

No more lies!

The way forward in the struggle against the poisoning of Flint

The WSWS editorial board
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This statement is being distributed at a community meeting in Flint today.

Once again, we are being told by politicians that they are coming to Flint to hear what we have to say and address our concerns. What kind of fools do they take us for? As Lincoln famously said: “You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.”

Governor Whitmer and Attorney General Nessel say they want to consult with the people of Flint about the criminal investigation of the Flint water disaster. But they didn’t ask our opinion before deciding to drop all charges against officials involved in the poisoning of tens of thousands of people and then lying about it!

Five years after the water supply was switched to the toxic Flint River in order to make a financial killing for the corporations and investors behind the Karegnondi Water Authority, with a cut going to their political stooges in both parties, not a single official has been criminally convicted. No charges have even been lodged against the prime movers in this criminal conspiracy: Rick Snyder, Andy Dillon, Dayne Walling, Jeff Wright, to name a few.

At tonight’s meeting, Solicitor General Fadwa Hammoud and Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy follow a parade of officials such as Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders who all used the poisoning of Flint’s water as a backdrop for election campaigning—never to be heard from again.

Obama deigned to come here in order to tell us to shut up and drink the water!

The dropping of all charges in the water crisis by Whitmer makes crystal clear that the working people of Flint cannot secure justice by appealing to either the

Democratic or Republican Party or any section of the political establishment. They are all beholden to big business and the financial oligarchy.

Similar atrocities as the disaster in Flint are taking place in cities across the country. One fourth of people in the US drink water from systems that do not meet safety laws. The Detroit Public School system’s drinking fountains have been shut off due to high lead levels since last year.

The rounding up of impoverished immigrants and their children to be thrown into concentration camps recalls the mass incarceration of Japanese-Americans and the atrocities of Nazi Germany. Virtually every day a worker or youth is shot dead by police. While untold trillions are spent for war, working people are told there is no money for health care, education, housing or the infrastructure.

Similar social crimes are being inflicted on workers all over the world. This is inevitable in a society where eight billionaires have more wealth than the bottom half of the world’s population—3.5 billion people. In the US, three oligarchs—Jeff Bezos, Warren Buffett and Bill Gates—have more wealth than 160 million people at the bottom end of the wealth scale.

These are crimes not just of greedy and corrupt individuals, but of capitalism, a system based on the exploitation of the working class, which produces all the wealth, by a parasitic ruling class. There is no solution for working people in Flint or anywhere else outside of a struggle to put an end to capitalism and establish socialism.

Flint, once the world’s center of auto production, is proof of this. GM took its revenge for the sit-down strikes of the 1930s that forced it to recognize the

United Auto Workers union by shutting its plants and leaving behind poverty and pollution. The UAW itself has long since been turned into a tool of the corporations and second line of oppression against the workers it falsely claims to represent. Norwood Jewell, since convicted for taking bribes from Fiat-Chrysler to push through pro-company sellout contracts, was one of the biggest promoters of the KWA and the water switch when he was UAW regional director in Flint.

No confidence can be placed in any section of the political establishment or either party, including phony “socialists” who try to channel workers’ anger behind the big business Democrats, such as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

The solution to the crisis facing the working class, including securing justice for the crimes against the Flint population, lies in turning to the massive power of the working class in Michigan, throughout the US and internationally. Strikes and protests against inequality and attacks on democratic rights are drawing millions into struggle from teachers in the US to workers in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Poland, New Zealand, Tunisia and Algeria, to name but a few. Millions of workers and young people around the world are coming to realize that it is capitalism that is stealing their jobs and impoverishing their families, not immigrants or refugees.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the organization of an independent committee of workers and young people in Flint as part of the fight to establish rank-and-file committees independent of the unions and the big business parties in factories, work locations and neighborhoods all across the country. This will provide the democratic and fighting means for the working people of Flint to press their demands for justice and full compensation for all they have lost in the water disaster.

These demands must be based on what people need, not what the politicians say is “affordable.”

These include full compensation for the loss of home values, jobs and income, and payment of all medical costs for life for both children and adults. The entire water infrastructure must be rebuilt. Decades of corporate plundering must be reversed with the provision of decent-paying jobs, housing and education for all.

This means a direct challenge to the corporate

monopoly over economic and political life. Securing the needs of working people requires the nationalization of all utilities—including water—under the democratic control of the working class. Likewise, the banks and financial institutions and the auto industry must be taken out of the hands of the ruling elite and reorganized as public utilities to meet the needs of society as a whole, not the richest 10 percent.

All attempts to divide us along the lines of race, gender or national origin must be rejected. Our strength is in our unity and the consciousness of what we face and what must be done.

All those who see the need for such a fight should contact the Socialist Equality Party (via webform or Facebook).

Join this fight!



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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