

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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Next Steps in the Fight for Housing as a Human Right

For almost two centuries during the period of the growth of industrial capitalism, workers frequently faced housing shortages, because working class housing was generally less profitable for builders than housing for the ruling classes. Housing crises tended to come and go with the rise and fall of supply and demand, depending on the growth and contraction of various industries in particular localities or regions.

In the 21st century, the introduction of high-tech automation across more and more sectors of our economy is literally destroying the capitalist system as we know it. It is steadily increasing unemployment and reducing wages, in spite of the best efforts of “Fight for \$15” and other workers movements to counter the underlying economic trends. This has caused more workers to lose benefits and protections they and their families have had for decades, including affordable housing. As homeowners, workers face not only foreclosures, but in hundreds of cities across the country, they find themselves no longer able even to afford rent to keep a roof over their heads. An entire generation of children is growing up with the fear that they and their families may become homeless.

This situation has unleashed a broad movement for housing that extends over a number of distinct, but interrelated fronts. Across the country renters are battling for rent control and against unjust and abusive evictions. HUD tenants are resisting federal budget cuts, and homeowners are fighting foreclosures and evictions. People in high rent cities are grappling with displacement and banishment, when older buildings are demolished and replaced with luxury housing for the elites.

Finally, homeless people are struggling for homes and basic human rights. They are organizing tent cities with their own self-governance, calling media and testifying and demonstrating at City Halls. A Homeless Bill of Rights has been introduced in several state legislatures. Cities are responding with stepped-up attacks. Police in San Francisco and Denver are confiscating tents and blankets.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

What is to be done when the battlefield is so broad and varied? The question of government accountability is the linchpin that can draw together the scattered struggles in the housing and homelessness movements. All the varying housing movements demand housing as a human right, whether for homeless people, tenants facing eviction, or workers facing foreclosure. But the only way to secure any human right is to fight in the po-

litical arena: Since the crisis is systemic, incremental and market-based solutions do not work.

The only way to enforce the right to housing concretely, and solve the housing question, is to secure every family a dwelling unit with a lifetime guarantee against eviction, foreclosure, or any other form of interference. Homeless people should receive vacant government-owned homes, or homes taken back from corporate owners. Renters should obtain title to the home they live in. Homeowners should be freed from predatory bank liens. All of these things are possible and eminently practical, but only the government can make them happen. The housing movement is already making these kinds of demands. In the process of fighting for them, revolutionaries can demonstrate that a system that fails to guarantee these (and other human necessities) should be overturned and replaced with one that will.

FREEDOM FROM EVICTION

Making the right to housing a reality requires grappling with the question of who owns it and exactly what those ownership rights include.

Only 20 percent of households actually own their own homes free of any bank mortgage, an amount that has been steadily in decline. As dramatized by the 2008 crisis, the right to individual family-owned housing is not secure, as long as for-profit banks hold liens on their homes. Homeowners will only have a guarantee against eviction, when banks are publicly owned and accountable, and when payment plans are affordable.

The right to rental housing can only be ensured when it is “de-commodified” by removing it from the speculative market. Housing that is not owned or operated for profit, cannot be sold for speculative gain. Such housing provides security of tenure for residents and is generally defined as socially owned. There are already four million units of socially owned or partially socially owned housing in the US today. This includes government-owned public housing, housing owned by non-profits and housing owned by residents themselves in the form of “limited-equity” cooperatives. Federal government housing, owned by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and certain non-profit corporations, are examples of partially socially owned housing, because they rarely provide adequate protections against eviction.

Even though HUD owns or subsidizes millions of units, the right of residents in government-owned housing is still not se-



Homeless gather at a freezing cold food line in Detroit, getting a meal to survive another day. Photo by Daymonjahartley.com

cure. Because the US government is corporate-dominated, HUD utilizes its holdings for corporate political aims and collusion with real estate profiteers. It allows thousands of units to remain empty or fall into disrepair. It subjects tenants to punitive “one-strike” eviction policies or immigration restrictions. The rightful demand of the workers is for HUD to serve the needs of its residents and all people who need housing – not the corporations.

Most twentieth century socialist societies housed their people through a combination of government-owned and socially owned housing. In Cuba, for example, the 1960 Urban Reform Law made tenants into homeowners, by amortizing the purchase price of their units through the rents they paid. In an article by Jill Hamburg in *Progressive Planning*, she states, “State-built housing was offered as long-term

‘lease holding’, with rents set at 10 percent of family income. Private renting was prohibited. In addition, vacant units confiscated from emigrants were distributed to people in need... Residents of poor urban housing remained as long-term leaseholders, but by the mid-1960s, no longer paid rent. Homeowners could buy and sell dwellings and land, but only at low government-set prices, and the State had first option to buy... By the early 1990s, more than 85% of Cuban households were homeowners, paying little or nothing for their units except for maintenance, repair, and utilities. There were no mortgages, or land and property taxes...”

POLITICAL UNITY

Some of the political approaches to social and government housing ownership that are already happening include:

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Strategy, Vision and the Way Forward

Inside Rally, Comrades!

The election and actions of Donald Trump have given rise to a broad debate about the future of our country. The millions who are marching and speaking out in defense of their basic right to survival are demanding that the government come to their aid. There is a growing awareness that there is a difference between the interests of the few and the interests of the many. They are calling for unity, defending democracy and the higher morality in protecting those who suffer. As the old forms of achieving a better life are being rapidly destroyed, one question is coming to the fore: Which way?

All the working class movement can rely on is an understanding of where history is going, and, on that basis, a strategy to achieve a vision made possible by conditions today.

This vision of a better life, free from want and exploitation, is deep in the heart of American history. This struggle has often been corrupted, diverted and thwarted, yet the ruling class has been unable to kill the aspirations of the American working class, regardless of their color, their nationality, their sex or their faith. It has been fought for by generations of workers in opposition to the ruling class, ever since there was an America.

The article, "From the Editors: An Epoch of Social Revolution" provides a much needed perspective that explains the world historical moment we are living through and the resulting social and political upheavals that are following in its wake. It summarizes many of the general themes that thread

themselves through the articles in this issue. It shows the revolutionary impact of labor-replacing technology and the creation of a new class of workers that hold the potential to lead humanity to a new society. It points out how the struggle to hold the government accountable for providing the basic necessities of life, when combined with the lessons learned in that struggle, further develops the thinking and consciousness of our class. It shows how a cooperative, communist society is the only solution to the demands of the workers.

"The Special Revolutionary Role of Women" shows how the recent succession of marches and protests, beginning with the massive women's marches throughout the country and the world, are a powerful, catalyzing force. It points out how these women's demands are the result of their historic oppression as women and also the expression of their position as workers.

These responses have been global, because the processes underlying them are global. Production without labor means distribution without money. A new class of workers is forming and cutting its teeth on this reality. "Globalization and Internationalism" shows that this class is global, and, as we respond to the new conditions created by globalization, we have to see internationalism in a new light. While we build understanding and solidarity with the peoples of the world, U.S. revolutionaries' internationalist service is the struggle against our own corporate State and the struggle for the establishment of a cooperative society.

As the workers fight for their basic necessities in every arena, revolutionaries must show them what is at the root of their problems and what the path is to resolving them.

Our cover article "Next Steps in the Fight for Housing as a Human Right" explains that making the right to housing a reality requires grappling with the question of who owns it and exactly what those ownership rights include. As our class begins to direct its demands to the federal government, they combine the scattered struggles against individual landlords, banks and corporations, and focus them into a political struggle against the State. Such national demands raise the issue of which class the State serves, broadening the battlefield where class consciousness can be taught.

The movement is filled with fine organizers and courageous fighters. They know their work. The growing calls for unity and the inevitable grappling with the worsening conditions of the people are bringing forward a vision for America once again. There is a growing debate of how to make this vision a reality, what forces do we need, where do we focus, how do prepare not only for the daily battles, but also how to prepare for those that are coming.

Strategy must determine the one first step that is indispensable to the success of all else. "Class Unity Decisive in Fight for New Society" explains that without unity on the basis of common economic conditions, the workers will not be able to achieve their goals. Their basic demands for food, clothing and shelter are the foundation upon which the entire rotten system can be overturned. In spite of worsening economic conditions, nothing can be accomplished until the American people hold a vision of where they want to go and what they want to be. Creating and imbuing them with such vision is the overriding task of revolutionaries and the foundation of our organization and our press.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Rally: to bring back together and put in a state of order, as retreating troops [to return to attack]

Comrade: a person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause

Rally, Comrades! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally, Comrades!* provides a strategic outlook for the revolutionaries by indicating and illuminating the line of march of the revolutionary process. It presents a pole of scientific clarity, examines and analyzes the real problems of the revolutionary movement, and draws political conclusions for the tasks of revolutionaries at each stage of development in order to prepare for future stages. It is a vehicle to reach out and communicate with revolutionaries both within the League and outside of the League, to engage them in debate and discussion, and to provide a forum for these discussions. Articles represent the position and policies of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

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League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Tens of thousands of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions. The League's mission is to unite these scattered revolutionaries on the basis of the demands of the new class, to educate and win them over to the cooperative, communist resolution of the problem.

The demands of this new impoverished class for food, housing, education, health care and an opportunity to contribute to society are summed up as the demand for a cooperative society. Such a society must be based on the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need.

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The *Rally, Comrades!* bilingual website provides online access to all issues of *Rally, Comrades!* It is a political resource for our readers, and provides up-to-date articles, statements and analysis of key questions of importance to revolutionaries.

Class Unity Decisive in Fight for New Society

As the workers awaken to the truth of their conditions, the necessity for unity is becoming a decisive factor in the struggle for a new society.

Unity seems to be an apparent and obvious thing. The old sayings say as much: “In unity there is strength,” or “Many hands make light work,” and “United we stand, divided we fall.” Yet, it is also recognized, as Steven Biko once observed, “unity cannot be willed by mere declarations.” To get to the heart of unity in our struggle today, we must ask ourselves important questions. What is it about this moment in history that makes unity so necessary? What group in society is capable of leading the fight for the reorganization of society? How will unity be achieved?

The demand for a new world is already being proclaimed and defended by millions throughout this country. They don’t yet see that within their common demand for the basic necessities of life, they are articulating a new vision of America. It is a vision where cooperation and fulfilling the needs of humanity are the guiding principles. Today, the role of revolutionaries is to illuminate the meaning of what people are already fighting for and provide a strategy to achieve it.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS MOMENT

The statistics can be found in any newspaper, think tank study, or government report. Literally tens of millions are either homeless, living hand to mouth, or scrambling to feed their families, some working two or three jobs just to keep body and soul together. This is the reality for the growing tens of millions of workers in the richest, most powerful country in the world.

It is not simply a recession from which we will soon recover, or a temporary layoff from which we will return to decent jobs and that once decent life. The spread of automation and robotics and the continued advances in digital technology are not simply destroying previous categories of work. These new technologies are eliminating human labor from production. The social order, based on the buying and selling of our ability to work as a means to live, is being destroyed. As the old social order crumbles, it means there is no other choice but to fight to create a new one.

In fact, these wondrous new technologies offer the promise of a world where poverty and exploitation can be eradicated from society once and for all, where everyone can have the access to the necessities of life and the positive fruits of human progress.

The capitalist system of private property relations prevents this abundance from being distributed freely to all of society. The deepening and accelerating polarization of wealth and poverty is the dominant expression of this antagonism. It is no more clearly expressed than in the staggering statistic recently released by Oxfam: Eight individuals own the same wealth as the 3.6 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity.

The clash between the promise of the new technology and its obstruction is caused by private property relations. This is creating the crisis and the struggle against its devastating

consequences that we see all around us today. The ruling class has no choice but to preserve these private property relations, and is turning to fascism to do so. The workers have no choice but to take over these new means of production, and use them to build a cooperative society that provides for all.

“ It is the world historical transformation made possible by the electronic revolution – and the practical impossibility of survival without the reorganization of society – that makes class unity both urgent and necessary. ”

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NO CHOICE BUT TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY

What is the group in society that is capable of leading the fight for the reorganization of society? That group is the one whose economic position gives them no choice but to overturn the existing system.

Automation and digital production are eliminating the necessity for human labor in production and creating a new class of workers. This new section of the working class is outside of, and has no stake in, private property relations itself.

This new class may appear simply as a conglomeration of people defined by their poverty. But poverty is the consequence of their position and not the cause of it. The majority of the new class is contingent, minimum wage, below-minimum wage, and part-time workers – now over 40 percent of the workforce. This employed sector of the class is constantly being drawn into the growing unemployed sector that ranges from the structurally unemployed to the absolutely destitute, homeless workers. These categories of work will be destroyed as automation and digital technologies advance. As the capitalist government increases its disregard for them, the new class is ultimately compelled to attack the source of their suffering, the system of private property itself.

However, because these workers are still in the process of formation as a class, they are also confused and their actions are often contradictory and chaotic. They are being thrown into competition with one another, not simply for the crumbs of livelihood, but for their very survival. They cling to the ideas of the ruling class, and are disarmed by the absence of an alternative vision of what is possible today, or a strategy to achieve it. The ruling class actively works to provoke one section of the class to accept its fascist program to attack

another section.

Yet underneath all of this, the new class has an unassailable strength. They cannot give up and go home. They need housing, food, health care and other basic necessities of life. Their demands are coming into conflict with the State, which is standing in the way of them

securing these basic necessities. This class is in fact, if not in understanding, struggling to transfer capitalist property to itself in order to feed, clothe, house and care for itself.

EQUALITY OF CONDITION IS BASIS OF UNITY

Despite the confusion and vulnerability of this new class, the hitherto unknown breadth of the equality of its common economic condition is creating the basis for real unity.

Unity or the lack of unity has never been simply a subjective question. When a large group of people are on the same social level with common economic problems, they can unite. Despite a history of common economic condition in the past, the workers in America could not unite. Petty social privileges granted to the white workers over the Black workers always made unity impossible. The workers could not unite, when they were unequally oppressed and exploited. Only equals can unite.

Privileges granted to white workers were not because the ruling class cared for them. The ruling class used bribery, a political tactic designed to prevent unity of the class, made possible by an expanding capitalist system. This imperialist bribery was extended not only to white workers over Black workers, but to Northern workers over Southern workers, and American workers over the workers of other countries. In a disintegrating capitalist system, bribery is no longer needed or even possible to facilitate exploitation, and is being cast aside. Exploitation is now achieved through automated production, the international competition for jobs, and the laws of the global marketplace.

The once privileged white worker, and in descending order of privilege, this new class of workers, is being created throughout the world. These workers have been cast adrift by a new ruling class of multi-colored, supranational financiers. This new international ruling class cares no more for, and has no more need for the worker in Chicago than one in Rio de Janeiro.

Of course, simply because the class is

presented with the practical possibility of unity does not mean that unity will automatically take place. The divisions within the working class are very deep in America. The capitalist ruling class has forged a history of genocide, slavery, oppression and exploitation of the working class. They have created and exacerbated the divisions among the workers. Preventing the unity of the workers in any period of history has always been the ruling class key to power, highlighting the danger that this new class presents to them.

The divisions can only be overcome by intellectual struggle linked to the daily experience of the common struggles. Regardless of color, sex, faith or nationality, workers throughout the country are already beginning to express their common plight and need to act together.

UNITING FOR THE COMING BATTLE

The new battles are being carried out by a new type of revolutionary. They seek to solve common practical problems. The impulse towards unity among these workers reflects a striving towards unity that arises out of their common interests rooted in the fight for the basic necessities. Their common condition is undermining all the old ideologies that have been used to divide the class. They do not need to be organized or told how to do their work. These fighters need an understanding of the significance of their fight and a vision of what is possible, to avoid falling victim to the ideology of a ruling class they are fighting. They need a strategy that reflects the new situation – a strategy that protects them from falling prey to simply fighting the tactics of the enemy.

All of history shows that change is impossible without new ideas – without vision. New ideas arise from the practical need to solve practical problems. Vision inspires, it shows what is actually possible, illuminating the direction in which to fight. The reality is that the new class – in all its chaos, disorientation and yes, sometimes ugliness – is the only force that can overturn the existing order and lead humanity to a peaceful and cooperative society. This class cannot move history forward until it has a sense of itself as a class, holds a vision of where it wants to go and what its historic mission is.

Special organizations must be created to carry out this fight. Until there is a new vision, even the most revolutionary fighters end up looking backward, fighting to recover what has been lost. Creating and imbuing them with such vision is the overriding task of revolutionaries and the foundation of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

The social ills of today can only be resolved through the transition to a cooperative society, organized around the needs of humanity rather than the profit of a few. Today, the system of private property can be brought to an end. It cannot be accomplished without uniting the new class on the basis of their common equality of condition. Revolutionaries must throw everything into this fight for the unity of the new class.

Globalization and Internationalism

The ever-extending globalization of the economy has created a new reality filled with problems and opportunities for those of us who are fighting for a better world. As we struggle for the basic economic necessities of life, as well as equality, democracy, and a clean environment at home, we see that our fate is inextricably tied with the fate of the working class on every continent.

ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

Economic globalization is capitalism in the era of electronics. Manufacturing can be carried out in different locations depending on labor costs, the availability of labor-replacing technology, location of customers, location of raw materials, specialization and assembly, the regulatory environment, and subsidies from governments eager to attract employment. While Apple's iPhone is assembled by Foxconn or Pegatron in China, the components are manufactured by more than 20 different companies in hundreds of locations throughout the world.

Electronic telecommunications today gives corporations the ability to spread their business functions out to different areas in the world – research and development, software development, data entry, management, finance, sales and customer service – depending on the availability of technical expertise, reliability, and labor costs. This of course means those working for the same corporation are scattered, with a production, supply, and distribution chain that stretches around the world.

On the other side of the coin is the migration of workers to where fixed jobs are located. Employment in sectors such as food service, health care, domestic service, transportation, construction, automotive and appliance repair, brick and mortar retail, and personal services can't be exported. Migrants move to other countries where they take on these largely lower paid jobs. According to the International Organization on Migration's *2015 World Migration Report*, there are an estimated 232 million international migrants and 740 million internal migrants in the world.

CORPORATE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

At the same time, transnational capital is seeking to consolidate its power to impose its will on sovereign nations through trade agreements and other international accords. For instance, the tobacco company Philip Morris sued Uruguay after it enacted strict laws aimed at promoting public health. Following the rejection of the Keystone Pipeline by President Obama, TransCanada Corporation is suing the U.S. government for \$15 billion in damages under North American Free Trade Agreement rules. The company wants to build the pipeline from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and use "eminent domain" to seize land from ranchers, farmers and other property owners. The Investor State Dispute Resolution of the currently sidelined TPP would have also allowed corporations to

sue governments.

The European Union, dominated by the needs of capital, has seven supranational institutions. The European Parliament is the only one of them that is elected, and elections occur only every five years. The European Court recently issued a ruling that labor laws and legislation in each country are subordinate to the free movement of global capital.

Another method of international corporate dominance is through loans by banks, directed by entities like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Bank. For instance, The World Bank's stated official goal is the reduction of poverty. But according to its Articles of Agreement, all of its decisions must be guided by a commitment to the promotion of foreign investment and international trade to facilitate capital investment. When the sovereign debt of a nation reaches a certain level, these lending institutions are called in to provide loans with strict restructuring conditions favoring the corporations, combined with austerity measures to guarantee the repayment of the loans. Austerity measures include spending cuts for social services and other government functions, tax increases, and pension reductions.

The role of other international entities like the United Nations and large non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Oxfam, Gates Foundation, World Vision, and Doctors without Borders is to address some suffering, but never challenge the capitalist conditions that cause the deteriorating social conditions and human suffering. Partnerships are often created between NGOs and corporations seeking low-cost, public relations ploys, while bolstering the capitalist system.

NATIONALIST RESPONSES TO GLOBALIZATION

The downward spiral in the standard of living of previously secure sections of the working class of developed countries has created a great deal of anger, confusion and frustration amongst them. Caused by loss of decent stable employment, and fueled by the advances of technology under capitalism, some sectors of the working class are being led to the belief that workers of other countries and immigrants are the cause of their problems.

The successful Brexit referendum last June for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union was fueled largely by nationalist, anti-immigrant ideological sentiment. The right-wing anti-immigrant Danish Peoples Party won 21 percent of the vote in 2015; the Freedom party of Austria won 35 percent, and France's National Front 28 percent. The election of Donald Trump, albeit by a minority vote amid voter repression in an election where many stayed home, was in part a response to the declining standard of living of the working class. Some believed Trump's claim that the offshoring of jobs and the presence of immigrants were the cause of their problems.

As automated electronic technology glo-

balizes production and business services, capitalists continue to scramble for markets as worldwide purchasing power declines, due to the race to the bottom in wage compensation, and permanent job loss caused by the electronic economic revolution. This has increased the drive to militarization and war in the Middle East, the Ukraine, Africa, and the Senkaku-Diaoyu islands in Asia, as the United States and others seek to maintain or extend their dominance.

HISTORY OF INTERNATIONALISM

Ever since the slogan "Workers of the World, Unite" was raised at the First International in the 19th century, there has been international solidarity in the anti-capitalist struggle. The English working class supported the North during the American Civil War, following Marx's statement, "Labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin." He also wrote that for English workers "the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment, but the first condition of their own emancipation."

During the national liberation struggles of the 20th century against colonialism, Cuba showed great international solidarity, particularly in Africa. Cuban troops were sent to Angola to support its left-wing government, helping defeat South African insurgents, also leading to Namibia's independence from South Africa and adding pressure on the apartheid regime. Cuba's history of internationalism also includes sending doctors all over the world in times of crisis and the offer of free medical school education to tens of thousands of students throughout the world (including the United States), if they agree to serve underserved populations in their own countries.

Over the years, many people from the United States have shown solidarity with the working class of other countries. The Abraham Lincoln Brigade in 1937 showed great courage, fighting to oppose Franco's fascist military regime in Spain. Organizations and unions supported the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, such as the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), which refused to unload South African cargo in 1984. Many activists and organizations in the latter part of the 20th century supported those fighting against U.S. backed regimes in Central and Latin America.

A NEW ERA OF INTERNATIONALISM

Now more than ever, as we respond to the new conditions created by globalization, we have to see internationalism in a new light. It's more than a question of ideological solidarity, or one-way support activities of good causes. It is a practical question – we can't fight for our own basic necessities as long as capitalism keeps us separated from others who are fighting for the same necessities and the same system we are. We have a global working class that is connected as never before, but

remains nationally isolated from one another in many ways. There must be conscious efforts to forge and maintain ties to address our mutual interests.

There are lessons in current examples of how objective conditions have compelled people to come together. For instance, the Tri-national Conference for the Defense of Public Education is an organization of advocates of public education from Canada, Mexico, and the United States. It was founded in 1993 to build understanding and solidarity among education activists in the three countries. Immigrant workers are part of the American working class and as such offer an organic connection to the working class of other countries.

By definition, the environmental movement to save the planet from species extinction, from global warming and the pollution of our air and water, requires an international movement. A recent example was when 130 environmental groups called for an end to capitalism at a UN-sponsored conference in Venezuela in 2014. There are also people-to-people examples of internationalism, such as the struggle over land and water rights at Standing Rock, where flags fly from more than 200 Native American nations and international supporters have descended into the North Dakota camps. Or take Flint Michigan, where people from Windsor, Ontario in Canada donated 50,000 bottles of water to Flint residents in response to a call by the Windsor Spitfires junior hockey team.

Some unions have forged real ties internationally. Since 1991, the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and the Mexican telecom union, Sindicato de Telefonistas de la Republica Mexicana (STRM) have been working together, defending worker and union rights and supporting each other in cross-border bargaining, organizing, and mobilization. CWA has also supported Colombian unionists, who are under violent attack, and works with the UNI Global Union based in Nyon, Switzerland, which represents more than 20 million workers from over 900 trade unions in the skills and service sectors.

Our greatest internationalist service is the struggle against our own corporate State and the struggle for the establishment of a cooperative society. To do that we have to propagandize, organize and unify our own working class in all of its complexity – urban, suburban and rural, employed and unemployed, immigrant and native born, in all its colors and ethnicities and varying levels of consciousness. We begin this by focusing on those sectors where unity is most possible, where there is an equality of poverty. This includes the hard work of showing workers who do not yet understand they will only save themselves and their families by fighting for their basic necessities, alongside others of their class. This is why we dedicate ourselves to promoting class consciousness and providing a vision of a cooperative society.

The Special Revolutionary Role of Women

The 2016 electoral environment in the United States reflected the stance that women were second-class citizens. Even though there was a female candidate for President, the verbal rants about women and toward women were degrading and demeaning. In response, there was a three million plus women's march on Washington and other parts of the country on the day after Donald Trump's presidential inauguration.

An attendee at the Chicago Women's March was quoted as saying: "It's estimated that 300,000 marched – women, yes, but families, fathers pushing babies in strollers, three generations marching – grandmothers, mothers and daughters, and men were not absent, but right in tow with their spouses, girlfriends and mothers. The participants were standing for democracy, against inequality and for a different society than the one pictured by Trump and the rest of the ruling class. This march represents an opportunity to broaden the social movement against the capitalist class and the effects of the electronic revolution."

This electronic revolution is creating a new class of workers, thrown out of all means of survival. Men and women, across the color line, of all faiths and nationalities, are being displaced by robots. They are fighting to keep their families together and alive. Without a job people don't have money. There is no way for the movement to resolve the social ills of today without taking up these demands. In order to feed, clothe and shelter their families they must fight with the vision that they must take political power for things to change. Women's struggle is central to this struggle.

HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS

As we look at the heroic role women played during the pre-Civil War period and during the Civil War, we see a dialectical relationship between their material conditions and their vision. One reinforces the other. Their conditions as they struggled for the necessities for survival helped create the vision of a society free of want and exploitation. The struggle for that vision helped create the conditions for the vision to be realized. This happens in every revolution.

In 1867 Sojourner Truth gave a speech entitled "When Woman Gets Her Rights Man Will be Right." She stated "There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights (they received their rights after the Civil War), but not a word about the colored women, and if colored men get their rights and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women and it will be just as bad as it was before. So I am for keeping the thing going while things are stirring."

Beginning in 1892, when her newspaper, *The Memphis Free Speech* was destroyed, Ida B. Wells spent the next forty years as the most prominent, vocal opponent of lynching in the United States.

Harriet Tubman was also the epitome of courage and determination who continues to stand out. She not only freed herself from slavery, but played a major role in freeing ap-

proximately 300 people from the slaveholding South to freedom in the the North via "The Underground Railroad."

These women reflect the struggles against oppression and exploitation that laid the foundation for women of today.

A TIME WHEN WOMEN WERE EQUAL TO MEN

Historically, there was a period of time when women were equal to men. Under early communism, everyone's labor was needed to survive. Women took care of the household and gathered from the land. Men were the hunters. There was a division of labor between men and women, but not inequality. These societies were matriarchal. It was the era of "Mother Right." There was no inequality because there was no possibility of the accumulation of property.

“ Men and women are fighting to keep their families together and alive. In order to feed, clothe and shelter their families they must fight to take political power for things to change. Women's struggle is central to this struggle. ”

The domestication of animals and the development of agriculture led to the accumulation of property that eventually got inherited from one generation to the next. These epochal changes brought about a reorganization of society to advance private property relations. Women were pushed out of social production and reduced to private property within the family, thus becoming dependent upon men.

Later, society was organized around mechanically-driven industry that needed to keep a steady supply of labor. Eventually, a declining standard of living made it necessary for women to enter the workforce, because one income was not enough to support a family. New household and work technologies made it possible to lessen the labor needed so women could enter the workforce, but they were still oppressed and exploited.

A LONG TIME HIDDEN

Women's history has been overlooked in most school textbooks, and this history was barely taught. Facts are now being revealed that show the intelligence and creativeness of many women most people have never heard of. The day that astronaut John Glenn died, it was reported that the movie "Hidden Figures," was a story about three African American women that John Glenn insisted he wanted on the NASA staff. They were the scientists who made the mathematical calculations necessary for his spacecraft to successfully orbit

the earth three times.

News about Dr. Vera Rubin, another woman scientist surfaced on December 27, 2016 when she died at 88 years of age. There was little known about her by the American public. She was a pioneer astrophysicist, who discovered the first evidence of dark matter. She and her colleague Kent Ford concluded that the gravity from an invisible mass – or dark matter – alters the motion of stars. Their research showed there is ten times as much dark matter as visible material in a galaxy. Because of this discovery, physicists now know ninety-percent of the universe is made of dark material.

CAPITALISM AND WOMEN'S CONDITION

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development,

control, cancer screenings, HIV tests and other health care. U.S. maternal mortality rate will continue to rise.

Women are paid about twenty-three percent less than men for a year's hard work. The U.S. is currently ranked in twenty-eighth position worldwide for gender equality and since 2014 has fallen eight places behind several developing nations. In 2015 the U.S. failed to make the top twenty of the World Economic Forum's ranking of the most gender equal countries.

The United Nation's declaration about violence against women found that the most common form of violence experienced globally by women is physical violence inflicted by an intimate partner. One in three women are beaten, coerced into sex or abused by an intimate partner in the course of their lifetimes. Women who are between the ages of 15-44 are most at risk from rape and domestic violence. Sexual assault in the American military and on college campuses continues on a scale that shows that male abuse and domination of women has become a "norm" in capitalist society.

Over ninety-two percent of homeless mothers in the U.S. have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime. Domestic violence is a principal cause of homelessness among single mother families. One of every four homeless women is homeless because of violence committed against her.

The majority of prostitutes are women who live in poverty and must feed their children. An estimated one million prostitutes live in the U.S. More women are arrested and jailed for prostitution than those who exploit and abuse them.

THE LEADING ROLE OF WOMEN

Women are moving into the leadership of the class, due to their day-to-day struggle for the basic necessities of life, in order for them and their families to survive.

Today there are organizations led by women revolutionaries of all colors and nationalities, who represent some of the most oppressed women in the U.S. Working class women are emerging as leaders in struggles across the country. There are young black women leading the Black Lives Matter contingents against police shootings. Women stand in the front lines at Standing Rock, North Dakota fighting against a pipeline that will pollute their water supply. And, in Flint, Michigan, women were in the forefront of the struggle to keep their water clean and lead free.

What's next? This social movement cannot go back to its different and separate agendas, though the bourgeois media wants to keep it just on gender and ethnicity. Revolutionaries stand on the demands of the new class, bringing the class question to the forefront.

There's an old Chinese adage that states: "Women hold up half of the world." The emancipation of women means the emancipation of everyone.

An Epoch of Social Revolution

From the Editors

Ours is a time of social upheaval, of a growing groundswell surging up from below, bent on both resisting and resolving the crisis of our time. This movement is precipitated by the introduction into human history of the hitherto unthinkable – a technology that makes human labor superfluous. Both the ruling class and the workers displaced by robotics are engaged in a life-and-death struggle to resolve the crisis in their respective interests.

As they are replaced by labor-less technology, the workers are thrown out, discarded. They are in the process of the formation of a new class of workers. We saw the struggle of this emerging class reflected in the elections. Workers on all sides were, and are, engaged in a common struggle to secure the basic necessities of life – food, water, homes, education, health care. Some saw that as a demand for good-paying jobs, the restoration of the promise of the American dream. Others expressed that promise as a demand that the needs of all be met regardless of ability to pay. Common to all is the conviction that something has to be done; a broken system had to be fixed, or replaced.

The arc of a movement in the interests of the workers bends toward a new society that benefits of all of humanity. The interests of a corporate ruling class stands in stark antagonism to this rising social motion. They are desperately seeking answers as well, but their strategy bends toward a reorganization of society that protects their own private interests and blunts the developing social revolution. As a result, the ruling class can only move in the direction of fascist solutions.

It would be easy to portray Donald Trump as the face of fascism, but he is more appropriately coming to be seen as a tool in the program to move the process along toward fascist solutions. The election of Donald Trump represents the acceleration, a doubling down, on this process that has been underway for some time. The government has merged with the corporations and they are moving together to direct and control the economy and society in the interests of the ruling class.

What is the answer of the ruling class to the vast social ills they are raining down on the American people? To imperil clean air and water by gutting EPA regulations, to reopen the construction of the Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines, and to resume the ravaging of the West Virginia countryside for expanded coal mining. They are moving to destroy public education, to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with something that will deny access to health care to millions, and to establish national Right-to-Work laws that will destroy labor unions and living wage jobs.

Defunding Planned Parenthood will put the health of women at risk. A wall is to be built that will funnel billions to construction industry corporations, strengthening the repressive apparatus of the State. The Constitution itself is now being tested and challenged, with Executive Orders in the name of making America safe, banning immigrants and refugees on the basis of their religion. And, what is their solution to the growing poverty throughout our country? To establish a police state and bring in federal troops to establish so-called law and order.

More than three million people led by women, marched the day after Trump's inauguration in an effort to protect the country against Trump's campaign promises. When the immigration ban was ordered, hundreds of thousands more poured into the nation's airports to oppose the ban.

Right now, this rising upsurge is in opposition to Trump, but the problem is really an economic system and a ruling class unfit to rule. It is up to revolutionaries to show the deeper meaning of the fight. The protests of these millions are part of a developing broad anti-fascist movement that is arising. It is in response to the deteriorating conditions and is making demands that the government protect the interests of the people over the corporations. The growing demands of the new class for the basic necessities of life are at the center of what this movement is about, and can pull the entire struggle forward.

The scattered battles of this class have been underway for some time. We saw it in the wave of responses to police murders of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, to Occupy Wall Street, to Flint Michigan and Standing Rock, North Dakota, and many other protests and struggles around the country. We are seeing now that the once scattered struggles are not so scattered anymore. The fighters are beginning to express a sense of common cause and interests. Here and there, the beginning of class awareness is emerging. Revolutionaries have to grab hold of and further develop these changes in thinking, no matter how contradictory and embryonic they are.

The battle is on. History does not set for itself problems that have no solution. For the workers of the new class, the only solution is to reorganize society on a new basis – a cooperative, communist society – designed to distribute the abundance to all – according to need. A rising movement is already underway. It is up to revolutionaries to provide this vision, and a strategy to achieve it.

Housing as a Human Right...

(Continued from page 1)

- Transform “housing first” from being an empty slogan to a practical reality, by demanding the turnover of vacant government-owned homes to house the homeless.
- Fight for enactment of a national “Homeless Bill of Rights” to stabilize and empower homeless people to be able to fight for the housing they need.
- Call for immediate expansion of public housing and non-profit housing to end the affordable housing shortage.
- Demand government use of eminent domain: to take possession of housing where landlords are demolishing buildings or are “going out of business” and to appropriate to rehabilitate slumlord housing.
- Move from rent control to government and/or cooperative tenant ownership of rental housing.

The political fight to expand the government and socially owned sectors of the housing market is a key vehicle for pulling together these scattered and defensive struggles, and transforming them into an effective political force. Since community land trusts or private donations of land for affordable housing is so rare, the only realistic way to secure affordable housing is through united political organization and struggle.

Government or social ownership in any of its various forms are not the ultimate solution to the housing question. However, these are steps along the line of march towards a working class government capable of organizing a fully cooperative economy, necessary to guarantee the right to housing, as well as other basic human rights.

The fight for equitable and affordable forms of housing ownership, like the fight for free health care and education, are parts of the larger class struggle for a cooperative society. Only when society as a whole takes

over the basic economic instruments can the entire abundant social product be distributed fairly and on the basis of need, instead of for private profit. Only when the means of production are socially owned can they be used to meet human needs.

TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES

Humanity invented housing to protect itself against the elements: wind, rain, snow, sun, heat, and cold. The capitalist system turned it into a commodity for securing private profit. Throughout American history, monopoly land speculators have always played a key role in impoverishing the masses and forcing them into wage slavery. The people always resisted by squatting and homesteading. What is different today is the economy based on wage-labor is being destroyed. Millions have been left homeless. Because the current economic system is broken, all the technology in the world is unable to provide protection from the elements for millions of people.

The political struggle for social and government housing ownership is important, because at every stage it allows us to raise the question of property. It allows us to point out that government intervention in the economy should be carried out for the benefit of the workers – not the corporations. This is the only way to meet the needs of the people. Any solutions that fail to confront private property are doomed to failure.

Directing our demands at the federal government brings together the scattered struggles against individual landlords, banks and corporations into a political struggle against the State. Such national demands raise the issue of which class the State serves, broadening the battlefield, where class consciousness can be taught.

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