

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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An Election Like No Other and the Fight for America

From the Editors

At a projected 161 million, the 2020 Presidential Election saw the greatest voter turnout in our history. Called at 75 million votes for Biden and 71 million votes for Trump, the outcome reflected a history of this capitalist democracy's division along ideological lines. Though that subjectively divided working class is, by design, an obstacle to our fight for the future, it is important to recognize this election as the culmination of decades of growing unrest and four years of intensified protest that illustrate a new class of Americans growing aware of its power and potential as a rising social force to transform society.

America is in a place it's never been before, and every part of our society is scrambling to find the way forward. The ruling class cannot maintain control the way it has in the past, and a subjective struggle over how to maintain that control is being fought out within the ruling class. At the same time, the working class is struggling to survive and desperately searching for a solution.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this struggle as the U.S. had the world's worst outbreak, with over 10 million infected, nearly a quarter-million deceased, and 22 million people losing jobs. Congress passed only one stimulus package for the working class, granting the amount of one month's rent to cover eight months of lost work while the wealthiest made over 641 billion dollars from the crisis. Meanwhile, the people fought back against the brutality of the system, as 26 million people hit the streets all across America to stand up against the growing police state's brutality and systemic racism.

RULING CLASS UNFIT TO RULE

We must understand that the people have begun to fight like never before because the American ruling class has all-but-abdicated responsibility for our well-being. With fundamental changes in the economy increasingly eliminating the use of labor in broader sectors of work, and the refusal of the capitalist system to provide for the people, the ruling class' turn towards fascism is inevitable. Under today's new conditions the ruling class,



San Francisco, CA: June 3, 2020, protestors at a George Floyd protest. Photo: Sheila Fitzgerald

which itself is being transformed, must align society's institutions, laws, military and police forces with the changing nature of social relations through fascism. The capitalists understand that the old relationships between themselves and a working class that holds jobs and receives wages is over. They have to develop a new system of private property, wherein they keep the new technology and ways of producing goods and services in private hands. And just as important, keep the decision-making and political power in their hands.

Just as our class has to unite around resolving the problems of lack of jobs, poverty, hunger and homelessness, the ruling class has unite themselves and a section of the workers around an openly fascist solution to maintain power.

All of the political turmoil we see is a reflection of this process. The leadership of both parties is struggling to appeal to the American people to unite part of working class behind the aims of the ruling class. Biden's win offers supposed comfort through promising an end to the division sown by the Trump regime.

With this vote, a majority of Americans rejected the brutal tactics of maintaining ICE raids during the pandemic, clamp-downs on peaceful protests, and encouragement to extremist elements of the social base, including a militia group who planned to kidnap Michigan's governor. Instead, the people elected a person who, at least symbolically, challenged the

country's racism and sexism by choosing a woman of African American and Asian descent as his running mate. No doubt, that choice also was meant to send a message to the entire world that America can transcend its current conflicts over race and gender.

However, Biden and Harris emerged as proponents of a "kinder, gentler" police state, muting the progressive, grassroots movement in the party. Joe Biden led the effort behind 1994's Violent Crime Control and Enforcement Act, characterized by its call for community-oriented policing. Kamala Harris became a Senator after nearly three decades as a prosecutor, district attorney, and Attorney General of California. The Democratic Party clearly wanted to capture and reassure the would-be Trump voter concerned with

law and order. The ruling class negotiated a way forward without making any real concessions to Americans fighting for our most basic needs. Both parties are failing us when it comes to financial relief, distribution of PPE, contact tracing, and certainly the threat of the growing police state.

WALL STREET VERSUS OUR STREETS

If there were ever an obvious sign of the difference in the world inhabited by the ruling class and the world the rest of us live in, it would be the way the stock market, after a dip in March, has made record-breaking gains throughout the pandemic. Economics professor Itay Goldstein of the Wharton School of Business told ABC News, "The stock market is not the economy....The stock market is a very selective group of firms that are traded in the market, and those groups of firms are mostly large firms....And then you go on Main Street, and you see all these Mom and Pop shops and these small restaurants, and they are hurting."

The ruling class profits off of every crisis. Fortune magazine reports that the real unemployment rate in America is around 20 percent, which corresponds directly to the one in five Americans who now face evictions. With a rate of COVID infection only comparable to Brazil, this year's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) reported one in four Americans suffering depression as a result of the pandemic.

That percentage, one in four, is also how many filed unemployment during the pandemic and how many are facing hunger.

Continued on page 5

CONTENTS

Inside: Beyond Survival to Human Liberation	2	Immigrant Fighters Alert to Danger of Betrayal	5
After the Elections: The Fight For Our Future	3	From Fighting Eviction to Cancelling the Rent	6
What Kind of Government do We Need to Survive the Pandemic?	4		

Beyond Survival to Human Liberation

Inside Rally, Comrades!

This year we got a concentrated dose of what has long ailed our country — historical systematic racism, anti-government militias bent on violence against politicians, governments at every level that put the interests of the corporations ahead of the people. COVID-19 and the massive protests after the George Floyd murder exposed the full meaning of these long-standing horrors to our class.

These events were like signposts, indicators, if you will, of a much deeper process at work. To move forward after the election, we need to understand these processes, how they have advanced our fight, and the solutions they hold for us. The articles in this issue of *Rally, Comrades!* share our perspective of the problems we face, what we can do about them, and a vision for the future.

The often-heard statement “These elections are like no other in our history” is true because the conditions are unlike any other in history. Global transformation is shattering and transforming all existing social and political relationships. Automated production within the wage labor value system is polarizing society with unheard-of wealth on one side and

unheard-of poverty on the other. It is destroying the basis of modern society, and it lies at the heart of the economic and political crisis that is engulfing the globe. It is giving the struggles around the world a revolutionary character.

Going forward, any U.S. Presidential administration, Democrat or Republican, will have to grapple with this historical reality and its results. The U.S. ruling class today, and their political mouthpieces, are not in disagreement about the defense of the private property system and U.S. global hegemony. They are in dangerous disagreement over how those goals should be accomplished. This is why they are fighting so hard to get our class behind one or another of their competing proposals and political parties within the electoral and every other arena.

At the same time, it is impossible to maintain the existing political and economic order with the new economic foundation that is being created. For the ruling class, fascism is the only way out. For us, the working class, the fight for a cooperative, communist society is the only path.

“After the Elections: The Fight for our Future” shows the direction our fight must take. If we accept the domination of corporate property in the form of a fascist state, then government that derives its just powers from the “consent of the governed” will become a thing of the past. The alternative is to plan now to make a

fight for real democracy, take government away from corporations, put it genuinely in the hands of the people, and reorganize the economy around distribution according to human need instead of private profit. We cannot secure real and lasting democracy as long as control over the necessities of human life is left in the hands of private corporations.

Our class needs its own political movement to clear the way for this new society. This movement is beginning to develop before our very eyes.

“What Kind of Government do We Need to Survive the Pandemic?” shows how the rising resistance of the people is rooted in a new awareness of how our government works hand in glove with the corporations to protect the interests of the ruling class, even to the extent of transforming moral values to justify their actions.

This reality has opened up the fighters thinking about the need for new solutions — unity based on our common economic interests and the practical solution of providing people with what they need. Revolutionaries play an important role by showing a vision of how our society’s wealth could be used for the benefit of all once it is freed from private ownership.

We see this new understanding in all areas of the fight. “Immigrant Youth Seek Unity Against the System” shows how the most socially conscious immi-

grants’ rights organizers realize that today they cannot just mobilize a struggle for immigrants’ rights within the existing system because the whole economic and political system is no longer working. The system’s abuse of immigrants cannot be ended without ending its ability to abuse any section of the poorest class of Americans.

“From Fighting Eviction to Cancelling Rent” shows that rising demands for rent forgiveness or cancellation is a precursor of the kind of housing system that modern technology makes possible. It is time for humanity to find a way to create a system where housing is made available regardless of ability to pay.

The demands of our class are well within our grasp. Today, we have the technology so that no one has to risk their lives to work or go without adequate healthcare or struggle for our most basic survival needs. In fact, we have the technology today to re-envision the whole concept of basic needs so that all Americans can have what we need to live the life we dream of living.

The fight for basic needs that has guided us through this electoral season will continue to guide us in 2021, but when we recognize our power as a class, that very fight will transform from one of survival to one of human liberation. **RC**

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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

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

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League of Revolutionaries for a New America

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.

After the Elections: The Fight For Our Future

The record voter turnout and decisive electoral defeat of the Donald Trump administration is a victory for the working class and the entire American people. An outstanding grassroots mobilization not only defeated him in the popular election by over six million votes, a total that may rise by the time all of the votes are counted. It also prevailed in the electoral college.

The victory was an extension and continuation of the George Floyd rebellion that rocked America since June. Millions demanded the defunding and abolition of the police and protested the mishandling of the pandemic, including its disproportionate impact on African Americans. Over 65 percent of eligible voters turned out, despite the November spike in deadly COVID-19 cases. In one example, early voting by 18- to 29-year olds increased dramatically, including by 700 percent in the swing states of Florida, North Carolina, and Michigan.

FASCIST OFFENSIVE

The fascist offensive continues to threaten America, however. There are three great dangers. The first and most immediate is that the Trump administration continues to contest the election results. It moved to a strategy of legal challenges, delaying tactics, and social chaos designed to rally Republican state legislatures to overturn the will of the people and appoint Trump electors. We dare not underestimate the power of Trump to bend Republican political officials to his will. The will of the majority of the American people must not be threatened.

The second great danger is that the fascist social base that Trump has built continues to “stand by.” The Proud Boys, the militias, and the white nationalists are not going away and will be out there working to recruit and physically attack those fighting against police terror and the results of the pandemic. The victory of right-wing Senators and the defeat of progressive propositions indicate the power of demagogic populism, especially when amplified by its presence on social media and the airwaves.

The third and ultimately most serious danger is the stable fascist groups embedded in the economy — Wall Street, the transnational corporations, the military-industrial complex, and the unchecked power of technology corporations. These forces pose a mortal danger to what democracy that continues to exist, unless and until the people rise up to seize the levers of power away from them.

The damage Trump has already done cannot easily be reversed. The migrant families destroyed, the COVID-19 deaths, and the damage to the earth can never be repaired. And especially if Republicans keep control of the Senate, there is no easy path to undo the unleashing of polluters, the Trump tax giveaways, the impending mass evictions, and the rampant vot-

er suppression. All these battles remain at the heart of our agenda.

The resistance can and should use any law and lawsuit that will help us secure our victory, but we dare not rely on the Constitution and the courts as a strategy. The assurances by mainstream media and Democratic Party leaders that “the system is working” are a dangerous lie. The fact that Trump is even contesting the clear expression of the will of the people is a sign that American democracy is broken.

The 2000 Bush-Gore election is one example. Al Gore and the Democratic Party leadership relied on the courts, refused to mobilize their base to defend the election results, and allowed the US Supreme Court to overturn the will of the voters.

The whole history of the Trump administration has exposed the underlying, undemocratic structure of the American political system. In the 2016 general election, Republicans who won a minority of votes in elections for the US House of Representatives, the US Senate, and the presidency ended up controlling all three. Their elected officials then used their power to pack the Supreme Court and lower courts all across the land with pro-corporate and anti-democratic judges.

How is this possible? Contrary to what many of us were taught in school, the US Constitution does not even guarantee political democracy, not to mention economic democracy. When workers fight for their basic demands today, they confront constitutional obstacles put in place by eighteenth-century slave owners and other wealthy capitalists to defend slavery and corporate property rights. In the Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court notoriously used the Constitution to rule that African Americans “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect” and could be “bought and sold and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic whenever a profit could be made by it.”

The checks and balances in the Constitution were specifically designed not only to protect slavery but, in the words of James Madison, to thwart a “rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project” that would benefit the people at the expense of the wealthy. The Constitution has served as a vehicle not only to oppress African Americans but to politically control and exploit working people of all colors.

REAL DEMOCRACY REQUIRES POLITICAL REVOLUTION

The 2020 election has proved not that the system worked, but that it has to be changed. This has been done before. The Civil War brought about the abolition of slavery and established the human rights embodied in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. It will take an equal or greater popular mobilization to create a

Constitution that aligns with the needs and aspirations of the people today.

The development of fascism in the U.S. and internationally is based in the fact that corporate private property and democracy are incompatible in the era of electronics. The introduction of digital technology into the economy has created a fundamental antagonism between the production of material goods by robots and artificial intelligence and the system of private property. This creates a new class of workers that are temporary, part-time workers, minimum wage, below minimum wage, gig workers, partially unemployed, or permanently unemployed.

When human workers are replaced, a system based on the buying and selling of labor power can no longer function. Corporate owners with little or no need for human labor have little regard for human beings. While the new class is driven into political struggle, including voting, just to be able to survive, the corporate class is driven to embrace fascist dictatorship to prevent human beings from using their vote in a way that interferes with profits.

HISTORIC CHOICE

In this situation, we have a historic choice. If we accept the domination of corporate property in the form of a fascist state, then government that derives its just powers from the “consent of the governed” will become a thing of the past. The alternative is to plan now to make a fight for real democracy, take government away from corporations, put it genuinely in the hands of the people, and reorganize the economy around distribution according to human need instead of private profit. We cannot secure real and lasting democracy as long as control over the necessities of human life is left in the hands of private corporations.

Strategy in this situation must rely on this new class that is forced to fight the

government for the necessities of life that it needs and deserves. Strategy has to further rely on the developing unity of that new class, as it begins to sense that it cannot win these basic demands without consciously opposing the relentless attempts by Trump and the rest of the ruling class to divide it by race, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation, or religion. In addition, it now has to repudiate those Democratic Party leaders who are already attacking the very masses of people of color, low-income, and youth who gave them their margin of victory.

Strategy further depends on connecting with the deep moral indignation of the American people at the disgusting inhumanity of a government that murders African Americans with impunity, separates migrant children from their families, and does nothing while hundreds of thousands of all colors die of COVID-19. Democracy and morality are also basic needs. The very essence of America is the idea that whenever a government tramples on the right of the people to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it.

Despite the brutality and immorality of the system, popular movements have arisen over the past decade: the immigrant rights marches, Occupy, Fight for 15, the women’s marches, the opposition to the Muslim ban, the fight at Standing Rock, the MeToo Movement, the red state teachers rebellions, the anti-gun violence marches, the climate strikes, the movement to Abolish Ice, the George Floyd rebellion, and the war against COVID-19.

They are proof that with strategy and a vision for a new society, we have the power to defeat the ruling class dictatorship and move forward toward the cooperative society we are striving for. The fight for democracy is indispensable and will immediately be tested in the upcoming battles we face against the eviction crisis and the pandemic spike. **RC**

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What Kind of Government do We Need to Survive the Pandemic?

It has been over nine months since the first COVID-19 stay at home orders began in U.S. states. We are going through unprecedented times of uncertainty, yet government at all levels is unwilling or unable to respond. Over the last six months, we have been forced to restructure our lives completely, many losing jobs, and suffering the threat of sickness and death. Over 12 million of us are sick, with over 250,000 deaths, with the numbers increasing every day.

As usual, the lowest-income workers are hardest hit, and both historic and current realities ensure that certain ethnic groups are over-represented among the poor. While all of us are at risk, as of September, one in every 1,020 Black Americans and one in every 1,220 Indigenous Americans have died. In addition, 1 in every 1,400 Pacific Islander Americans, one in every 1,540 Latinx Americans, one in every 2,150 white Americans, and 1 in every 2,470 Asian Americans have lost their lives, according to APM Research Lab's report "The Color of the Coronavirus."

Our people, all members of the working class, are dying, while members of the ruling class are protected because they don't have to leave their homes and put themselves at risk. With an escalating number of cases throughout the country, many of us have loved ones, friends, and neighbors who have become sick or died. Adding salt to the wound, we understand that the spread of this pandemic could have been minimized by government's taking action based on scientific public health advice.

Despite the massive loss of life and devastating increases in unemployment and hunger, government is doing practically nothing for the everyday person, while spending trillions on corporate bailouts. In the middle of the worst escalation of COVID-19 cases in our country, Congress went home on vacation for two weeks (or, as they say, "recess"), without passing a relief bill.

WHAT SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT BE DOING?

First, it should immediately use this country's enormous resources to respond to the people's growing demands for health care, housing, food, and enough money to obtain their basic needs during this crisis. There's plenty of capacity to produce everything we need to fight the virus, whether masks, gowns, or ventilators, or tests. There's plenty of food — it's going to waste because it can't be distributed for a profit. There are thousands of people on the front lines, who can tell us how to organize ourselves to fight the virus. There are millions now out of work, who could be mobilized for what needs



Volunteers distribute food at Wrigley Field in Chicago.

PHOTO/MARY KAY YARAK

to be done to solve this crisis, and rebuild our country if society was organized to meet human needs.

POLICE TERROR IN THE PANDEMIC

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed the May 25 murder of George Floyd at the knee of a Minneapolis Police officer, in an agonizing 8-minute incident filmed on a cell phone. Floyd's death became a spark that led to the biggest protests in American history, involving millions of people of all colors around the country and around the world, demanding systemic change. A national struggle emerged from the George Floyd Rebellion, based on the demand for cities, counties, and school districts, to pull funding from local police departments, which some have agreed to at least partially do. The demand to defund or abolish the police envisions a new society that divests from armed law enforcement and invests in human needs, such as health and mental health care, housing, education, and other vital human services. The movement is on a collision course with the capitalist system that prioritizes private property over human lives.

YOUTH LEAD THE WAY

The George Floyd movement, as well as protests to cancel rent and fight for essential worker rights, has been overwhelming-

ly led by young people under the age of 34. Today's youth have good reason to want radical change. First, they have grown up understanding the power and potential of digital technologies. They also have grown up in an economy that clearly doesn't want them. If they are lucky enough to find a job, they work side-by-side with adults twice their age, whose prior employment has been eliminated.

Eighteen to 24-year-olds have been the largest demographic thrown into unemployment by the coronavirus, and groups like the World Economic Forum project that their ability to regain employment will not only take longer than for others, but will likely affect their lifelong job prospects. It is easy for youth to understand the relationship between the new technologies and a dying economy. This is one reason why the base for candidate Andrew Yang, the only Presidential candidate to address the economic costs of technology, was largely between the ages of 18 and 29. It's safe to say most youth know the world's broken.

Our youth feel the contradictions between human-made restrictions and human potential, and they're stepping up to fix things right. The economic crisis being nothing new, but amplified by the pandemic, younger people were already showing an increased interest in socialism and communism in polls at the end of 2019. As conditions deteriorate, young-

er people are showing solidarity with the great majority of Americans, who must work together as a class to end the domination of the ruling class, that runs the economy as its own private property. With our youth's morality and vision on our side, our class can secure our future, providing far more than basic needs for countless generations to come.

The stability of having a job is gone for many and, with it, the ability to secure the pursuit of happiness. Being blocked by the ruling class' private hoarding of what the people have produced, and its refusal to use this socially produced wealth to relieve the growing suffering, opens the fighters to thinking about new solutions. Revolutionaries can play an important role, by introducing a vision of this social wealth's collective use, once it is freed from private ownership and control.

Some might connect this vision to their spiritual or cultural traditions. Some might link it to the Meriam-Webster definition of communism, "a system in which goods are owned in common and are available to all as needed." If we can imagine a society without murderous police or politicians, who risk our lives for their careers, and we can, then we can imagine a society where the most powerful technology belongs to everyone and is used to provide enough medical masks, food, and housing for everyone, whether they have a job or not. **RC**

Immigrant Fighters Alert to Danger of Betrayal

Undocumented people are not able to vote, but they have built a movement that has changed laws, challenged politicians and presidents, and won in the U.S. Supreme Court. During the 2020 elections, some spoke out about the need to prevent the re-election of Donald Trump, the president who ordered the separation of detained parents from their children and attempted to end the DACA program for undocumented students. Some also got involved with local elections and issues as a way to develop allies and get ready for the struggles coming after the elections.

The most aware undocumented youth reject the narrative that the Dreamers are “good immigrants,” who arrived through no fault of their own and deserved jobs and freedom from deportation under DACA, while immigrants like their parents deserve to be criminalized and deported. These fighters express their hatred of being “unDACAmented” as their relatives, and the youth who didn’t qualify for DACA, remain the “undocumented-undocumented,” with no recognition or protection under the law at all.

The most socially conscious immigrants’ rights organizers realize that today they cannot just mobilize a “struggle for immigrants’ rights” within the existing system, because the whole economic and political system is no longer working. They have a commitment, passion, and knowledge about how to organize as a step towards going beyond the broken system we are in today. So, their fight for equal rights has to also move in the direction of uniting with other movements for basic needs and justice, to build toward the social destruction and conflict they know is coming.

This includes linking to people fighting for the needs of tenants, the homeless, and saving the environment. It also includes efforts to connect to parts of the wide array of organizations and forces fighting under the slogan of Black Lives Matter. They are looking at the experience of the movement against police killings of Blacks as they think over such issues as whether to work with the police when planning protests. Liberal leaders of immigrant assistance services claim they must work with the police to protect the undocumented from arrest at rallies, but organizers of BLM protests refuse to include police in their planning. Instead, they have shared with immigrant rights activists the ways they organize people to surround and protect legally vulnerable previously-incarcerated people at BLM protests.

Immigrant youth organizers are also training each other in the history of political and labor struggles, even questioning the actions of civil rights icons. They know about the United Farm Workers union strikes in the 1970s when Cesar Chavez called on the Border Patrol to arrest undocumented strike-breakers. The union finally stopped doing that as the ranks of immigrants grew, but this sad experience illustrates how capitalism pits laborers against themselves. The young leaders’ purpose is not to denigrate revered leaders, but to learn how the capitalist system insidiously turns workers against their own material and political class interests.

It is not lost on young immigrant leaders that these tragic lessons in history have occurred under both Democrat and Republican Administrations. They know that the last time comprehensive

immigration reform occurred (sometimes called amnesty) was under a Republican president, Ronald Reagan, who also was a rabid imperialist, responsible for the training of death squads that ran guns as well as drugs across Central America. They also know that Democrats controlled both houses of Congress and the presidency from 2008 to 2010 yet failed to deliver the “comprehensive immigration reform” they’d promised.

Instead, Obama issued his DACA Executive Order for young students while the great mass of undocumented remained in peril. Eventually, immigrants began mobilizing protests against the rising deportations carried out under the man they began calling “the Deporter-in-Chief.” But by then the movement which was so massive during the May 1, 2006 nationwide mobilizations against the Sensenbrenner bill had become much smaller. As a result, all immigrants were more vulnerable when the election of Trump led to huge new attacks on immigrant rights.

Now, the Trump Administration has stepped up both anti-immigrant rhetoric and punitive enforcement actions such as deportations and family separations, as a core part of his re-election campaign message. This has allowed the Democratic Party’s leadership to replay one part of the strategy they used under Obama – criticizing the Republicans and promising to fight for immigrants if they win control of the presidency and Congress, without actually presenting a plan to do so.

The reality is that no matter what happens in the elections, new tools are needed to dismantle the current system and its increasingly blatant abuse of immigrants.

On September 14, the social action organization Project South filed a complaint with the Department of Homeland Security accusing Georgia’s Irwin County Detention Center of gross violations of the human rights of incarcerated immigrants, including repeated failures to protect them from COVID-19 infections and repeated hysterectomy surgeries, that resulted in sterilizations of immigrant women without their consent. These atrocities reflect an American tradition of forced sterilization of the most vulnerable members of the working class.

It’s a history that includes sterilizations of an uncounted mass of Native American women for over a century, as documented in the 1977 class-action lawsuit against the federal government filed by three anonymous Northern Cheyenne women in Montana. It includes a huge number of poor Black women over the decades, such as Alabama’s 1973 sterilization of Minnie Lee and Mary Alice Relf. And it includes Carrie Buck, a white woman who was the first person sterilized in Virginia under its 1927 law.

Today’s sterilization of immigrants and separation of their families are the legacy of a socio-economic system built on indigenous genocide, slave labor, and imperialist conquest in Latin America, which made the ruling class strong enough to ensure the ongoing exploitation of workers of all colors. The system’s abuse of immigrants cannot be ended without ending its ability to abuse any section of the poorest class of Americans. Young immigrant activists are consciously moving towards linking their struggle to that of others facing the same enemy. **RC**

An Election like No Other and the Fight for America

Continued from page 1

One-quarter of all Americans have lost any stake in the system. The *New York Times* reports 3.8 million Americans now face permanent unemployment; that’s twice as many as were permanently unemployed before the pandemic. This new number of permanently unemployed, roughly equivalent to the population of Los Angeles, are never expected to work again.

Though ruling class leaders and the media championed the essential workers as the heroes of the pandemic, the expansion of laborless production means more motivation than ever to eliminate these jobs. Delivery is permanently replacing restaurants, self-check-out has leaped forward at most retail stores, remote health care is prevalent, and COVID tests are being self-administered. The essential worker job is being cut, breaking the tenuous grasp of about 55 million more workers, according to the Economic Policy Institute. This is about the same number of people the U.S. hunger organization Civil Eats reports already live in “food deserts.”

The resistance to this growing disparity has expressed itself in the motion around Bernie Sanders’ candidacy, the protests by health care workers fighting for PPE, protests over unsafe conditions by essential workers such as Amazon employees, and the uprisings after the George Floyd murder. The deepened inequality and the reaction to it reflect the polarization both between and within the two major parties, which have dominated American politics for over a century. Those splits are going to increase the viability of new party formations in the near future. While many of those formations will revolve around traditional concepts of Left and Right, true democracy will only come from a vision that unleashes the power of the great masses of the American people to fight for our common needs.

The turnout of the 2020 elections shows the people of a country that has never really had true democracy striving like never before to achieve that goal. Our country began with democracy only for landowners, taking another fifty years for

the majority of white men to gain the vote, another century for white women to gain the vote, and forty more years for most Black Americans. However, America will not see a completely realized democracy while the power and influence of the ruling class controls the electoral system, and working class America continues to lose value in the capitalist system.

We fight for our most basic needs not being provided by this system. We must call for continuous and ongoing stimulus programs specifically but more generally demanding that the country ensure our life, liberty, and ability to thrive in the face of a collapsing system. Instead of one political party playing one segment of the working class against another, we have to unite as a class to have the power to achieve these goals.

The election was a strategic battle to stop the most brutal and divisive tactics the ruling class has attempted during the current crisis. But the working class must move forward with an objective understanding of our basis for unity. With a shared understanding of our objective

situation, we not only have the numbers to survive this crisis in American history, but that same objectivity can reveal the new world struggling to be born. That clarity regarding our power and potential is necessary to achieve the goals of a true democracy, where every individual has equal rights and equal support to thrive.

We have the technology today so that none of us must risk our lives to work or go without adequate healthcare or struggle for our most basic survival needs. In fact, we have the technology today to reenvision the whole concept of basic needs so that all Americans can live a life we couldn’t imagine before. The fight for basic needs has compelled our efforts throughout this electoral season and will continue to do so in 2021. But, when we come together and recognize our power as a class, that very fight will transform from one of simply survival to one that calls for the control of the means of production and distribution of all that’s needed to live decently, as a means to universal human liberation. **RC**

From Fighting Eviction to Cancelling Rent

Thirty to forty million Americans are at risk of pandemic-related eviction as the various state, and local restrictions expire this fall, according to the Aspen Institute. A last-minute moratorium by the Trump administration on September 1 was supposed to postpone the evictions at least temporarily, but a stampede of corporate landlords have filed for evictions in Georgia, Florida, and elsewhere to get them done before tenants could become aware of the moratorium. Renters are already organizing eviction defense actions, including court or home blockades, in New Orleans, Kansas City, Chicago, New York City, and Prince Georges County, Maryland.

Many tenants understand that the moratorium is a thinly disguised Trump election ploy. “The Trump administration has been quick to celebrate the national eviction moratorium as his offering to working families,” said Tara Raghuvver of People’s Action. “But it must not be attributed to Trump. This is a victory for tenants.”

In any case, the moratorium expires on December 31. This, at best, only would delay the evictions. Like every other Trump promise, the eviction moratorium is a lie. It does nothing to cancel or forgive the back rent, which would be necessary to stop evictions from happening. After the election, tenants’ leverage to win rent cancellation or any relief will be sharply reduced.

CAUSES OF THE CRISIS

The COVID-19 eviction wave is revealing fatal flaws that already existed in America’s housing system before the pandemic began. The displacement of millions of Americans by digital production has caused the rise of a new class of contingent workers, whose wages are so low and irregular that they no longer make enough money to afford to pay rent. At the same time, uncontrolled corporate speculation has driven those rents astronomically upward. Before the pandemic, there was already an eviction crisis, which has now thrown an additional forty-seven million people out of their jobs and created the looming “eviction cliff.”

This is not a crisis that will go away when COVID-19 is over, even if that takes several years. University of Chicago economist Steven Davis estimated that up to 40 percent of American jobs lost in April and May are likely to be permanently gone, and that the number will only increase the longer the pandemic lasts.

Resistance to the eviction wave has taken the form of a fight for rent forgiveness or cancellation. So far, it has been blocked by a bipartisan united front of politicians protecting corporate property rights. The Democratic-dominated

California legislature refused to even consider rent cancellation, in the face of opposition by the California Apartment Association and Wall Street banks.

HR 6515

The most sweeping proposal has been the Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act, HR 6515, written in consultation with tenant organizations by Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar in April. Omar’s bill would immediately forgive rents and mortgages without requiring repayment for all renters and all homeowners with a mortgage on their primary residence. Property owners and lenders would have the opportunity to apply for reimbursement from the federal government. In return, they would have to agree to not increase rent for five years, follow just cause eviction guidelines, and not discriminate

the movement. The Trump moratorium is actually a deliberate maneuver on his part to try to drive a wedge between workers struggling for economic justice, on the one hand, and for racial justice on the other. In fact, the two are inseparable. The summer Black Lives Matter uprising struck a massive blow against the historic ruling class tactic to divide workers by isolating and suppressing African Americans and other people of color. The victory was made possible by leaders who understood the deep interrelationship between racial oppression and economic exploitation. But Trump is desperately trying to strike back.

African Americans and Latinos are deeply, disproportionately impacted by the housing crisis generally, and the pandemic eviction wave in particular. Due to historical discrimination, Black and

eviction,” said Jenay Manley of KC Tenants in Kansas City, Missouri. “We need to talk about Black lives mattering before the point where we are brutalized or killed by police.”

One of the most important steps toward rent cancellation was to defeat Trump in the 2020 election. We cannot unite, and we cannot move forward unless we clearly repudiate Trump’s overtly racist and divisive tactics. But while we vote against Republicans, we should hold no illusions about Democrats. Defeating Trump simply takes the struggle for housing to the next level. Many Democrats are also allied with banks and corporations and conveniently blame Republican opposition for their own inaction. If we can remove the Republicans, we can hold Democratic politicians responsible when they betray us. We can open the door for new leaders and even new parties to represent the battle for the needs of the new class.

HR 6515 sponsor Ilhan Omar was not only brutally, racially insulted by Trump, but she was attacked and even “primaried” by a wealthy pro-corporate Democrat while running for re-election. The fact that Omar won, as well as numerous new progressive candidates, is a tribute to the power of voting and the necessity of holding on to what limited democracy we have left in America. Without democracy, neither rent cancellation, nor rent relief, nor any renters rights of any kind will ever happen.

SOLUTIONS

Rent forgiveness is not only an immediate, practical solution. It is an example, a precursor of the kind of housing system that modern technology makes possible. If digital printing can lower construction costs to practically nothing, it is time for humanity to find a way to create a system where housing is free. It is time to “decommodify” it, to separate housing and the land it rests on from the speculative corporate market.

“Decommodification” at scale will require more than regulation. It will require a fully cooperative economy. Building a cooperative economy requires a political revolution – one where the working class becomes the government, strips corporations of their private property (including land), and turns it over to the public for public benefit. The banks and corporations rest their case on the Fifth Amendment provisions which states in part, “nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.” But when those provisions make it impossible for human beings to live, it is time for the people to throw them off and make new ones. **RC**

The COVID-19 eviction wave is revealing fatal flaws that already existed in America’s housing system.

against tenants based on their source of income, immigration status, conviction or arrest record, sexuality, gender, or credit history.

The bill would further require Congress to fully fund the program based on need, to prevent it from running out of money like the federal Section 8 program or the pandemic Paycheck Protection Program. But despite favorable polling, HR 6515, like state and local rent cancellation bills, has also so far been blocked by the banks and corporate landlords.

What did advance were two \$100 billion rent relief bills passed by the House of Representatives to prevent the eviction wave. The Senate and Administration, however, refused to act on either one of them. Rent relief has shortcomings compared to cancellation. The burden of applying for it falls on tenants, with the result that many fall through the cracks. The government would likely deny assistance to undocumented and other marginalized groups, and assistance would likely be delayed, as happened with the pandemic unemployment benefits.

UNITY

Tenants are happy to take any rent relief they can get, but they have to be vigilant to resist any plan that leaves out the undocumented or discriminates against any other group of renters. The first step to winning the right to housing is to unite

Latino homeownership rates are 44 percent and 49 percent, respectively, while that of whites is 74 percent. This creates a huge wealth gap that makes Blacks and Latinos dramatically more vulnerable to eviction and homelessness than whites. The strategy and tactics of fighting for rent cancellation have to recognize the disparities while at the same time understanding that billionaires exploit all tenants for their benefit. The growth of the new class actually means that more and more white workers are being driven down into an equality of poverty with workers of color.

Significant sections of the renters’ movement actively embraced and participated in the summer’s George Floyd Rebellion and fought to unite the two movements. Since the 1960s and before, African American and Latino renters have played a leading role in tenant organizations all across the country, so resisting racial oppression necessarily elevates tenants as well. In New York, Ithaca Tenants Union members actively participated in both renter organizing and defund the police protests. In Boston, City Life/Vida Urbana joined the movement to redirect 10 percent of police funds to community needs, and New York’s Housing for All has been leading a campaign to fire city marshals who serve eviction papers.

“I don’t think we can talk about Black lives mattering without talking about