. En la construcción de los programas de lucha, en el desarrollo de los combates de las masas se va forjando la unidad de las masas trabajadoras y los pueblos, de las mujeres y la juventud. Nuestros Partidos asumen la responsabilidad de incorporarse con sus fuerzas levantando las banderas unitarias y visibilizándose como combativas y consecuentes. Debemos trabajar porque la unidad en la acción se proyecte a la unidad política y programática que trascienda las jornadas de las calles a la confrontación

política cotidiana al capitalismo y sus capitostes. La consigna leninista de ir a donde las masas luchan se convierte para nuestros partidos en una voz de orden de ejecución inmediata.

11. Los momentos de la lucha directa, del enfrentamiento a la represión, mismo si conquistamos la victoria, como si sufrimos reveses deben ser convertidos en espacio para el debate, para el desenmascaramiento del enemigo de clase, para la afirmación de la plataforma, para el fortalecimiento de la unidad, para la difusión de las ideas, propuestas y caminos de la revolución y el socialismo; deben convertirse en peldaños para la forja de un proyecto político democrático, popular y revolucionario.

12. En la lucha política electoral que se desenvuelve en diferentes países, por lo general se polariza el enfrentamiento entre las posiciones liberales y las políticas del progresismo.

Es una confrontación política electoral en la que concurren los trabajadores y los pueblos en búsqueda de alternativas. Las políticas del progresismo, en ausencia de una fuerza significativa de las posiciones de izquierda reciben el afluente de la insatisfacción, la inconformidad y el anhelo de cambio de las masas.

Estas circunstancias deben ser enfrentadas por los marxistas leninistas desde las posiciones de clase, teniendo en cuenta el análisis concreto de la situación concreta.

La independencia de clase que caracteriza a nuestras propuestas y actividades debe marcar las posiciones de nuestros partidos en las elecciones y los frentes anti neoliberales que se encuentran en curso.

13. Debemos trabajar en tanto que partidos para la construcción de instrumentos políticos y organizativos que abran la perspectiva de la construcción de bloques electorales alternativos populares y de izquierda.

14. Este nuevo estadio de la lucha popular plantea un gran desafío para los partidos marxistas leninistas.

– ¿cómo involucrarnos en el movimiento de masas para llevar la política revolucionaria?

– ¿cómo ganar posiciones en la dirección del movimiento popular?

– ¿cómo desenmascarar las posiciones de la socialdemocracia y el oportunismo en el seno del movimiento de masas?

– ¿cómo destacar en el movimiento de masas y en la lucha política dirigentes populares revolucionarios que disputen el liderazgo social?

15. Las herramientas de la comunicación y la propaganda revolucionaria deben ser racionalizadas y potenciadas.

– El periódico del Partido debe asegurar su regularidad y cumplir, en los hechos, el papel de propagandista, agitador y organizador.

– Las volantes, los manifiestos, las pintas siguen teniendo validez y deben ser utilizadas.

– Las redes sociales son un espacio y deben ser convertidos en instrumentos para la propaganda revolucionaria: hay que insistir en la utilización de sus diversos mecanismos y herramientas: las páginas Web, los blogs, los periódicos digitales, etc.

– Es necesario tener en cuenta los nuevos elementos de la tecnología y aprovecharlos.

Banderas

Colocarnos en modo de ofensiva para la promoción de las banderas de la revolución y el socialismo en el movimiento obrero y popular.

La lucha ideológica y política contra el imperialismo y el capitalismo, contra la reacción. Denunciar las lacras del capitalismo: el paro, la miseria, las políticas de agresión del imperialismo, particularmente norteamericano y, la penetración del imperialismo chino. Entender que las contradicciones inter-imperialistas no benefician a los pueblos y menos a la revolución, pero que deben ser tenidas en cuenta en la elaboración de la política.

La lucha por la democracia, la vigencia de las libertades públicas, la represión y el autoritarismo, el desenmascaramiento y combate a las políticas fascizantes.

Demarcar posiciones con las diversas expresiones ideológicas y políticas que inciden en el movimiento obrero popular: la social democracia, las diversas manifestaciones del oportunismo, el socialismo del siglo XXI, el progresismo. De cara a las posiciones y propuestas de sectores de la pequeña burguesía revolucionaria debemos esforzarnos por comprender su naturaleza y a través del debate trabajar por que avancen a posiciones consecuentes.

Combatir las políticas neoliberales: los reajustes propuestos por el FMI: privatizaciones, la flexibilización laboral, la eliminación de los subsidios, los tratados de libre comercio.

Combatir el extractivismo, la explotación de los recursos naturales desarrollada por los monopolios internacionales.

Levantar la oposición a la deuda externa.

Apoyo a las luchas populares dentro y fuera de nuestros países.

Impulsar la solidaridad entre los luchadores sociales, los pueblos de América Latina y del resto del mundo.