

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

VOLUME 29, EDITION 1

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019

RALLYCOMRADES.LRNA.ORG

\$1 DONATION

Take Up the Vision of a New America!

A group of scientists will be giving United Nations' leaders a New Year's gift that some may want to give back. Investigative journalist Nafeez Ahmed reports that an analysis, prepared for the U.N.'s 2019 "Global Sustainable Development Report," will warn that we may be witnessing "capitalism's imminent demise." These scientists claim that disturbing worldwide trends, such as "rising inequality, unemployment, slow economic growth, rising debt levels, and impotent governments," are all linked.

These trends are linked, because the new electronic means of production are undermining the economic basis of capitalism and making its destruction inevitable. But the scientists stopped short of such a revolutionary conclusion, warning only that capitalism is being disrupted because "the era of cheap energy is coming to an end." Leading capitalists like billionaire investor Jeremy Grantham have also cautioned members of his class, that "we face a form of capitalism that has hardened its focus to short-term profit maximization, with little or no apparent interest in social good." He and the U.N. scientists both imply that the system can avoid collapse through developing less greed and more cheap energy.

As 2019 dawns, millions of workers in the U.S. and around the world are fighting to survive the economic and social consequences of the maximization of ruling class profits that Grantham refers to. Some workers organize against economic attacks like wage cuts and layoffs, or a lack of food, housing, and clean water. Others confront political attacks like police abuse, rampant imprisonment, and violence against women and youth.

Some of the biggest protests in American history have taken place in the last two years. This indicates that social awareness, the stage of consciousness that recognizes the need to get out and mobilize against problems, is growing rapidly. But protests cannot produce lasting solutions if people remain locked into the belief that this system can be fixed, or return to some mythical "good old days."

FIGHTING FORWARD TO ABUNDANCE

More and more fighters are understanding this, and as they discuss and study what's happening, their thinking is starting to develop past social awareness taking steps towards the stage of social consciousness. This stage means knowing we belong to one class, and that each of our struggles are actually pieces



At the San Diego border with Tijuana, Mexico, faith and community leaders are stopped by the U.S. Border Patrol as they approach the border wall, calling for the end of deportations and for refugees in the caravan to be granted asylum. Thirty-two were arrested.

Photo: Margarito Diaz

of an overall struggle against the same ruling class, whose interests are contrary to ours. It means understanding that we can only win by developing class solidarity across the divisions of color, gender, and nationality that have kept the working class divided. It means understanding that we can't trust our class enemy to look out for us.

An historic transformation is underway, as the electronic revolution generates robotic production and artificial intelligence. New ways of producing everything people need are not only destabilizing the energy industry but every industry. Ruling class leaders know this and are maneuvering to keep society under their control, even as the foundation of capitalism is being destroyed. Revolutionaries must explain that the fight is to control the economic abundance the new technology makes possible. We don't need to recreate the jobs economy of the past.

Last summer, *Foreign Affairs*, the magazine of the Council on Foreign Relations, advised its readers to "Make no mistake: the digital revolution is going to be the biggest geopolitical revolution in human history. The Industrial Revolution changed the world, and all it did was replace human muscle. Human brains were still needed to build, operate, and maintain the machines, and that produced plenty of well-paying jobs for everyone. But the digital revolution will replace the human brain ... And unlike the Industrial Revolution, which took more than 100 years to truly un-

fold, job losses during the digital revolution will accelerate in mere decades...The two most important developments of the twenty-first century will be AI-driven mass unemployment and fossil-fuel-driven climate change."

MOST IMPORTANT SOCIAL FORCE

Though the U.N. analysis does identify aspects of today's economic revolution, it leaves out the most important political development: a force is now emerging that can ensure that digital tools are used to create abundance for humanity and not just more wealth for the ruling class. This force is the section of the working class being created by electronic production that is increasingly driven outside of the property relations of capitalism. This is a new class that cannot live se-

curely until society as a whole owns the new means of production and distributes the fruits of social production according to people's need.

This is a program, for the good of humanity, to abolish private ownership of the economy's means of production. It is objectively a communist program for the era of electronics. When this program is in place, decisions about providing for society's needs will no longer be dictated by what increases the wealth of the rulers. Energy production and all arenas of production will no longer be allowed to poison the people's air and water. Housing, food, and health care will be produced for all the people. The new technologies can actually do all this already, but have been held back by the ruling class.

Whether the new class can lead all those who can be united in a struggle for such a new world will depend on it achieving consciousness, both of itself as a class, and of its historic mission. The *League of Revolutionaries for a New America* was created to

participate in facilitating the development of that consciousness. The League's mission is to unite the scattered revolutionaries of the new class on the basis of their actual demands, while fighting alongside them to educate and win them over to the cooperative, communist resolution of their problems.

No one can predict the details of how 2019 will unfold. We can be sure that the electronic revolution will continue to destroy the old capitalist forms of social organization, driving millions of Americans toward poverty, sickness and violence that will force them to struggle for society's future. Armed with the class consciousness which revolutionaries bring them, they can take steps to ensure that 2019 brings America closer to realizing its revolutionary potential. **RC**

CONTENTS

<i>Inside: Every Beginning Means Something is Ending</i>	2
<i>From the Editors: A Practical Solution to Homelessness in America</i>	3
<i>Race and Class in a Time of Epochal Change</i>	3
<i>Illuminating the Way out of Today's Social Crisis</i>	4
<i>Where We Stand After the Elections</i>	5
<i>The Hope in Life After Capitalism</i>	6

SUBSCRIBE TO **RALLY, COMRADES!**

ONE FULL YEAR FOR \$20

Rally, Comrades! stands out, offering a sound and clear analysis of the way forward. We rely completely on volunteers and donations from readers like you to carry out this urgent work.

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Please send this coupon with a check or money order payable to "LRNA" to the following address:
LRNA
P.O. Box 477113
Chicago, IL 60647

Every Beginning Means Something is Ending

Inside Rally, Comrades!

In a New Year's resolution, "a person resolves to change an undesired trait or behavior, to accomplish a personal goal, or otherwise improve their life." With the various Migrant Caravans, thousands of Central Americans collectively resolved to improve their lives by trekking to the United States. They organized themselves through general assemblies, giving each participant a political voice, something their governments have long denied them. Meanwhile, France's Yellow Vest movement tapped into this discontent and mobilized thousands of different political affiliations, to protest growing poverty and government proposed new taxes on gasoline and pensions that would make their situation even worse. By New Year's Day, president Macron was forced to back down, and to raise the minimum wage.

The American working class, like rest of the working class around the world, is fighting back against ruling class efforts to make them carry the burden of the capitalist crisis. "Where We Stand After the Elections," shows that while the high voter turnout in the 2018 mid-term election appeared inspired by anti-Trump resistance, the actual demands were for the government to do something about poverty and hardship, and to guarantee access to housing, health care, clean water, and public education. The people are forced into participating in politics to fight for their future, including the electoral arena, because they have nowhere else to turn.

This issue of *Rally, Comrades!* explains why the growth of these movements, as the

new year began, signals that something is ending, and something new is beginning. With the electronics revolution, the capitalist system that private property created is dying, and those who accumulated wealth under that system are desperately fighting to hang onto power while the society around them collapses.

The article, "Race and Class in a Time of Epochal Change," explain that the masses of Black workers suffer profoundly and disproportionately from the economic crisis and cannot move forward, without fundamental changes in the entire social and economic system. The ruling class offensive against Black workers is central to its fight to impose fascism on society as a whole, which means that the mass of African Americans workers and the growing mass of impoverished white workers have common class interests. Revolutionaries concentrate on the unity of the historically disparate sectors of the new, revolutionary class.

The holiday season reminded us how generous and caring the American people can be. But that homeless person on the side of the road also exposes the shocking immorality of a system that produces both abundance and growing deprivation. Charity alone will never solve the problem. "From the Editors: A Practical Solution to Homelessness," concludes that it comes down to a question of property: the immorality of a system where property rights are absolute, and those who lack money must go without basic necessities, versus the morality of a cooperative, sharing system, in which the welfare of every person comes first.

Some of the biggest protests in American history have taken place in the last two years. But protests cannot be steps towards solutions, if people remain locked into the belief that this system can be fixed. Our cover story, "Take

Up the Vision of a New America!" points out that the fight is to control the economic abundance the new technology makes possible. A force – a new class – is now emerging that can ensure that digital tools are used to create abundance for humanity, not just more wealth for the ruling class. This new class, being driven outside of the property relations, cannot live securely until society as a whole owns the new means of production and distributes the fruits of social production according to people's needs.

The article, "Illuminating the Way out of Today's Social Crisis," shows that the electronic revolution has forced the American people into a war for their very survival. More Americans than ever before are fighting a war for survival. The resulting mental health crisis, the drug crisis, the rise in suicide, and mass incarceration all reveal that the old world is falling apart. The ruling class' only solution is to use the destruction to justify creating a new fascist system.

"Hope in Life After Capitalism," explains how a new world is within our grasp. We have to forge the broadest possible unity in the fight for the necessities of life, such as housing, healthcare, education, decent jobs, and necessary social services. There are countless examples of community spirit, creativity, and compassion that are freely given think what could be unleashed if the ruling class and its system of private property were removed from the picture! We must help point the new manifestations of struggle towards the direction of systemic change.

The technological leap offers us a new society in which humanity can provide for one another. With this vision, the American people have a practical basis to fight forward to the new world that is struggling to be born. **RC**

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.

Editor: Brooke Heagerty

Editorial Board: Bob Brown, Kimberly King, John Slaughter, Steve Teixeira, Mary Kay Yarak

Photo Editor: Daymon Hartley

Reach us at: RALLY@LRNA.ORG

League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Today, whether through words or deeds, vast numbers 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.

LRNA, P.O. Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647
info@lrna.org | 1(773)486-0028 | lrna.org

**Visit the *Rally, Comrades!* website!
rallycomrades.lrna.org**

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.

Race and Class in a Time of Epochal Change

With the beginning of the new year of 2019, African Americans in particular and indeed the American masses as a whole, are facing a grim uncertain future. A recent study by the Third Way found that 62% of jobs today do not even provide a basic living for an individual, let alone a family. In May of 2018, Philip G. Alston, special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights for the U.N., published a report saying 40 million Americans live in poverty and 18.5 million Americans live in extreme poverty.

Within this downward spiral, the masses of Blacks suffer profoundly and disproportionately from almost every social and health problem facing the American people. In every state, the unemployment rate among Blacks is higher than the overall unemployment rate for that state. African Americans have the highest rate of infant mortality, HIV infection, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. The imprisonment of African American youth and adults has reached epidemic proportions.

We must examine these conditions – not simply point to the CEOs, the professors, and the generals, the Black elite who have made it in the system. The masses of Black workers are economically stuck and cannot move forward without fundamental changes in the entire social and economic system.

EPOCHAL CHANGE AND THE CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP

Today it is broadly accepted that humanity is in a period of epochal change. The fundamental changes in the production and distribution of the means of life compel all social relations and formations to change accordingly. Such change isn't simply the destruction of the old and introduction of the new. It is a complex process involving changing relationships of form and content and of quantity and quality. Such a period demands a leadership capable of understanding and working with social motion in transition.

Quantitative changes in the economy are incremental, but as they accumulate, they force social changes that appear suddenly, and as crisis. Social ideas do not evolve as a reflection of the evolution of the economy. The ruling class will not allow them to do so. The old ideas serve as a reactionary counter-balance to the emergence of revolutionary new ideas. Such old ideas, hangovers from previous periods, have played a very special role in disorienting radical movements in our country.

At the center of these old ideas is the political concept of race. The question of race was the central issue in preventing the American people from achieving their goals in the Revolutionary War. Those goals, enshrined in our documents of the Revolution, were unattainable for the mass of white toilers, while a quarter of the working class was in chains. The question of race was central to frustrating the popular aims of the Civil War. Before abandoning the goal of breaking the political back of the Southern planters, the ruling class needed the American people to first abandon the vision, "And crown thy

good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea." Playing the race card did this.

In the midst of this new epoch of transformation, the race question again presents itself as a changing but central question. The profound economic changes are creating a new class of workers whose economic destitution is cutting across the color line. Now the mass of African Americans, who formed the core of the new class, and the growing number of impoverished white workers joining its ranks, unmistakably have common interests, which grow out of not morality alone, but objective economic class interests. The only way this class can survive is to take over the massive means of production and distribute the wherewithal of life on the basis of need. The only alternative is fascism. This time we dare not fail.

RACE AND CHANGING CONDITIONS

Racism in America has been directed against the the Native Americans, the Irish, the Latin Americans, and the Asians, among others. Most of all it has centered on the African Americans, because it is a political question. Politics, it has been written, is the art of the class struggle. Nothing could be more artful than to use a myth to convince literally millions of people to do harm to themselves in the interests of the people they are struggling against. Yet this is precisely what has happened in our history. It happened because the American people became convinced that they were dealing with a biological, rather than a political question. Today we understand that contrary to common usage, race is not a valid biological reality, but rather a social and political construction, formed by the ruling class to facilitate the capitalist system.

We emphasize this point because the great economic and political changes taking place are having a profound effect on the politics of race and color.

One of the ideological hangovers from the period of segregation is the tendency to see the African Americans as a category, rather than a scattered grouping of over 40 million individuals who have different histories, ideals, and goals, and who belong to different economic classes. This characterization was correct years ago, when the pressure of segregation isolated the African Americans from the rest of society. This isolation allowed for the creation of a common culture, internal class stratification, and a common political agenda.

The elimination of de jure segregation allowed the Black elite to leave the segregated areas, and work their way into the general American elite. To a lesser degree, this also applied to the growing ranks of Black professionals and even to a section of the upper strata of Black workers. This dispersal of the African Americans into their different economic classes marked the beginning of the end of their cohesion as a community or a people. The Black elite presents itself as

Continues on page 6

A Practical Solution to Homelessness in America

From the Editors

There is an abundance of housing in America. Millions are homeless in America.

California is the breadbasket of the world; it produces enough food to feed the entire world.

Millions in America are "food insecure." For many children the only meal they get is a school lunch.

Healthcare in America is the most advanced in the world, boasting miraculous innovations in technology and science. In America millions go without health insurance, having to choose between paying for health care and putting food on the table for their families, or paying the rent.

There is something terribly wrong with this picture. This is what is at the bottom of the great unease that permeates our political process. In the midst of a land of plenty, there are the millions of those cast aside, who are fighting what seems like a losing battle to obtain even the most basic of human needs.

On a roadside in just about every city and suburb and rural area of America, there is a homeless person, a man or a woman or a child, holding up a hand-painted cardboard sign that reads: "Will work for food."

This is the image that the ruling class would like for us to forget. That homeless person on the side of the road exposes the shocking immorality of a system that produces more abundance, while at the same time more deprivation. All across America, cities are demolishing homeless encampments and passing laws that make it unlawful for the homeless to be in certain areas, or even to ask for food. In Oakland, California, the city government is building "Tuff Sheds," tiny storage sheds, as places the homeless can now reside. In the shadow of luxury, rents skyrocket and wages shrink.

Since the Great Recession, more than 10 million homes have been foreclosed upon. Many of those who lost their homes never got them back. Now real estate speculators have bought up those properties, causing the price of homes to shoot up to all-time highs. These speculative capitalists have also cornered the rental market and driven the cost of renting beyond the reach of more and more. For example, in Los Angeles, where there are more than 50,000 homeless, some pay as much as \$1500 a month just to live in someone's garage.

Another study has shown that in two-year community colleges, as many as one-half of the student population is homeless. Although most have to work while attending classes, their wages are not enough to pay for college expenses and to also pay for housing. So they live in their car, or on a friend's couch.

It is really quite simple: the system of private property, in which great wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few is just outmoded. It is broken and can't be fixed. Automation and robotics now produce an abundance we could only dream of, while at the same time eliminating millions of workers from production. And there is more to come. It is estimated that by 2050, as many as half of all existing jobs will be eliminated due to advanced electronics. A system which can no longer house its people, no longer deserves to exist. A new world is striving to be born.

It really all comes down to a question of private property. There is an immorality of a system where those who don't have the money to pay go without, and are discarded and forgotten. And then there is the morality of a cooperative, sharing system, in which the welfare of every person comes first.

All of this could be resolved in a day. There is such abundance right now to house everyone who needs it, to feed everyone who is hungry, to care for the health and well-being of all. This is not an abstract problem; the solution is very practical. The only thing that makes any sense at all is to distribute the abundance of society to all in need.

We look ahead to a new year. Yet once again many of our homeless will freeze to death on the streets of our cities. It does not have to be this way.

The American people are a generous and caring people. We see this every holiday season, as food drives are conducted to restock the shelves of our food banks, clothing is collected, donations are made to help those in need. Yet we know that charity alone will never solve the problem.

The generosity and caring of the American people points the way to the new kind of society we have to build. It is a truly cooperative society, where every human being is valued, and one in which the abundance we produce is distributed to all in need. It is the only practical and moral thing to do. **RC**

Illuminating the Way out of Today's Social Crisis

Our country is being divided now more than ever before. The ruling class creates this conflict. It then sells it as a battle between left and right, but the mental health crisis, the drug crisis, the rise in suicide and mass incarceration all reveal something almost everyone can agree on: the old world is falling apart.

The world most Americans grew up in is already gone. The economic basis for the country was that people could make a living based on the labor they could provide an employer. The capitalist system is being destroyed by labor replacing technology, causing capitalist society as a whole to be destroyed. The automation of virtually every field of work is making the workers superfluous. Globalization has generalized these conditions around the world.

More Americans than ever before are fighting a war for survival. That war is taking place on many different fronts – workers fight for a living wage, affordable health care, a healthy environment, clean water, food, and housing, as well as for respect and common decency.

A SYSTEM PROPPED UP BY OLD IDEAS

With the electronic revolution, we are seeing the most dramatic shift in the way goods are produced and distributed since the birth of private property. The capitalist system that private property created is finished, and those who accumulated wealth under that system are desperately fighting to hang onto that wealth, while the society around them collapses. Their only solution is to use the destruction of the old society as a tool to justify and create a new fascist system.

Financed by the corporations, both political parties sell fear of the other party to divide and conquer the people. The ruling class strategy keeps the people blaming each other's failures for everything that's wrong. The ruling class sells us old, useless soap that cannot wash away the problems growing out of the new economy. They hasten the destruction of society by turning to the permanent war economy and the drug economy amongst other things.

CASUALTIES OF WAR

Americans share a great dissatisfaction with the status quo because it does not address their needs, and they can feel the social fabric of the country tearing apart. The country as a whole exists on a footing of never-ending war. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have all but destroyed both countries and fueled the destruction of bordering states such as Syria. Meanwhile, Americans are becoming more aware of the war at home. They experience greater violence, political brutality, and poverty, and are demanding the government address their plight. They have protested against low wages, poisoned water, and the mass shootings that have now made active shooter training part of our schools' curriculum.

A steady flow of veterans return to America suffering the trauma of war and the difficulty of an abrupt transition to civilian life. These veterans also face the same social destruction their families are facing at home. Large numbers wind up homeless. It should be no surprise that veterans are twice as likely to commit suicide as the average American, at a time when the mainstream media talks about America undergoing what is being called "a suicide epidemic."

Since 1999 the United States suicide rate has risen by 24 percent. *Forbes* recently reported that this phenomenon is worldwide. The majority of suicides in the U.S. are among young people, both in the civilian population and among military veterans. Suicide is the second leading cause of death

sales, up around 700 percent. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Purdue Pharma's OxyContin (Oxycodone) is the most popular. The Sackler family, who owns that product, also owns the leading generic. Now that heroin addiction is beginning to outpace OxyContin sales, the Sackler's lead the market with buprenorphine, the latest way to treat opioid addiction. Today's ruling class sells anxiety and pain, then anxiety and pain relief, and then relief from addiction to the drugs it sold us in the first place.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD AND THE POTENTIAL FOR UNITY

As Americans, it's not hard for us to see what's driving the working class crisis behind these addictions. Despite upticks in the number of people getting new jobs, most of which are part-time and low wage, the overall unemployment rate remains high. The real unemployment rate is 7.5 percent, about twice the government's estimate of 3.9 percent if we take into consideration those workers who need, but do not have full-time work, as well as those who have temporarily or permanently given up seeking work.

Tellingly, the CDC has found no clinical mental health issues in over half of today's suicides. What the CDC has found are that financial troubles and other stressors can be traced to the lack of financial security. The ruling class is killing us, regardless of political affiliation, race or gender. The suicide rate among all ethnicities of Americans hovers at around the same rate.

The reality of the ruling class war being waged against society allows for and demands a new level of consciousness among the American working class. By furthering the destruction of the old social fabric, the ruling class has also exacerbated the social divisions of the capitalist era. Working class Americans are in pain, and all deal with fear and anxiety. We increasingly hit the streets to fight for our needs and defend our freedoms, with a growing awareness of different pieces of the ruling class agenda to protect private property. To win the war for our future, we must unite against the ruling class agenda in its entirety, understanding the commonality of our different struggles is what must bring us together. Our hopes, dreams and our very survival depend upon it.

Revolutionaries understand the leap from one system to another makes a new society possible, a society where everyone can use the new technology to provide for one another. In the midst of the struggle for a new society, revolutionaries offer a vision of class unity, hope and human potential. With this vision, the American people have a practical basis to fight forward to the new world that is struggling to be born. **RC**

The working class is in pain, and all deal with fear and anxiety. We increasingly hit the streets to fight for our needs and defend our freedoms. To win the war for our future, we must unite against the ruling class agenda in its entirety, understanding the commonality of our different struggles is what must bring us together. Our hopes, dreams and our very survival depend upon it.

Aggressively recruiting young people with few job prospects, the ruling class sells the military and war as a viable career option. The United States has the largest military budget in the world, and it has more than doubled that spending over the past decade, creating unprecedented profits for corporations. *USA Today* reports 100 companies alone make \$410 billion in war profits annually.

among Americans between the ages of 15 to 34. As the America the working class once believed in ceases to function, such losses are casualties of the war being waged against them.

The high number of suicides among white males is just one gauge of America's working class crisis. Parallel to the increases in suicide, the rate of overdose has doubled. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has linked opioid overdose to suicide by noting a 40-60 percent increased chance of suicidal thoughts among those who use opioids. Every day, 115 Americans die because of these drugs. A national public health study found most rural Americans rank the problem of drug abuse as a deeper concern than the economy. As a result, growing numbers of Americans have begun to sue pharmaceutical companies.

Since 1999, when suicide began to skyrocket, sales of antidepressants have increased by 65 percent, with 16 million Americans diagnosed with clinical depression. In the same period, opioid producers such as Purdue Pharma have seen exponential increases in

Join the League of Revolutionaries for a New America!

Society can now create the abundance the new technology promises, and so a new world: a cooperative society, with this abundance distributed according to need. 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.

Join us! For more information or a free information packet, email LRNA at info@lrna.org, or call 773-486-0028, or write LRNA, P.O. Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647. Sign up and stay informed at rallycomrades.lrna.org/contact-us

Where We Stand After the Elections

American elections have historically played an important role in the ebb and flow of the unfolding social struggle. On one hand, they have served as an indicator of the degree of the polarization in society, and as a gauge of the social awareness and social consciousness of the workers. On the other hand, they have served as an arena for a massive propaganda war over the causes and solutions of America's economic and social problems. The 2018 midterm elections were no exception.

According to the United States Elections Project, a midterm record of 118 million ballots had been counted, and the 50.1 percent turnout of eligible voters was the highest in a midterm election in over 100 years. According to Tufts University researchers, voter turnout among young people aged 18-29 increased the most, rising from 21 percent in 2014 to 31 percent in 2018.

Increased voter turnout reflected an overall upsurge in political participation, especially among the youth. The Tufts studies found that the percentage of young people who said they had attended a political march or rally tripled in the past two years. Significantly, they found that most youth who described themselves as "more cynical about politics," also said that they were extremely likely to vote. Seventy-two percent of all young people said they believed that "dramatic change could occur in this country if people banded together."

SYSTEMIC CRISIS

The cause of the increased turnout is not difficult to discern. Although on the surface the 2018 turnout appears inspired by anti-Trump resistance, the actual cause is deeper and not so partisan. Even amid a so-called recovery, actual poverty and hardship are growing, and access to housing, health care, clean water, and public education is eroding. In late November, General Motors announced plans to shut down five plants and lay off 15 percent of its salaried workforce. George Mason University economist Tyler Cowen has projected an American future with "a Mexico-like or Brazil-like environment," complete with a lower "quality of water" and "partial shantytowns."

Voters appeared to be more driven by the struggle for necessities than by parties. "Red state" residents voted over the opposition of Republican officials to expand Medicaid in Idaho, Nebraska, and Utah, and to raise the minimum wage in Arkansas and Missouri. In California, in Democratic Party dominated San Francisco and Mountain View, voters elected to impose "tech taxes" on their largest corporations to pay for transit and homeless services, despite opposition by leading Democrats. Florida voters passed a voter re-enfranchisement measure that will add 1.5 million ex-felons as new voters to the rolls in 2020.

Many observers noted a shift among suburban voters in Texas, Georgia, and Florida that caused surprising near victories by reformers Beto O'Rourke, Stacy Abrams and Andrew Gillum. This happened because their programs were responsive to the demands of people for basic necessities, while the suburbs themselves had changed over the last two decades. As urban scholar Richard Florida points out

in his book, *The New Urban Crisis*, "Across the United States, more than one in four suburbanites are poor or nearly poor. In fact, the suburbs of America's largest metropolitan areas have more poor people living in them than their inner cities do."

Elections have played a critical role in the social struggle in America, because our sharpest battles for class interests have always been bound up with the battle for democracy. Today's revolutionaries need to show that we cannot win our economic and political demands without democracy, we cannot secure democracy without breaking the power of the corporations, and we cannot win real freedom and real democracy until we abolish private property.

The crisis is systemic. The very foundation of capitalism is the buying and selling of labor power. Today's replacement of human labor by automated production is steadily destroying our economy and polarizing our society. On the one hand, more wealth is being produced and concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer than at any other time in human history. On the other hand, more and more workers are being permanently displaced from their jobs and left with nowhere to work, without the wherewithal to secure the necessities of life, with no access to the social wealth that they and their ancestors helped to create. They are more and more forced into political struggle, including the electoral arena, because they have nowhere else to turn.

POLARIZATION

This trend toward increased voter participation by the working class is on a collision course with a ruling class that is intent on preserving its private property relations at all costs. The government has launched a massive campaign of gerrymandering and voter suppression. In her book, *Democracy in Chains*, Nancy McLean states, "In the two years after Republican candidates swept the 2010 midterm elections, ALEC-backed legislators in forty-one states introduced more than 180 bills to restrict who could vote and how." Voter roll purges in Georgia, Florida, and elsewhere literally reversed the outcomes of many of the most important statewide campaigns there. At the same time, numerous state legislatures gerrymandered electoral districts to disenfranchise the working class. The result was that in the 2016 general election, the party that the majority of people voted *against* in elections for the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and the presidency ended up controlling all three. While the form of these battles appears to be partisan, the underlying cause

is a bipartisan drive to strip all political rights from the working class.

Elected officials opposed by the majority of Americans then used their power to install judges on the Supreme Court and in lower courts all across the land. The President of the

to vote in the Kansas election and installed a pro-slavery legislature. This set off the period of warfare that became known as "Bleeding Kansas." Free-soilers were forced to boycott two elections and a state constitutional convention, before they were finally able to organize an election fair enough to win admission to the Union as a free state.

After the Civil War, elections in the Southern states became the linch-pin around which all social struggle around the country turned. Throughout the periods of Reconstruction, populism, Jim Crow, and the civil rights movement, Southern elections were more often than not accompanied by pitched battles, lynchings, massive fraud, and violent assaults on voters. As the 2018 elections confirmed, elections were and continue to be a central arena where the battle between class unity and fascist division has been and is being fought out.

DEMOCRACY AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

The pre-Civil War political struggle was fought between the slave labor agricultural capitalists on the one hand, and free labor industrial capitalists on the other. Today, America's social polarization is driven by the antagonism between a ruling class of private property owners, and a new, propertyless class that is becoming increasingly separated from the formal capitalist economy altogether. This new class cannot physically survive without material means of support, and cannot obtain them without demanding their distribution based on need. This compels it to confront the private property system and the government. The conflict is every bit as irrepressible as the one in the pre-Civil War period.

Despite vastly different economic and political conditions, the major ideological debate today is in one respect remarkably similar to that of the pre-Civil War era. As early as the 1840s, the pro-slavery apologist John Calhoun began to develop the "substantive due process" doctrine, in order to outflank the growing political power of the Northern industrialists. The essential argument was that since slaves were property, the constitution protected the slave system, with no political, legal, or territorial limitations whatsoever. This was the doctrine that was ultimately declared to be the law of the land in the 1857 Dred Scott decision – and then overthrown at Appomattox in 1865.

Just as Calhoun argued then, that the constitutional right to own slaves trumped democracy, today's rulers argue that the right to private property supersedes other democratic rights. Today's revolutionaries need to show that we cannot win our economic and political demands without democracy, we cannot secure democracy without breaking the power of the corporations, and we cannot win real freedom and real democracy until we abolish private property. Revolutionaries play their true role when they explain the nature of the class antagonism and the class interests underlying our increasing poverty and violence. This is the path to the cooperative society we are striving for. **RC**

United States even threatened to revoke birthright citizenship altogether. Just at the time when more Americans than ever are participating in politics to fight for their future, the ruling class is moving to attempt to deny them the ability to do so. As a result, the courts and other government institutions are losing their legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The battle is on.

ELECTIONS

Historically, elections have played a critical role in the social struggle in America, because our sharpest battles for class interests have always been bound up with the battle for democracy. For example, the fight against nineteenth century slavery gained its real political traction only when the abolitionists began to point out that slave power tyranny threatened democracy everywhere, North and South. In the same way, the fight for housing, health care, and education for the working class today is inseparable from its right to protest, to speak and write, and to vote. Martin Luther King echoed the sentiment of millions when he said, "Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for right."

Some people portray electoral battles as diversionary or reformist. Although that can often be the case, a cursory examination of American history shows that many of our sharpest and most militant reform and even revolutionary struggles have tended to revolve around elections.

For example, the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, set off a bitter battle over whether the territory of Kansas would enter the Union as a slave state or a free state. Free-soil settlers outnumbered pro-slavery Kansans by an estimated nine to one margin, but the 1855 election for a territorial legislature was deliberately sabotaged, when some 5000 (slave state) Missourians literally crossed the border

The Hope in Life After Capitalism

These are turbulent times. All such times in history have their own content and dynamics. It is up to us, those who live in these times, to understand what stage we are in and how to emerge from it, having created the best possible outcome in the world we were given.

The fundamental content of our time is the dramatic transition to electronic/digital production, that replaces jobs ranging anywhere from harvesting crops to writing software. The relationship between wage labor and capital is being destroyed by this process. The capitalist system depends on workers receiving a wage, which they use to buy from the capitalists what they need to live. The ability of the resultant part-time, contingent workforce and the unemployed to buy the products that are produced is being destroyed. The ability of the capitalists to make profits based on human labor is being destroyed as human labor is being replaced with robots and artificial intelligence. As a consequence, we see the beginning of the end of capitalism.

The ruling class knows this and is defensively scrambling to prepare for a world in which it can maintain its private property and luxurious lifestyle without capitalism. It is essential for us to contrast that future with another, the vision and preparation for a cooperative society that will end private property and prioritize the needs of humanity, the earth, and all life.

ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN PROFIT AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

How is the ruling class attempting to maintain profit and private property? We've seen for many years that less money is being made through the production of actual goods and services, and more from moving money from productive capital to speculative capital. According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 1955, 12% of all corporate profits were from the financial sector. That figure doubled to 23% in 2015. Yet all this leads to speculative bubbles like the 2000 dot-com bust and the mortgage meltdown which began in 2008, with the ruination of millions through lost jobs, foreclosures, and the wiping out of retirement savings.

The tech industry is leading the way in the pursuit of profitable strategies. Both Google and Facebook make the vast majority of their revenue from advertising, 88%, and 97% respectively, compared to other sectors of the economy that actually produce goods and services. What they provide is nominally free to us, but we pay for it through constant exposure to ads, the invasion of our privacy through the personal information we are forced to provide, and the costs of advertising that are passed on to us. The tech industry employs relatively few people compared to the massive wealth they generate; when Instagram was sold to Facebook in 2012 for a billion dollars, it only had 13 employees. Such figures clearly show that the capitalist economy in the long term cannot be maintained.

Manufacturers of products like cell phones are still able to make huge profits. These manufacturers exercise a monopoly on technology through intellectual property rights. The iPhone X that you pay \$999 for

costs only \$370 to manufacture. According to the 2016 government report "Intellectual Property and the US Economy," intellectual property in 2014 accounted for 38.2% of the US GDP, or \$6.6 trillion.

Without being shackled by the private property, our health care system could cover everyone. There could be a decent roof over every head. Education could focus on our youth's well-being. We could raise our cultural level, become musicians, writers, artists, and filmmakers. We could eliminate fossil fuels, return our oceans and rivers to health, keep the air and land clean, and maintain a healthy food supply.

Another strategy is the privatization of public property and services. Civic jobs are contracted out to private companies where the pay is less. 8.5% of all state and federal prisoners are incarcerated in private prisons, according to the Sentencing Project. Public dollars from Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act subsidies are funneled through private insurance companies. In the rapidly growing charter school sector, even those that are "non-profit" benefit private real estate and management interests. Valuable public properties are turned over to private entities by revenue-starved local governments. In Benton Harbor Michigan, a private golf course has replaced a city park that fronts on Lake Michigan. All of this means the loss of our precious common public resources that are supposed to belong to all of society.

These temporary strategies can only be sustained for so long. In the end, they cannot overcome the shrinking ability of the ruling class to make a profit off of human labor and the shrinking capacity of workers to buy products and services. These strategies lead to increased impoverishment and polarization of wealth. This is accompanied with increased militarism of our borders and cities, voter suppression and anti-union court decisions, austerity in the public sector, environmental devastation, police violence, and dangerously divisive rhetoric that are all part of the ruling class fascist offensive.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY

Contrast that path with the potential that now exists to build a cooperative society, where the priority is the well-being of the people and the planet. Technology in the hands of the working class opens the way to change, that could be used to serve our needs. People would have the opportunity to contribute to society's real needs, instead of taking any job that provides a paycheck. It would give us the means to produce all of our necessities and more, and give everyone the free time to de-

velop as human beings.

Without being shackled by the private property interests of the ruling class, our health care system could cover everyone, be equal and comprehensive, and actually focus

creativity, and compassion, that is freely given: artists' cooperatives, community gardens, church soup kitchens, caregiving for family and friends, river clean-ups, volunteer home building and repairs, open-source software and wikis and cultural collectives. If we can do all this swimming against the centuries-old tide of capitalist individualism and selfishness, think what could be unleashed if the ruling class and its system of private property were removed from the picture!

GETTING THERE FROM HERE

It will not be easy to get the kind of society we need to thrive, but understanding that capitalism is being destroyed can shape what we do. We need to keep our eyes on the prize – keeping to the line of march that leads us to our vision, not being distracted by calls to go back to the "good old days," or to "fix" the capitalist system. We have to quickly understand new manifestations of struggle and point them in the direction of systemic change.

We have to forge the broadest possible unity in the fight for the necessities of life, such as housing, healthcare, water, education, decent jobs, and necessary social services. We must fight for the unity of our class against the divisive actions and rhetoric that pit us against each other, like immigrants against other sections of the class, the homeless against those that are housed, or youth against the rest of society.

We spread a vision of a cooperative communist society, while we fight shoulder to shoulder with all who fight against the growing poverty, social and ecological destruction, fascism and war.

It is indeed a mighty task, but by doing so we will be playing our essential role in the liberation of humanity. **RC**

on our physical and mental health. There could be a decent roof over every head. Education could concentrate on our youth's well-being and implement innovation. We could take care of our families, our elderly and disabled. We could raise our cultural level and learn languages, become musicians, writers, artists, and filmmakers. We would be able to prioritize measures to eliminate fossil fuels, return our oceans, lakes, and rivers to health, keep the air and land clean of chemical contamination, and maintain a safe and healthy food supply.

Even now, there are countless examples of passionate community spirit, innovation,

Race and Class... (Continued from page 3)

speaking for all African Americans, since they still need a social base for their economic and social advancement. Actually, the two classes objectively have little in common, and both sides are drifting toward class orientation.

RACE AND UNITY OF THE NEW CLASS

Race is a political, not a scientific concept. It is used for identification and can be used in any manner that suits the political needs of the ruling class. The ruling class cannot abandon the weapon of race, since it is historically evolved and an integral part of American politics. Irreversible changes in the world economy, expressed as globalization, are incompatible with race as color. The ruling class must adapt. Color as racial identification by the ruling class still exists, but they are replacing it with identification based on culture and class differences. They are using these class and cultural differences with the ruling class as the ideological basis for their savage assault against the new class as a class.

Class and color are intertwined. The old is never abruptly replaced by the new. The tactical offensive by the ruling class against the masses of Blacks is central to their fight to impose fascism on society as a whole.

No matter how the ruling class attempts to divide us, the new class is already forming along the lines of a unity based on what is practical, real, and possible. Fully conscious of the viability of the race question and how the ruling class uses it politically, we revolutionaries concentrate on the question of the political unity of the new class.

In summary, the political struggle is an art. It requires the ability to sum up, to make decisions on the basis of the temporary relationship of subjective and objective forces. This is nowhere more true than in the effort to unite the historically disparate sectors of the new, revolutionary class. **RC**