

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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School Privatization and America's Housing Crisis

"Education is a human right!," say students, teachers and parents around the country. They believe all children and adults should have access to free, high-quality education and are engaged in the struggle to make it so. They are fighting against the crisis of inadequate education funding and privatization. This crisis is increasingly intertwined with the housing crisis. Under capitalism, quality education and housing are only accessible to those who can pay for it.

Real estate developers, agents of global finance capital, increasingly dictate educational policy for private profit. The result is the rise in homelessness among school children and their families, including the inability of teachers to afford housing in their school districts. Neighborhood schools are displaced by charter schools and selective-enrollment public schools.

A PRIVATE PROPERTY PLAN

A generation ago charter schools were marketed to people of color, African-Americans in particular, as the solution to reverse fifty years of separate and unequal schools. Charter schools are publicly funded, but privately run and controlled, and mostly non-union. Today, global real estate corporations have made charters a key weapon in their gentrification take-overs of entire communities, pushing out families to make way for higher profits.

School closures are a result. School closures are almost always a real estate plan. School districts regularly close public schools and supplant them with charters. These maneuvers destabilize entire districts, opening them to skyrocketing housing costs. Housing commodification goes hand in hand with school commodification.

Trump's spending on federal charter grants has increased over 30 percent since he took office. Obama's Department of Education gave away billions of dollars to charter corporations. Over one-quarter of this money was scammed away by "ghost charters" that never opened or opened briefly and shut down. Almost no one has gone to jail for these crimes. Students, however, are increasingly criminalized for school fights or refusing to go through metal detectors.

As new sources of private profit, the number of charter schools in the U.S. ballooned from approximately 2,000 to 7,000 between 2000 and 2016. California has the most students in charter schools: 603,000, or 10 percent of all public-school students in the state). New Orleans has the first all-charter school district in the nation. Both public housing and public schools were closed, and most were not reopened after Hurricane Katrina. In the

Los Angeles Unified School District, the 2nd largest school district in the country, 20 percent of the students attend charter schools, costing the district \$600 million. Billionaire real estate mogul, Eli Broad is a leader of the privatization of public schools in Los Angeles and nationally.

The growth of charter schools was facilitated by laws incentivizing the conversion of public property to private property. Charter schools became a popular investment when the Clinton-era Community Tax Relief Act of 2000 provided generous tax credits for investing in underserved areas. Charter operators can combine this tax credit with other tax breaks, while also collecting interest on any money they lend. The credit allows them to double their investment in seven years. In California and other charter-dense states, charter schools are empowered to take over public schools that are "underperforming." State law guarantees them the same financing as public schools.

So-called non-profit charter schools often create for-profit arms. These private management corporations are then paid with public funds to provide services, facilities and supplies to affiliated charter schools. *Imagine Schools*, a large charter operation that runs 63 charter schools enrolling more than 33,000 students in several states, turned over 40 percent of their public funding to their for-profit management company to lease property for the school.

The scams are endless and amount to criminal corporate looting, abetted by government everywhere, that results in making schools "broke on purpose."

Oakland, California is one of the hottest real estate markets in the country. Developers there currently have 16,000 residential units under construction. Almost none of this new housing will be for low-income families. At the same time, Oakland School Board members, whose electoral campaigns were largely funded by the charter school industry and wealthy billionaires, stated they must close 24 public schools to save money. However, the National Education Policy Center found that closing schools does not save money and causes the greatest harm to the lowest income students.

Puerto Rico is an alarming example of where we are all headed. After hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017, the Puerto Rican Education Secretary stated that it was a great opportunity to use the New Orleans "Katrina model" to close schools. They will be reopened as charter schools to serve new gated communities for hi-tech elites under the real estate scheme that global capitalists have for the island.



Oakland, CA - February 26, 2019: Teachers, students and parents in Day 4 of Oakland Teachers strike, marching down 98th street to Roots Academy, first of 24 schools in Oakland slated for closure. Photo: Sheila Fitzgerald

BROKE ON PURPOSE

Real estate developers make huge profits when schools are "broke on purpose," but the social destruction is horrific. Over one million U.S. school children in 2017 were homeless; 100,000 more than in 2016 and the highest it's ever been. Many U.S. school children are part of America's growing number of impoverished families, who are barely hanging on.

In Chicago, the competition for a seat at one of the selective public high schools is so rough that the process has been referred to as the, "Midwest's Hunger Games." In the 2015-16 school year, 13,413 students applied for 3,600 freshman seats at the selective enrollments, according to the district. In the spring of 2019, only 7 Black students were admitted to the highly selective Stuyvesant High in New York City.

Many teachers cannot afford to live near the schools where they teach. Federal guidelines recommend spending no more than 30 percent of annual income on housing, but that's impossible for teachers in expensive

housing markets, such as New York and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Although privatizers tout charters as superior education, research finds that on average, there are no differences between the test scores of students at charter schools and non-charters. There are some high performing charter schools, but the majority of charter schools do the same or worse than public schools. Test scores are highly correlated with family and neighborhood wealth.

DECREASE IN PUBLIC FUNDING FOR EDUCATION

Free universal public education was created by the government because corporate industry needed literate workers for industrial manufacturing. The purpose of public schools has been to train employees to take their place in the economy. This was true until the 1970s and 1980s, when computers started to become powerful enough to be applied massively throughout industry. Today, automation via robotics, artificial intelligence

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Partial Measures Will Not Do

Inside Rally, Comrades!

During the Democratic presidential debates for the 2020 elections, many of the candidates spoke about the skyrocketing housing costs, resulting in a glaring increase in the number of homeless families. This is most starkly seen in the coastal cities of California. In San Francisco the city's homeless population has risen 30 percent since 2017; homelessness is up 86 percent in Los Angeles' Koreatown and up 43 percent from 2017 in Orange County. And in Oakland, the Bay Area's third-largest city, homelessness has increased by 47 percent since 2017.

The candidates spoke about rent control, fair housing policies and building more affordable housing. Those who are homeless need homes now. Today it is possible to create housing structures using robots and with 3D printing. The capacity to build homes is not the problem. The housing industry will not make all the walls that the technology allows for, because they will only make as many homes as will be profitable.

This begs the question: Do we settle for partial measures being put forward within the confines of capitalist profitability, or do we fight for a future of quality, decent homes for all families? In this issue of *Rally, Comrades!*, we look at what is at stake for everyday people in the 2020 elections, the struggles around public education, housing and how we meet the challenges of today.

"School Privatization Worsens Housing Crisis," shows how real estate developers

make huge profits when schools are "broke on purpose," but the social destruction is horrific. Over one million U.S. school children in 2017 were homeless; 100,000 more than in 2016 and the highest it's ever been. Many U.S. school children are part of America's growing number of impoverished families, who are barely hanging on. Without decent jobs, the only way this new impoverished class will get its basic needs met, is if these needs are provided to all people in society.

"From the Editors," discusses the killings in El Paso as a bellwether of the heightening crisis that is engulfing our society today. El Paso illuminates both the cause and the solution to the crisis of our time. Class unity is the condition of the emancipation of our class.

"The Truth About Unnatural Disasters in the U.S." points out that there have been a number of strong and disastrous events across the U.S. South, including Hurricanes Katrina, Harvey, Michael and Maria. All of these are profit-driven, "unnatural" disasters. Capitalist production, driven by the law of maximum profit, has for centuries exploited the earth's people and resources with a vengeance. The tragic result is global climate change — super-storms, firestorms, extreme drought and flooding. All are manifestations of man-made disasters that are placing the planet and humanity in deep peril.

"The Green New Deal, Framing Socialism and the 2020 Elections" shows that the ruling class cannot permit a debate on how to achieve economic and social justice during the 2020 elections. The plan is to attack the American people's basic attitude towards social equality by negative associations (framing) and to limit the debate. The latter strategy

is reflected by the Democratic Party's drive to center the election on defeating Trump, not his policies or programs. In contrast, the 2020 election campaign and the struggle around the Green New Deal present revolutionaries with the opportunity to push forward the development of class consciousness, using the basic demands for homes, food, clothing, medical care, and water.

All social motion takes place within the advancing technological revolution. Electronics-initiated polarization creates a new class that is separated from capitalist relations. "Demands for Basic Needs within the Electoral Process," illustrates that as this new class advances their program, they reveal themselves as a social force demanding that the government intervene on behalf of their goals, not those of the corporations. In a period like this, which we have described as a leap, and a break in continuity, the changes we describe can accelerate. Our class is emerging from a Rip-Van-Winkle-like slumber. That which has been roiling beneath the surface for more than twenty years is about to erupt.

"The Revolutionary Aims of the Spontaneous Movement" looks at the fights for basic needs today from a revolutionary perspective. The task of those fighting for revolutionary change today is to develop the consciousness of those fighting for reform, while at the same time showing them a vision and the necessity of gaining the political power to achieve it. Therefore, revolutionaries fight for the immediate demands of our class, while also introducing those ideas that explain the actual quality of the struggle our class is engaged in. This takes an organization of revolutionaries dedicated to that effort. **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.

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

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

Storms, Floods, and Fires Threaten Pursuit of Happiness

In the last two decades, there have been strong and destructive weather patterns occurring in the United States and worldwide. The fires in California, and the flooding in the Midwest and on the East Coast, show our environment is changing drastically. There have been a number of strong and disastrous events across the U.S. South, including Hurricanes Katrina, Harvey, Michael and Maria. All of these are man-made “unnatural” disasters.

Capitalist production, driven by the law of maximum profit, has for centuries exploited the earth’s people and resources with a vengeance. The tragic result is global climate change – super-storms, firestorms, extreme drought and flooding. All are manifestations of man-made disasters that are placing the planet and humanity in deep peril.

Now there is an added dimension to this crisis. The new technology, automated, robotic production is labor less production. A new class of millions of workers is being displaced. Capitalist production is itself being destroyed, and along with it the society which is based upon it. Yet the ruling class continues upon its mad bent to defend private property, resulting in the exacerbation of the global climate crisis. Climate change itself has become a dimension of the destruction of society. With every approaching storm, the response of the ruling class is to take advantage of the crisis, and at the same time the government asserts that it has no responsibility to care for the needs of the people affected.

In 2015, a group of young people from across the U.S. filed a suit against the government claiming that they are being affected by the consequences of climate change. One of the plaintiffs, an 11-year-old, stated that he has lived most of his life on a barrier island in Florida that is barely above sea level, and his biggest fear is that he won’t have a home there in the future. They assert that the guarantees of the Constitution of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” are being denied them. They are being robbed of their future, and the government is failing its responsibility to meet the basic needs of the people.

ANYTHING GOES

The corporations are merging with the State and more openly represent the interests of the ruling class. They have trillions of dollars invested in a global, fossil fuel energy-financed infrastructure, and they are not about to change that, unless it becomes profitable to do so. The government, with its relationship with the corporations, has lifted regulatory bans on the energy industry. Anything goes! Fracking and gas pipelines are allowed near water resources. Forbes.com states that the U.S. spends ten times more on fossil fuel subsidies than on education.

The oil companies are allowed to drill for oil in the Gulf of Mexico, in spite of the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon explosion there, which killed eleven workers and injured seventeen others. It caused a massive offshore oil spill in

the Gulf of Mexico. It is considered the largest marine oil spill in the world and the largest environmental disaster in U.S. history.

Also, the Gulf of Mexico is experiencing one of the largest dead zones in U.S. history. As the Mississippi river flows from the north, through areas along the way to the Gulf, it picks up a residue of pesticides and other toxins, including the dumping by an array of chemical plants situated along the river in Louisiana. Fish and other sea life are dying, and there have been warnings posted in some areas along the Gulf coast that swimming is not allowed. Scientists predict that the 2019 dead zone will be the second largest on record. Last summer, the dead zone in the coastal waters near Louisiana and Texas was about the size of Delaware. This year, it’s expected to be far bigger.

HURRICANES KATRINA AND HARVEY

Hurricane Katrina marks a turning point in American history. No one can ever forget the images of thousands of poor African-Americans stranded at the superdome. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall near Grand Isle, Louisiana as a Category 3, with winds near 127 mph. Nearly eighty percent of New Orleans was under water. Residents who lived behind levees on land below sea level were wiped out by the flood as the levees were breached. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) took days to establish operations in New Orleans. Two thousand people were killed due to the thrust of the storm. There were 400,000 people permanently displaced. The government did not have an evacuation plan and left people in desperate conditions for days.

Thousands of people desperate for food, water and shelter broke into the Convention Center complex, but there were no supplies there. Poor people, especially without cars or anyplace else to go, were stuck. People tried to walk over the bridge to the nearby suburb of Gretna, but police officers with shotguns forced them to turn back.

There were homes, hospitals, and schools damaged or completely destroyed. In the aftermath of the storm, the ruling class used public funding to shut down the public schools. They then set up charter schools and for-profit schools to replace the public schools in New Orleans.

Thousands of people came forward to confront the crisis and to demand that the fundamental needs of the people be met. Gulf Coast Rise Up was organized and demanded that the government provide for their needs.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey was the costliest tropical storm on record, inflicting \$125 billion in damage, primarily from catastrophic rainfall-triggered flooding in the Houston metropolitan area and Southeast Texas. The storm dumped more than 27 trillion gallons of rain over Texas. Thirteen million people were affected, with nearly 135,000 homes damaged,

El Paso: Cause and Solution

From the Editors

El Paso is a bellwether of the heightening crisis that is engulfing our society today. On August 3, an assassin armed with a weapon of war and a manifesto killed 22 people at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas. That massacre was preceded by another in Gilroy, California only days before, and was followed only hours later by the mass killings in Dayton, Ohio. Then, on the first day of school in Mississippi, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided seven food processing plants and detained 680 Latino immigrant workers. Suddenly hundreds of children found themselves abandoned.

The ruling class cannot allow the working class to unite, so it calls up anti-immigrant and white supremacist ideology from the dark underbelly of American history, to divide the class against itself. Developed in order to justify slavery and then the horrific excesses of Jim Crow segregation, it is now trumpeted from the highest reaches of government. This is the social face of fascism today.

The response to these attacks has been overwhelming expressions and actions of unity. People lined up for blocks to give blood, many brought food, coming to the aid of their brothers and sisters from all across the country. These are all glimpses of the kind of unity required of our class if we are to move forward.

Demagogic anti-immigrant propaganda blames the immigrant for taking away jobs. All of the jobs are being taken away by rapidly advancing automation, along with a ruling class hell-bent upon keeping all of the wealth that society produces for itself alone. Those who were murdered in El Paso were from both sides of the border. A global new class calls for global class unity.

We live in a time of crisis. Production with robots permanently replaces wage-labor, throwing millions of workers outside of, and to the fringes of society. This is a new class, necessarily set upon a path to secure the necessities of life, and to secure a future where distribution is based on need, and not with money.

This new class is under attack. The ruling class is first waging economic warfare against the very class already impoverished by the crisis in the economy. As the crisis grows exponentially, a growing equality of poverty grows along with it.

El Paso illuminates both the cause and the solution to the crisis of our time. Class unity is the condition of the emancipation of our class. **RC**

or destroyed in the flooding. The death toll was at 88 people. Some of those who were affected most by Harvey were Katrina evacuees from New Orleans.

HURRICANES IRMA, MARIA AND MICHAEL

In 2018, a year after Hurricane Maria hit the island of Puerto Rico, thousands of residents were still recovering from the storm. Even now power outages are still common, especially in rural areas. Thousands of Puerto Ricans are still living under blue tarps. Maria was the worst storm to strike the island in over 80 years. More than 3,000 residents died. Some 135,000 Puerto Ricans left their homes and settled in the continental U.S.

Before hurricanes Irma and Maria hit, Puerto Rico had already been facing difficult economic times due to its legacy as a colony of the U.S. Almost half of the residents live below the poverty line, the highest poverty rate of any U.S. state or territory. The unemployment rate is nearly three times the national level. The Puerto Rican government went into default but was still forced to meet the draconian financial terms demanded by Wall Street.

Puerto Rico is still treated like a colony of the U.S. Sixty-two percent of applicants were denied assistance to rebuild their homes from FEMA, because they could not find their deeds to their homes. The law of the land says that the power grid has to be replaced as it was before, but no better. Since 2016, protests against austerity measures that include significant cuts to education and healthcare, have taken place regularly.

In 2018, Hurricane Michael was the most powerful storm to hit the U.S. in more than 25 years and it was the most powerful on record in the Florida panhandle. The storm blew in with sustained winds of 155 mph. The cities of Mexico Beach and Panama City suffered the worst of Michael, with catastrophic damage reported, due to the extreme winds and storm surge. Mexico Beach was wiped out. Thirty-five people were killed. Michael moved inland and also hit parts of Georgia, destroying crops and timber.

Almost a year later, the U.S. Senate finally set aside more than \$19 billion for farmers hit by Hurricane Michael and other storms. Georgia received \$3 billion to assist those hit by hurricane Michael. Yet, big agricultural corporations got the most funding from this compensation, thanks to the relationship of the government and big agribusiness. Puerto Rico received less than \$900 million.

In all of these disasters the most impoverished section of the working class is hurt the most, and the ruling class and the government help them the least.

The system of capitalism is dying. The ruling class will do anything to make maximum profit, even if it harms people and the planet. We must demand that the government meet the needs of humanity and quit destroying the earth. Clean air and water, and an economy that protects the environment and heals the planet, are basic human needs and a requirement for a full and happy life. A system that destroys the planet as the price for private profit, must be replaced with a new economic system organized to meet the basic needs of humanity. **RC**

Demands for Basic Needs and the Electoral Process

Editor's Note: The following is an abridged version of the March 2019 Political Report on the Midterm Elections, from the Central Committee of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. This report was written before over 25 candidates entered the Democratic Party primaries as candidates for President; before the fascists rescinded Florida's Amendment 4; and before the courageous "Squad" challenged fascist attacks from Republicans and from within their own Democratic Party.

INTRODUCTION

The 2018 midterm election results indicate that the United States has moved from economic polarization to social and political polarization. Polarization takes place from inside of a thing. The election results showed the growing polarization within both the Democratic and the Republican Parties. Polarization is not marked simply by one neat split between a progressive and conservative pole in society. As development proceeds, there is further splitting. The progressive pole splits into progressive and revolutionary poles; the conservative pole splits into conservative and fascist poles.

All social motion takes place within the advancing technological revolution. Electronics-initiated polarization creates a new class that is separated from capitalist relations. As this new class advances its program, they reveal themselves as a social force demanding that the government intervene on behalf of their goals, not those of the corporations. In a period like this, which we have described as a break in continuity, the changes we describe accelerate. Our class is emerging from a Rip-Van-Winkle-like slumber. That which has been roiling beneath the surface for more than 20 years is about to erupt.

WAVE OF RESISTANCE AND SOCIAL RESPONSE

The 2018 election was a referendum on the state of the country. Tens of millions of people took part to send a message that they wanted change. Many were involved for the first time in political campaigning. They sent the message in the form of voting for candidates, most of whom were affiliated with the Democratic Party. Still, the election's result was not a blue wave: It was a wave of

resistance to the status quo, in which people used the only means available to most of them (voting for Democrats) to send that message. While most attention has been paid to the candidates, some significant races highlighted ballot referenda on issues such as housing, healthcare, public education, ballot access, voting rights, "right to work," and water privatization.

In every area of the country, the new class is trying to fight for its basic needs of housing, healthcare, education, and even for the most elemental levels of democracy. As they find their rulers turning a deaf ear to their demands, the new class seeks every avenue it can to redress its grievances, including the electoral battlefield. Even now, with an historic high in voter participation in midterm elections, the U.S. consistently provides evidence that more than half of the electorate believes that their votes make no difference and/or that it cannot find relief through elections.

The midterm elections saw new class members successfully run state ballot measures to expand Medicaid eligibility in Idaho, Nebraska and Utah. Florida passed Amendment 4 to reinstate voting rights for people with felony convictions upon completion of their sentences, including prison, parole and probation. This impacted 1.5 million of new class dispossessed forces and can be viewed as a step in the practical advancement of the program of the new class. We can see in these measures the stirring of a kind of political awareness that is beginning to mark a break in continuity.

One aspect of the "wave of resistance" was the number of women elected to political office. In the House of Representatives, the number of women elected exceeded 100 for the first time, including historic firsts for Native Americans, African Americans and Muslims. What carried some of these candidates to victory, and often going beyond resistance, was advancing the programmatic demands of the class as expressed locally. In Michigan, statewide offices were swept by women Democrats although the state legislature remained firmly in control of Republicans. Insurgents ran as Democrats, but also as Independents and sometimes as Socialists.

When candidates ran not as "red" candidates or "blue" candidates, but rather as candidates dedicated to fighting to secure

one or another basic need, they often won. When they didn't win at the top of the ticket, often in down ballot primaries, total novices replaced long-standing incumbents and then won down ballot races (e.g. Texas and Georgia). First time Muslim, Palestinian, and Native American women candidates won their elections, because new class forces were galvanized. Youth, women, and people of color, voted in significant numbers, all of this resulting in the largest voter turnout in a midterm election in 50 years. While 49% of eligible voters did not vote, a section of the new class used the electoral arena to pursue their class interests. That of course was when the election wasn't being stolen.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF FASCISM

The 2018 elections were also a battleground for the advance of fascism. Leading up to November 6, Donald Trump and Mike Pence crossed the country sowing their message of division and hatred. Trump took every opportunity to attack the migrants fleeing Central America in search of asylum. Proclaiming himself a nationalist, he used that platform to re-define the press as the enemy of the people. And he embraced candidates who did not hesitate to campaign on supporting voter suppression and outright lynching (e.g. Mississippi). In fact, the under-reported story of the midterms was voter suppression.

The 2018 midterm elections have seen a marked progression in the reorganization of the state apparatus (i.e. corporate dictatorship/fascism). In this era of the digital revolution, the recently dispossessed section of the new class is compelled to fight for their basic needs – compelled even to secure their bare basic democratic rights, as they become aware that only the cooperative control of the socially necessary means of production guarantees their well-being.

As we go forward, it is especially important to mention the deadly role of the Democratic Party establishment, as relates to reorganization of the state to ensure private property relations in the "blue" states. Contrary to the rulers' narrative, having California, Illinois, Maryland, etc. more firmly in the grip of the Democratic Party institutions, with all its diversity, will not mean less poverty or less homelessness; we won't be safer, more secure, or have less hateful or violent times. A clear example of this is the solid "blue" area around Washington, D.C. and Maryland, where the solid grip of the Democratic Party vetoed a D.C. referendum to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. The wave of resistance often took on the form of an anti-Trump vote, and mostly it was the Democratic Party that benefitted from the anti-Trump feeling. Corporate Democrats as a whole in this election played defense across the country, preferring to lambast Trump as a person and leaving the issues general. In 2016, the Democratic Party ran on "maintaining the middle class." Those corporate Democrats still wail about the decline of the middle-class jobs in the Midwest rust belt, but this time around, some

rising new voices began to demand a different kind of party.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES AND EXPRESSIONS

While the demands and aspirations of the new class may be more visible in platforms and initiatives rising in urban-centric areas, including Florida and Georgia, they are keenly felt by poor and dispossessed in all areas of the country – including, and perhaps especially, in "Trump country." These rural counties, towns, and small cities are areas where dispossession in the transformed and depressed economy combines with ruling class manipulation of racial fears and resentments, Christian fundamentalist political grip, and deeply embedded anti-communism and fear of socialism to render people particularly vulnerable to "Trump, Inc."

Counted in these areas are the 200 U.S. counties that voted for Obama and then flipped to Trump in the next election. They also include those like the West Virginians who supported Bernie Sanders in primaries but, left with no such candidate in the final elections, turned to the available ruling class candidates, mostly Republicans, who spoke to their fears and resentments. What is most salient for us, is the probable reason for the appeal of Obama's and Sanders' messages among these folks. They spoke to hope for change that they, or their children, would have at least some basic needs met within the political structure they know and trust as "patriotic Americans."

These elections were marked by polarization, energy and debate that indicate that the new proletarian class and the capitalist class are engaging politically. Specific contradictions are developing to the point that breaks in continuity are beginning to have a direct effect on politics. The electoral process itself represents such a break. It is not surprising then, that at the very same time as the Democratic Party moves to consolidate its grip, for example in Illinois and California, fissures are developing within the party structure that represents the polarity emanating from the class that must fight for its survival.

In 2016, the Democratic Party presidential candidate won only about 1/3 of the counties in the country, mostly heavily urban counties along the East and West Coasts and some in the old Rust Belt around the Great Lakes. These counties produce about 2/3 of the country's GDP. Trump, on the other hand, won 2/3 of the counties, predominantly rural, which produce about 1/3 of the GDP. These counties tend to reflect the industrial era "traditional" economies of agriculture, energy production, and manufacturing of tangible products, whereas the coastal counties are bastions of the new digital economy.

Elections are an arena for class battle. Under the assault of beginning independent class programmatic activity, the Democratic Party (even where it is solidly in control), is not monolithic anymore. Like the Republican Party, the Democratic Party is in the process of disintegrating. **RC**

Correction:

In the article, "Voter Suppression and the Battle for Democracy" in the July/August 2019 issue, the statement "the Three-Fifths Compromise, which provided that for every 100 slaves owned, the slaveholder could cast 60 votes on his own behalf," is not literally the case. The Compromise provided that the slave population would be counted as three-fifths in total when apportioning representatives to Congress, as well as the number of electoral votes each state would receive. The result assured the supremacy of the slaveholding class in the politics of the nation.

The Green New Deal, Framing Socialism and the 2020 Elections

The outcome of the 2018 Congressional elections was the entry of new progressive congressional representatives and the introduction of the Green New Deal (GND). While the primary objectives of the GND are climate change and renewable energy, the proposal also raises the issues of “providing all people of the United States with – (i) high-quality health care; (ii) affordable, safe and adequate housing; (iii) economic security; and (iv) access to clean water, clean air, healthy and affordable food and nature.” The GND reflects many of the practical demands of the new class and presents revolutionaries with multiple opportunities to enter the 2020 election process.

The GND proposes to combat global climate change and deliver a better quality of life, by transferring excess capital accumulations, through increased taxes and the expansion and enforcement of legislation protecting human rights. The GND will also utilize alternative institutions, such as public banks to ensure that “the public receives appropriate ownership stakes and returns on investment.” Although the ultimate objective of the GND is to reform capitalism, the struggle for these reforms provides revolutionaries a platform for clarifying the vision of a cooperative communist society; the distribution of necessities of life according to need is communism. The only way we can transfer the necessities of life to those who need it is to do so without money.

REFRAMING SOCIALISM

While the struggle to achieve the objectives of the GND provides revolutionaries with multiple opportunities, it also provides the ruling class with a potential wedge issue by reframing socialism. When one “frames” a concept or program, the objective is to use a word or phrase to evoke a preset mental image and/or response. For example, the phrase “Crooked Hillary” triggers a negative response, without the need to repeat the assertions of corruption, bribery, missing emails, etc. used to establish the frame. If one responds, “no she is not,” or “you’re the crook,” or anything else, the battle is already lost, as the debate takes place within the “Crooked Hillary” frame.

This is what the ruling class is attempting to do to with the reframing of “socialism.” This coordinated campaign began with the 2019 “State of the Union” address and continues at every level of the political and social debate, including the press (see for example George Will, Feb. 18, 2019, “So What is Socialism Again?,” *Washington Post*; David von Drehle, March 13, 2019, “Catch-2020: Who Defines Socialism,” *Washington Post*; Robert J. Samuelson, March 25, 2019, “Has America Gone Socialist?,” *Washington Post*.) The GND and socialism were also major issues at the Conservative Political Action Conference held February 26-28, 2019. Multiple speakers associated socialism with the “loss of your freedom,” “increased government control and taxes,” or “decreased

job growth and economic stagnation,” and “making the USA into Venezuela.” In the words of Sebastian Gorka, “They want to take your pickup truck. They want to take away your hamburger. This is what Stalin dreamt about but never achieved.” (March 1, 2019, *Business Insider*) These statements may sound like silly rants, but a new frame is being put into place. The phrases and images that work will be kept and refined, the others discarded.

Why is the reframing of socialism so important to the ruling class? Forty three percent of Americans believe that socialism would be a good thing. The ruling class cannot permit a debate on how to achieve economic and social justice during the 2020 elections. Their plan is to attack the American people’s basic attitude towards social equality, and limit the debate.

THE ROLE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The campaign to reframe socialism is not a “right wing conspiracy.” The leadership of the Democratic Party is also attempting to silence alternative and progressive viewpoints. They are also isolating and denigrating newly elected progressive voices, such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib and Ayanna Pressley. Most of the Democratic presidential candidates have publicly disavowed socialist ideology and declared themselves capitalists. For example, former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper told the California Democratic Convention that “socialism is not the answer,” and repeated this position during the first 2019 Democratic Debate. Elizabeth Warren has repeatedly declared that she is a capitalist and is being portrayed as the “Savior of Capitalism,” because her programs are aimed at reducing some of the most outrageous aspects of excess wealth accumulation (David Leonhardt, March 15, 2019 Opinion, “Elizabeth Warren Actually Wants to Fix Capitalism,” *New York Times*).

The bipartisan support for the continuing attack on Venezuela is another example of the framing of socialism. The objective is to identify Venezuela as a “failed socialist country.” The use of the pain and suffering of the Venezuelan people is a key tactic in the negative reframing of socialism. “You want universal free medical care, just look at what socialism did to the health care of the Venezuelans!”

Why is the reframing of socialism so important to the ruling class? A Gallup Poll

conducted this year between April 17-30, determined that 43 percent of Americans believe that socialism would be a good thing. The report also points out that “previous Gallup research shows that Americans’ definition of socialism has changed over the years, with nearly one in four now associating the concept with social equality and 17 percent associating it with the more classical definition of having some degree of government control over the means of production.” The rul-

culated by lack of clarity, produced by the ideological differences and class distinctions between a “Socialist,” a “Social Democrat” and a “Democratic Socialist” program. The ideological confusion surrounding the definition of socialism and the ruling class campaign to add to this confusion, is reflected in the article, “Five Myths About Socialism” (Sheri Berman, March 1, 2019, *Washington Post*). In a subsection of the piece entitled “Myth No. 1 – Socialism is a single coherent ideology,” the author writes, “... socialism has multiple meanings and interpretations, which have to be disentangled before a discussion about its merits can begin.” We do not have the leisure of engaging in an intellectual debate to define socialism, as the ruling class is rapidly moving to frame socialism, in order to continue its attack on the concrete demands of the new class.

In contrast, the 2020 election campaign and the struggle around the GND present revolutionaries with the opportunity to push forward the development of class consciousness, using the basic demands for food, clothing, medical care, and water. To accomplish this, revolutionaries need to present the program of the new class, without being dragged into unproductive debates on the ideology of socialism. In this process it will be necessary not “to think outside of the box,” but “to think without a box.” “Socialism” is just a frame, a word used to represent a complex set of interrelated economic and political constructs, and like any other word, it can be replaced. When ruling class candidates attack socialism, revolutionaries should pivot and concentrate on raising the practical demands of the new class and the vision of a cooperative communist society.

A new frame needs to be built, one that is centered on the realization that we are in the era where human history can begin, in which the light of the individual can shine in the full brightness of liberated life, and that this can be realized within a society based upon true equality and cooperation: communism. The Gallup poll and the rising social struggles demonstrate that this can be a winning strategy. **RC**

ing class cannot permit a debate on how to achieve economic and social justice during the 2020 elections. The plan is to attack the American people’s basic attitude towards social equality by negative associations (framing) and to limit the debate. The latter strategy is reflected by the Democratic Party’s drive to center the election on defeating Trump, not his policies or programs.

REFRAMING SOCIALISM AND THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM

We are facing a serious, well organized campaign to use a reframed “socialism” as a wedge issue, to divide the forces organizing to fight for the practical demands of the new class and to attack the vision of a cooperative communist society. This attack is fa-

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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.

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Preparation for Historic Revolutionary Change

Millions of people are struggling against the State apparatus for the basic necessities of life. The underlying motion of these struggles is toward the distribution of the necessities of life according to need, not according to money. The political and ideological preparation of the people for such revolutionary change can only come through the struggle for reform. However, lasting reform can only be won with the political power to get that reform, as the result of a revolution.

The task of those fighting for revolutionary change today is to develop the consciousness of those fighting for reform, while at the same time showing them a vision and the necessity of gaining the political power to achieve it. Therefore, revolutionaries fight for the immediate demands of our class, while also introducing those ideas that explain the actual quality of the struggle our class is engaged in. This takes an organization of revolutionaries dedicated to that effort.

However, we must first determine the stage in which our class finds itself, and the level of development of the revolutionary movement in order to understand what it means to be an organization of revolutionaries inseparably connected with the spontaneous movement. The demands of people to satisfy their immediate, specific practical needs create the spontaneous struggle.

GLOBAL CAPITALISM – THE CURRENT STAGE

The U.S., indeed, the world, is currently in the throes of capitalist crisis. Given that the level of development of the productive forces is unprecedented in human history by virtue of the electronic revolution, a new class has arisen. The majority consists of contingent workers, minimum wage workers, the chronically unemployed, and the homeless. This new class is growing daily. The global financial crisis of 2008 that started in the U.S. and quickly engulfed global capitalism further ruptured the political system of bourgeois democracy. In the U.S. the merger of the corporations and the State (fascism) is now complete. Currently, the ruling class is at

the stage of devising laws to consolidate the gains it achieved in the merger of the corporations and the State. It is critical to note that all political groupings of the ruling class operate to protect private property.

Political and social movements struggling for reforms are fighting to regain that which had been lost through the development of the productive forces driven by the electronic revolution. Workers became homeless, unemployed, or are in a weaker economic and financial position due to labor replacing technologies. In such a political environment, that is based on the objective electronic revolution, we have to use today's revolutionary changes as a lever to free people's minds to create a new world.

This new situation calls into question the entire system of private property. However, the ruling class is compelled to establish a new system of private property. Fascism is the first stage in the creation of such a system. Here the role of the revolutionary organization in preparing the people for revolution is crucial: Introducing class consciousness and a new vision to those in struggle against the ruling class and private property.

THE SPONTANEOUS MOVEMENT IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM

In the U.S., people's organizations fighting for different causes (free education, free health care, etc.) occupy a huge political space, and struggle hard to improve the conditions of life of the people. Many leaders in the spontaneous movement understand that capitalism is the problem. Some even understand that private property itself needs to be abolished.

The role of the revolutionary organization is to spread that consciousness throughout the new class and show that the fight needs to be for a cooperative communist society – the public ownership of the means of production and distribution of the necessities for life according to need. Revolutionaries fight shoulder-to-shoulder with our class to win the immediate demands of the moment, while simultaneously explaining the class con-

tent of the fight. The ongoing development of political consciousness and a vision of a new society amongst the combatants, is what taking care of the future aims of the revolution is all about.

The interest of the ruling class is to maintain its hold on private property. It uses its own instruments to achieve its political goals. Two of those instruments are the Democratic and Republican Parties. Sections of the new class might be attracted to the Democratic Party to fight for better health care or education. But the Democrats might be interested in producing enough reform in health care, such as Obamacare, to hold on to the support of sections of the American people. The bigger question is how do we permanently win quality health care, housing, education, water for all of society? How should the struggle move forward to win the demands of the new class?

THE ART OF POLITICS

Historically, the line of march has been a critical concept in the revolutionary movement. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels were precise in describing the role of the communists. Revolutionaries have to clearly understand the line of march – the trajectory upon which the new class needs to move in its fight against the owners of private property, to achieve the goals of the movement. Put differently, the revolutionaries point out to the new class what is possible given the stage of development of the revolutionary process. How do the revolutionaries do that? We can use the science of society to study the historical and material conditions of life to determine the stage of development of the revolutionary process. On the basis of that examination, we discern who comprises the revolutionary class in society and what are its demands at a particular stage.

Society is going through a leap from economies based almost entirely on labor, to a labor-less future. A new class is being created that is being pushed entirely outside of today's economy or to its margins, with no way to exchange its work for a living wage. It is the revolutionary force created by the

advancement of the productive forces within global capitalism.

The new class has no ties to any system of private property and so it is free to lead humanity toward a cooperative communist society. It is of the greatest importance to make this new class aware of its role in history and to spread that awareness throughout society.

Just as the electronic revolution began with the introduction of the computer chip from the outside of the process of production, similarly, new ideas need to be introduced for the revolutionary new class to complete its tasks.

Class consciousness and this vision can only be introduced into the spontaneous movement through mastering the art of propaganda. The organization of revolutionaries utilizes every expression of spontaneous struggle (the fight against police brutality, for free health care, etc.) to propagandize. How do revolutionaries operate, through and within the spontaneous movement to achieve the strategic goal at a given stage? It is critical to first win over the leaders of the spontaneous movement to the cause of revolution. Second, it is essential to determine where the center of gravity is, to direct all activity to that center, which if won to the cause of revolution, would draw to it the largest section possible of the new class.

The alternative to injecting class-consciousness through propaganda to the spontaneous movement is for the revolutionaries to work in the spontaneous movement, as other political and social movements do, by simply taking up what the new class already knows. However, to do this does not prepare the new class for its historic task. Instead, it would be working simply for implementing the program and goals of the ruling class. The new class has no other choice but to fight for a cooperative communist society and produce its own organizations and leaders. Through revolutionary propaganda, the revolutionaries can clearly understand the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the movement, to achieve the emancipatory vision of a world to be won. **RC**

School Privatization ... (Continued from page 1)

and other digital technology, is replacing human labor and changing the job market forever.

Labor-replacing production, in the context of the capitalist imperative of maximum profit, is pushing more and more workers out of the economy, as their jobs are done more efficiently and cheaply by electronic technology. This process is creating a new class of permanently unemployed or underemployed workers. The ruling class, which controls the government and wealth of this country, will not pay to educate workers it no longer needs. Thus, public education funding is on the decline.

The new class is being deprived of both education and housing, which are basic human rights, things we all deserve regardless of ability to pay. Without decent jobs, the only way this new impoverished class will get its basic needs met, is if these needs are provided to all people in society. The new class has no choice but to fight for the

political power to reconstruct society on a cooperative basis to achieve this.

WHAT EDUCATION AND HOUSING COULD BE

The teacher strikes last year in West Virginia, Oklahoma and Kentucky and this year in Los Angeles and Oakland, brought attention to the crisis caused by decades of education cuts and the parasitic impact of charter schools. Elected officials, both Republican and Democrat, have contributed to this crisis, and the public is beginning to reject the ruling class' narrative that teachers and their unions are the problem.

As corporations merge with the State, politicians blatantly abandon their responsibility to the public and promote the commodification of education and housing. The way forward begins by holding them accountable or replacing them. The same technology manipulated to replace and impoverish workers could be used to provide first-rate public

education for all, where schools provide supportive, intellectually stimulating, learning environments. Well-funded schools could take a wholistic approach that enhances the strengths of all students, taught by well-educated and well-supported teachers.

Today, we must educate those who will guide humanity through the historic transition society now faces. As jobs continue to vanish, the old idea that the purpose of education is to get a good job is vanishing along with them. Every step taken to halt the advance of charter schools is a step toward attacking the hold that private property has on education. Every step taken to destroy the stranglehold real estate speculation has on where we live, attacks the privatization of our lives. Today's movement for quality education is a fight against private property, which enforces inequality and impoverishment. It is a fight for high-quality schools that all students deserve. **RC**