

# RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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## End the Scourge of Homelessness: Abolish Evictions

“Shelter, stability, and storage are what the homeless are looking for ... And they will continue to develop in nooks everywhere. The city is wasting money and effort fighting a losing battle. The truth is the homeless in this country are people who can't go away. They have no place to go. But it is not over. It will never be over until there are equal rights, justice, and compassion for those in need. By cooperating and taking care of each other, the homeless show the housed what humanity is all about.”

— Mike Zint, founder of First They Came for the Homeless, Berkeley

Some 30 to 40 million American renters — at least those who have managed not to get evicted already — are at risk of eviction and homelessness as the last state and federal eviction moratoriums expired. Many of them, primarily the so-called essential workers, have been living in a permanent state of unbearable anxiety since the pandemic began, facing repeated moratorium expiration dates with only last-minute extensions, and in many cases, no extensions at all. To date, only a fraction of the federal rent relief funds designed to avert eviction has been paid out.

### CRIMINALIZATION

Renters are terrified of eviction. Unhoused people already have a life expectancy some twenty years shorter than average. Renters are also witnessing the stepped-up encampment sweeps by cities claiming they can ignore CDC guidelines now that the pandemic is partially managed. On June 29, the Los Angeles City Council voted 12-3 to draft rules that would outlaw camping near schools, parks, libraries, daycare centers, preschools, homeless shelters. They cover areas that threaten public safety and other “sensitive” locations and ban tents and encampments from blocking sidewalks.

On the very same day, police in Sausalito, California, dismantled an encampment of 35 men, women, and children with a bulldozer. On June 30, Sacramento Democratic Mayor Darrell Steinberg announced a plan to force homeless people to accept shelter whether it meets their needs or not. Republican candidate for Governor Kevin Faulconer began campaigning on a platform to break up encampments and force unhoused people to “change behavior.”

The reality is that the system refuses to provide the housing that human beings need. Rent relief programs, morato-



Los Angeles: Protest at homeless encampment in Echo Park Lake as the city makes plans to evict people from their tents. Photo: Ringo Chiu/Shutterstock

riums, other pandemic relief measures, and programs of “permanent supportive housing” are necessary but are based on the flawed idea that the housing system is sound and will self-correct after the pandemic is over and all the people who are currently homeless are housed. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even before the pandemic, the City of San Jose, California, found that two or three new people became homeless every time it housed one unhoused person.

The ultimate cause of the housing crisis is that a capitalist economy cannot function in an era of digital production. Workers replaced by automation no longer have money to pay rent, and the government is no longer willing to subsidize housing for people not needed by industry. This fundamental failure has been exposed and severely aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, when tens of millions of people lost work and could no longer pay rent. A wave of pandemic-inspired concern forced California Governor Gavin Newsom to pledge to pay 100 percent of back rent owed by renters and spend \$12 billion to house the homeless. This is still barely scratching the surface of the problem.

Because it refuses to meet people's needs, the system is step by step suppressing the people's right to vote and right to protest, as part of the state's transitioning into a fascist dictatorship. The criminalization of unhoused people serves this transition by dividing and terrorizing some of those sectors most like-

ly to resist.

### INCREMENTAL REFORMS

Change is necessary, but what kind of change? “We Want a Society Without Landlords,” a recent article by Andrej Helm, is based on the Berlin housing movement, which is currently involved in a campaign to oust large corporate landlords and turn their buildings over to public ownership. Helm offers a brief history of the 19th to 21st-century housing movement and identifies three trends: technocratic, reformist, and socialist.

The “technocratic” position has been and continues to be the dominant trend in the recent American housing movement. It consists primarily in advocating

tax incentives and providing “demand-side subsidies” (like the federal Section 8 choice voucher program) to make the production of “affordable” housing profitable for investors. The chief American example is the so-called Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) enacted in 1986. But LIHTC only produces 100,000 units a year, while there is a documented shortage of 7.4 million extremely low-income units alone.

The “reformist” trend in the housing movement attempts to address the obvious failure of technocratic solutions by seeking to limit profit, regulate housing markets, control rents, and expand public and cooperative housing, without otherwise challenging the market's basic operating principles. The best examples of this model are the nationwide rent control movement, the limited number of public housing projects still operating, and the various privately owned but HUD-subsidized apartments around the country. The problem with many of these projects is that they are insufficient, and when their terms of affordability expire, they throw whole communities into crisis.

### A SOCIETY WITHOUT LANDLORDS

The “socialist” trend, as identified by Andrej Helm, works within these same movements to limit rents and expand cooperatives and social ownership. Still, it does so with the ultimate aim of abolishing private ownership of rental housing altogether. Brick and mortar housing is relatively inexpensive and getting more reasonable all the time, with technological improvements like 3D printing. The

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# Unity and the Struggle to Reconstruct Society

## **Inside Rally, Comrades!**

The articles in this issue examine crises in housing, COVID-19, public education, science, democracy, and the basic survival of humanity and nature.

As the political system fails the people of this country, the fight for a government that serves the needs of all people — not the corporations and hedge funds — moves thinking forward toward the struggle for a new society, as stated in “New Impulses and the Work of Revolutionaries.”

As shown in “From the Editors,” in an era when labor-replacing technology has undercut the basis on which capitalist exchange rests, the ruling class must defend the system that gives it power — creating homelessness while catering to speculative capital. According to the most recent U.S. Census, the system allows 17 million empty homes to sit while over 500,000 Americans go homeless every night.

To win the fight for the direction of society, the new class created by labor-replacing technology and pushed out of the capitalist economy must recognize itself as a class with the power to change society. A working class without decently paid work cannot survive. It must reconstruct society with distribution according to need. Objectively, this makes it a revolutionary communist class.

The ruling class does not want us to understand our common interests and so tries to divide us.

“Demanding a Government that Meets

Human Needs” shows that the leadership in both the Republican and Democratic parties is fully committed to protecting private property and corporate profits. They aim to block the unity of the working class, destroy its fighting capacity, and strip it of the ability to influence government policy.

United political struggle of the class will be necessary to reconstruct society.

The case of Hunter Brittain, an unarmed 17-year-old murdered in Arkansas by a Lonoke County deputy during a traffic stop, is a step in this direction. Hunter was white. Like most police victims, his family suffers from poverty. They are joining the movement against police terror. They are represented by the same attorney as the families of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Nightly protests of Hunter’s death were held for over two weeks. Al Sharpton and members of the NAACP spoke at Hunter’s memorial service. Jesse Brittain, Hunter’s uncle, said, “Your life had meaning. You’re loved, and your family will not stop advocating until we have justice for you, Hunter. And also justice for all of our other brothers and sisters dying at the hands of law enforcement hired to protect and serve us around this country.” Other speakers called for federal lawmakers to pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.

The article “We Abolish Educational Inequality, or They Abolish Public Education” points out that racism is used to attack and divide our class. It discusses the orchestrated right-wing attack on “Critical Race Theory.” What is characterized as a dispute about academics is a political tactic in the ongoing campaign to

privatize public schools, on the one hand, and a justification of white supremacy. This dispute is a textbook case of using racism as a weapon to divide our class so corporations can make private profit.

The article “Alternative Facts, The Big Lie and Evolution” explains the importance of recognizing the “Big Lie” about evolution that falsely presents “survival of the fittest” as justifying economic, social, and gender-based exploitation as natural, evolutionary phenomena. It argues that the discussion should be about the misteaching of Darwin’s theory. Schools should teach that Darwinian evolution demonstrates humankind’s cooperative, collective nature, that change is inevitable, and that we can develop a society based upon cooperation, peace, and love.

Our poverty, unemployment, skin color, immigration status, or whether we live in rural or urban communities do not justify our being unhoused, undereducated, sick with COVID, or murdered by police.

As “End the Scourge of Homelessness, Abolish Evictions” clarifies, the system refuses to provide the housing that human beings need. Workers pushed out of the economy no longer have money to pay rent, and the government is no longer willing to subsidize housing for people not required by industry. The criminalization of unhoused people serves this transition by dividing and terrorizing some of those sectors most likely to resist.

Let us unite on our shared situation, with a common solution of distribution based on need. **RC**

## **Jack Hirschman 1933-2021 Revolutionary Poet and Organizer**

The world and the movement for social transformation has suffered the loss of one of its great lights and souls with the passing of the revolutionary visionary poet and organizer Jack Hirschman.

Outpourings of grief and remembrance are sounding around the globe. Jack manifested universal kindness, in practice of what he (with others) envisioned as a loving social order. He left us with a stupendous body of work with its positive forward vision, along with his fiery exposure and condemnation of the cruelties of a dying and mean system of exploitation.

Jack was the Fourth Poet Laureate of San Francisco, a founding member of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America and the Revolutionary Poets Brigade; most recently he was made the head of the World Poetry Movement.

**Jack Hirschman presente!**

*We will have an article in our November-December issue on Jack’s contribution to the revolutionary movement.*

## **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.

# Demanding a Government that Meets Human Needs

The accelerating social revolution is forcing workers to enter the political arena, not only for their survival but also to defend the democracy they need to carry on the battle. At the same time, it is forcing the ruling class to resort to fascist tactics to maintain power. The fascist offensive in the United States is underway. An assault on the right to vote is happening state by state, modeled after the “Negro disenfranchisement” movement that swept the South from 1890 to 1910. Laws against the right to protest are similarly spreading across the country, including laws to legalize running over protestors with cars and SUVs. The government is deliberately increasing poverty by refusing to enact the \$15 minimum wage and by the 25 states that have refused to allow people to receive extended unemployment benefits. People in poverty who are then evicted and lose their homes are treated as criminals by police and swept mercilessly from place to place.

What we see here, and what we saw during the January 6 Capitol insurrection, is what is called the “social face of fascism.” We see this in the expansion of white supremacist groups. We see it inside local police departments and inside ICE and the Border Patrol. But the cause of fascism is greater than the formation of groups of people doing evil things. Fascism also has an economic face: the merger of large corporations with the State.

## ECONOMIC FACE OF FASCISM

The technological revolution has created a situation where the private property economy no longer needs human labor the way it did during the agricultural and industrial eras. Human labor is increasingly being replaced by automation and artificial intelligence. Corporations are required to maximize profit and will not tolerate interference in their businesses by a government that represents people they do not need, especially people demanding their human rights. The fewer workers they need, the more they promote measures to discard democracy and transform government into a corporate dictatorship.

Significantly, many of the corporations that pledged in January (for public relations reasons) to stop funding the 147 legislators who voted to overturn the election have now changed their mind or “clarified” their position and resumed support for politicians committed to overthrowing democracy.

Sometimes the fascist offensive appears to be a partisan, Republican-led attack on democracy, and there is certainly no question that the Republican Party leadership is committed to establishing a new Jim Crow-type dictatorship in America. There are still significant tactical differences between the major parties, and revolutionaries should take advantage of any opportunities these create for protecting the interests of workers suffer-

ing from unemployment, evictions, and denial of health care. But we dare not allow ourselves to be deceived that these tactical differences amount to a different strategic aim.

Leadership in both parties is fully committed to protecting private property and corporate profits by blocking the unity of the working class, destroying its fighting capacity, and stripping it of the ability to influence government policy.

## BIPARTISANSHIP

The clearest example of this is what is happening at the U.S.-Mexico border. Historically, the border has served as an important model and testing ground for introducing fascist policies into the United States. In spite of his softened rhetoric, President Joe Biden has continued and even stepped up many of the cruelest and most racist practices instituted by Donald Trump, stripping migrants of their rights to due process and to apply for asylum. He has refused to rescind Trump’s so-called Title 42 policy that expels migrants within hours without a hearing, without a “credible fear” interview, without even receiving a registration number or being entered into Border Patrol records. Title 42 was implemented based purely on the pretext

that it was a public health measure – even though it has no health impacts at all and was actually opposed by the Center for Disease Control.

Another example of two-party corporate domination is the “bipartisan” infrastructure bill currently being promoted in the Senate by President Biden and others. While the bill would provide \$579 billion for badly needed improvements in roads, bridges, and ports, including replacing America’s lead pipes, its funding mechanisms are a combination of accounting tricks and massive giveaways to corporations. One example, called “asset recycling,” would sell off public resources to corporations for short-term gain. In 2009, for example, the City of Chicago sold the rights to its parking meter revenue for 75 years, a deal that brought it \$1.15 billion but will cost Chicago residents \$11.6 billion over the life of the contract.

Fortunately, resistance to the bill is rising in Congress, not only over its financing but especially over what it leaves out. “No climate, no deal!” has become the rallying cry of the Squad in Congress and the Sunrise Movement in the streets. As Sunrise’s Varshini Prakash said, “Anything less than a robust jobs and climate package is a death sentence for our generation.” Senator Bernie Sanders has

discussed an alternative, comprehensive \$6 trillion bill that would fund not only physical infrastructure but green energy, housing, health care, education, child care, and other critical safety net programs.

## GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE

This objective motion toward fascism does not mean we cannot or should not fight it with every fiber of our being. What it does mean, however, is that when we resist attacks, we have to simultaneously organize to go on the offensive against the corporate power behind the social face of fascism. We have to strike it at its weakest point: the fact that the corporate, private property system cannot meet the basic human needs of the people, including housing, health care, food, clothing, and education of our children. The battle for our basic needs is not only a necessity for survival. It is the most effective arena for defending democracy. It is also a school where revolutionaries can develop and share their vision and strategy for reorganizing society for the benefit of all.

The remnants of democracy that still exist are important, especially to the extent that they still allow for working-class communication, unity, and political ed-

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## Pandemic: Homelessness Increased Instead of Housing

### *From the Editors*

From the beginning of the pandemic, our class has fought to stop evictions, find safe housing for those without and provide basic needs for one another. By contrast, the ruling class has failed to distribute more than 6.5 percent of at least 45 billion dollars allotted to landlords to prevent evictions. Instead of providing for those without, our rulers have aggressively advanced efforts to criminalize homelessness. Since last winter, sweeps of homeless encampments took place in every major city across the country. Now, despite a three-month extension of the national moratorium, evictions continue, and the moratorium’s expiration in October promises millions more homeless.

Our class fights on. In Portland, Oregon, the homeless have filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of those whose possessions were confiscated by the city and tossed in the dump. After months of struggle and the loss of hotel housing, Kansas City Homeless Union leader Qadhafi told The Star: “Everything [the city] said was a lie.”

In New York, organizers protested the city’s decision to move homeless residents from relatively safe housing to hotels without refrigerators or working elevators. A diabetic resident without his medical needs being met, Alvin Murray told The New York Daily News, “I feel like I’m in prison.” Another resident named Bo said, “They dumped us here.”

Meanwhile, the Philadelphia base of the national Poor People’s Army is housing over thirty different families in abandoned HUD housing and suing HUD, HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge, and the Philadelphia Housing Authority. The lawsuit seeks protections for those living in public properties as well as needed improvements for such properties under both the U.S. Constitution and the laws of the state of Pennsylvania. This ruling would declare housing as a human right under the U.S. Constitution, consistent with the United Nations’ 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In an interview with Fred Hampton Leftists, Artist and Media Coordinator for the Poor People’s Army Shamako Donae Noble explained the ruling class mindset: “If they were to ac-

knowledge housing as a human right, it undermines the fundamental basis of capitalism . . . [They] hold our basic needs to keep us spinning in the hamster wheel.” National coordinator Cheri Honkala elaborated, “They stole those houses from the beginning through discrimination, through land grabs, through only caring about developers and speculators.”

In an era when labor-replacing technology has undercut the basis on which capitalist exchange rests, the ruling class must defend the system that gives it power—creating homelessness while catering to speculative capital. According to the Association of Foreign Investors in Real Estate, the U.S. is the #1 country in the world for such investment. In a country founded by people seeking a new home, the ruling class hoards property.

Americans hurled into a dispossessed new class go homeless every night, and their numbers will explode in the coming months. We must face this challenge with a vision of a new America, where society’s wealth is owned in common, so everyone has a right to a safe, secure home. **RC**



# We Abolish Educational Inequality, or They Abolish Public Education

Public education from pre-school to higher education is being permanently transformed before our eyes. The massive intrusion of corporate-owned tech platforms into public schools has accelerated the trend towards abolishing the public's control of public schools. Meanwhile, thousands of teachers and millions of students apparently have left the system.

To abolish means to implement policy to do away with something, whether legally or extra-legally. That's what it means to say slavery was abolished, and that is exactly what school privatization means today: a coordinated program by corporations and government to abolish public education at every level. Along with everything else, COVID-19 has accelerated and concentrated this political seizure of power.

As society considers what real recovery from the pandemic looks like, it is clear that real broad public education is key to meet the emergencies of these transformative times. America has learned the hard way that the price for ignoring facts and science is paid in human lives. The pandemic is also accelerating the segregation of US schools, drastically reducing education for the majority of people.

Before the pandemic, across the country, schools that were 75 percent white received an amazing \$23 billion a year more in state funds than schools that were 75 percent Black-Indigenous-People-of-Color (BIPOC). Regardless of race, poor and rural schools also reflect the same pattern. Well-funded schools tend to be in communities with less COVID, where parents can work more easily from home. These schools returned to campuses earlier, with more resources and more flexibility. Pandemic privilege is alive and well.

Under these conditions, reopening itself is desperately unequal. Affluent families all have broadband access to online education. Schools in these communities will open with far more access, resources, and options. Coinciding with reopening, a rising fascist political force intends to double-down on the 150-year-old white supremacist foundations of public education.

It's no accident that the same Republican-led states which are criminally trying to suppress the vote are also

passing laws that ban teaching the truth of the USA's structural racism. The director of education policy for the fascist-oriented Heritage Foundation, which guides a national campaign to suppress voting, declared the "most important" way to fight "Critical Race Theory" was by supporting "school choice." As neo-fascist Steve Bannon proclaimed, "The path to save the nation is very simple — it's going to go through the school boards."

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a university-level discourse that argues that racist structures permeate American law and society. It has never been used at the K12 level. What is characterized as a dispute about academics is really a political tactic in the ongoing campaign to privatize public schools, one on hand, and a justification of white supremacy on the other. This is a textbook case of using racism as a weapon to divide our class so corporations can make private profit.

## RACISM AND PRIVATIZATION

At least 26 states are considering bills that have nearly identical prohibitions about how teachers can discuss racism, sexism, and other social issues. These transgressions are deliberately left vague and general, opening the door to direct attacks on individual teachers by organized forces. In West Virginia, the proposed law calls for teachers to be dismissed for teaching "divisive" concepts.

It's certainly no coincidence that in many states, where there are bills attacking the teaching of "divisive topics" — including Georgia, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, South Dakota, West Virginia, and Texas — lawmakers are also considering or enacting new "school choice" laws to create or expand programs that give parents vouchers. Vouchers allow people to remove their children from public schools and send them to private schools at taxpayer expense.

One effective strategy for manipulating white families out of public schools is to raise fears that their children are being indoctrinated with values and beliefs that could divide them. Historically, issues of race and school privatization have always been connected. The fascist attacks on CRT are directed at every aspect of equity, our cultural richness, and LGBTQ rights.

History is about power and politics. Now it is supposedly "divisive" to teach that enslaved people were considered 3/5 of a person. Teachers are forced to lie to children and teach that the men who agreed to this horror of slavery were instead all honorable visionaries. Will it be legal to teach that the US Supreme Court decided in 1954 that separate schools can never be equal?

But divisive for whom? "Whose children are we talking about?" asks LaGarrett King, a professor at the University of Missouri School of Education, who has developed a new framework for teaching Black history. "Black parents talk to their kids about racism. Asian American parents talk to their kids about racism. Just say that you don't want white kids to learn about racism."

Insisting that teachers teach the false myths of US history and the American Dream means abolishing the First Amendment right of freedom of speech in schools, which are public institutions. Such laws aim at criminalizing those who would teach any project that details the structural nature of white supremacy.

The history of this country, a history that we are still fighting out, begins with recognizing the bloody, painful truth that white supremacy pervades every social structure and harms everyone by undermining united struggle for basic human needs. We are supposed to think that our problems are not systemic but just originate from a few individuals who are "bad apples," such as killer cops.

The fascist elements in society today want to abolish public schools, abolish parent control of the schools, abolish the First Amendment and abolish an understanding of the true history of the United States. This program is the defense of privilege, both race and class, and abolishes the teacher's right to teach and the student's right to learn.

## ABOLISHING INEQUALITY

One lesson of the pandemic is that nothing can be done without a nationally-funded and nationally organized system. The campaign against teaching the truth in schools can exist because schools are funded primarily locally and at the state level. The white supremacist notion of states' rights guarantees massive unequal education funding from state to state.

That's one thing that must be abolished. We can make no real headway against structural racism until education is funded nationally and guarantees it is funded equally and democratically everywhere. Abolishing state inequality in education doesn't mean abolishing local control of schools, it would strengthen it by guaranteeing genuine and democratic access for all.

This direction cannot be achieved

unless we also abolish the official government policy, in place since 1994, that public education is a commodity that can be bought, sold, and speculated on as a source of private profit. It also requires abolishing the private corporations who direct and benefit from school privatization and from preventing the Internet from becoming a free public good that all students and everyone else can access.

We certainly cannot abolish the school-to-prison pipeline in all its forms if we do not abolish the control of the forces that benefit from it. But there can be no abolition without creating education for emancipation. The transformation of education — now well on the way almost two years after the pandemic hit — reflects the reorganization of society as digital technology transforms every institution. The issue is, will this transformation be dictated by corporations or people who need public education as a basic human necessity in desperate times. Public schools are essential to produce the leaders society needs to solve the massive problems of a capitalist system, that intends to profit from destroying the planet.

Therefore, we must abolish the model of teaching that requires constantly memorizing factoids that are measured by high-stakes testing used to sort people in order to grant social privilege. Education means teaching the big ideas, the really big ideas, the revolutionary ideas, that open the door to the power of the public to control what the public needs.

The pandemic has thrown a light on the interrelated crises and emergencies in our society. Teachers, parents, and students are called to witness to the truth and address the tragedies unfolding before our eyes: public safety and public schools, white supremacy as a structural force in society, and ongoing climate crisis. The battle lines are drawn. Corporate forces use racism to transform public education into private profit; we must expose and reject racism to transform public education and help resolve the crises of our times.

Albert Einstein stated, "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge." The purpose of public education is to serve the common good by opening up inquiry and advancing human knowledge. Schools must produce life-long learners who learn to develop themselves and apply their powers to what they enjoy.

We have seen the massive social disaster when market forces controlled government's pandemic response. We, therefore, hold government accountable, as the only institution that can abolish school privatization and consolidate the public's control over public education. Government at every level must reject fascist dog-whistle issues and establish schools that meet the needs of everyone. **RC**

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# Alternative Facts, The Big Lie and Evolution

We live in a country where reality is being replaced by “alternative facts,” where we are besieged by an anti-vaccine campaign that replaces objective scientific truths with distortion and outright lies, and where to counter these lies, the prosecuting attorney in the Derek Chauvin trial told the jury to “Believe your eyes, you saw what you saw.”

It is tempting to blame Trump, Fox News, and their co-conspirators for the seemingly rapid increase in the acceptance of lies and conspiracy theories. However, this is actually the current stage in the ruling class’s strategy to disorient the response to economic and social destruction and to blunt the movement towards a new cooperative society. Their goal is to replace scientific materialism — the understanding that objective reality exists independently of human consciousness and that the world can be understood and changed — with idealism, in which objective reality exists only in the mind and where there is no possibility of understanding nature and its laws. In essence, to make the predominant philosophy, “believe what we tell you, not what you see.”

The ruling class’s strategy is illustrated by the work of the Discovery Institute (DI). Revolutionaries can learn useful lessons from this strategy and apply it to today’s debates. The DI’s objectives and strategy were laid out in the 1999 “Wedge Document”:

“The DI seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its cultural legacies... In order to defeat materialism, we must cut it off at its source. That source is scientific materialism. This is precisely our strategy. If we view the predominant materialistic science as a giant tree, our strategy is intended to function as a ‘wedge’ that, while relatively small, can split the trunk when applied at its weakest points. The ‘thin edge of the wedge’ is Darwinism.”

Darwinism is a “wedge issue” because it provides a scientific description of the world and the understanding that the world changes and can be changed. Darwinism demonstrates that systems undergo internal changes, that these changes are expressed when the external environment changes, and that this process leads to new relationships and systems. These are dangerous concepts for a ruling class that requires the primacy of idealism and the appearance that capitalism and the social relations that arise from it are natural and unchanging.

The DI’s tactical approach is to challenge the teaching of evolution in elementary and secondary schools. The initial step is to accuse Darwinian evolutionary theory of being amoral, anti-religious, and anti-God. Then, using church-based and reactionary organizations, agitating for the addition of the theory of Intelligent Design (ID) to school curricula. The basic tenets of ID are that humankind came

about due to God’s “intelligent design” and that the world runs according to “God’s will”. Thus, pandemics, poverty, and natural disasters are preordained and must be endured. The brilliance of this tactic is that the DI could argue that they were not attempting to stop the teaching of scientific materialism (evolution), only asking for an opportunity to present idealism as an alternative theory us-

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## Darwinism provides an understanding that the world can be changed.

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ing the slogan “teach the controversy.” In this manner, they grew their base and increased the effect of their message, thereby winning even if they lost at the school board or in the courts. Is the DI’s strategy working? According to a 2019 Gallup poll, 40 percent of Americans believed in Creationism.

The “teach the controversy” strategy put the pro-evolutionary forces on the defensive. It exposed the weaknesses of their strategy, which was to block the introduction of ID in Federal courts using the First Amendment and the “separation of church and state.” Their main tactics were to extoll people to support science because it is the right thing to do and to characterize the anti-evolution movement as an attack on science by religious reactionaries. This approach was successfully executed by numerous broad-based religious and secular organizations. However, the 2019 Gallup poll suggests that while the pro-evolution forces won in the courts, they lost on the streets.

This was predictable as the DI was allowed to frame the struggle and to pick the battlegrounds. There is a more effective strategy that revolutionaries can use to defeat the DI’s anti-Darwinism campaign and to promote scientific materialism. The approach is to expose the perception that evolution is described by “the survival of the fittest,” a class-based distortion of Darwinism, and to replace it with the fact that human evolution is based upon cooperation and peace.

“Survival of the fittest” originates from a 1798 essay by Thomas Malthus written during the consolidation of the Industrial Revolution in England. Malthus used the phrase “the struggle for existence” to justify the growing impoverishment of the working classes and the enrichment of the capitalist class by characterizing those who grow rich as the fittest. Later, Herbert Spencer replaced “struggle for existence” with “survival of the fittest,” using the phrase to define Social Darwinism and to justify capitalist and imperialist exploitation. In the words of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., “The growth of large business is merely a survival of the fittest .... It is merely the working out of a

law of nature and a law of God.”

However, the driving force behind Darwinian evolution is adaptation to changing environments and cooperation, not “survival of the fittest.” In his book *Darwin, Competition and Cooperation*, Ashley Montagu wrote, “To ‘struggle for life’ is to be cooperative, for life is of its nature social and all activities calculated to maintain it in the individual and in

the species are cooperative.” Thus, while there is one set of material facts that describe evolution, there are two different conclusions drawn from the process reflecting competing world views.

One detaches Darwinism from its historical economic and political bases and presents economic exploitation, inequality, oppression, and war as a natural, evolutionary phenomenon. The other presents this same exploitation, inequality, oppression, and war as anti-evolutionary and demonstrates that the basic foundation of humankind is not competition but cooperation.

These competing world views present the pro-evolution forces with the possibility of reframing “teach the controversy” moving from defense to offense. Recognizing that “survival of the fittest” is evolution’s “Big Lie,” the discussion can then be reframed to be about the mis-teaching of Darwinian evolution with the demands that schools teach that

Darwinian evolution demonstrates the cooperative, collective nature of humankind, that change is inevitable, and that we can develop a society based upon cooperation, peace, and love.

A key lesson from the DI’s attack on evolution is that the ruling class’s campaign against scientific materialism is multi-faceted and opportunistic. While evolution remains a front of struggle for the DI, they are currently developing a campaign using the teaching of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a “wedge issue.” The DI’s analysis and strategy are outlined in “Critical Race Theory: What It Is and How to Fight It”, which uses the CRT-associated concept of “equity” to frame the issue in the following manner:

“An equity-based form of government would mean the end not only of private property, but also of individual rights, equality under the law, federalism, and freedom of speech. These would be replaced by race-based redistribution of wealth, group-based rights, active discrimination, and omnipotent bureaucratic authority.”

The DI is following the strategy and tactics perfected in the anti-Darwinism campaign and framing the issues to limit the response to “fight racism and white nationalism” in order to distract from their real objective, scientific materialism. The lessons of the pro-evolution struggle teach that it is not enough to respond within the DI’s frame. Just as we need to expose “survival of the fittest” within the pro-Darwin movement, it is up to us to identify and grasp the key link in the anti-CRT campaign and to use it to educate the American people about scientific materialism. **RC**

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## End Homelessness

*Continued from page 1*

actual cause of housing unaffordability is the cost of land, artificially inflated by speculation.

Land ownership in the United States today is thoroughly corrupted and clouded by its historical legacy of outright theft, slavery, genocide, railroad baron land grants, racist homesteading laws, and 20th-century red-lining. Because it rests on this edifice of exploitation and racial oppression, the entire U.S. real estate industry has no moral legitimacy. People who believe in housing as a human right have a responsibility to start dismantling this system, beginning as the people of Germany with the largest corporate landlords.

Revolutionaries work within the existing, practical movement that is fighting for housing today. They emerge from and work with people living in encampments and people in the various cooperative and public housing movements. There can

be no successful housing movement that does not include unhoused people, and, in their way, encampments are one of the initial steps toward reclaiming land for meeting human needs. Wherever they are, revolutionaries fight for a revolutionary approach, not to fix a broken housing system but to decommodify it and abolish evictions altogether. Evictions are breaking down whatever distinctions may exist between housed and unhoused people.

Ultimately the only way to decommodify housing is through the politicization of the social revolution that is already breaking out across the country. Carrying this revolution through to completion requires building an organization of revolutionaries dedicated to imbuing the people with a vision of the cooperative society that is possible today, which distributes not just housing, but all the necessities of life, based on human need instead of private profit. **RC**



# New Impulses and the Work of Revolutionaries

*Secretariat, League of Revolutionaries  
for a New America*

The line between a functioning democracy and its death by strangulation grows thinner day by day.

The people's movement for basic needs and input into the direction of the country is growing, and the political system is failing the people.

In this context, revolutionaries elevate and deepen the understanding of the "political power" nature of the cause and the solution. Power in the hands of the capitalist class (the class that currently holds power) will not sufficiently protect the people from pandemic. It will not and cannot stop burning the planet. At the same time, we must fight to hold the political "leaders" of both political parties responsible to the people, teaching as we fight that the solution is political power in the hands of a new class.

As we fight the specific battles (e.g., voting rights, housing, police terror, healthcare, etc.), we also fight to politically coalesce the broader movement, keeping the ultimate cause and solution of these current battles in our sights.

What follows is an abridged excerpt from the February 2021 Political Report of the Secretariat of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Throughout the pandemic, our rulers abdicated their responsibility for the health of the American people. All existing inequalities in American society intensified and were apparent in stark numbers for all to see. Televised police

terror shone a spotlight on the political nature of systemic white supremacy. The election of November 2020 capped months of economic devastation and a struggle for basic needs and rights, followed by the violent insurrection on January 6 that attempted to overturn the election results.

As the pandemic raged across the U.S., some 50 million workers lost their jobs, and as many as 42 percent of them are not coming back. By the end of January, U.S. billionaires had reaped \$1.1 trillion since the pandemic's start, a 40 percent rise in wealth for the wealthiest 660 individuals. The polarization of wealth and poverty is killing people — testing the limits of endurance and fueling social struggle.

With all sections of society promoting demands and programs that address their needs, a vast social struggle is gathering steam, fueled by the pandemic and climate disaster. Assaults on democracy widen it. Police terror politicizes it. Contamination, commodification, and privatization of water (and nature in general) threaten life everywhere. Modern-day fascism enables the ruling class and its corporations to maintain control of our government in opposition to the masses fighting for transformation to a new, just, and equal America.

The broad struggle for basic needs draws people into action, political discussion, and inquiry. It brings energy and demands to the electoral arena. Extensive networks and organizations mobilized to defeat Trump. While millions were relieved to get Trump out, they know that

the election of Biden is not enough.

To make the most out of revolutionary work to develop consciousness, we look at the motion in society, the objective context in which stages of political consciousness can be accomplished. In the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement drew various sections of society into motion and contention and stirred up their thinking. People throughout society joined the battle for equality and justice. Millions marched as rebellions erupted. Some people progressed quickly from moral outrage to class consciousness and commitment to revolution. Others moved from passivity to social consciousness. Involvement and ideology were churning and polarizing, progressing everywhere.

Things are moving even faster now. In May and June 2020, an estimated 26 million people took to the streets in moral and political outrage over the murder of George Floyd and countless other victims of police terror. The rebellion changed the public conversation. It moved demands and programs from journal articles and study circles to the streets and into every struggle for basic needs. It politicized demands and gave them a programmatic edge: "More funds for public schools" quickly grew to "more funds for public schools — defund the police."

This political impulse is broad and powerful. It can and must be deepened and sustained. At the same time, opposed to this motion, fascist ideology has achieved a new level of organizational cohesion.

The rise of violent, terroristic gangs

like those that attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan 6 to stop the certification of the 2020 election draws strength from deeply embedded white supremacy. In a country founded on slavery and genocide, every broad change is shaped and fought out in these terms. The approximately 800 people who broke into the Capitol were essentially an insurrectionary force within a broader pro-fascist motion. Some operate as private militias. Some have infiltrated law enforcement agencies, and law enforcement agencies have infiltrated them. Calls to "abolish the police" are, in part, a recognition of this reality.

Elected fascists inside the halls of government are threatening democracy and the right of people to fight for their needs. In January alone, over 100 new voter suppression bills were introduced, including one in Arizona to allow the legislature to set aside the Secretary of State's certification of election results.

Together these forces cultivate a mass base to oppose people's struggles for what they need, and to protect the political supremacy of the capitalist class.

Behind this fascist front stands a ruling class whose need for labor is declining. The pandemic showed how low our rulers' regard for human life could go and in whose interests they work. The 2020 CARES Act ensured a further merger of the financial industry with the State, by awarding corporations virtually unlimited access to Federal Reserve funding.

The events around the election, the coup attempt, and the second impeachment trial indicate tactical differences between the more openly fascist and white supremacist groupings and those who want to at least keep up the appearances of bourgeois democracy. These tactical differences are partially expressed in differences between the two major parties and within each party, as especially the polarization in the Republican Party is revealing. These are differences about how best to control the social movement — by maintaining a facade of democracy and concern for human life or by moving as soon as possible to drown it in blood.

The whole process depicts how fragile our democracy is — and how close Trump came to taking the election — how the election, post-election, and January 6 attempted coup could have had a different ending.

As the political system fails the people of this country, the fight for a government that serves the needs of all people — not the corporations and hedge funds — moves thinking forward toward the struggle for a new society.

*This report has been edited for length. The full Political Report is available at <https://lrna.org> and at <http://rallycomrades.org/political-reports/>. Other sections of this political report cover the George Floyd Rebellion, fighting forward, revolutionary ideas, and political steps ahead. **RC***

## Demanding a Government that Meets Human Needs

*Continued from page 3*

ucation. We cannot sustain an offensive against the corporate dictatorship without social consciousness - the idea that we are members of a common working class and that we are exploited by a ruling class that is alien to us and does not have our interests at heart. Social consciousness empowers workers to never again be misled to follow a billionaire politician as their savior and turn their backs on their very own class brothers and sisters.

It is the responsibility of revolutionaries to march side by side with workers through all the twists and turns of the struggle toward ever greater unity and greater consciousness. An indispensable part of this is participating in electoral campaigns and using campaigns and elected positions as powerful platforms for advancing the people's demands. Elected positions can be instrumental, not because they can solve all our problems, but because they can be used to expose and resist the system and educate and organize our people.

In Oakland, California, for example, the recent election of more City Council

members committed to meeting human needs has transformed the political paradigm. Before the pandemic, corporate predators were hollowing out city government with layoffs and hiring freezes. Now the debate has been shifted to one of good governance: how to distribute the necessities of life to the people who need them.

The City Council's approach to the issue of defunding police has been to prioritize human needs, especially housing and homelessness programs. Oakland's unhoused population doubled between 2015 to 2019. The African American share of Oakland's overall population was decimated by displacement, falling from 45 percent to 24 percent, while its share among unhoused residents rose to 70 percent. The Council purchased motels and hotels, provided rental assistance, and expanded support services.

When the Council decided on its budget in June 2021, it defunded the police by some \$18.4 million, despite the outrage of its corporate critics. By shifting funds to human services, youth programs, vio-

lence prevention, and alternative responses to calls for assistance, it expects to make Oakland safer by freeing up police to focus on violent crimes. At the same time, the Oakland School Board and Peralta Community College District voted to completely terminate their contracts with police and sheriffs and diverted funds into mental health and student services.

By themselves, these measures cannot defeat fascism. One city alone cannot reverse the political climate of an entire country. But what is happening in Oakland is also taking place in other cities and congressional districts all across the nation. It is a building block in the emerging political revolution. The task of revolutionaries is to participate in this motion every step of the way and proclaim, share, and expand their vision of a world where wealth is distributed based on meeting human needs instead of private profit. The same technology that tears apart our system as long as it is under corporate control also contains the power to free the world forever from back-breaking labor, poverty, and misery. **RC**