

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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New Year Calls for New Thinking

January was named for Janus, the Roman god who always turned one of his faces toward the past and the other one toward the future. We should approach the new year like that, but not let ruling class propaganda about the past cloud our vision of the future. That future is a society without capitalism, which will inevitably result from the destruction of the capitalist system that is already underway. Still, the question is whether the future post-capitalist society will be something won by the revolutionary new class suffering at the bottom of the current society, or whether it will be a new form of fascism, imposed by the ruling class to preserve its private property.

A stark example of the opposed interests of these two classes was the very different Thanksgiving they had as 2020 was ending. Investors pushed stock indexes to all-time highs right after the election, in recognition that there was little chance the new government would start putting the workers' needs ahead of theirs. As Michael Arone of State Street Global Advisors explained to The New York Times the day before Thanksgiving, "You have a Biden administration likely governed by a split Congress and a conservative Supreme Court, so it eliminates some of the most extreme policies either on the right or left. So markets are celebrating that."

But fourteen million Americans receiving federal emergency unemployment relief spent their holiday not knowing if the government would act to extend the December 31 expiration deadline. About nine million received Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, covering self-employed workers and others ineligible for regular state benefits. Also 4.5 million were relying on the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, which added 13 weeks of benefits to the 26 weeks available in most states.

Federal rules preventing evictions and defaults for non-payment of mortgages or student loans were also set to expire, making it hard for many families to feel thankful about their government. We shouldn't forget what they went through, no matter which half-steps were later adopted.

Society's economic transformation from old electro-mechanical technology to today's digitally-controlled factories requiring little or no human labor will continue in 2021. Though this could create environmentally sustainable economic abundance for all, the ruling class only uses technology to produce profits at the expense of the workers. Dispossessed of



NEW YORK, NY, JUNE 2020: 'White Coats for Black Lives.' Photo: Jennifer M. Mason/Shutterstock.

secure jobs and incomes by electronic production, they are becoming part of a new class of the marginally employed, the permanently unemployed, and the absolutely destitute homeless. The result is that the capitalist system's future is to break down, becoming inoperable as millions are forced outside of the market.

FASCISM UNDER NEW CONDITIONS

The ruling class's response to the coronavirus pandemic sped up both the growth of this new class and the turn towards fascist methods of control. In the fascism of one hundred years ago in Italy, the government's goal was to accelerate capitalism by putting certain companies in charge of whole industries. Workers' rights to fight for better conditions were restricted, their energy diverted by propaganda calling for them to unite with the government against supposedly disloyal ethnic groups and communists. But today's ruling class merges corporations with the State because the digital economic revolution is destroying capitalism, and they intend to maintain the dominance of private property over whatever comes next.

Of course, leaders of the ruling class are not going to admit that capitalism

that technological job displacement will spread such "disorderly failure" throughout the capitalist system.

NO WAY TO REVERSE

President-elect Biden has promised to prioritize job creation, but there is no way he can reverse the electronic revolution that has raged through the economy during the last several presidencies. It has especially impoverished millions in the South and its border area, home to eight of the ten states with the most unpaid mortgages and rents: Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Arkansas, West Virginia, and Missouri. With Southern poverty certain to increase in 2021, the nationwide struggle over the economics of the new American fascism will become especially intense in this region.

Knowing that such struggles are rising, any American president has to further fascist political policies that prepare the State apparatus for greater repression against the fights for people's basic needs. Those fights really express the struggle of the new class as a whole, but because so many in this class are Blacks and immigrants, class repression against them is often accompanied by racist propaganda spewed by "hate groups." That makes people think the only American fascists are those who think like Germany's racist Nazis.

But fascist economics that protect corporations, and fascist politics to crack down on the new class, are being imposed by the ruling class through "respectable" leaders of both political parties, not just by the extremists.

We can be sure that in 2021, the ruling class will need Joe Biden to deal with the "coronavirus recession" by going in the fascist direction already taken by Trump and Obama. They are on a colli-

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Embracing Transformation for the Future

Inside Rally, Comrades!

In the waning days of 2020, Sarah Palin, a demagogue of the ruling class, came to Georgia to speak at a rally on behalf of the two Republican candidates campaigning for the January 5 runoff election for the U.S. Senate. "What we need," she said, "is not transformation, but restoration." On New Year's Eve, we would all like to have heaved a big sigh of relief and finally put 2020 behind us. But as the article "New Year Calls for New Thinking" points out for us, January, named for the two-faced Roman god Janus, has one face always turned to the past, and the other

toward the future. That best describes the choice we have to make as we enter into the new year of 2021: restoration or transformation?

Twenty-twenty saw a time of deep crisis, a pandemic that even now is killing us at the rate of a Pearl Harbor or 9/11 every day, and an economy in which masses of people are literally starving, and jobs continue to disappear.

Twenty-twenty was also a year of rebellion, as millions rose to protest the systemic police violence and killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many more. Yet, in spite of the massive uprisings, the police state has not abated its stance to control by force a restive new class of workers, being cast aside as worthless and having no choice

but to fight for their survival.

Now another name is added to the growing list: in December, 23-year-old Casey Goodson, Jr. was gunned down by a police officer in Columbus, Ohio. The officer said he thought he saw a gun and shot Goodson to death. There were no witnesses, no body cams, no videos. According to Goodson's family, Casey was actually carrying a Subway sandwich and was shot as he entered his own home. "He was shot through the metal screen door, and he fell and died in his kitchen," said the family.

The battle is joined. The powers of the State and its ruling class will stop at nothing to protect, maintain, and "restore" a dying capitalism, that is in the process of its own destruction. For a desperate new class of workers, who face only hunger, deepening poverty, eviction from their homes, and shrinking means to obtain even the most basic necessities of life, the only real option is to go forward to a society transformed, in which the abundance of life is distributed to all who are in need.

As the article "Police Terror, Rebellion and Revolution" says, "Today, our society is fighting out an economic revolution — the clash between the labor-replacing power of digital technology and a society organized around the buying and selling of labor power. Society needs to transform, and reorganize around its capacity to produce without exploitation, and to ensure a healthy and productive life for all."

As we celebrate Black History Month this February, the article "American

History and the Liberation of Us All" shows how, just as an abolitionist movement arose to abolish slavery, now today a new class arising in opposition to its existing conditions is also an abolitionist class. Organizer and educator Marianne Kaba stated: "For me, capitalism has to go. It has to be abolished. So we're doing work every single day to set the conditions for that possible vision of a world without prisons, policing, and surveillance."

"Sweet Home Chicago" unveils the insidious practice of "gentrification," used both in Chicago and throughout America, which directly links this practice to the exponential growth of potentially millions of homeless people. Even the shooting death of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky, was part of a police operation to clear out a block that was to be part of a major gentrification makeover.

"The Road to a New America Runs Through the South" shows how the South has long been a key to ruling class political control of Southern workers and all workers throughout America. "The full weight of the knee of American capitalism has always been pressed on the neck of working and poor Southerners." The recent elections in Georgia show how the American working class can win when it understands the strategic role of the South, which has the potential to unleash revolutionary transformation.

"From the Editors" affirms that history is on our side. "Once the human mind and spirit are set free of the constraints of an outdated system, we can then work together to achieve goals that reach for the limits of human imagination." **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.

Sweet Home Chicago?

Lincoln Park is a wealthy neighborhood in Chicago. It borders Lake Michigan and has become an extension of the Gold Coast. Looking around at the greystone mansions and tree-lined streets, it's hard to believe that this was once one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city, a refuge for Puerto Rican immigrants. Signs of the bloody fight that went down from the 1960s to the 1980s as residents fought to hold onto their roots is now only a memory to those who were forced to scatter into other poor neighborhoods like Humboldt Park. Today, more than 50 years later, the largely Puerto Rican neighborhood of Humboldt Park once again faces the same forces that expelled them from Lincoln Park.

This practice of building more affluent neighborhoods on the ashes of poor working-class communities continues across the country today, even during a pandemic. Besides tearing apart communities, another result of this process is ever raising rents. RentCafé, the online rental listing service, estimates the average monthly rent in Chicago at about \$2,000. Given the rise of "official" unemployment in Chicago to over 10.6 percent in September and the permanent loss of thousands of jobs, Chicagoans will soon face evictions in record numbers.

U.S. EVICTION CRISIS

The Aspen Institute estimates that 30-40 million people are at risk of being evicted when the COVID-19 eviction moratorium is lifted, allowing landlords, courts, and law enforcement to rev up the eviction machine once more. Before the pandemic, this eviction machine uprooted families from their homes at an incredible rate. In 2019, more than 23,000 evictions were filed in Chicago. Across the U. S., seven evictions were filed every minute, and three households were actually evicted!

Even with the eviction moratorium, renters are still being pushed out with lockouts, notices on doors, and legal manipulations. And those being pushed out have nowhere to turn. "Due to chronic underfunding by the federal government, only one in four eligible renters receive federal financial assistance," the Aspen Institute reported in August 2020. "With the loss of four million affordable housing units over the last decade, and a shortage of seven million affordable apartments available to the lowest-income renters, many renters entered the pandemic already facing housing instability and vulnerable to eviction."

Without substantial relief, Americans will become homeless by the millions, and shantytowns will become a permanent feature of our cities and towns. How did

we arrive at this juncture?

HOUSING CRISIS

Manipulating property for profit at the expense of communities has a long history. The government works alongside financial institutions and corporate developers, and is responsible for impoverishing communities and all of the resultant social problems. To understand their role, we need a historical perspective.

Going back to 1944, when cotton could be planted, harvested, and baled by machinery, a major population shift took place in the U.S. The new technology combined with Jim Crow laws resulted in a mass migration of African Americans out of the South and into the northern cities, where manufacturing jobs were plentiful. Those making the journey were allowed to settle in immigrant neighborhoods, where a practice of redlining existed.

Redlining meant that people of color were denied access to loans, which stopped them from buying or repairing homes in their neighborhoods. Wikipedia describes it well, "As a result, there was a very low rate at which people... were able to own their homes, opening the door for slum landlords (who could get approved for low interest loans in those communities) to take over and do as they saw fit."

Redlining helped create segregation of communities by wealth, race, or nationality, inequality of essential services, food deserts, and a political and social isolation that still exists in American cities throughout the nation.

In 1949, the Urban Renewal Act was passed to clear large areas of "slum" housing to make way for modern developments, becoming known as the 'Negro removal Act.' "The cleared land was sold to private developers for use in new developments designed to extend the central business district or to attract middle-income residents... the former residents of the area were relocated outside the renewal district," wrote Mindy Thompson Fullilove, MD in her 2001 book "Root Shock."

Today we call the process of driving people out of their homes and replacing their neighborhood with more affluent people gentrification. In Chicago, we see this happening in one after another of the inner city neighborhoods. The whole process is planned and orchestrated by government officials, financial agencies, and property developers. Plans to revitalize a neighborhood begin to take shape and be publicly discussed using rhetoric that promises investment in blighted neighborhoods and job creation. One current example taking shape in Chicago is Mayor Lori Lightfoot's "Invest South/

Covid-19 Catastrophe

From the Editors

The new year begins with reflections on the hard lessons of 2020. Countries such as China, South Korea, Taiwan, New Zealand, and Vietnam, which all-but-eliminated the threat of COVID-19, imposed rigorous national lockdowns and ensured testing and contact-tracing strategies. They paid a price upfront and began a return to normal within weeks.

By comparison, the United States ended the year with a race between a vaccine rollout and the progress of a disease that's reached more than 22,000,000 Americans, spreading at more than 200,000 new cases a day, with over 375,000 Americans dead. Compare that number to the 4,634 who've died in China, or the 659 in South Korea or the 35 in Vietnam, the 25 in New Zealand, and the seven who died in Taiwan.

What goes a long way toward explaining the difference is how the United States government spent our money. As the independent global news organization, The Conversation reports, New Zealand spent one-fourth of its GDP, the vast majority supporting workers and their businesses through the lockdown and almost half again as much specifically focused on seniors and low-income workers. By comparison, the United States only spent one-fifth of its GDP, over half of it going to businesses and only one-fifth going to workers.

While 40 million Americans contin-

ue to face eviction, Business Insider reports that America's ruling class made \$845 billion off the first six months of the pandemic. The pandemic in the United States was an exploited opportunity. Our lives were sacrificed for the sake of private property.

This is happening because the basic formula that made capitalism work has been automated out of existence. Digital technologies are rapidly replacing human labor, creating a new class of workers who are being thrown out of the economic system. Because this new class can no longer sell its labor in the marketplace, it can no longer buy from the market, disrupting and destroying the buying and selling that makes capitalism what it is. The new class has no stake in the system, and if it were to become conscious of itself as a class, it would threaten the future of the private property system.

History is on our side. We are the class being created by new technologies that beg to be set free of a system that hobbles what these technologies can do. With today's technology, we can take care of everyone, and we can redefine human life as a society to fit our moral standards.

We can recognize human life as inherently valuable, far beyond any concept of material wealth. We can remove any incentive to destroy our planet or each other and repair the damage we've done to our environment. Once the human mind and spirit are free of the constraints of an outdated system, we can then work together to achieve goals that reach beyond the limits of human imagination. **RC**

West." Her campaign promise to bring resources into deprived neighborhoods turns out to be a way to channel city taxes into the working class neighborhoods of Bronzeville and Pilsen to prepare these areas for gentrification. In these examples, "middle class" minorities will often be replacing the poorer people of color who live there now.

Gentrification often takes years, but it relentlessly presses forward. Neighborhoods that have begged and protested for much needed resources suddenly find that schools receive funds, and parks, sidewalks, and streets are beautified. Starbucks coffee shops appear alongside new trendy restaurants and different kinds of shops and services that cater to the new, more affluent residents moving into the pricier refurbished and modernized housing. While this takes place, the old residents struggle to pay higher rents or are forced to move, when landlords evict them so they can rehab their buildings. The little homeowner is alarmed by the rising property taxes and must sell before foreclosure.

The new, more affluent people moving in get the credit for improving the neighborhood, while those fighting to save their homes and their community are accused of standing in the way of progress. The longtime residents are seen as blight and a danger to the new residents. Consequently, the police become more involved with increased surveillance and more arrests. The more interactions people have with police, the more likely people will get hurt.

Yes, this process is a violent one, and very aggressive measures can be used to clear out residents. One example of this was the recent murder of Breonna Taylor by the Louisville, Kentucky police. In a July 2020 article from the Louisville Courier-Journal, Taylor's family lawyers asserted that the no knock-warrant, which resulted in the shooting death of Taylor "was the result of a Louisville police department operation to clear out a block in western Louisville that was part of a major gentrification makeover."

While the police play their role, so do

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Police Terror, Rebellion and Revolution

An estimated 26 million people took to the streets in moral and political outrage at the public lynching of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, the largest protest in U.S. history. They were met with terror by the police, National Guard, Homeland Security, and white supremacist militia.

A few days after his murder, George Floyd's six-year-old daughter, Gianna, said that her "Daddy changed the world."

The broad and sustained rebellion of people of all colors was a profound political impulse that rejects police terror and our rulers' formula for power. Revolutionaries can strengthen and deepen that rejection. History shines a light on its revolutionary potential.

LEGACY OF SLAVERY

"Between 1500 and 1800, roughly two and a half million Europeans moved to the Americas; they carried 12 million Africans there by force; and as many as 50 million Native Americans died," writes Historian Jill Lepore. Until 1865, approximately one in eight people in this country were enslaved as the property of Southern plantation owners. The history of slavery and genocide in the U.S. shaped how political power operates.

Although slavery was abolished after the Civil War, the plantation owners kept their land. The 1876 Presidential election was too close to call. The two ruling political parties made a compromise. The Republican Party got the Presidency. The Democratic Party got the Federal troops withdrawn from the South, giving the plantation owners free rein to murder, terrorize, immobilize, and forcibly exploit the freed people. Reconstruction, which was supposed to enforce the rights of the formerly enslaved people to get an education and exercise democracy, was violently overthrown.

Then came Jim Crow segregation and rule by legal and extra-legal terror. Raw cotton from the U.S., now harvested by formerly enslaved people, resumed its place on the expanding world market.

In this country, the relationship between classes in production, the economic base, included both capitalism and slavery. Southern slavery put the U.S. in a unique and powerful position on the world market. As Karl Marx noted, "Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery, you have no cotton; without cotton, you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given the colonies their value; it is the colonies that have created world trade, and it is world trade that is the pre-condition of large-scale industry."

The political superstructure (the laws, police, and other organs of force) supported, protected and promoted the economic base of direct slavery and wage slavery. It secured U.S. prominence in world trade.

Before the Civil War, slave patrols returned escaped slaves to their masters. Vigilantes were deputized to kill the Native peoples. The Federal government forcibly dispossessed Native people of their land and developed railroads, mines, and plantations. That history shapes every aspect of power to this day.

Some might argue that the Civil War ended slavery, so the political superstructure that protected slavery no longer exists. Not so. Reconstruction's overthrow showed all too well that slavery had not been excised from the organs of rule wielded by the U.S. ruling class. Formerly enslaved people had no political rights and no choice but to work on the plantations for next to nothing.

Slavery is no longer legal. But its stamp on how political power is exercised and the destructive effects on all

of society are strong. Political power in America includes "divide and rule" and an ideology that accepts inequality. But it is more than that. The killing of Black people is historically ingrained in the political machinery of force and power in this country. It is part of how power is held by the ruling class.

REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

The state-supported overthrow of Reconstruction and the imposition of Jim Crow set the stage for the denial of civil rights, the "War on Crime," the "War on Drugs," the new Jim Crow, and countless victims of police terror. This power is also seen in voter suppression, disproportionate COVID deaths, under-funded schools, outsized homelessness, and an imperiled democracy and precarious economic conditions.

No American is safe from police terror as long as the African American people are not safe. No one is safe from the pandemic as long as the most impoverished workers die at a rate three times greater than everyone else.

The economic revolution that is replacing labor and throwing people into economic despair undermines the ideas and institutions used to hold society together. Society is polarizing economically and now, ideologically.

People cannot directly fight capitalism, the economic base of society. It's just there; everywhere, but beyond reach. Struggle takes place within and against the political superstructure supporting and protecting that base.

The 2020 rebellion against police terror is a powerful political impulse aimed objectively, at the political superstructure that protects capitalism. It is part of the revolutionary struggle. Amid climate crisis, pandemic, and the abdication of our rulers of any responsibility for people's

lives or the Nature we are part of, the rebellion is a response to changes at society's economic foundation.

These are revolutionary times. Millions of people are taking their outrage and life-and-death demands to the polls and to the streets. There are huge shifts in opinion and broad discussion of the problems of the day. These are revolutionary times because the vast majority of people need and demand changes that our society, as it is now constituted, cannot and will not respect.

Revolutionaries and revolutionary thought can make a powerful difference. We need to know why and how revolutions happen. In a nutshell, revolution is possible when it is necessary — when a fundamental change in how things are produced destabilizes core relationships, institutions, laws, and ideas that hold society together.

Today, our society is fighting out an economic revolution — the clash between the labor-replacing power of digital technology and a society organized around the buying and selling of labor power. Society needs to transform, and reorganize around its capacity to produce without exploitation, and to ensure a healthy and productive life for all.

This transformation must be fought out politically and ideologically. Society is beginning to do so. The political direction of the reconstruction of society today is not assured. It could continue in an unmistakably fascist direction that serves only a tiny class of exploiters and rulers. Or it could go forward to reorganize society in the interests of majority.

IN WHOSE INTERESTS?

The conclusion of the Civil War presented history with the opportunity to reorganize society around the interests of the freed people. The overthrow of Reconstruction ensured that did not happen. Critical moments bring that unfinished struggle to the surface. The police murder of George Floyd did just that.

Once again, the American people have an opportunity to reconstruct society. It will be on the basis of the interests of all who face police or vigilante terror, for all who have to make the choice between healthcare and housing, for all who have neither, for all who live in poverty and fear, for all "essential workers" who are treated as expendable workers. This time on the basis of the needs and rights of this new class of people whose labor and lives are becoming useless to the capitalist class and whose voices and basic human needs are ignored. That is the only way to fight for the future of humanity and Nature.

Revolutionaries today can equip the movement with a consciousness of its interests, with the understanding of how the U.S. ruling class holds its power, and with the confidence to play a role in reconstructing society. **RC**

Sweet Home Chicago?

Continued from page 3

some non-profit organizations (that are funded by corporate dollars). They take over the leadership of struggles to save existing public or "affordable housing." The role of these organizations, along with politicians, is to negotiate the terms of surrender to the inevitable gentrification of the neighborhood. They operate as middlemen providing a buffer between angry residents on one side and the property developers, banks, and gentrifiers on the other. Residents are told to look on the bright side of gentrification and channel their efforts into what turns out to be losing battles to hold on to some turf. In Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood, with a large Mexican population, residents are promised that some of their distinctive cultural landmarks will not be destroyed.

If you are forced to uproot and move elsewhere, this is a poor consolation prize.

When the developers, the banks, the politicians, the police, and non-profit organizations all gang up on a poor working class community — isn't this a war? Although we are the majority, we are not organized to successfully defend our communities against such a powerful alliance. A few communities have successfully organized themselves into an independent force refusing to surrender, and in the end, raised such a fuss that their powerful opposition decided it wasn't worth it to continue to fight. Of course, gentrification didn't stop, it just moved to another community.

Banks, real estate investors, developers, and politicians cannot make money from our dream of having stability for our

families. Their interests lie in destroying communities, building up new ones, and then destroying once again. For the victims of gentrification, the solution lies in coming together around a shared vision of the kind of community we want and need. We, the people, will have to take over the running of the economy if we are to stop our communities from being ruined. To win a better future, we need a clear understanding of what is in our interests, before we can stand up to those who care nothing for our needs. We will need to take control of our communities, rejecting the idea that anyone who has enough money and power can destroy a neighborhood. We need new ideas to prevail, like the needs of the people are sacred and must always come first. **RC**

American History and the Liberation of Us All

America's working class is enormous and diverse, yet we share a life-shaping commonality — we must sell our labor to live. Because we have no choice, some call us wage slaves. Black history month asks us to consider the system of African American slavery that built the wealth of this country and lingers still in the systemic racism intertwined with capitalism. Doing so reveals a path between America's earliest abolitionist movement and the abolition of poverty and wage slavery today.

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

America's chattel slavery was dehumanizing, brutal, and highly profitable. By the start of the Civil War in 1861, slavery had created more millionaires per capita in the Mississippi River Delta than anywhere else in the nation. The South's cotton industry made up at least two-thirds of the world's cotton supply by the Civil War. If the Confederacy had been a separate nation, it would have ranked as the fourth richest in the world. The U.S. became one of the leading global economies, due in large part to stealing labor from Africans and selling them as commodities, worth \$4 billion by the end of the Civil War.

Manisha Sinha, author of the extensive history *The Slave's Cause*, writes, "As most abolitionists understood, the story of abolition must begin with the struggles of the enslaved....Fugitive slaves united all factions of the movement and led abolitionists to justify revolutionary resistance to slavery." The history of the movement to abolish slavery is a progressive and impassioned story of enslaved Africans, free Black Americans, European immigrants, and white Americans, all integral to the movement. In the late 1600s, Quakers protested slavery and in 1754 issued a formal condemnation.

In 1773, slaves and the Sons of Africa formed an anti-slavery committee, modeled most likely after the Sons of Liberty. Two years later, French-born Anthony Benezet helped form the first American abolitionist society in Philadelphia, including "Common Sense" author Thomas Paine. In the New England colonies, slaves petitioning for freedom during the revolution helped initiate the movement toward emancipation. Meanwhile, slaves in Pennsylvania ran away in record numbers, and free Blacks petitioned against new slavery laws. They protested, petitioned, and wrote, often collaborating with white abolitionists. By 1784, Pennsylvania and all the New England states had abolished slavery.

A new wave of abolition began in the 19th century with the publicity of the

1822 Denmark Vesey conspiracy to organize a slave uprising in Charleston; the 1829 publication of David Walker's abolitionist pamphlet *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*; the 1831 emergence of William Lloyd Garrison's important abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*; and Nat Turner's 1831 multi-plantation slave rebellion. Abolitionists formed numerous organizations, sending petitions with thousands of signatures to Congress, boycotting products made with slave labor, holding meetings and conferences, and giving innumerable speeches for their cause. The 1837 first issue of the Black abolitionist newspaper *Weekly Advocate* promoted "Universal Suffrages and Universal Education," and promised, "we shall oppose all Monopolies, which oppress the Poor and laboring classes of society."

Former slave and leader in the abolition movement, Frederick Douglass worked closely with Garrison for 10 years. After conversations with the revolutionary abolitionist John Brown, Douglass came to acknowledge that violence may be necessary to end slavery, breaking with Garrison. Underground Railroad leader Harriet Tubman advised Brown on his 1859 raid on Harper's Ferry. Free Black and white abolitionists financially backed Brown's revolutionary efforts to end slavery. Though the attack did not instigate its intended mass slave uprising, and Brown and most of his men were executed, their actions inspired the coming Civil War.

750,000 Americans (including 40,000 African American soldiers) gave their lives to settle the question of chattel slavery. The War was revolutionary: ending with the greatest redistribution of wealth the world had ever known, \$4 billion in private property returned to the 4 million formerly enslaved people themselves. Unfortunately, the poor and laboring classes could not yet be liberated. Reconstruction was ended by removing the Federal troops from the South, unleashing terror upon and disenfranchising the newly freed African Americans.

THE GREAT MIGRATION

One hundred years of legal and cultural segregation maintained the concentration of poverty in the South. The formerly enslaved worked in slave-like conditions as sharecroppers, enforced by Black Codes, Jim Crow, and the violence of the Ku Klux Klan. After WWII, the mechanical cotton picker reduced the need for sharecroppers, accelerating a mass migration to urban industrial centers. Six million African Americans migrated

out of the rural Southern United States between 1910 and 1970, the number of African Americans employed in industrial jobs nearly doubling.

By the 1960s, new automation began to reverse the opportunities in the cities. General Motors began using the first assembly line robot UNIMATE in 1962, and by 1964, President Johnson convened a commission to research the effect of robotics in the workplace. Industrial jobs that paid decent wages began to be replaced by revolutionary labor-replacing technology.

GROWTH OF ABOLITIONIST CLASS

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows six million manufacturing jobs lost since 1970. Since the more recent African American migrants from the South tended to be most recently hired and in the most easily automated jobs, they were among the first fired as the electronic revolution progressed.

In this way, history put the descendants of African American slaves at the core of a new class of workers of all colors being created by labor-replacing technology. The new economy proliferated part-time, temporary, and minimum wage jobs. Poverty, housing insecurity, and health problems have been the results.

Yet, this class's position outside the economy is its power. The new class must fight politically for its right to survive. Its political program is the abolition of the system of private property and the distribution of goods according to need. The new class is an abolitionist class.

The growth of an abolitionist class threatens the ruling class's hold on private property. They cannot allow the new class to have a say in society's direction, instead resorting to increasingly violent social control. A militarized police force beats and murders the new class, tears families apart, deports, imprisons, and moves against the protestors. Central to the historical fight, Black workers are targeted by these developments and are leaders in the response.

Police shot and killed 5000 people between 2013-2019, the American Public Health Association declaring it a "public health crisis." Like the coronavirus and other health problems, Black people are disproportionately harmed—killed by police at three times the rate of whites. Uniting behind the demand that Black Lives Matter is part of the defense of the new abolitionist class and a fight for a new world.

In May 2020, a rebellion sprung from the heartless police murder of George Floyd in the middle of a pandem-

ic that disproportionately kills African Americans and others in the new class. 26 million people of all colors protested across the country for weeks, calling for an end to police terror and systemic racism.

This rebellion birthed a movement to defund or abolish the police and the entire prison industrial complex (PIC), calling on the government to invest their funding in human needs (e.g., housing, food, health and mental health care, public transportation, education, etc.).

Kandist Mallett writes in her November 2, 2020 Op-Ed column for Teen Vogue, "Black Canary," "Throughout Trump's presidential term, abolitionist movements have become popularized: abolish ICE, the police, prisons, the electoral college, and the Supreme Court. These movements have been covered in the press as isolated phenomena, but viewed collectively what they truly express is a need to destroy the old so that something new can be created." She's right.

PIC abolitionists recognize the need for a new society, as when organizer and educator Mariame Kaba said in an April 10, 2019 interview with Chris Hayes on MSNBC: "For me, capitalism has to go. It has to be abolished. We live within a system that's got all these other isms, and we're gonna have to uproot those. So we're doing work every single day to set the conditions for the possibility of that alternate vision of a world without prisons, policing, and surveillance." Abolitionist scholar and activist Ruth Wilson Gilmore told The Intercept abolition must distribute "the resources needed for well-being for the most vulnerable people in our community, which then will extend to all people."

The motions to defund and abolish the police demand the government take care of the people abandoned and abused by a system, that prioritizes private property over human lives. With movements to cancel rent and student debt and provide healthcare to all, this new abolitionist class demands a government that works for them. Fighting against police violence, they fight a State force that maintains the private property system. Winning will require the abolition of this system.

To liberate today's wage slaves, the new abolitionist class is best positioned to lead us to a cooperative society, where the collective wealth is shared, and all of humanity and the earth can thrive. From those who once were private property to those of all colors whose lives have been destroyed by the private property system, today's abolitionist class is fighting to transform society. **RC**

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The Road to a New America Runs Through the South

Regardless of its outcome, the January 5 runoff election for two U.S. Senate seats in Georgia represents a historic convergence. It joins together the 150-year-old Southern freedom movement, led by African Americans, with the national battle for justice being waged by people all across the United States, especially by the most marginalized who are struggling to secure the basic necessities of life. The elections of 2020 defeated Donald Trump, arguably the most racist, divisive, and fascistic president since the days of Jim Crow, but it has left the American people deeply uncertain about their future in the midst of an unchecked pandemic.

Up to 30 million people are currently unemployed, and things are about to get a whole lot worse. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance ran out on December 16, and the CARES Act extending unemployment insurance is expiring on December 31, as well as eviction prevention, mortgage forbearance, the freeze on student loan replacement, and the federal emergency loan program for small business. This impacts not only impoverished communities but also airline workers, health workers, teachers, government workers, and millions more whose jobs will be permanently replaced by bankruptcy or labor-replacing technology.

As early as November 5, CNN reported that the stock market was rallying because it anticipated a divided government, where Democrats would control the presidency and the House of Representatives, while Republicans would hold onto control of the Senate. "Such a combination will lead to more moderate policies including a quick stimulus deal but limited tax increases," it reported — because it would block the government from taking action to meet the needs of the people.

SOUTHERN MOVEMENT

Together with the New Georgia Project and dozens of other groups, the South's

historic social movements built a powerful voter registration and turnout movement that not only led to Trump's defeat in Georgia but forced the two US Senate races into a runoff election that decided in favor of Democrats Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff.

The South has always been the key to ruling class political control of American workers. Over a century and a half, Wall Street has deliberately cultivated a long line of reactionary and fascistic Southern politicians who have relied for their power on segregation, white supremacy, terror, and voter suppression. The Georgia runoff election system itself was created to prevent African Americans from ever winning statewide office. Southern poli-

ticians have, in turn, led virtually every national campaign to weaken labor laws, block Medicaid expansion, and criminalize poverty with mass incarceration and immigrant detentions. The full weight of the knee of American capitalism has always been pressed on the neck of working and poor Southerners.

Southern oppression has not gone unchallenged, but for many decades people toiled in relative isolation. The Southern movement for land, equality, economic democracy, and voting rights arose out of necessity through bottom-up social and political infrastructures. This work accelerated after Katrina and then erupted this summer, with the onset of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. People refused to allow the murders of George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Breonna

Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery to go unanswered. Millions took to the streets and emerged as a social force. Fifty-seven percent of voters in the nationwide November election identified themselves as Black Lives Matter supporters. This was the motion that energized the sophisticated and resourced organizing that defeated Trump in Georgia and created the opportunity to flip the Senate.

ON THE GROUND

After the gutting of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, Georgia, along with dozens of other states, began passing restrictive voting laws: exact match, voter roll purges, and polling place closures, especially in majority Black rural counties, and

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restrictions on early voting. Fair Count, Fair Fight, and the New Georgia Project responded by building an electoral and legal infrastructure to register and organize voters, launch legal challenges to voter suppression, and help make Biden's Georgia victory possible. But their work rested on Georgia's long legacy of fighting voter suppression. Some of the key work was done by people who still live on the land where their enslaved ancestors picked cotton in Southwest Georgia.

Grassroots organizations built Mutual Aid Centers, registered new voters when they turned 18, performed "no contact canvassing," collected testimonies for court cases, and mobilized the youth to be poll watchers and provide water, masks, and sanitizer to voters. They warned voters when their registration was purged,

or their polling place changed. They prepared people to demand that every vote be counted, knowing that millions were using absentee ballots to avoid COVID-19. The Democratic Party was their only available vehicle, and Biden was their only choice. As Project South wrote, "We won in Georgia. But let's be clear, Southern freedom movements did not do it for the Democratic Party; we did it to save ourselves."

FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE

The lessons of the Southern movement are that it is never about one election. It is about taking one more step forward in a lifelong battle for justice. Perdue and Loeffler are not only multimillionaires, but they openly represent the powerful alliance of big finance and big pharma/healthcare and their death grip on the working class. Like the movement to defeat Trump, the battle to defeat Loeffler and Perdue had to draw on every single sector of society concerned with democracy and racial and economic justice.

If the Democratic Party wins control of the U.S. Senate, it could have control of the executive and both legislative branches of the national government. There will be no excuse for inaction. Workers and voters across the country will be able to press their demands for pandemic relief and basic needs and expose any elected officials or political leaders who stand in their way.

The Georgia election confirms once again that the American working class will win when it understands the strategic role of the South: that it is currently an obstacle to a national movement for basic needs, but that it has the potential to unleash revolutionary transformation. This represents a turning point in the struggle for class unity and the path to power, but it is also more. The unity of these movements, in the South, and across the country, is also a question of ideals and of a common vision for the future of America. Communities throughout America share the same aspirations for control over housing, food, education, healthcare, and our very destiny. The role of revolutionaries is to unite with this vision, never let it go, and participate, learn, create, fight, study, and teach.

The pandemic is hastening the discarding of millions of workers from steady employment or even any employment at all. Revolutionaries engage these workers with the vision of the society that can be created when they wrestle government away from the corporate rulers, who are abandoning our people to die. We human beings have it in our power to create a government that provides for our needs and creates a flourishing society and planet. **RC**

New Year Calls for New Thinking

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sion course with the growing new class, including people like Tammy Phelps, a divorced mother of 5 in Nebraska who told CNN, "I am the kind of American that needs it now, who never needed it before.

NEW CLASS NEEDS NEW SYSTEM

Millions also need help with their healthcare costs, which keep rising despite the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as "Obamacare." While Trump campaigned on ending ACA and Biden

promised to maintain it, both ignored the millions of voters who used the Sanders campaign to call for a government healthcare program free of corporate control. This year, the struggle of those demanding nationalized healthcare will heat up again, along with the fight of mortgage payers and renters to keep their housing and the movement of those who are already homeless.

More of these fighters are insisting the government's responsibility is to act on their behalf, and that is opening many of them to new revolutionary ideas. The new

class they are part of cannot solve its economic problems without the public ownership of the means of production and the distribution of society's production according to need. That is a communist economic system, which means that the destruction of capitalism has created, for the first time, an objectively communist economic class. It has no alternative but to replace the fascism now being imposed by the ruling class with such a new system that represents society's future. **RC**