

# RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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## Defeat Trump

# Demand that Government Meet Basic Needs

The massive, spontaneous uprising of 2020, in response to the police murder of George Floyd, was possibly the largest and broadest mass movement in American history. According to one poll, some 26 million people participated in the movement against police terror that came to be called Black Lives Matter, a diverse outpouring of people of all colors and walks of life, a majority of whom were white. The scale and power of the uprising expresses a total transformation of the relationship between the historic African American freedom movement, on the one hand, and the burgeoning class movement against poverty and exploitation on the other.

There has long been some convergence between sections of these movements for equality and for economic justice, dating back to Reconstruction, the CIO, the 1960s Poor Peoples Campaign, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers of the 1970s. What is happening now is different. These movements have been completely changed by the emergence of an altogether new class in recent decades: the class of workers discarded by the increasingly automated economy. This is an antagonistic contradiction at the very heart of our economic system. It is steadily expelling millions of people from the formal economy and destroying our society as we know it because when people have no money, the whole system of production and exchange begins to break down.

### EQUALITY OF POVERTY

Even before the pandemic, some 140 million Americans were living below or near the poverty line. The COVID-19 shutdown then forced 47 million people to file for unemployment. Of these, some 25-30 million lost their enhanced federal unemployment benefits as of July 31. These people in economic straits, many of them desperate, joined with the tens of millions who were morally outraged at the sickening, racist brutality of the police to create the social and political explosion known as Black Lives Matter.

Due to these dramatic underlying causes, the movement called Black Lives Matter was able to trigger an epochal shift in attitudes of white workers toward police repression and racism. The Washington Post reported that the percentage of white voters opposed to po-

lice racism and abuse rose by 33 points since 2015.

The basis of this shift is the fact that the new class is not a racial category, and not an "underclass," but is actually what the majority of the working class of all colors now looks like in the era of automation and job elimination. More and more people are experiencing an equality of poverty as unemployment and the pandemic numbers spiral upward, especially the youth. GenZ (people under 25) are not only the most economically insecure. They are the most active age group in the Black Lives Matter motion. According to a June 16 CNN report, they are also the most racially diverse generation in American history. Forty-eight percent of them are people of color (compared to 39 percent of Millennials).

This coming together of the issues around class and race gives the movement its power. When white workers experience their own abandonment by the system, they become open to class unity with African Americans in the same position. The Black Lives Matter movement has already won real victories, including prosecutions of brutal cops, police reforms, and significant defunding of several police departments. Its success confirms the understanding that we cannot win economic justice without racial justice, and cannot win equality without a just economy.

Movement leaders who ignore racial disparities in the criminal justice system, in income, in wealth, in health care, in housing, and in pandemic deaths do so at their peril. Strategy proceeds from the reality that while white workers make up larger absolute numbers of the new class, the rate of poverty and unemployment is significantly higher within the Black community. African American workers are concentrated at the core of the new class. To effectively attack the injustices of the private property system, we have to attack its historic reliance on white supremacy and racial oppression.

### 2020 ELECTIONS

Because it is increasingly separated from the formal economy, the new class cannot survive without confronting the political representatives of the corporate class and fighting for an economy based on distribution according to need. Their



June 4, 2020: Black Lives Matter protest in Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

Photo: Jess Pomponio

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# Inside: ‘Get Your Knee Off Our Necks’

## Inside Rally, Comrades!

*Sufferings and Struggles, Hopes and Prospects* reports on life-or-death threats people face. Nearly 14 million children in the United States went hungry in June, 10 million more than in 2018. Three in ten Black families don't have enough food for their children.

The biggest protests in American history arose when Minneapolis cops murdered George Floyd. Now the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin shows how the State is doubling down on police terror as a response to the uprisings and demonstrations, which are also now intensified with armed vigilantes provoking violent confrontations. The response of the movement to these fascist attacks: Get your knee off our necks! The struggles over Covid-19, immigration, and police brutality are about what kind of society America is going to have, and the motion is toward the distribution of the resources of life on a different principle than how much money you have.

In *From the Editors*, we salute the thousands of people in our country fighting to change it for the better, by taking over homes, and coming up with innovative ways to feed the hungry and protect the vulnerable. History also shows that we must add one more ingredient — new

ideas. These new ideas help break up the old ways of thinking and give us new ways of seeing that are in line with what is now possible. They help us see ourselves for what we are — a class that has its own interests separate from the ruling class, who have our own vision of the kind of society that we need, and who are entirely capable of using these ideas to direct our struggle to achieve the political power to achieve that vision.

Articles from Georgia and California describe how these leaders are arising from the communities suffering the highest rates of poverty and illness. *The Devil Went Down to Georgia* discusses Albany, which is 73 percent African American and where 32 percent of the residents live below the poverty line, and Gainesville, where chicken processing plant workers have suffered high infection rates, most of them Latinx. But white workers have not escaped the poverty of the Black Belt region and the South either.

Legal and extralegal segregation enshrined a divided working class, united in a common poverty but unable to fight as one. However, the murder of Ahmaud Arbery in Glynn County, and the police killing of Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta spurred a massive uprising of all colors. In the South, “Black Lives Matter” has come to be an expression of unity, a glimpse of the power embodied in a class standing together in the fight for its own interests, and in defense of one another.

South East Los Angeles is another area

where new leaders dare to challenge the old. Once, over 900 factories thrived there. Today the shuttered plants produce sickness and death from toxic chemicals they left behind. “LA’s Rust Belt” Fights For Representation reports on new leaders who are working to defeat Donald Trump, but also throw out local Democratic misleaders. As one asks, “do we actually mean that Medicare for All is something that we’re going to have, do we actually mean that we’re going to have rent control and housing as a human right, do we actually mean that we’re not going to have mass incarceration?”

With Coronavirus cases spiking across the country, everyone from CEOs, the President, state governors, to the corporate media are calling for schools to open “to save the economy.” Most parents, teachers, and students face a brutal choice — physically reopen schools and risk their health or keep children home and not go to work. In recent years, government and corporate leaders backed closing neighborhood schools. Now they demand that schools closed because of the pandemic be reopened. Our cover story Reclaim Our Schools explains this change.

In higher education, as explained in *Pandemic Drives More Privatization of Higher Education*, the wealthiest universities and tech companies are partnering to dominate online learning, at the expense of accessible, quality education. Just as COVID-19 demands a national health-care strategy, safely reopening public

schools and colleges demands national solutions.

*Defeat Trump: Demand that Government Meet Basic Needs* points out that the movement for Black lives was able to trigger an epochal shift in attitudes toward police repression and racism, particularly among white workers. Black Lives Matter and virtually every social movement in America have called for the defeat of Trump in the November election, despite aversion and distrust by many of them for his corporate Democratic opponent, Joe Biden. The fact that Trump is openly committed to a fascist solution is an opportunity to educate those sections of the working class, still not awakened to the danger he represents. Trump must be defeated in order to be able to fight further fascist offensives that will arise in the future so long as the corporate private property system exists.

The coming together of the issues around class and race gives the movement its power. When white workers experience their own abandonment by the system, they become open to class unity with African Americans in the same position.

The historic advances of the George Floyd Black Lives Matter rebellion, on the one hand, and the fascist attacks on democracy on the other, have set up a titanic battle that will be fought out over the course of the fall of 2020.

The movement is wide open to revolutionary ideas. **RC**

## Bring a revolutionary perspective to America. Donate to *Rally, Comrades!*

### 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

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, healthcare 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.

# Pandemic: 'The Devil Went Down to Georgia'\*

Albany, Georgia, was the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic when it first began to take hold in Georgia. The sole incorporated town in rural Dougherty County in the heart of South Georgia's "Black Belt," 73 percent of its population of 70,000 are African American. Thirty-two percent live below the poverty line, and Albany had the highest rates of the diseases of poverty – cancer, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, hypertension, and obesity.

These are the underlying conditions that give rise to the highest death rates from the coronavirus pandemic and came to include all of Georgia, especially the metro Atlanta area. By the middle of August, the numbers of COVID-19 cases were surging past a quarter of a million, and on August 11, a record high of deaths occurred for one day.

Across America, African American death rates from COVID are three times as high as white Americans, as is the case with Latinx communities. Gainesville, Georgia is another hotspot, where the chicken processing plants are concentrated, and most of the workers employed there are Latinx.

## WHAT THE PANDEMIC REVEALS

COVID-19 did not create the conditions of poverty in which the pandem-

ic has its most devastating effect. Those conditions are rooted in Southern history. The Southern Black Belt is the historic plantation belt, where great wealth from the production of cotton was produced by enslaved labor. The Civil War was fought to put an end to slavery, yet at its conclusion, the newly freed remained mired in deep poverty, along with many poor white workers. This situation offered a glimpse of a possible way forward: uniting as a class to determine a common destiny.

But that was not to be. White supremacy was employed as a justification for attacking the African Americans with both legal and extralegal terror (KKK), driving the workers apart. A rigid segregation was imposed, and any who dared to oppose it were subject to the same terror.

But the all-class white unity which white supremacy aimed to forge did not bring substantive economic gains for poor whites. They, too, were disenfranchised and left with few rights. Legal and extralegal segregation enshrined a divided working class, united in a common poverty, unable to fight as one. That is a condition that has prevailed across the South to this day.

The murder of Ahmaud Arbery in Glynn County, Georgia, combined with the police killing of George Floyd in

Minneapolis, and then followed by the police shooting of Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta, was the catalyst for the massive uprising of all colors that spread across Georgia. The call for "Black Lives Matter" came to be an expression of unity, a recognition that the old divisions that have kept us apart as a class could be breached, and a glimpse of the power that a class that stands together in the fight for its own interests and in defense of one another could embody.

## GOVERNMENT OF, BY AND FOR THE CORPORATIONS

Georgia was the last state in the country to shut down for the pandemic and the first to reopen only three weeks later. Georgia is also rated the number one place in the country to do business. The state operates in the interests of the corporations, and it is in the interest of the corporations to keep the profits coming in, no matter the danger to the workers.

Georgia is no longer mainly based in agriculture, as it was during the post-Civil War period. When agriculture became mechanized, hastening the end of the sharecropping system, the agricultural workers were pushed off the land, and the industrialization of the South began in earnest. Millions of workers flooded into the industrial centers then in forma-

tion, including Atlanta and Birmingham, but also Detroit, Chicago, and all points North.

Agribusiness remains about 10 percent of the Georgia economy, relying mostly on migrant labor. Georgia is also home to auto, film, paper and timber, transportation and warehousing, and many of the world's multi-national corporations. Georgia has been fully integrated into the global economy, ranking 12th in the nation in exports, and in 2019 traded over \$143 billion in products with 221 countries.

Georgia is so attractive to the corporations because it is a right-to-work state. The rate of unionization in the state now stands at 2.5 percent. The minimum wage remains the lowest in the nation. Automation eliminates more and more jobs, leaving workers scrambling for work at the lowest wages, the fewest benefits, and the most dangerous working conditions. When they can find work at all, many have to settle for gig work, part-time, temporary, and seasonal work. And if that is not enough, corporations are lured into doing business in Georgia with generous tax credits and the country's lowest corporate income tax rate.

When the pandemic hit, it was the workers at the bottom that were hit the hardest. 2.8 million workers have filed

\*Charlie Daniels, 1979

*Continued on page 8*

## Beyond Devastation: New Ideas and the Way Forward

### From the Editors

In times of great upheaval, all seems to be turmoil and often chaos. But history is not simply a never-ending circle where nothing changes or is a series of random unexplainable events. It is going somewhere.

As fighters in the struggle for a better America, we all know firsthand the devastation being forced on our country. As members of a class fighting against these miseries we have experienced them ourselves. We have had victories, key being the broad exposure and the realization of the brutal violence in our country waged against our class, with the brunt being borne by Black workers.

We have mobilized millions of people of all colors, ages, and backgrounds first through protests in defense of essential workers and then exploding into a fight against police brutality and

violence.

Whether through government refusal to defend our welfare in the face of the virus, or through the vicious police tactics in the streets, or through the ruling class's efforts to limit and contain the meaning of our struggle, our class is coming to understand what capitalism in America truly means.

History is not the story of the wealthy or some bigshot. History is the story of millions of people like us fighting through every stage of existence toward a better future, a greater understanding, and a deeper love of humanity, community, and nature.

History shows us that humanity can only change its condition for the better, when its living conditions change. Today, electronics is eliminating human labor, destroying the source of all value, and ending that which makes capitalism what it is: a system of buying and selling based on the exploitation of human labor and the expropriation of the profit from the surplus value created.

Without that exploitation, profit cannot be realized, and without profit, capitalism cannot survive as a system. In this sense, capitalism no longer exists as it once was, and something new is struggling to be born. It is laying the basis for a new society that can provide a decent, stable, and happy life for all.

How will we make the world we want? Thousands of people in our country are fighting to change it for the better. They are taking over homes, taking charge of the streets in every city and little town across America. They are coming up with new and innovative ways to feed the hungry, protect the vulnerable, and teach our children. They are registering voters, working for progressive candidates, and vowing to "defeat Trump" as part of the effort to wrest our country from the ruling class.

A new class is arising out of the destruction of the capitalist system, and this work is helping to shape up a huge social force brought forth by the technological and social conditions underway.

History also shows that we must add one more ingredient — new ideas. These new ideas help break up the old ways of thinking and give us new ways of seeing that are in line with what is now possible. They help us see ourselves for what we are — a class that has its own interests separate from the ruling class, who have our own vision of the kind of society that we need, and who are entirely capable of using these ideas to direct our struggle to achieve the political power to achieve that vision.

What are these new ideas? That we can have a world where no one has to fight another for the daily bread of existence. That we can have a world where cooperation and fulfilling the needs of humanity are the guiding principles. A world where independence from the chains of exploitation, the guaranteed ability of every person to contribute to society, freedom from want, and an expectation of a better life make true democracy possible. **RC**

# Sufferings and Struggles, Hopes and Prospects

Sixty-two percent of Americans agree that the U.S. government's handling of the Coronavirus crisis is going badly. No community is untouched by the devastating pandemic.

The havoc can be seen in the numbers suffering from the social and economic blows to individuals and families. According to an analysis of census data released by the Hamilton Project, nearly 14 million children in the United States went hungry in June. That's an increase of more than 10 million since 2018 and nearly three times the number of children who went hungry during the Great Recession of 2007. Three in ten Black families don't have enough food for their children. The relief measures from the federal government are running out, abandoning millions of Americans.

You won't find any of the one percent among them. Now, look at this from the point of view of individual families coping with this every day. How did this come to be, and what can be done? To make history, determining our own future requires that we understand the situation and how to move forward.

## WHAT'S CAUSING THIS UPHEAVAL

Before Covid-19, the country's landscape was changing, pushing more of us into hunger, homelessness, and illness. Society is undergoing revolutionary change, and a new class is being born, with most of us rapidly becoming a part of that class. The cause of the upheavals all around is the transformation from industry to robotics.

Some argue that just as many jobs are being created as are lost to robots and electronic production. But it is the nature of humans to continually improve our ability to produce what we need, so computerized technologies are increasingly being introduced into succeeding sectors of the economy. Self-serve kiosks

are everywhere, trash is sorted by and offices are cleaned by robots, packages are delivered by drones, and driverless cars and trucks are being developed. It is projected that up to 20 million manufacturing jobs around the world could be replaced by robots by 2030, according to the analysis firm Oxford Economics.

We certainly cannot explain away the hardships people endure by blaming their individual shortcomings. Millions of people did not choose to go hungry, lose their jobs, homes, health care, and access to real education. Society, the whole world really, has entered a new stage of development. Given the fundamental changes in the economy, all struggles today are related to how to change society. An economy based in industry with huge factories employing millions required a certain level of education, health care, housing, and overall stability to guarantee a workforce. An economy based on automated production needs fewer and fewer workers with each advance.

The struggles over Covid-19, immigration, and murders and brutality committed by the police are about what kind of society America is going to have. This new economy calls for a new society to distribute the abundance of food, homes, and clothing according to need rather than the ability to pay. However, the ruling class is determined to keep the private property system, the ownership of the means to produce all that is required for human survival, in their own hands.

Let's look at the conditions we face to understand better what we are up against, and how to fight forward.

On May 25th, when Minneapolis police killed George Floyd, at least five other men were killed across the country. As Melissa Segura wrote in BuzzFeed News, "They included a decorated Marine veteran and two warehouse workers. They lived with their children in suburban



COVID-19 testing site in Chicago, Illinois.

Photo: Mary Kay Yarak

brick houses and with their mothers off dusty backroads. They were Black, white, Latino, and Pacific Islander. They hailed from the Southeast to the North Pacific. Since 2015, police in the U.S. have not gone more than two days without fatally shooting someone."

On any given night, HUD admits there are well over 500,000 people homeless. Estimates are that homelessness could rise by more than 40 percent this year. Every region of the country, family status, gender category, and racial/ethnic group is affected. During the Great Recession of 2007, 10 million people lost their homes. Today up to 28 million people face eviction due to the economic fallout of the Coronavirus. Evictions are accompanied by increased mortality, respiratory distress, depression, and suicide.

Foreclosures, water shutoffs, detention of children and separation of families, police brutality, the opioid crisis, and increasing suicides are all part of the same process. These conditions have driven millions to act, whether against the murder of George Floyd and others, the separation of families at the border and attacks on immigrants by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), or in defense of prisoners, children, the elderly, and the health care and other essential workers needed during the pandemic.

## REASONS TO HOPE

Our rulers are responding harshly. In response to epic protests around the country, state legislators in 20 states proposed bills in 2017 to restrict people's right to protest. The United States government spent \$1.84 billion detaining immigrants. The federal prison population increased by almost 790 percent since 1980. Faced with the most diverse electorate in U.S. history, from 2011 to 2012 27 measures were passed or implemented in 19 states, making it harder to vote.

These alarming steps by the U.S. ruling class to restrict any say that the new class has in the country's direction reflect the fascism that is being imposed on the country — the consolidation between the political power, the military power of the State and the economic power of the ma-

corporate corporations.

So, where does hope lie? More people are speaking out, taking to the streets in every corner of America to right the wrongs and talk about revolutionary change. One protestor told the San Francisco Chronicle, "I want to see the police force changed in such a drastic way that it's not really even a police force anymore." We stand at the edge of tremendous, historic changes.

In Oakland, a young man observed, "I've heard hospitals complaining about not having enough masks or supplies during the pandemic. I've seen students beg for textbooks, and teachers beg for reading books, and low-income families beg for support with health or food. But I've never seen police beg for resources." He believes that police funds should be re-directed: "I'd love to see money go back to the community. Mental health services, physical health, education, low-income housing. There's so much you can do..."

## NEW SYSTEM NEEDED

With each round of protest, people are talking with each other about permanent revolutionary change. Inevitably, their practical motion and activity move toward the destruction of capitalism. Fewer and fewer people are earning money, or at least enough money. Any statistics show that the American people are getting poorer. The struggle they face is to distribute the resources of life on a different principle than how much money you have.

Communism is the rational distribution of the necessities of life according to need, the establishment of a free and democratic society based on a co-operative economic system. It is not just an ideology promoted by a country or a few famous people. It is a system that can provide for every person, so they can contribute to society.

Our strength lies in the new class that can propel society to revolutionary transformation. It has history on its side because the limitless capacity of electronic production opens a whole new world free from want. **RC**

## A Vision for a New America

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# LA's 'Rust Belt' Fights for Representation

Without voting for it, or wanting it, Assembly District 63 in the community of South East Los Angeles (known as SELA) has become a laboratory for testing how the ruling class shifts from a system that required human labor to operate its gigantic means of industrial production, to digitally controlled production requiring little to no human labor. The resulting political struggle underway in SELA offers lessons for all Americans about how the new dispossessed class can fight for its future.

South East Los Angeles emerged as an important hub of industrial production in the pre-and-post-World War II period. General Motors, Bethlehem Steel, Firestone, Sampson Tire and Rubber, and a number of other large manufacturing companies formed the backbone of the region's employment. As early as 1935 Los Angeles was the largest industrial area west of Chicago, in part due to the region's well-known hostility to unionization. By 1940, there were 900 factories within a two-mile radius. However, during the 1970s, SELA began to rapidly de-industrialize, earning the region the moniker "Los Angeles's Rust Belt".

## DEFEAT TRUMP AND MISLEADERS

Immigrants have come to SELA since the 1930s from the U.S. South, Mexico and other areas, many finding good paying union jobs in auto and rubber plants. But by 1990 the expanding jobs were in the service and transportation sectors, non-union, low paying and often part-time. In the old economy's place emerged a postindustrial economy that is primarily "extractive," a new predatory economic order where wealth became concentrated in the hands of a relatively small number of apartment owners, gambling operators, and recycling companies "designed to suck from a community whatever economic vitality might remain" (from *The Reluctant Metropolis*, by William Fulton).

In the national elections, the working class must fight these predators by defeating Trump's re-election, and many activists in South East LA are part of that struggle. But like many industrial communities, local government in SELA is controlled by Democratic Party politicians beholden to the ruling class. Democrats hold every state-wide office, have super majorities in the state assembly and state senate, and voted in a large majority for Bernie Sanders in the presidential primary. The victory of Joe Biden in California is assured. So, as they fight Trump, the people of SELA are also struggling against the local Democratic misleaders.

Maria Estrada is running to represent Assembly District 63 against Anthony Rendon, the Assembly's Speaker, one of the most powerful politicians in California and the second most effective fund-raiser after Congressperson Nancy Pelosi. Rendon refused to allow a vote for a Healthcare for All bill, which would have passed in the Assembly, effective-

ly removing it as a ballot measure across the country.

In the years from 1997 to 2010, when South East Los Angeles was rapidly changing, average voter turnout dropped to 13 percent. This low voter turnout can be explained by the high percentage of non-citizens, wide-spread poverty, and a transient population. For example, in the city of Bell, 91 percent of the city's population identified as Hispanic and 88 percent spoke a language other than English. This political base for the ruling Democratic Party rests on non-representation of the poorest, primarily Black and Brown workers.

## POLITICIANS NEGLECT NEEDS

With the loss of employment and a vanishing tax base the ruling class party, the Democrats, are unable to bribe the organized section of the working class like before, but instead steal and privatize the district's resources. The Central Basin Municipal Water District, serving over 2.5 million residents, is in immediate danger of being privatized with the help of Assembly Speaker Rendon and the Democratic Party establishment.

Ms. Estrada's campaign to represent this district literally represents a life or death battle for the residents. The 63rd Assembly District suffers severe pollution from abandoned factories, such as the abandoned Exide battery recycling plant that left a blanket of lead-contaminated dust over the entire region. Other abandoned plants have housing built right up to their gates. "The corporations are funding candidates and they are funding the party itself. We the people do not have anyone representing us. It is more obvious now, but it has always been here," she has said.

Assembly District 63 is plagued with problems of corruption and self-dealing

among elected officials, but this is also true throughout LA County and the state. For example, when the FBI raided LA City Councilmember Democrat Jose Huizar's house last month, they found suitcases of cash they said were from real estate developers. California has the widest disparity of income of any state in the country. Farmworkers in the San Joaquin valley, which is so productive it could feed the world, have to buy their own Covid-19 masks from growers on a daily basis.

In a recent speech, Ms. Estrada said "The lack of engagement with the people in this community is the reason why Los Angeles County has the highest poverty rate in the nation. SELA has the highest rate of uninsured children, the 2nd highest rate of uninsured adults. We have some of the worst environmental conditions in the country. That is directly related to the Democratic Party and its failure to stand against big oil, big pharma, the health care industry, the corporations and building contractors allowing people to get priced out of their homes. That's why homelessness has gone up."

She adds that, without realizing it voters have been "supporting people that support builders that are gentrifying our community. We're supporting people who are fighting against Health Care For All which is part of this [Democratic] Party's platform and this party. The fact is that it is not the people that support the Republican Party and support Donald Trump who are making this happen. The biggest threat against progressivism is the Democratic Party."

Estrada's campaign challenges workers to decide "do we actually mean that Black Lives Matter, do we actually mean that Medicare for All is something that we're going to have, do we actually mean that we're going to have rent control and

housing as a human right, do we actually mean that we're not going to have mass incarceration?"

## NEW CLASS, NEW LEADERS

Across the country there is the emergence of a vibrant group of new leaders running as candidates against corrupt corporate Democrats by presenting a new vision of what society should be. In New York, this resurgence of progressive candidates running for municipal, local and state elections includes Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. She has observed that "When politicians cease to worry about re-election, they become free to pursue government policy that does not reflect constituent preferences. They acquire the ability to enrich themselves and their supporters." She has made clear that she intends to support the Democratic presidential nominee, Joe Biden but said his current overtures to progressives must go further, "and what I hope does not happen in this process is that everyone just tries to shoo it along and brush aside real policies that mean the difference of life and death or affording your insulin and not affording your insulin."

The result of low voter turnout, non-existent media coverage and disappearance of community organizations once led to lack of any valid political representation. But with the November 2020 elections there's a real chance that things have changed. The merger of the government and the corporations has set the basis for the working class to support candidates who oppose the corruption and misrepresentation by current Democratic Party elected officials, candidates who seek to represent voters from the new dispossessed class. Fueled by the Bernie Sanders campaign and progressive local candidates, these voters will eventually succeed. **RC**

## Reggie Harris, Working Class Intellectual and Revolutionary

Reggie Harris, a founding member of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, died recently in Los Angeles. Reggie was a revolutionary, working class intellectual, and accomplished musician. He left Chicago for a tour of the West Coast when he was 18 years old to play drums with Oscar Brown Jr, and is known for his collaboration with Max Roach on *We Insist!*, which was an early record celebrating the Black freedom movement in the U.S.

After moving to L.A. in the early 1970s, Reggie frequently visited the Midnight Special Bookstore in Santa Monica, California. Reggie, a bus driver, would schedule his breaks to visit the bookstore.

Reggie talked about his auntie, who lived in Compton, California. She was a member of the Roman Catholic order of the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans. Composed of free women of color, the order provided nursing care and a home for orphans, later establishing schools as well. They taught enslaved children when such education was prohibited by law.

Reggie's presentations whether at rallies, discussion groups, or League of Revolutionaries committee meetings

were extemporaneous and profound. Reggie read widely, his curiosity never satiated. Reggie never kept his books. He gave them to his friends and anyone who was interested.

Reggie was an consummate revolutionary. He reached out to other revolutionaries, and as part of a collective in the 1990s he distributed hundreds of *People's Tribunes* each week in Jordan Downs, Nickerson Gardens and Imperial Courts public housing projects in Watts, California for nine years.

Most recently Reggie was a key player in a new *People's Tribune* distribution network of 42 locations that included libraries, bookstores, and clothing stores, throughout the Los Angeles area.

We remember Comrade Reggie wading into a group of people with a twinkle in his eye, a formal approach to introduce himself, the *People's Tribune* in his hand, engaging strangers in a discussion of the issues of the day.

Reggie studied *Rally, Comrades!* and used it to talk about the importance of having a vision of the kind of world that where all people could thrive and grow.

Reggie, we miss you. Rest well, dear comrade. **RC**

# Public Education and the Fight

With Coronavirus cases spiking across the country, everyone from CEOs to the President, state governors, and the corporate media are calling for schools to open “to save the economy.” Most parents, teachers, and students face a brutal choice — physically reopen schools and risk their health, or keep children home and not go to work.

It didn't have to be this way. The government refused to provide adequate unemployment or health care, thus making families desperate to work. Many European countries covered 60 percent to 90 percent of workers' wages to keep families home. Government could solve these

problems with a national program, but in the U.S., everyone is on their own.

No country has tried to open schools with the virus spreading like here in the U.S. Currently cases are surging nationally; over 100,000 youth tested positive since June. The Federal government also demands that all Indigenous children in reservation schools attend school physically, instituting once again the genocidal policies of the last 400 years. There aren't enough tests or testing. If you can't test and trace, there's no way you can keep a school safe from coronavirus if the virus is raging out of control in the community.

Before schools physically reopen, certain principles of public health must be established:

- No reopening without full scientific best practices. So far, this is seriously lacking.
- No reopening without overcoming the vast practical hurdles. These steps require more funding, yet the funding to address these problems does not exist.
- No reopening without total and complete public transparency. So far, decisions are made behind closed doors. Planning is slapdash and haphazard at best. Teachers, unions, and communities must be fully involved as co-

equals with politicians in establishing policies.

- Schools should continue to be food centers for communities, but upon reopening they should reinstate and expand what government has cut — access to nurses, vision services, mental health, and cultural support. Communities need these services now more than ever.
- We must hold government accountable for securing public health and public safety. Governments must guarantee safe childcare. Public schools are still controlled locally, hence we must exert our power to protect our children. We have no choice.

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## Pandemic Drives More Privatization of Higher Education

Police murdered Rayshard Brooks right after murdering George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor and so many others. These atrocities have ignited a powerful global protest movement, with African Americans at the core of hundreds of thousands of fighters of all colors, communities, and ages. College and university students, faculty, and staff have been highly visible in this struggle. Their economic displacement, combined with their study of societal problems, has driven and informed their actions. Their next challenge will be fighting massive cuts to public higher education funding by state governments, as the pandemic lockdowns reduce tax revenues. The political battle over these cuts will include a new conflict over campus police's role and funding.

Corporations and their government are using the budget and coronavirus crises to leap ahead in their privatization of public higher education. This fall, most higher education campuses will continue to be locked down and shifted to online instruction because of the coronavirus. That gives high-tech corporations access to education funds like never before. In May, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo invited ex-Google CEO Eric Schmidt and hi-tech billionaire Bill Gates to help “reimagine” that state's k-12 public schools, increasing the use of online instruction and reducing the use of physical classrooms.

### “ZOMBIE” UNIVERSITIES

Higher ed faces the same danger. “Big-tech companies are about to enter education and health care in a big way” investor and business professor Scott Galloway recently told the press. The biggest tech companies will partner with the wealthiest universities to use online technology to grab students who now enroll elsewhere. For campuses losing this market, “Everyone will recognize they're going out of business, but it will take longer than people think. There will be a lot of zombie universities. They'll cut costs to figure out how to stay alive, but they'll effectively be the walking dead”.

“Zombie universities” will undoubtedly cut costs by reducing wages for faculty and staff, terminating others, and cutting services to students. The resulting pool of displaced educators can be used by managers everywhere to threaten their employees' job security and unions, and increase workloads. That will dilute educational quality at all but the wealthiest universities, which mainly serve the wealthiest families. Quality ed-

ucation would maintain staffing levels and class workloads, and use technology to help in-class educators, not replace them or overwork them. But poorly-funded public colleges and universities can't afford that.

Corporations will never do digital education “right” for those institutions because campus managers hire them to cut costs, not increase quality education. Yet, many of their working class students come from the wrong side of the “digital divide,” making writing papers and taking entire classes on cell phones with bare-bones Internet access ineffective for them. These conditions increase dropouts, especially displacing low income students. Meanwhile, faculty struggle to convert to online courses without sufficient training or technical assistance. Many have suffered from vision and back problems and carpal tunnel because there was no plan to ensure they had appropriate workstations for full-time work. But despite all these problems, more higher education/corporate partnerships are on the way for places like Laney Community College in Oakland, whose students and employees fought off a plan to build a privately owned stadium on campus.

Other “partnerships” would bring law enforcement agencies into higher education, like the Forensic Science building at Cal State L.A., whose control is shared between the campus, the L.A. Sheriff's Department and the LAPD. But the growing movement against police abuses has proposed a way to prevent more of that. Across America, groups fighting police murder are demanding that funds be taken from police and used for people's needs. “The mayor has proposed spending 54 percent of the city's general fund on LAPD,” said Melina Abdullah, co-founder of Black Lives Matter LA, and a professor of Pan African Studies at Cal State L.A. “And we know that that is not what keeps communities safe. What keeps communities safe is good jobs, mental health resources, housing, parks, after-school programs.” The coalition's mobilization resulted in mayor Garcetti promising to shift at least \$100 million from LAPD's \$1.3 billion budget into vital human services.

In June, Oakland-area Peralta Community College District ended funding for the county Sheriff's policing of its campuses. As New York sociologist Alex Vitale explains, “No one's talking about a situation where tomorrow, there's some magical switch, and there are no police... We're talking about looking at our gross over-reliance on policing and searching in every possible way to replace that with alternatives designed to

build up people, to build up communities rather than criminalizing them.”

This way of thinking points a way around the funding disaster facing public higher education. Instead of turning public education over to corporations or police, people are holding government accountable to give campuses funding from the enormous state and local budgets for police repression, including the budgets for campus police. It is infuriating that leaders of America's public colleges and universities failed to act in the public's interest by mobilizing thousands to do this, as the grassroots budget coalitions have. These “leaders” delivered dramatic, hand wringing speeches about brutal policing and lack of education funding yet delivered nothing to the effort to deal with both problems. Research shows that 46 percent of college students suffer from “housing insecurity,” 17 percent are among America's huge homeless population. Thousands of part-time faculty and staff face similarly deteriorating conditions.

### A DYING SYSTEM

Colleges and universities face death, along with the dreams of students, faculty, and staff, because the capitalist system is dying. When robotics and other technologies push masses of workers out of the economy, capitalists lose future profits from their labor time. Public services lose tax revenues for benefits like health care. The ruling class responds by cutting government services for the poor, which even more people need than before. Another way is by slashing public education. The ruling class intends to hold on to their huge concentrations of corporate wealth and other forms of private property, even if the capitalist system that produced that private property no longer functions.

Technology can now produce everything people need, which would free them to learn new skills and make more satisfying contributions to society. But the class that controls the economy as its private property prevents that. Like the “zombie” universities, capitalists will cut costs to figure out how to stay alive, but they'll effectively be the walking dead, surviving only by killing others through poverty and vicious policing. The struggle to fund public higher education by disarming the murderers is one step towards burying their dying system and building a new system of collective public ownership in its place. **RC**

# for our Children's Future

We've already seen what happens when we use shortcuts and go against public health science. Other countries that have successfully suppressed the level of COVID-19 have one thing in common—a national coordinated strategy.

The U.S. response to the virus has been criminally incompetent and deadly, and intentionally fractured. Rather than organizing a coordinated national response, the federal government has put corporations in total control. Corporations demand their workers return to work so they can make a profit from their investments. But they refuse to provide childcare.

These same people, who previously had no trouble closing schools throughout neighborhoods and subjecting children to hours of high-stakes testing at computer screens, now state that keeping children out of school denies them the emotional, social, and knowledge growth they desperately need. Suddenly, also, the teachers who were degraded as the worst problem with public schools, then were called heroic essential frontline workers, are now vilified if they resist risking their lives in unsafe classrooms.

## BIG PROBLEMS

Schools are opening, district-by-district across the country, while nail shops and bars remain closed. Many schools have easily-contaminated recycled air throughout whole buildings instead of windows that can be opened to bring in the fresh air. Taking steps as minimal as social distancing will cost vast amounts. Little things become big problems. Before, a Kindergarten teacher could take the whole class to the bathroom at once. Now a class of 15 that requires 6 feet of spacing forms a line 90 feet long! And how exactly are bathrooms going to be sanitized?

COVID-19 aggravates every problem that existed before it appeared. There are no clear guidelines, and planning is confused and hidden from the public. Personal Protective Equipment is in short supply. School budgets are being slashed even as the costs of adequately dealing with the virus skyrocket. School nurses were virtually eliminated before the virus hit. Now, what exactly is going to happen if a child feels sick?

The gap between school finances, destroyed by the virus, and the greatly increased costs, also caused by the virus, runs into billions. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has estimated the funding required to reopen public schools safely is at least \$116.5 billion.

## PHYSICALLY REOPENING? IF SO, HOW?

America's schools do not meet even the most lenient advice for physical reopening, which are found on the White House website. Teachers advocate no physical

reopening until no new cases arise for 14 days, the time for symptoms to appear. The virus is now spiking in schools that have already physically opened. Students, parents and teachers who don't blindly accept this threat to their lives are refusing to go onto unhealthy campuses or even resigning. Meanwhile, private schools are reopening and touting that they already have small class sizes. We

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Teaching today must unleash the marvelous powers and creativity of our collective humanity. We need this now more than ever.

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are witnessing the creation of a market for vouchers that will hasten the privatization of public education.

Once again, as with the George Floyd rebellion, our character as a people will be tested. The challenge today for the American people is to stand up for the right of quality public education for all. The virus proves that no one is safe unless everyone is safe. As we can now see, the same is true for our schools.

Yes, the mental, physical and emotional health of children is critical. No, this cannot be achieved by simply physically reopening schools under current conditions. We will find ways to bring young people back together again for education, but it means completely rethinking how to accomplish that.

## IMMEDIATE AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Even before the virus, schools were the anchor of the community. Closing public schools is a method of gentrification and community dispossession. Now we see once again that healthy schools create healthy communities and healthy communities create healthy schools.

Whether schools physically open or not, the nature of public education has dramatically changed. Through the spring, public schools offered online distance learning. As students graduated in June, Zoom Video Communications, Inc announced that it was being used by 100,000 schools globally.

Education has gone from being supported by technology to being dependent on technology and from being corporate-supported to becoming corporate-dependent. Corporations like Pearson and Google tout online education as a way of saving money in tough times, but this just leads to private profits for corporations.

Under corporate control, online learning, distance learning, and virtual charter schools are a dismal failure. The

California Attorney General is investigating the entire virtual charter industry for putting private profit ahead of quality education. The largest virtual charter corporation, K12 Inc, "educates" 120,000 students, making \$900 million in revenue, all from taxpayer money earmarked for public education. Only half of the online high school students graduate within four years, compared to 84 percent

quires long-term public investment, not corporations that offer short-term, top-down, individual solutions.

We can fight for an entirely different model of public education that meets people's most fundamental needs. United Teachers Los Angeles believes "that every child has the right to attend a high-quality sustainable community school in their neighborhood... leveraging public school to become hubs of educational, recreational, cultural, health and civil partnerships, improving the education of children in the community and revitalizing the entire community". Community Schools—a program that has been successful in a number of communities—already addresses these needs.

As the virus peaked in New York City, government opened Enrichment Centers for children of essential workers. These centers combined science with childcare, public health, and public education to create new ways to meet children's needs, with very little viral spread.

Indigenous Peoples in Mexico, Canada, and the US have long defied the system of educational oppression historically forced on them and now being forced on all of us. They have developed models for transforming education as an inclusive, respectful, creative, collective education incorporating their language, culture, and learning styles.

## SCHOOLS IN CRISIS

U.S. schools at every level are facing a crisis of unprecedented proportions. By the time the 2020-2021 school year is over, corporations and governments—if unopposed—will establish a degraded model that works against the interests of our children while making billions for the elite.

When government can bailout billionaires with trillions of dollars, we see that the money exists to build a system of public education that can build the leaders we need to transform the world. Teaching today must unleash the marvelous powers and creativity of our collective humanity. We need this now more than ever. Students are the people the world needs today to overcome the challenges of a desperately sick population, a sick society, and a sick planet.

Scientifically, we see that the only solutions that can work must be organized at the national level by government to benefit everyone. Just as COVID-19 demands a national coordinated strategy, the problems of safely reopening public schools demand national solutions. Not piecemeal, local, short-term quick fixes. Instead, upgrade our schools by combining a public health approach with a public schools approach. This moment requires communities to use their political power to reopen safely and reclaim public schools to address our needs. **RC**

nationally. The Center for Research on Education Outcomes found that students in virtual charters do so poorly in math and English that it's as if they didn't attend school at all.

Most teachers estimate that only about 25 percent of their students do well in online education. The education model is the same test and fail regime that students could not succeed in even before the virus. Most students have trouble learning through screens since the other vital ways that humans learn are eliminated or reduced. And, of course, how does a family provide enough laptops for every child, much less the expense of connecting through Wi-fi?

Government at every level has invited billionaires, tech corporations, and CEOs to determine what public education will look like as the virus rolls on. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo invited Bill Gates and Google into the state to "re-imagine public education." In other words, government is systematically replacing elected officials, who are accountable to the people, with private, unaccountable capitalists in a campaign to defund and privatize public schools and debase the purpose of education.

The ethical and moral implications of this corporate effort to terminate the education our children and communities need are highly disturbing. There is little public discussion about this even as government proclaims online learning as the miracle of the age.

## THE FIGHT FOR A NEW MODEL FOR EDUCATION IS NECESSARY

As Stacy Davis Gates, Vice President of the Chicago Teachers Union, says, it is impossible to fix schools if government doesn't also provide for the needs of the communities in which the school is located. Public schools must prioritize the wellbeing of students, educators, and the community. A healthy school system re-

# Defeat Trump: Demand that Government Meet Basic Needs

*Continued from page 1*

demands for funding basic human needs and defunding the police are framing and defining the entire 2020 election debate, and have already started to polarize both major parties.

However, the same economic situation that gave the movement for Black Lives its breadth and power also creates a grave danger of outright fascist measures to suppress protest and block the will of the voters. The real success of Black Lives Matter is its dramatic motion toward class unity across color lines. Because the system has no positive economic benefits to offer people, Trump has responded by using every opportunity to promote lies, division, and “white power” in a desperate attempt to thwart that unity. The Trump movement has already implemented a raft of anti-democratic judicial and cabinet appointments, environmental regulation repeals, organized “white nationalist” paramilitary gangs, the virtual end of immigration, mass incarceration of immigrant children, separation of families, the dispatch of federal police agencies to cities that don’t want them, and a coordinated national campaign to strip the American people of their voting rights.

Black Lives Matter and virtually every social movement in America have called for the defeat of Trump in the November election, despite aversion and distrust by many of them for his corporate Democratic opponent, Joe Biden. The fact that Trump is openly committed to a fascist solution is an opportunity to educate those sections of the working class, still not awakened to the danger he represents. Trump must be defeated in order to be able to fight further fascist offensives that will arise in the future so long as the corporate private property system exists.

## **FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE**

Defeating Trump is not just about rejecting the man who personifies the social face of the fascist movement. The fight to defeat Trump is also identical to the fight to protect democracy, and the right to vote in particular. It will require a massive campaign to exercise the vote, including registration, vote-by-mail, poll-watching, and political mobilization. Sixteen million people have already been purged from the voter rolls, at a time when re-registration is many times more difficult due to the pandemic. DMV closures have created obstacles to obtaining the IDs required by many of the new voter ID laws.

While Trump cannot legally cancel the November election, he can certainly make it difficult or impossible for people to vote. He has already mounted a propaganda campaign against vote-by-mail, which may be the only safe voting system when the COVID-19 worsens. He has blocked election funding to ensure that election officials get overwhelmed and unable to count the mail-in ballots cast. States like

Texas are severely restricting absentee ballots and imposing rules to guarantee that significant numbers of ballots will be rejected. Finally, Trump has threatened to defund the US Postal Service before the election to prevent the timely delivery of ballots.

As a result, millions of people may be forced to vote in person, despite the danger to public health. The Trump administration and its allies are putting significant obstacles in place here as well. The virus is expected to sharply reduce the number of polling places, as already happened during the primaries in Texas, Wisconsin, Kentucky, and Georgia. Some states may deliberately install faulty voting machines to slow down voting, as happened in the Georgia primary. Trump may issue executive orders banning people from congregating at polling places, and use the federal agents he is deploying

to Democratic cities to enforce them, or to seize ballot boxes. Already the administration is openly recruiting some 50,000 ex-military and retired police officers to “patrol” voting locations in working-class areas to intimidate and discourage potential voters from casting their ballots.

## **THE NEW SOCIAL FORCE**

The historic advances of the George Floyd Black Lives Matter rebellion, on the one hand, and these fascist attacks on democracy on the other, have set up a titanic battle that will be fought out over the course of the Fall of 2020. Already a large national network of “Election Protectors” has arisen in response to the attack on the right to vote.

Although the leadership of the rebellion is politically diverse, the movement itself is on a collision course with the private property system and the State that

supports it. The new class, in particular within the movement, is becoming a social force and is galvanizing the entire country. It has moved from protest to programmatic demands on the government: defund the police, cancel the rent, provide for basic human needs, and save the planet we live in. Victory, in the long run, requires a revolutionary organization to stabilize the movement, keep it on course, and develop and disseminate the vision of the world that we can and must create for our future generations.

The movement is wide open to revolutionary ideas. It will need an organization to create the political education and political direction necessary to address the burning questions of the day: point the way forward from where we are today to the abundant, cooperative society that is possible, when we break the bonds of corporate private property. **RC**

# Pandemic: ‘The Devil Went Down to Georgia’

*Continued from page 3*

unemployment claims. In April, the unemployment rate in Georgia peaked at 12.4 percent. On August 1, the stimulus unemployment compensation expired. Many thousands are now left with nothing, and eviction proceedings are already underway. The state legislature passed a budget in July in which \$2 billion in cuts are being made to services across the board, including \$950 million to education. Ill-prepared and ill-equipped, the governor has pushed to get our children back in school, and the result has been disastrous. Some schools that attempted to open have had to close, with hundreds of students and staff in quarantine.

Yet the governor still opposes a mask-wearing mandate and even sued the mayor of Atlanta for imposing a mandate to wear masks. The state still refuses to expand Medicaid, and hundreds of thousands remain without health insurance.

In the midst of a pandemic, health care workers are being laid off. Scores of smaller hospitals across rural Georgia are closing due to a lack of resources. Now the pandemic is surging, setting new records for cases, hospitalizations, and deaths every day. Yet the governor continues to refuse to require even the most elementary measures to contain the virus. We are past the point of having to choose between lives or livelihoods. The pandemic is engulfing both.

It is in the midst of the crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic that a police state still operative in Georgia was exposed. In the Black Belt county of Glynn on the southeast coast, Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man who was out for his morning jog, was gunned down by a retired police investigator and his son, who also had ties to the District Attorney’s office. The killing was covered

up for 78 days until a 36-second videotape of the incident was revealed. Soon to follow came the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and then Rayshard Brooks was shot in the back by police officers in Atlanta. In the aftermath of the protests, Governor Kemp called out the National Guard to Atlanta without even consulting with city leaders.

All of this is indicative of a way of life that is endemic to how the South is ruled. Every African American in Georgia knows that at any time, they could be targeted for any or no reason at all. This is what the protesters, who came out by the thousands in every city and town, from all walks of life, knew and understood when they proclaimed that this is systemic and that the system itself must be transformed.

## **THE WEAPON OF VOTER SUPPRESSION**

Georgia’s governor, Brian Kemp, who campaigned in 2016 armed with a shotgun, promised to be tough on crime, is of course, pro-business anti-immigrant, and refused to expand Medicaid. He was able to be elected by employing a time-honored tradition in the South – massive voter suppression.

Now, in 2020, we approach an election that promises to be of major consequence, and steps are being put in place to make voter suppression operative again to maintain political control. In the June 9 primary, the state sent out absentee ballots to all of its 7 million registered voters. While many of them said they never received them, over 1 million did cast absentee ballots, leading to a record turnout. Even so, voting at the polls was a fiasco. Hundreds of precincts were closed, leading to long lines, with some voters not even knowing where they were to go. New voting machines, and poll work-

ers not even trained in their use, added to the chaos.

Now, for the November election, the Georgia Secretary of State has declared that absentee ballots will not be mailed out to all registered voters, further exacerbating a voting nightmare. A record 5 million are expected to vote, many of whom are energized by the movement to defeat Trump.

Voter suppression, along with a police apparatus that exercises brute force as a matter of course, white supremacy, states’ rights, pro-corporate, anti-worker, a state government merged with the corporations and operating in their interests — these characterize the economic, social, and political system that defines the situation in Georgia and across America.

All of that may describe the conditions rooted in Southern history, but they do not tell the whole story. The story of the South is also a freedom story — a story to be free from slavery, and a story to be rid of systemic racism, a story of a divided working class uniting to overcome its chains.

Can racism be eliminated without, at the same time, transforming the economy in which it is rooted? Despite all of the gains of the Civil Rights movement, the economic relations remained. The ruling class, a capitalist class, remained intact. This time, transformation means throwing it out root and branch. Capitalism may be in the process of its own destruction, but the owners of private property are preparing right now to move to a fascist solution to maintain their supremacy. The working class, especially that new section discarded by electronics and automation, united as a class around a common program and with a vision of a new society, can change the world, a world in which all of the needs of every human being are provided in a truly cooperative society. **RC**