

RALLY, COMRADES!

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Healthcare: From Private to Public

Nowhere is the chaos and insecurity of a society in transition felt more universally than in healthcare. Two distinct classes with opposing interests are facing off in a struggle that will determine the future role of healthcare in our society. On one side stands a corporate class, whose interests require private ownership of health resources. On the other side is our working class in need of freely distributed healthcare. The focal point of the battle today is Medicaid, a publicly funded health insurance that is mainly distributed privately, covering 74 million working and poor people in this country.

The political roots of the assault on Medicaid and threats of abandonment of any governmental responsibility for healthcare lie deep within Southern history. The Southern politicians, that currently hold key positions in shaping the future of healthcare, revel in maintaining the impossibility of the past in the present. You can't go back. Georgia's Tom Price of Health and Human Services is committed to the federal defunding of Medicaid and the vouchered privatization of Medicare. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, nationally propelled from his racist Alabama history, is pushing for a thoroughly discredited new war on drugs. South Carolina's Scott Mulvaney, the Director of the Office of Budget and Management, and a founder of the Freedom Caucus, is hell bent on punting crucial health coverage regulations to the states.

A "states rights" application to healthcare did not begin anew in January of 2017, but rather relied on the ignominious history of Wall Street's control of the South. From slavery to Jim Crow and the Dixiecrats to the Tea Party and "Freedom Caucus", subjugation of the South and the intended isolation of the Black worker has been the strategy of the ruling elite, to maintain political control of an increasingly destitute working class of all nationalities and colors.

SOUTHERN ROOTS SHAPING HEALTHCARE

An 1860's plantation physician who provided rudimentary healthcare to enslaved humans, wrote, "To save [the plantation owner's] capital was to save his Negroes." It was slave labor that built an empire of cotton and it was Wall Street that held financial hegemony of the cotton trade. From slave to wage labor, the needs of capital dictated the development of U.S. healthcare, and the South was key. Following the defeat of Reconstruction, John Rockefeller's "Hookworm Project" was designed to eradicate the lethargy-producing and productivity-lowering hookworm epidemic in the white workforce of North Carolina's textile mills. As Richard Brown writes in *Rockefeller Medicine Men* the hookworm project was "directed ultimately to integrat-



Medicare for All supporters demonstrate in Michigan earlier this year against the proposed American Health Care Act. Photo © Daymonjhartley.com

ing the Southern economy into the national dominion of Northern capitalists."

Health policies in the South were not limited to the goal of profitability through productivity. The infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, started in 1932 and continued for 40 more years by the U.S. Public Health Service, stained the relationship of health institutions with Black communities far beyond the 600 men involved. Eugenic practices, especially those related to involuntary sterilization, were rampant. "In the South, rendering black women infertile without their knowledge during other surgery was so common," wrote Harriet Washington in *Medical Apartheid*, that the procedure was called a 'Mississippi appendectomy.' Eugenics also targeted the most impoverished Southern white women. The U.S. healthcare system was molded out of the violence, segregation and white supremacy necessary to subjugate Southern workers, but was erected by Wall Street to control the entire U.S. working class.

History informs the present. The powerful structural reforms of Medicare and Medicaid in the 1960's capped a period of expanding capitalism and the end of explicit de jure segregation, an obstacle to industrial exploitation of cheaper, non-union Southern labor. Medicaid in Southern states, demeaningly constructed and highly restrictive, was successfully used as a wedge to prevent the expansion of Medicare to all. By the time the last Southern states instituted Medicaid in 1972, there were about 19 million enrolled in the nation as a whole.

Today there are over 74 million people on Medicaid in the U.S. They are in the bulls-eye of the assault on healthcare today. The growth in Medicaid numbers reflects the growth of a new class of workers whose need for healthcare is no longer tied to capital's need for profits. The health insecurity that Southern wage workers have rarely escaped is now spreading across broad sections of the working class.

The status of healthcare in the Southern states is a roadmap of where things could be headed, in the absence of class unity capable of seizing the reins away from corporate care to human care. Southern states have the highest rates of uninsured, infant mortality, rural hospital closures, and morbidity in the country. Eight Southeastern states account for roughly 30% of all preventable deaths from heart disease, cancer, stroke, respiratory illnesses, and unintended injury. Mississippi has the highest rate of infant mortality in the country, with nearly 9 deaths per 1000 live births. Seven southern states account for more than

50% of all rural hospital closures since 2010. Southern women rank lowest in all health and well-being indices.

The southern legacy of Medicaid as a compromise with Dixiecrat politicians, is the political weapon now being brandished universally to a working class, whose ties to capitalist production is being severed through labor-replacing technologies.

STATES RIGHTS REVISITED

The Supreme Court ruling that upheld the Affordable Care Act's ("Obamacare") individual mandate, also ruled the Medicaid expansion unconstitutionally "coercive" to states. The former was necessary to sustain the private insurance market place, a central goal of the ACA. The latter resulted in making Medicaid expansion optional for states. With the exception of Arkansas and Louisiana, no Southern state expanded Medicaid. Eighty percent of those falling in the Medicaid coverage gap live in the South. Four states – Georgia, Florida, Texas and North Carolina – hold 2/3rds of those uninsured due to their refusal to expand Medicaid. Southern Blacks are twice as likely to fall into the coverage gap than whites, and Latinos are more than three times as likely to be uninsured, translating into thousands of preventable deaths and undue suffering.

Temporarily shelved "repeal and replace" schemes, regulatory powers, and/or Congressional budgets cuts extend Southern inequality, and universalize it to the most impoverished workers of all nationalities, colors, and genders throughout the country. Every proposal punts Medicaid to the states, withdrawing federal funds, weakening or eliminating federal protections, and ending Medicaid expansion. State waivers to apply punitive measures like work requirements, drug testing, co-pays, and watered down benefits are promoted by Price and Congress, potentially resulting in a massive transfer of public funds to private wealth – a tax cut of \$765 billion for the richest and a cut to Medicaid of about the same amount over a decade. The assault on government-supported healthcare, even when

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Blowing in the Wind

Inside Rally, Comrades!

A storm is coming. We can track its approach, but even as we are caught up in its vortex, there is no amount of defense, of protecting, of shoring up, of sandbagging that can shield us from the cataclysm. The storm we face now is not only ecological; it is economic, social, political. The devastation and destruction visited upon the Gulf coast, the Florida Keys, Puerto Rico, and the firestorms of California and the earthquakes in Mexico, starkly expose the real cause and outcome of the storm we all face: they are a sign of a broken system.

Before Maria assaulted Puerto Rico, it was already made bankrupt, the government hardly able to function. Over seventy billion dollars of debt is owed to large-scale investors and hedge funds. The austerity measures already in place resulted in double-digit unemployment. The U.S. government has already indicated that there will be no help coming. The Puerto Rican people are on their own. The hurricane disaster only exacerbates and accelerates the crisis.

As the article "From the Editors, The Corporate State versus Humanity" states, we are living in a world where the corporate private property interests of the few are dictating the terms of life and death for the many. This is a systemic, human-made disaster, a process of global capital around the world.

As dire as all of this may sound, it does not best describe the times we are in. We are

living in revolutionary times. This means that the very conditions that have led to the current crisis we are experiencing, have also created the forces that can chart a different path. The new technology, automated, electronic, laborless production, is the root cause of the brokenness of a system that is based upon production by human labor. The workers, who are more and more being excluded from production, constitute a new class, who are now free to become the political force that can resolve the crisis engulfing society and ensure the future of humanity and the planet. All is not lost. That is our hope, our vision, our future.

As the article "Our Class Needs to Know the Truth" states upfront, the revolutionary period we are in is real and profound. Nothing less than the fate of the planet is at stake. The increasing social and political storms we find ourselves caught up in are the shaping up of two opposing forces contending for our imperiled future. The ruling class is preparing to contain social upheaval by instituting fascist control, at the same time it throws up smokescreens of confusion and deception.

The truth is that the era of capitalism and its merciless exploitation is coming to an end. There is no going back. To secure our future we must go forward. On a new foundation, we have a new world to build. The very abundance the new technology is able to produce, is itself the key to a future worth having. With the new class obtaining the political power to do so, it can distribute the abundance to all those in need. It can put an end to private property, which now concentrates the wealth of society in the hands of a few.

Homelessness is absolute destitution,

where growing millions are being altogether abandoned. The homeless are at the heart of the new class being cast off from a broken system. However, as the article, "Homelessness is the Sign of a Broken System" shows, the workers of this new class of which the homeless are a part, themselves constitute the power to overturn the private property system and establish a cooperative society to meet human needs. Indeed, it is the only way they can survive.

Healthcare is also a vital battleground in which the stakes are for life and death itself. "Healthcare: From Private to Public" points out how the introduction of advanced technologies into healthcare has caused an irreversible antagonism and polarized the interests of the private corporations versus the best interests of the public, the working class. Making comprehensive and universal healthcare a necessary public infrastructure is illusive to a corporate State. Yet, the nationalization of the abundance of health resources, to end the scarcity of health distribution, is on the strategic path of a new class on course to build a new society organized in its interests.

"The Anthropocene and Fossil Capitalism" explains how not only the super-hurricanes and the super-firestorms are man-made, and constitute a "new normal." Global warming is part and parcel of a private property economic system that is at the same time wreaking havoc on human society. Yet, the astounding technological advances of our times can, in the hands of the people, be the force to provide all we need to live a decent life.

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.

The Anthropocene and Fossil Capitalism

The Anthropocene is a term first seriously used in 2000 by climatologists to recognize that human beings have become the primary new geological force affecting the future of the Earth system. The Anthropocene follows the geological epoch of the last 11,700 years, the Holocene. Some say it started with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and others beginning around the 1950's, with the "great acceleration" in human impact on the environment. Essential to this concept is the role of capitalism and its use of fossil fuels to drive relentless growth, and the need to move beyond capitalism and private property if we are to save both humanity and the earth. One of many books and articles discussing this change is *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System* by Ian Angus, published in 2016.

Key to understanding the concept of the Anthropocene is looking at the earth as an integrated planetary system, utilizing the methods of geology, biology, ecology, physics and other disciplines. Social scientists reject the idea of history, attributed to Winston Churchill as just "one damned thing after another," but see it instead as a complex progression of dialectical change and development. Similarly, scientists studying the Anthropocene look at the complex web of cycles and interdependence in the world.

QUALITATIVE LEAPS AND NINE OF EARTH'S ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES

Qualitative transformation takes place by sudden leaps and begins with the introduction of a new quality. These leaps take place in ways that are sometimes known, but are often unpredictable, and have long been recognized in the natural world, such as with changes in ocean or air circulation or abrupt extinctions. Adding the effect of human activity dominated by capital makes it likely that such qualitative leaps will be reached so quickly that there will be little time to react. There are nine of earth's ecological processes which have been identified where these leaps are probably imminent:

- Climate change – the volume of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere is higher than it has been for hundreds of thousands of years, averaging 400 parts per million in 2015.
- Biodiversity loss – species are going extinct at a rate 1000 times greater than in preindustrial times.
- Wide use of fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorous – Up to 50% of nitrogen ends up in lakes, rivers and oceans. In the Gulf of Mexico, this has triggered algae blooms that choke off oxygen in water, which have created a "dead zone" where marine life can't survive.
- Stratospheric ozone depletion – scientists accidentally learned in the 1970's that widely used chemicals were destroying the ozone layer that blocks harmful ultraviolet radiation. This harmful process was reversed by banning those chemicals, and the ozone layer has been essentially restored.

- Ocean acidification – some CO2 emissions dissolve in seawater, making it acidic, which interferes with the survival of coral, shellfish, and plankton; this results in the collapse of food webs and reduction in fish and marine mammal populations.
- Excessive freshwater use by agriculture and industry, which depletes major aquifers; melting glaciers are also eliminating the source water of many rivers.
- Land-system change – 42% of all ice-free land is currently used for farming, eliminating space for grasslands, savannas, and forests. This has a negative effect on earth's climate and water systems as well as hurting biodiversity.
- Air pollution – This causes 7.2 million deaths per year, and also reduces monsoon activity.
- Introduction of over 100,000 new chemicals, nanomaterials and plastic polymers in commercial use, the effects of which are largely unknown.

Many heat and precipitation extremes have been documented over the past 20 years, anomalies that would not have occurred in the absence of global warming. Examples include Europe of 2003, where the hottest summer in over 500 years killed over 70,000 people; Russia in 2010 which caused 500 wildfires, cutting grain harvests and killing 56,000 people; and India in 2015 when 2500 people died in a heat wave where temperatures went as high as 117 degrees Fahrenheit. Predictions are that in many areas it will be physically impossible for human beings to engage in unprotected outdoor labor.

FOSSIL CAPITALISM

The Anthropocene is not just a biophysical phenomenon. It is also a socio-ecological phenomenon – a qualitative change in the relationship between human society and the rest of the natural world. Karl Marx said about capitalism, "On the one hand there have started into life, industrial and scientific forces, which no epoch of the former human history had ever suspected. On the other hand, there exist symptoms of decay, far surpassing the horrors recorded of the latter times of the Roman Empire."

The story of capitalism has been the story of a fossil fuel based economy. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, capital's need to grow drove the shift to fossil fuels, which are essentially the result of solar energy that has been preserved underground for millions of years. Coal and oil enabled great profits and a rise in some aspects of the standard of living, but as we now know, it also engendered the hidden costs of environmental destruction and the disruption of the carbon cycle. Now that we have this knowledge, and the alarm has been sounding for decades, it is time for a new economic system that puts people and planet first.

Some say that overpopulation is the root cause of the problem, and often blame high birth rates in countries with a low standard of living. Yet the fact is, if the poorest 3 billion

Climate Disasters – The Corporate State versus Humanity

From the Editors

Climate change disasters are intensifying the ongoing economic polarization of wealth and poverty in U.S. society. These are not "natural disasters," as ruling class propagandists claim. These are corporate-made disasters and there is nothing natural about them. Environmental polluting causes global warming and its ongoing negative environmental consequences. Environmental pollution today is caused by a dying capitalist economy and a ruling class that must protect its private property at all costs.

Heat waves combined with record high temperatures this year have caused wildfires, scorching more than 8 million acres of land across the country. And dozens of wildfires continue to burn and spread throughout the western U.S. Within the span of six weeks, warm ocean water temperatures produced four hurricanes (Harvey, Irma, Maria and Nate) that made direct landfall on the U.S. and its territories, wreaking havoc on the lives of tens of millions of people. Combined, these super-storms hit the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean Sea to the East, to the Gulf Coast states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Those worst hit were the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and southeastern Texas by Hurricane Harvey.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rushed into the Houston area to get oil refinery production back online, following the unprecedented flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey. Production returned to pre-hurricane levels within 3 weeks. And now two months later, Houstonians by the tens of thousands remain housed in shelters, motels and hotels. Corporate privatizers are on the scene to take over whatever public services they can convince city and surrounding county governments to sell for pennies on the dollar.

True to its interests as a corporate government agency and its purpose to protect ruling class private property, FEMA's response was slow to none in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Both U.S. territories were absolutely devastated by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, but neither had major corporate private property investments threatened, requiring a FEMA rapid response. More than a month following the super-storms, tens of thousands of the 100,000 U.S. Virgin Islanders have no drinkable water and a majority have no electricity. And in Puerto Rico, which remains a direct colony of the United States, inhabited by 3.4 million U.S. citizens, millions are without water and electricity, while food and medicine remain scarce throughout the island. Over a 100,000 homes were destroyed by Hurricane Maria. Day-to-day life for millions of people on the island remains an hour-to-hour struggle for survival.

We are living in a world where the corporate private property interests of the few are dictating the terms of life and death for the many. A small corporate ruling class continues to destroy the environment, causing record-breaking wildfires and super-storms that are becoming the "new normal." Then, in the name of disaster relief, the corporations and the federal government float loans to local governments for the corporations to reconstruct devastated regions.

The government and corporate investors then impose terms that include corporate privatization of public services and austerity measures on the local victims to pay back the loans. This disaster reconstruction process is not confined to the U.S. or to human-made systemic disasters. It is the same process used by global capitalism around the world. The same thing is happening in Mexico today, following the two major destructive earthquakes that hit there in September.

Either human society will take over the corporations, or the corporations will continue to destroy human society. These environmental catastrophes are making it increasingly clear that there is only one way forward for the vast majority of people around the world. The people must exercise the political will to take over the corporations and make corporate private property the public property of society, to be used for the common good of society as a whole.

people on the planet disappeared, it would make virtually no reduction in ongoing environmental destruction. Why is this?

The capitalist mode of agricultural production has contributed to many of the points listed above. 16% of U.S. energy is used in food production from farm to table, includ-

ing the manufacture of synthetic nitrogen (half of which, as noted above, ends up in the water). Agribusiness also uses wasteful watering practices, for example the lucrative practice of growing almonds for export to China in the deserts of California. A major U.S. weed

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Our Class Needs to Know the Truth

The revolutionary period we are in is real and profound. Nothing less than the fate of the planet is at stake. Can we expect to effect change without thoroughly understanding the battlefield we are on? Let's examine this briefly here.

The ruling classes of the world are strategically weak. They have created their own gravediggers in the form of a new class of workers, brought into being by the introduction of labor-replacing technology. Capitalism is an economic system based on the exploitation of labor. Labor-replacing technology is destroying the capitalist system. That idea is a reality the enemy would rather not have disclosed.

The capitalist class touts all kinds of proposals, from job creation to a guaranteed income, but none of them could work even if the ruling class did intend to implement them. Already, production without human labor steadily increases as 24/7 technologies produce more products than can ever be sold. Everyone, especially the capitalists, are beginning to understand the problem here. Production without human labor demands distribution without money.

The capitalist class is preparing for social upheaval, while trying to use the current period to institute fascist control. If they are to maintain the private property rights they have now, they can only do it by force. They know full well a social upheaval is developing from among the growing number of people who can no longer feed, clothe, and shelter themselves under the existing economic system.

RULING CLASS AIMS TO DECEIVE

The capitalist class has many means and methods of confusing and deceiving the movement for a society free from want. Fifty percent of the American people are living in poverty or are on the edge of it. The objective unity of a section of those workers, disenfranchised and made permanently redundant, is real, and there are strong signs those affected are recognizing this growing equality of poverty. It is a tie that binds them together. Such a consciousness would make real problems for the tiny capitalist class. Unity of the working class has always been their worst nightmare.

In their dilemma, the capitalists look for a way of disuniting and disorienting this tremendous historical movement of millions. This movement can only succeed by replacing corporate ownership and control of society with a collective public ownership and control of abundance. That abundance could eradicate poverty and want worldwide virtually overnight. The stakes could not be bigger. It is a race against time.

The ruling class is not stupid. They aim to retain private property at any cost and by any means. Owning both major political parties is a no-brainer, a relatively cheap thing they have great experience with. If the people begin to move independently of the Republican and Democrat corporate parties, it benefits the ruling class to herd them back in somehow.

The seemingly unbreakable trap of the capitalist form of two-party rule confuses many sincere revolutionary people. It appears to be the only game in town.

But now there are spontaneous outbreaks everywhere that the ruling class does not fully control. They must pay attention because any one of them could become gargantuan pretty quickly. In the last few years we have seen nearly constant upsurges against the deteriorating conditions: Occupy Wall Street, the immigrant marches, the battles against police brutality, the nationwide Moral Monday protests, the battles for health care and recently the Women's March. These are recent manifestations of both how volatile conditions are becoming and how determined the people are for change. The growing movement threatens the control of the rulers. The ruling class has a vested interest in controlling every aspect of these movements that they can.

“ The truth is we need, and can have, a new system that provides for all, compatible with the new technologies. The truth is there is an amazing abundance being kept from the people by a tiny capitalist class intent on preserving their control around the world. ”

DAILY REALITY UNDERMINES RULING CLASS TACTICS

The ruling class is in a hard spot because the new class of workers has an objective unity, that is, they are increasingly equal in their economic conditions. The main way that the ruling class tries to prevent this new class from uniting against them is by pitting them against one another.

As an example of how they do this, let's look at a hypothetical group of young workers. Let's say they are united in the fact they are mostly working temporary or part time hours in retail. Let's say they are a mix of cultures, races, nationalities, religions, genders, and sexual orientations.

To the ruling class, they appear as a potential threat. To neutralize the threat the ruling class must attempt to control the thinking of this highly energetic section of the population. Trouble is, most of them are not needed in production. They may get low-paying jobs, but their long term economic prospects are dim. Some might join the military in the hopes of a better life, only to re-emerge later, still largely unemployable because of the ever accelerating technological revolution. Some might go to college in the hopes of improving their outcomes in the future, but end up joining the ranks of those with crushing student loan debt. Some of them may drift into substance abuse, an always-plentiful means

by which the ruling class can neutralize them. Some may be incarcerated, as the increases in the prison population mirror the steep drop in manufacturing jobs. Those who find work today have zero job security, long hours, no benefits and low pay. It is hard to convince people they are doing okay or have a future when their life experience tells them the opposite. Young workers are getting angry and frustrated and sensing the need to unite forces.

The ruling class has made preparations for this eventuality. It takes the form of a narrative that appeals to the young fledgling activist while simultaneously clipping his or her feathers. The narrative says, “Everything can be fixed under capitalist rule. We have democracy!” The presumption of democracy and a long list of “rights” under the system is taken as a given by many Americans. But things have changed, and are changing rapidly. The fact that open fascist rule is sup-

The single biggest lie that undermines the revolutionary movement is that the capitalist system can be reformed. Evidence that reforms were granted in the past is used to propagate the idea they will be granted today. This suggests that rather than educating people around the objective changes of laborless production, people should be counseled (our youth included) to cry out louder for the changes they want, and caution them against revolutionary instruction. In this way, they are no threat to the ruling class, and will exhaust themselves trying to gain reform through a system from which reform is no longer possible. This is happening across all spectrums of the movement today.

TELLING THE TRUTH

When we tell our class they are in a revolutionary epoch and systematically begin to prove it, there are 15 funded agencies coming at them telling them, “No. It will be okay. We just need to be louder in our demands. We can make the system work for us!” Fifty years ago this might have been true, but today we no longer need to settle for crumbs from the capitalists' table.

Our class needs to know the truth. The truth is that only by uniting on their common economic interests as a class, and in spite of various differences, will the people be able to defeat the schemes of the ruling class. The truth is that the knowledge of this revolutionary epoch we have entered into is the single idea the ruling class most wants to suppress. The truth is that the most revolutionary thing an individual can do is to propagate the knowledge of the situation from a clear class perspective. The truth is it's us against them. The truth is this is a life or death struggle for a livable planet.

The truth is introduced as a revolutionary idea describing why the system of capitalism and its institutions are in terminal failure. The truth is that there are no reforms left under this system. The truth is we need, and can have, a new system that provides for all, compatible with the new technologies. The truth is there is an amazing abundance being kept from the people by a tiny capitalist class intent on preserving their control around the world.

The heroic task of revolutionaries is to understand and spread the revolutionary truth of our time. It is good news and enlightening news. Revolutionaries teach from inside the movement, and take as their task to raise the intellectual understanding and independent development of our class, by reaching those who are emerging to the forefront of the struggle.

The era of capitalism and its merciless exploitation is coming to an end. The era is giving birth to a society based on a sustainable distribution of abundance. There is nothing to go back to. We are going to secure a future worth having. Our shared vision is not only possible, it's the only thing that makes sense.

planting our so-called democracy is still not recognized.

The sophisticated use of billions of dollars paid into the movements for social justice and change is intended to guarantee people's continued confusion and suppression. The CIA, for example, has a long history of doing this, and now this method is increasingly used domestically, often drawing in honest people and young leaders seeking real change. The ruling class has designed networks to mislead any opposition to the rule of the capitalist. They have funded an opposition, diverted it, and then crushed the various people's movements, whenever they could.

Let go back to our hypothetical group of young adults. The unity they have in common is based on their objective position in society as marginal workers. If you desired to divide and conquer them you would try to do it by emphasizing the differences among them. You would suggest they organize themselves based on these differences, rather than what they have in common, their economic condition.

The ruling class benefits greatly from dividing and subdividing the movement. Unity, remember, is the only thing they fear. But let's say our young people are wise to those tricks of the ruling class. Yet there are still lots of political divisions for the ruling class to exploit.

Homelessness is the Sign of a Broken System

The past two years have revealed a shocking rise in homelessness in virtually every corner of the nation. Los Angeles County homelessness rose 23% in 2017. New York City moved 38,000 people from shelters into permanent housing in 2015, but the total number of homeless for the year still went up. Washington, DC had 8350 homeless in 2016, the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the country. California was particularly hard hit. In addition to Los Angeles, Alameda County experienced a 39% increase in homelessness this year, Santa Clara County 13%, Fresno 19%, and Sacramento 30%.

“It’s important to know that these people on your street are your people,” said Ryan Loofbourrow of the non-profit Sacramento Steps Forward, quoted in the *Sacramento Bee*. They are not refugees from other states or countries. An estimated 70% of Sacramento County’s homeless come from the same community where they grew up or lived for years, including many in residential suburbs. Karen Edwards reported her experience volunteering in a church shelter in Rancho Cordova: “We had local homeless knocking on our door asking, ‘Can we come in?’ I think the big thing that we’re learning the most, they’re not homeless migrating from other places. ... The majority of the homeless in Rancho Cordova are from Rancho Cordova.”

Where the homeless are coming from is another example of a failing private property economic system. The worldwide trend of replacing human workers with automation has left millions of Americans with no source of income. People with disabilities, the elderly, and the unemployed have had social security and other benefits cut, because corporations refuse to pay taxes to support workers they will not employ. For employed workers, they have driven wages so far down that more and more can no longer afford to keep a roof over their heads and their families.

The result is an intensification of the struggle for homes by people all across the country. Since only government action can make affordable homes available, these battles are necessarily fought out in the political arena. They are fought in the city councils, legislatures, in electoral campaigns, and in street actions that influence these contests. The struggle for homes is an expression of the objective impulse for political independence of the working class. When people’s lives are being ruined by

homelessness, they are not satisfied with compromises, or calls for patience, or legislative wheeling and dealing, or silence and betrayal from Republicans and Democrats. They will only be satisfied by homes that they and their families can actually live in. This demand for homes, and the growth of tent cities and other forms of resistance, are some of the seeds of this emerging political independence.

FEATURES OF THE CRISIS

Automation and its effects have been accelerating for several decades. The upsurge in homelessness in America today marks a new quantitative stage of the increase. What is triggering the sudden increase of homelessness? According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, over 11 million U.S. households now spend over half their income on rent. “That means that they are one emergency, one broken-down car, one illness, one missed day of work away from not being able to pay the rent,” stated Diane Yentel, president of the National Low-Income Housing Coalition. “They’re really at risk of losing their homes altogether and becoming homeless.”

These 11 million households represent a 25% increase since 2007. The upsurge in these “severely cost-burdened” households is caused by declining or stagnating incomes, a shrinking supply of affordable housing, and escalating rents. Seventy-three percent of severely cost-burdened households are categorized as extremely low-income (ELI) (earning 30% or less of the area median income). In a March 2017 study entitled “The Gap”, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition documented a national shortage of 7.4 million affordable housing units that are available for ELI families to rent. In other words, for every one hundred ELI families, there are only 35 available affordable housing units. Because affordability standards are geared to local incomes, the ELI housing shortage is relatively even in its spread across the country. The ten cities with the worst shortages are Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Houston, Orlando, San Diego, Dallas, Riverside, Sacramento, Austin, Miami, and Phoenix.

The housing shortage is the product of decades of rising rents and declining government affordable housing programs. As a rule, the private market simply does not build rental housing to be made affordable to the ELI households without a public subsidy. Today

there is growing political pressure to reduce regulations and unleash private housing developers. The alleged result of this is that a “filtering” process will cause older housing to become affordable over time. However, the decades necessary to make this happen are no help to people on the edge of homelessness today, and in hot markets, building owners will often opt to tear down less expensive housing before it becomes affordable and redevelop it for higher income renters.

Federal programs that subsidize housing to make it affordable for ELI families (such as Section 8 choice vouchers, public housing, and project-based vouchers) have been going through years-long, sustained reductions and are now in danger of accelerated cuts by the current Congress and Trump administration. Only 25% of those eligible for federally subsidized housing assistance actually receive it. State and local subsidies are also being removed. In California, where homelessness is increasing the most rapidly, affordable housing funding was slashed by over 70% since 2008.

SPECULATIVE CAPITAL IN HOUSING

Declining subsidies are only part of the reason for rising rents. As electronics replaces human labor, corporations are moving their capital into financial speculation instead of industrial production. In March, 2017 the United Nations Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Leilani Farha, released a comprehensive report detailing how this worldwide shift is causing an historic and destabilizing transformation of the entire global housing system: “Structural changes in housing, financial markets and global investment, whereby housing is treated as a commodity, have become a means of accumulating wealth and often as security for financial instruments that are traded and sold on global markets. It refers to the way capital investment in housing increasingly disconnects housing from its social function of providing a place to live in security and dignity and hence undermines the realization of housing as a human right.”

Her conclusion is echoed by economist Joseph Stiglitz, who points out that lending stimulated by bank deregulation has “gone to increase the value of land and other fixed resources (buildings, real estate, etc.)”, which is causing the wealthy to become wealthier, while “the workers, who have no wealth, don’t benefit.” The outrageous escalations in housing prices and rents in the high demand, so-called “hedge cities,” are driving working class families out of entire regions, or making them homeless. Over the course of five years some 13 million homes were foreclosed in the United States, causing evictions of 9 million households.

Smaller landlords are increasingly being replaced by private equity funds with the aggressive management and legal resources necessary to maximize profit and destroy communities. “The clearing out of rent-stabilized tenants has become such a common real estate practice that it is added to a building’s value even before the fact,” writes Michael

Greenberg about New York City. “Landlords have found enough loopholes in tenant protection laws to make widespread displacement a viable financial strategy.” Already, 15% of the city’s rent-controlled apartments were deregulated in the past ten years, through devious eviction schemes, buyouts, and extreme landlord harassment. In an economy where automation sharply reduces profitability in the so-called “productive” sector, the boom in real estate is devastating the ability of human beings to be able to live in homes.

ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARIES

While Ms. Farha and Mr. Stiglitz present excellent descriptions of the problem, they do not propose effective solutions. Farha’s recommendation for “more constructive engagement and dialogue between States, human rights actors, international and domestic financial regulatory bodies, private equity firms, and major investors,” will accomplish exactly nothing. Revolutionaries have historically held that the emancipation of the working classes around the globe must be won by the working classes themselves. It is the responsibility of revolutionaries to make them aware of this historic mission and organize them to accomplish it.

Above all, our role is to explain that today they constitute a new class cast off by a broken system. They are being separated from social production by automation and therefore from their livelihood. This is a problem that no existing State, no human rights organization, no regulatory agency, and certainly no investor will solve. Only the workers themselves, organized into a material political force, have the inclination and the power to overturn the corporate private property system and establish a cooperative society to meet human needs. Indeed, this is literally the only way they can survive the deepening social destruction.

The battle is on, over whether the government should represent and serve the interests of humanity or the corporations. The corporate sector and its agents are attempting to organize and inflame a new movement against the homeless, similar to the 1960s resistance to fair housing, in an attempt to divide and isolate them. Law enforcement is on the front line of the attack. Although they especially target the African American and Latino homeless, it is increasingly done more based on their economic status than on color, as is clear from the increasing assaults on the white homeless as well. More and more, the equality of poverty and equality of repression are creating an impulse toward class unity among the homeless that make them key players in the fight for the overall class unity that is necessary to win.

Revolutionaries fight for the unity of this new class over and against its divisions based on color, social status, employment, or homeownership. The great recession that began in 2008 taught us that homeowners become renters overnight and renters become homeless. The role of the revolutionaries is to teach these truths from within this movement as it develops stage by stage.

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From Los Angeles, California: “Appreciation for the work that you all at *Rally, Comrades!* do to make it the finest revolutionary literature of its kind.”

From Northern California: “What I have found effective is the regular appearance of urgent appeals to activists to get oriented to the ongoing economic revolution. We use the web site and also find the archives index is especially useful. Indeed, automation is on everyone’s lips. The millennial generation is especially attuned to this, of course. It’s the combination of common sense and theory that is powerful, making the point that the oncoming opportunities, and dangers, are both historic and inevitable that makes *Rally, Comrades!* so useful. The whole temper of the times is changing, and changing fast. People are hungry, turning to the LRNA as the only organization that is talking about these fundamental issues. More and more people are just DONE with the system.”

From Detroit, Michigan: “A leap is taking place in peoples thinking and people have been receptive to the distribution of *Rally, Comrades!* At a regular local event we have here, we set up a table and make a pitch for the *Rally*. We talk about how *Rally* provides analysis about where the world is today, offers and vision and how to carry it out. We also tell them about study groups the LRNA has. People come up to the table and ask for the paper. That’s why we upped our order. The times are changing. Trump’s election is really pushing things forward. It’s everywhere. So many things we can’t keep up with them. When they read the *Rally* you can see a light bulb going off in their heads.”

Fossil Capitalism...

(Continued from page 3)

killer crisis for farmers has arisen in Arkansas and Missouri, where the use of the herbicide Dicamba in some locations has drifted over and killed crops such as beans, peaches and vegetables. (The manufacturer Monsanto had prevented important testing on Dicamba for volatility).

Today the U.S. military is the world’s largest user of petroleum, the largest producer of greenhouse gases, and the largest polluter, producing more hazardous waste than the five largest US chemical companies combined. In addition to the dreadful direct human toll of warfare, Patricia Hynes writes in “Pentagon Pollution” her seven part 2011 series published in *Truthout*, “Modern war and militarism have a staggering impact on nature and our lived environment – by the kinds of weapons used (long-lived concealed explosives, toxic chemicals, and radiation); the ‘shock and awe’ intensity of industrial warfare, and the massive exploitation of natural resources and fossil fuels to support militarism.”

The victims of extreme weather events and other environmental disasters are not the wealthy, the CEOs, or the politicians that they control. Many developing countries are especially vulnerable to rising sea levels, drought or other climate related issues. Of the more than 1800 who died in Hurricane Katrina, most were the poor not only of New Orleans, but also many rural Louisiana parishes. It was

the poor and elderly who were trapped during Superstorm Sandy in New York’s high rise buildings. In addition to Flint, Michigan there are 2000 water systems in the U.S. suffering from high lead levels, affecting 6 million people. Along the Alabama coast where the BP oil spill took place, there has been a significant uptick in cancers, neurological disorders, and respiratory illnesses. West Virginia suffers from buried PCBs, mountaintop removal, strip mining and fracking.

The last 40 years of technology driven economic globalization have seen a weakening of the protections for workers and their unions, as well as for the environment they live in. One of the leading forms this takes are trade agreements such as NAFTA and the proposed TPP, in which corporations can sue sovereign governments when they take steps to protect local natural resources, or economies in need of assistance.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Make no mistake – in spite of the disingenuous protestations that climate change is either non-existent, or can be dealt with by ineffective gestures, such as market-based solutions or the Paris Accords, the ruling class is preparing for it. Insurance companies are calculating what it means for their bottom line and adjusting their practices. The United States military is making plans to deal with the

Healthcare...

(Continued from page 1)

distributed almost entirely by private entities, is an expression of the State apparatus stripping down to its most basic and violent control functions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the military, and the police.

FROM RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION

If the status quo was viable, “resistance” would be sufficient. Even the ACA’s subsidization of the commercial insurance market is not sustainable. Nationalization of the financing and delivery system is necessary. The administration and regulation of healthcare to the states is a reflection of and response to fundamental disruptions in the role of U.S. healthcare under capitalism. Making comprehensive and universal healthcare a necessary public infrastructure is illusive to a corporate State. The healthcare system’s origins were rooted in securing a productive workforce capable of reproducing itself in the interests of maximum profit from the plantation owner to General Motors.

The introduction of labor replacing technology over the last 30 years in the factories and fields, stores and schools, banks and telecommunications and in clinics and hospitals, is reducing labor to contingent, “gig,” part-time, temporary, unemployed and underemployed. Robots and 3-D printers don’t need healthcare, but they are shaping technology’s role inside the healthcare system and in society as a whole.

All of society is experiencing the disruptive transition from labor-intensive industry to labor-less technologies. The infamous “medical-industrial complex” superstructure that was built around an industrial society is in disarray. The hegemonic control of the usual suspects at the top of the healthcare food chain like insurance companies, big Pharma and mega hospital corporations are now competing for investment funds with Amazon, IBM and Google. These corporations are spinning off new companies making wearable behavioral healthcare apps, pre-

dictive-diagnostics and artificial intelligence applications.

The healthcare industry has become a very lucrative investment, employing 16% of all private sector jobs and more than 1/6th of the overall economy. But the pandemic of hospital and pharmaceutical mergers and acquisitions, ignited by electronic medical records and the ACA’s Accountable Care Organizations, fueled huge health-sector debt, soaring to over 300% since 2009. Debt fuels speculative investing that in turn sets the basis for a collapse, that could make the mortgage bubble look like a pimple. These internal contradictions to capital are among the causes of Congress’ inability to restructure the complexities of the healthcare system in any way other than to benefit the corporations. Couple this with the fact that the public insurances of Medicare and Medicaid pay for about 50% of all healthcare costs, with nearly all of that going to private entities, and capitalism’s inability to deliver secure healthcare for all is nakedly exposed.

The introduction of advanced technologies has caused an irreversible antagonism and polarized class interests. Technologies and exponentially expanding knowledge that could yield enormous advances to health are instead wielded chaotically for profit, not healing. The ruling class’ reliance on the historic methods of political control to isolate the most destitute section of the working class, uninsured, underinsured or on Medicaid, is a sign of their strategic weakness, even as they mount their tactical offensive. Medicaid must be defended as a critical tactic toward developing class-conscious unity.

Strategically, improved Medicare for all is the path to equal, quality comprehensive health services, as part of the total transformation of the healthcare system – from corporate to community – from private to public and from commercial health insurers to nationalization of the abundance of health resources to end the scarcity of health distribution.

global and domestic unrest that would come, when millions are starving or their homes and livelihoods are destroyed.

The purpose of sounding the alarm is not to discourage us or paralyze us with fear, but to add urgency to the work we are doing. Credible studies from a wide range of environmental groups argue that a full transition to renewable, non-carbon based energy sources is physically possible. But in the same way that profit-driven capitalism and the system of private property cannot be reformed to provide a life where we can all live and thrive, fossil fuels cannot just be plucked from capitalism, leaving the system intact; they are embedded in every aspect of the system.

So what kind of movement then do we need? We have to show that it is not just an optional issue, but that human survival and planetary survival require the same future of a cooperative society. We have to fight for environmental justice that recognizes the dis-

proportionate effects of these damages on the poor. We have to fight for “just transition” measures that deal with peoples’ legitimate concerns for stable employment, and for instance, the righteous fears of current and retired coal miners for their jobs, their pensions, and their health care. (Even now, almost 2 ½ times as many people are employed in solar energy as in coal.)

The astounding technological advances of our times don’t have to be the cause of economic inequality and the engine for mindless, ecological destruction as they are now. In the hands of the people they can be the force to provide a decent life for all, which also insures the kind of environmental stewardship that heals and maintains the planet’s life systems. This will only happen with the abolition of private property and the move towards communism, where we all share in the common good.