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Puerto Rico

Solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico

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Description:

We express our solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico in their struggle against the corrupt government of Governor Ricardo Rosselló. Friday [19 July] marked seven days of massive protests demanding the resignation of the governor and his associates. Despite tear gas attacks, rubber bullets, beatings and police arrests, the protests have grown in the capital San Juan and have spread to all corners of the island. On Wednesday, 17 July more than 350,000 people marched through the streets of the capital, an unprecedented rally.

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The protests began after accusations and arrests of several heads of government agencies in the Rossello administration, including former Education Secretary Julia Keleher. Keleher, in addition to awarding contracts to his relatives, was distinguished by implementing the policy of privatization of the public education system and the closure of more than 400 schools. Teachers' organizations and affected communities have been fighting these policies since 2017. Now the whole town joins the denunciation of Keleher and what it represents, neoliberalism and its sister corruption...

In addition to the accusations against Keleher and other government officials, there was the publication of a chat in which Governor Rosselló, officials of his administration and some close associates shared their comments. The more than 800 pages published reveal or suggest a large number of crimes such as obstructing justice, firing people for political reasons, giving "lessons" to opposition leaders such as Manuel Natal of the Movimiento Victoria Ciudadana, using public funds for private purposes. But, above all, the chat exposes the sexist, homophobic and racist attitudes of the participants. It is a living portrait of the mentality of a privileged class that governs the country as its former private estate, with total disdain for the population, although they publicly present themselves as the opposite. In the chat, the death of government critics, the corpses stored after Hurricane Maria and the grassroots activists of the same government party were mocked.

The people of Puerto Rico have decided that such a person can no longer be governor and have been demanding his resignation for the past week.

We know that Rossello is only part of the problem. Puerto Rico is experiencing an economic crisis that has already lasted a decade. Twenty per cent of the jobs that existed in 2007 have been lost. The economic crisis has resulted in a public debt crisis of \$70 billion. To pay it, a Fiscal Control Board imposed by the U.S. Congress is enacting austerity measures that impoverish the country and prolong the crisis. That is why the call for resignation is accompanied by the rejection of the Board and the demand for an audit of the debt. We do not doubt that the victory against Rossello will lay the best foundations to continue the struggle in those areas.

We express our admiration for the persistent struggle of the people of Puerto Rico, an example for the struggles of the world. We demand the release of those arrested or accused as a result of participating in this resistance. We join the call for the immediate resignation of Governor Ricardo Roselló.

22 July 2019

Signed by:

Guillermo Almeyra

Solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico

Humberto Montes de Oca, International Secretary of the SME (Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas) and the NCT (Nueva Central de Trabajadores).

Luis Bonilla-Molina, Portal Coordinator "Other Voices in Education".

Miguel Urbán (MEP for Podemos and militant of Anticapitalists in the Spanish State)

Stalin Pérez, LUCHAS (Liga Unitaria Chavista Socialista), Venezuela.

Polo Ciudadano, Panama: Olmedo Beluche, Briseida Barrantes, Félix Villarreal and Abdiel Rodríguez.

PRT ,Mexico. Edgard Sánchez, Luis Rangel, Josie Chávez, José Martínez, Alicia Mendoza, Mafer Arellanes, Melisa Morán.

Eric Toussaint, CADTM (International Network of the Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debts)

Dan LaBotz, Solidarity and DSA militant in the United States

Claudio Katz, Argentina

Eduardo Lucita, Argentina

Luz Mayorga, Venezuela

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Germán Hurtado, FP, Mexico

Alberto González Bárcenas, OPT, Mexico

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David Finkel and Dianne Feeley, editors, Against the Current

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José Antonio Salas: National Coordinator of Support to the Sovereign National State of Borinquen.

FROM VENEZUELA: Christian Pereira, General Secretary of the Union of Workers of the Company FCA (Fiat, Chrysler Automóvil) and President of the Unitary Federation of Automotive, Autoparts and Related Workers of Venezuela (FUTAAC), Ángel Navas, President of the Federation of Electrical Workers of Venezuela (FETRAELEC), Marcos García , General Secretary of the Union of Workers of the Municipality Libertador, Caracas; Gustavo Martínez, General Secretary of the Occimetal Company Workers Union; Hernán Castillo, General Secretary of the Pro Avena Company Workers Union of the Polar Group.

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