

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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The Eviction Moratorium Battle

The seesaw, eighteen-month campaign over the eviction moratorium has starkly exposed the conflict between human rights and the power of corporate property in American society. The moratorium was enacted after a groundswell of calls for rent cancellation for tenants facing eviction through no fault of their own, due to the 2020 economic lockdown. The “real estate industrial complex” fought it from the very beginning. The moratorium temporarily called into question the sanctity of “private property” and opened a new front in the long fight for the right to housing.

The 1944 Public Health Service Act empowers the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to “make and enforce such regulations” as are necessary to “prevent the introduction, transmission, or spread of communicable diseases.” The 100-year-old National Association of Realtors (NAR), the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts (NAREIT), National Apartment Association, National Multifamily Housing Council (NMFHC), and others immediately opposed the regulations. According to the OpenSecrets organization, housing and real estate industry groups spent more than \$100 million lobbying during the pandemic. The NAR spent \$18 million in 2021, while realtor associations in Georgia and Alabama filed lawsuits against the moratorium.



Los Angeles: Protesting sweeps and evictions at a homeless encampment in Echo Park. Photo: Ringo Chiu/Shutterstock

HUMAN COST

The power and inhumanity of the real estate lobby have been contested by millions of people, primarily renters and former renters who are now unhoused. Estimates of the number of people still at risk of eviction range from 3 million to as high as 40 million. The Aspen Institute calculates that 15 percent of all renters are in debt to their landlords, with such unequal rates as 22 percent of Black renters, 17 percent of Latinx renters, and 11 percent of white renters, the largest group. Rental debt is also challenging for renters with children, with 19 percent unable to make payments.

One of the high points of the eviction resistance was the four-day “sleep out” led by Congresswoman Cori Bush and tenant leaders on the Capitol steps from July 30 to August 3. Their actions led to the moratorium extension that saved tens of thousands of families from eviction. But the extension was then overturned by the Supreme Court on August 26.

The inhumanity of mass evictions is equaled only by the system’s cruelty toward unhoused people after eviction. The City of Los Angeles has earned the title of “meanest city in the country” by enforcing the will of real estate investors and hedge fund managers to clear poor residents off the streets. It has carried out massive, multi-agency “sweeps” of unhoused encampments by LAPD and County Sheriffs, including displacing some 2,000 unhoused residents from a three-mile stretch of Venice Beach. It is currently considering assembling teams from all over the city to sweep unhoused encampments on Skid Row, a 47 percent African American community.

A proposed municipal code change would prohibit sitting, sleeping or lying in the city, and potentially allow the city to criminally charge any unhoused resident who does not accept an offer of a time-limited shelter bed, even though enough shelter beds do not exist. California Governor Gavin Newsom recently attacked unhoused leaders, claiming that, “For people that ad-

vocate on behalf of those living in encampments when this state is putting up unprecedented resources and alternatives, one has to question the motivations.” The motivations are, that for hundreds of thousands of people, they have no place to go. Those “resources and alternatives” do not exist.

FINANCIALIZATION OF HOUSING

The housing crisis is driven not only by the impoverishment of low-wage and temporary workers, pandemic unemployment, and the September 6 end of extended unemployment benefits. The situation also results from speculative capital increasing its control of the housing industry and the economy as a whole. About 60 percent of rentals in the U.S. is controlled by business entities, including so-called REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts) like Equity Residential and Essex Property. According to Accountable.US, large REITs suffered little or no rental income loss during the pandemic. They continued to make robust profits yet were among the most vocal opponents of the eviction moratorium. Many REITs and private equity fund landlords earn more of their income trading shares on the speculative market than they do from managing their rental properties.

Long ago, capitalism transformed housing from shelter to protect human beings into a commodity to be bought and sold for profit, without regard for the needs and rights of those who need it. Now housing is undergoing “financialization.” As United Nations Special Rapporteur Leilani Farha wrote in a 2017 report, “Financialization of housing refers to structural changes in housing and financial markets and global investment whereby housing is treated as a commodity, a means of accumulating wealth and often as security for financial instruments that are traded and sold on global markets.”

The contradiction between financial demands of corporate property and the rights of human beings to basic necessities was dramatically revealed when the eviction

moratorium went to the Supreme Court in August. The court majority claimed that the moratorium put landlords “at risk of irreparable harm by depriving them of rent payments with no guarantee of eventual recovery” — even though the government allocated \$45 billion in rent relief designed to get to landlords, despite a slow roll-out.

Nowhere did the court mention or acknowledge tenants’ right not to be exposed to disease and possible death due to eviction and homelessness. The court held that “one of the most fundamental elements of private ownership” was the “right to exclude.” The ruling class exposed the truth that the underlying principle of private property is to exclude, deny, and violate the human rights of people who do not own any property.

The first task of revolutionaries is to unite with ev-

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Love, Vision, the End of Division

Inside Rally, Comrades!

Driven by desperation, nearly 15,000 people gathered under a bridge connecting Del Rio in Texas with Ciudad Acuña in Mexico. Most were originally from Haiti, but Dominicans, Venezuelans and Cubans were also present. They were driven back across the border and the Biden Administration flew thousands to Haiti, even though many Haitians made their way to the border after spending years in Brazil and other South American countries after the 2010 earthquake. They were drawn to jobs created by the 2016 Summer Olympics and 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Rather than an “immigration problem,” the plight of the Haitians represents a world-wide problem of the abandonment of the millions who are becoming homeless and unmoored from any economic stability. Whether being swept away from the border or from homeless encampments across the U.S., a new class is being created that is compelled to fight for a new future. This issue of *Rally, Comrades!* brings to light the situation we face, the struggles to address it, and a revolutionary perspective for the way forward.

The seesaw, eighteen-month campaign over the eviction moratorium has starkly exposed the conflict between human rights and the power of corporate property in American society today. The inhumanity of mass evictions is equaled

only by the cruelty of the system toward unhoused people after they are evicted. “The Eviction Moratorium Battle” points out that revolutionaries must unite with every act of resistance and fight for unity of the housing movement.

“Pandemic Recovery Requires Shift in Consciousness,” shows that what we learn from this pandemic must not be limited to this pandemic. While the U.S. Department of Labor reports 36 million Americans lost their jobs during the pandemic, the progressive think tank Institute for Policy Studies reports that “the \$1.8 trillion increase in American billionaire wealth over the last 17 months could pay the entire 10-year cost of making healthcare more affordable for 9 million people more than 10 times over.” We face an urgent, practical need for a new system that works to benefit everyone and secures a future for our children.

As stated in “Covid-19: Our Children are Counting on Us,” treating Covid-19 as a political and ideological debate rather than a worldwide health crisis has imperiled the lives of millions of people. Unclear health guidelines from both the Trump and Biden Administrations, driven by corporate economic interests, have turned into the loss of our grandparents, spouses, siblings, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, and children.

Within our present system, displaced workers cannot survive without taking their fights for housing, health care, and the environment into the very political arena that the ruling class is trying to drive them away from. Because its numbers are so rapidly growing, and because it has no stake in the status quo, this new

class is compelled to fight for a new society. The resistance to fascism, “Defending Democracy” states, not only has to unite all who can be united, but also must specifically ground itself in this new class of discarded workers to lead the fight for true democracy and a new society.

There is a growing recognition that the U.S. government is developing into a fascist apparatus that more openly represents the interests of the corporations rather than the people of the country. The ruling class works to consolidate a new fascist society, aiming its fire at all who no longer add to their profit. “New Forms of Fascism,” explains that our new class has a leading role in transforming society. Today, there is the ability to have an abundance of food and housing, have

quality education and health care, and to live a cultured life. We can fight forward with the understanding that robotic, digital production can be publicly owned, and the abundance it creates can be distributed to all without money.

“Jack Hirschman, Poet and Revolutionary, 1933-2021” dedicated his life to the revolutionary struggle and to poetry, its most intimate language. His words and life-long practice were pledged to love, vision, the end of division, and the positive fight for a life that would allow everyone their full humanity and creativity. Toward this end, he worked joyously and tirelessly to his last day, for this vision around the world and here in the U.S. **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.

Editorial Board: Danny Alexander, Brooke Heagerty, Kimberly King, John Slaughter, Steve Teixeira, Mary Kay Yarak

Photo Editors: Daymon Hartley, Kimberly King

Reach us at: RALLYCOMRADES.ORG

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.

LRNA, P.O. Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647
info@lrna.org | 1(773)486-0028 | lrna.org

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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.

Defending Democracy

Summer wildfires and hurricanes, new pandemic variants, and the grisly fascist offensive have cast a cloud of doom over American society. These are signs of the death throes of global capitalism. But while the symptoms are grave, they do not determine our fate, as long as we can change the system. Capitalism and the private property that it rests on are temporary forms of social organization. They were created by human beings, and they can be overturned and discarded by human beings.

Throughout history, people have survived famines, slavery, and world wars. There is no reason we cannot also solve the problems we face today, not only to survive but in order to build a beautiful future. The question is how to do it.

VOTING RIGHTS

The first step is to address the ruling class strategy of a fascist offensive. It has expanded from the January 6 insurrection into attempts not only to defend but glorify the insurrectionists. The national movement to eliminate the right to vote includes not only the state legislation to suppress voting and tamper with the count. It now includes extreme gerrymandering, and the attempt to impose the “Independent State Legislature” doctrine to overturn the popular vote in presidential elections. Fascist organizers in California used an undemocratic recall process to unsuccessfully attempt to install a pro-Trump governor in a state with only 24 percent Republican voters.

Fascism is not simply or exclusively partisan, however. The fascist attacks by “blue state” Democrat governors on unhoused people, for example, are a critical tactical component of the overall assault on democracy and human rights. It is not possible to defeat the fascist offensive without defeating its strategy. Attacking the enemy’s tactics cannot win the war. In fact, the enemy’s tactics today are specifically designed to divide us, by geography, color, gender, religion, immigration status, and a host of other features.

The battle for voting rights is often depicted in mainstream discourse as an African American or Latino issue, but this is a half-truth. While people of color are frequently targeted and attacked, the impact extends to vast sections of the working class regardless of color. Every day, elected officials and election outcomes decide life and death issues around health care, reproductive rights, the economy, foreign policy, and more. To address this reality, the Poor People’s Campaign has tied its battle for voting rights to the fight for a \$15 minimum wage.

DISCARDED WORKERS

The root of the problem is that the automation and AI of the tech economy are steadily eliminating the need for human labor. On the one hand, this is creating a new class of impoverished workers with

The ruling class’ tactics today are designed to divide us, by geography, color, gender, religion, immigration status, and a host of other features.

little if any access to good jobs and no viable future in the private property economy. The ruling class is resorting to fascist dictatorship because it has no intention of allowing this new class to influence government decision-making or in any way interfere with the maximization of corporate profit.

On the other hand, the new technology itself creates the possibility of achieving 100 percent renewable energy by 2030, of healing the earth, and of eliminating global poverty through astounding improvements in productivity — if only we can wrestle it out of the hands of corporate profiteers and turn it over to the people, before the private property system irreversibly damages the planet.

Within our present system, displaced workers cannot survive without taking their fight for housing, health care, and the environment into the very political arena that the ruling class is trying to

drive them from. Because its numbers are so rapidly growing, especially among the youth, and because it has no stake in the status quo, this new class is compelled, and has the power, to overturn the system and build a new society. The resistance to fascism not only has to unite all who can be united, but also must specifically ground itself in this new class of discarded workers, to lead the fight for true democracy and a new society.

BASIC NEEDS DEMOCRATS

The most effective tactics are therefore those that tie defense of democracy to the battle to meet the immediate demands of the people. The early August victory in the fight to extend the eviction moratorium was a perfect example. It happened on the same day as the loss by would-be Squad member Nina Turner in Ohio. Turner was leading in the contest for an open Congressional seat in the Cleveland-

Akron area, when the Democratic Party establishment closed ranks against her and brought about her defeat. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Democratic Majority for Israel, and Congressional Black Caucus spent together some \$6 million to defeat Turner, when the money should have been spent defeating Republican voting rights opponents in the 2022 midterm elections.

Squad member Cori Bush faced off against the same Democratic establishment, when the President and Democratic-controlled Congress failed to extend the eviction moratorium on July 30. She and her Squad allies combined direct action, legislative maneuvering, and sophisticated media messaging to force the President to sign off on the extension, over the outraged protests of the real estate lobby. On the one hand, based on the urgency and basic needs character of the issue, she was able to leverage her position as someone who herself was a formerly unhoused mom. On the other hand, she was also able to effectively mobilize the support of Nancy Pelosi and the Congressional Black Caucus, the very forces who defeated Nina Turner.

The visionary approach of the Squad —that dedicated group of

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Covid-19: Our Children are Counting on Us

From the Editors

We look at the numbers representing the toll of the Pandemic to understand our stark reality and see the possibilities of a better future.

Despite the U.S. having access to more COVID-19 vaccines than the rest of the world, over 714,000 Americans have died during the Pandemic, with over 5.5 million children being infected and hundreds dying. Out of every four COVID-19 deaths, one child was left behind without a mother, father and/or a grandparent.

A new study estimates that more than 140,000 children in the U.S. have lost a parent or a grandparent caregiver to COVID-19, changing their lives forever.

Treating Covid-19 as a political and ideological debate rather than a worldwide health crisis has imperiled the lives of millions of people. Unclear health guidelines from both the Trump and Biden Administrations, driven by corporate economic interests, have turned into the loss of our grandparents, spouses, siblings, mothers, fa-

thers, aunts, uncles, and children.

And then there are those who are profiting from our misery. According to the People’s Vaccine Alliance, the Pandemic has created nine new pharmaceutical billionaires worth \$19.3 billion, enough to vaccinate around 780 million people in low-income countries.

In addition, Big Pharma raised prices on 245 prescription drugs, 61 of which have been used to treat COVID-19 since the start of the Pandemic. Not to mention the trillions of dollars made during the Pandemic by Amazon, Walmart, Johnson and Johnson, Facebook, and others.

Today, a culture of fascist violence, hatred, and disregard for human life has taken hold. It is the ideological foundation for a government and society to take no responsibility for the rights and well-being of its people. We teach our children about sharing, kindness, and love, yet worldwide, the Pandemic has thrown an additional 150 million children into poverty.

Robotic and digital production is accelerating, replacing greater sections of workers, and creating an economic revolution. This process brings about

ever-increasing polarization of wealth and poverty and a whole new class of people who cannot make it.

The economy — the way things are produced and distributed — is the foundation for society and the political system. It is not possible to change that foundation and not change society and political system.

Therefore, this country is heading into a social revolution. On what basis do people change society and the political system?

The ruling class is reshaping government, the legal system, and policing to keep the means to produce the necessities of life in private hands for private gain. They turn to force and violence to keep at bay a growing class that cannot survive. Communism, an economic system based on the common ownership of socially necessary means of production, is completely compatible with robotic, digital production. Today it is possible to distribute the goods produced according to need without money. True political democracy rests on economic equality and access to the things required for a healthy life.

Our children are counting on us.

Understanding New Forms of Fascism in America

Change is upon us, and it can't be managed by reforming one or another aspect of the atrocities we are experiencing.

Many American people, especially young people, have shown they are willing to take to the streets. The effectiveness of the tens of thousands who are demanding change is increased by understanding what they are up against, who the enemy is and what the possibilities are.

There is a growing recognition that the U.S. government is developing into a fascist apparatus, that more openly represents the interests of the corporations than the people of the country. This merger of the corporations and the government exposes the ongoing construction of a fascist state, veiled by the misleading term "privatization." Privatization in the U.S. takes the form of paying private corporations with public money to carry out what was once a government responsibility. Legal, environmental, and labor legislation beneficial to corporate interests puts the corporations beyond public accountability.

Chiara Cordelli, brings this to light in "Why Privatization Is Wrong" (Boston Review), asking, "Can justice ever be achieved, and can democratic legitimacy ever be secured, in a privatized state?" She elaborates, "What about access to health care and welfare? Although governments may fund most of these services, they also contract out to private corporations an increasingly large part of their provision, and with it the de facto authority to decide who should be eligible for these services. Some thirty-three thousand private U.S. organizations are under a total of some two hundred thousand government contracts for social services delivery, including education, health care, child care, and unemployment benefits. In some U.S. states, nonprofit organizations control up to 90 percent of overall social service delivery."

The entire world is undergoing a leap from one economic base — production with human labor — to another without human labor. New tools introduced in the last stage of electromechanical industry have created a break from the past development of the economy. New tools, new forms of automation using no human labor, have begun to replace the old. A new epoch of human history is upon us, brought by the microchip, computer, and robot.

A new class of workers is being created as successive waves of work go out of existence. It is being pushed out of the economy, as it cannot work for wages needed to buy the necessities of life. This creates a problem for the ruling class. The new class must fight for access to food, homes, and water, even though it has no money to secure those things. It is compelled to transform society into public ownership of the new tools of production.

The ruling class is reorganizing the government to attempt to stabilize the

situation and protect their interests by merging the state, and all its financial, political, and military power, with the corporations. That objective base of fascism allows the corporations to shift the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the workers. These are the economics of fascism. As the burden becomes intolerable and the people begin to resist, the state will clamp down, destroying what little democracy exists and attempting to prevent any struggle of the people. This is the social face of fascism.

With the end of communal, primitive communist societies and the establishment of private ownership of the tools (means of production) and the economy, the dominant class was essentially a ruling class. They owned the primary means of production, at first land and natural resources and slaves, then machinery and industry.

During the last 10,000 years, special bodies of armed men became indispensable for the dominant class to maintain control over the exploited class. A power necessary to the ruling class arises out of society to keep the opposing classes from consuming themselves and society in fruitless struggle. It places itself above society so that the clash between conflicting classes is kept within the bounds of "order." This power is the State: police, a standing army, prisons, the system of courts, and institutions of coercion of all kinds. As in anything else financing, administration and structure are required to develop and

uphold this special power. The officials also stand "above society" protected by special laws and immunity.

Today the corporations use the State apparatus to guarantee their interests and their profits, whatever it takes. The relationship between capitalist and worker, that is the basis of capitalism, is being destroyed. But the class representing those who own and run the corporations as private property intends to guarantee that they retain their power, wealth, and privilege, under whatever new form the economic system takes. The State continues to grant corporations, which extract wealth from society for the owning class, unlimited rights, and powers.

The role of the state apparatus in society today is the same as the slave-owning class of the U.S.: as historian Kenneth Stampp put it, "To Make Them Stand in Fear." Force is the leading aspect of control of the new fascist reorganization of the State.

You can find examples of this throughout history, but you can also find many changes taking place today to develop a "new" fascism. The fascism needed today is to control a growing mass of people who are marginalized and cast aside as unnecessary and "useless" in a fully electronic, digital, AI-oriented economy. Today the ruling class is making the changes needed to use a highly aggressive, militarized fascist state to control a population fighting just to survive.

A thorough discussion and a good understanding of the development of the State and the fascism of the 21st century will help us in our daily practical work.

There are concentration camps in America. More than one in 500 Americans has died of Coronavirus. Thousands of children have been confined at our border apart from their families, their lives changed forever. Over 10,000 Haitian immigrants were stranded under a Texas bridge, with the government flying them back to Haiti, which has become uninhabitable for much of the population. Police have killed over five thousand Americans between 2015 and 2020, with 936 more in the past year. Police in at least 98 cities used some form of tear gas against Americans protesting the killing of George Floyd. Local governments as well as the federal government are passing laws suppressing the right to protest, vote and file lawsuits against corporations.

The ruling class works to consolidate a new fascist society, aiming its fire at all who no longer add to their profit. Our new class has a leading role in transforming society. Today, there is the ability to have an abundance of food and housing and have quality education and health care, to live a cultured life. We can fight forward with the understanding that robotic, digital production can be publicly owned, and the abundance it creates can be distributed to all without money. **RC**

Eviction Moratorium

Continued from page 1

ery act of resistance and fight for the unity of the housing movement — including leadership from the housed and unhoused, Black, Indigenous, and other people and communities of color — and the unity of the housing movement with the overall working-class movement. Impulses toward such unity are already happening.

The Poor People's Campaign explicitly promoted unity between housed and unhoused when it called for "making evictions from any dwelling, including cars, tents, and encampments, illegal." A July 2021 Los Angeles rally against the criminalization of the unhoused brought together LATU (Los Angeles Tenants Union), unhoused residents from UTACH (Unhoused Tenants Against Carceral Housing), civil rights, church groups, and labor unions from all across the city. UTACH is a recently formed organization with leadership of unhoused residents and Reclaimers from El Sereno, who moved into abandoned but perfectly habitable housing owned by Cal Trans, the CA Department of Transportation. Also, in Los Angeles, a street organization of unhoused veterans in an encampment next to the Veterans Administration invited members of UTACH to talk to them

about housing takeovers.

The second task of revolutionaries is to study and work step by step with the movement to uncover and explain the real cause of the problem, the private property system. "Private property" does not mean the personal property that every human being needs for the enjoyment of life: shelter, clothing, and personal vehicles, appliances, etc. Everyone has the right to these. Accurately defined, private property means the land and means of production that generate the society's wealth. Revolutionaries point out that these things must become publicly owned to distribute products according to need instead of being hoarded by the few.

Finally, the role of the revolutionary is to seek out the forms of transition or approach to revolutionary change. In the housing movement, many of those forms are beginning to take shape. Community Land Trusts are being organized with the explicit aim to "decommodify" land and housing by permanently removing them from the speculative market. National movements like the Homes Guarantee program or California's Social Housing Act are developing toward a massive expansion of a land and

housing sector called social housing, independent of the predatory private market. Revolutionaries participate in these movements to win, to keep them on their path until housing is permanently secured as a human right for everyone.

Social housing is defined as housing on land owned by a public entity or a mission-driven non-profit. Individual units may be owned by the individual families that live in them, but they cannot be sold or transferred to a private for-profit entity. Social housing is mixed-income, with permanent, deed-restricted affordability and security of tenure to prevent evictions. Residents have the democratic right to participate in property management and decision-making.

The challenge is to show how these visionary solutions to the housing crisis make a difference to the daily struggles defending against evictions and homelessness. We do this when we bring these ideas into our battles and connect the dots between temporary fixes and lasting solutions. This is how we do our part to build the revolutionary movement for the peaceful, cooperative society and sustainable earth that we all need and deserve. **RC**

Pandemic Recovery Requires Shift in Consciousness

The betrayal of the poor couldn't be more obvious. The U.S. ruling class has sacrificed more than 750,000 Americans, paying lip service to "essential workers," while doling out the bare minimum unemployment assistance necessary to stem social unrest. Now, with unemployment benefits extensions and eviction moratoriums ended, millions of Americans will be thrown into a struggle like nothing this country has ever seen before. A year and a half of our online article series, "Ray of Light in the Pandemic," allows us now to sum up this stage of our class's struggle against the ruthless ruling class that's taken advantage of the situation.

We must also keep in mind the international scale of this crisis. Though America has the greatest number of dead, the death toll worldwide is nearly five million people. The global unevenness of health care, economic support, and vaccine distribution demand a tremendous shift in consciousness to collectively fight the fascism accelerating against the world's people and threatening to destroy our planet.

America's struggle is an extreme example of the global pandemic. As we enter flu season, the delta variant of COVID-19 has raced through rural populations in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Texas. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, these states reported having less than 10 percent of their ICU beds available at the end of summer. By Labor Day, USA Today reported 1,000 schools in 35 states closed because of the surge in the delta variant, but most schools remained open in those same states.

Meanwhile, states with the highest populations ravaged by the delta variant, such as Texas and Florida, face the highest increases in evictions. A nurse stationed in Mississippi by the international disaster relief organization, Samaritan's Purse, Kelly Sites, told the Los Angeles Times, "To respond to the United States is quite surreal for us...It's a challenge because, usually, home is stable. And so when we deploy, we're just going to the disaster. This is the first time where home is a disaster."

While the United States remains deeply divided on the science of coronavirus and vaccinations, our class has fought forward on various fronts throughout the pandemic. We have seen a rise in social awareness and political organizing, fighting for unions and against voter suppression. Workers across America have been confronting this ruling class with calls for government accountability — for increased health care availability in the face of such a crisis, safety and access regarding education, and nationwide protection against evictions. Workers in each of these struggles fight each day valiant-



Illinois: Millions relied on food bank distributions during the Pandemic shutdown.

ly, in every state of the union, but these fronts must ultimately unite to stop a ruling class working to keep us divided.

After all, the ruling class has done well in this pandemic. While the U.S. government spent nearly 3 trillion dollars on the crisis, by privatizing the medical response and developing more automation in all industries, billionaires alone made nearly 2 trillion dollars from the pandemic. While the U.S. Department of Labor reports 36 million Americans lost their jobs during the pandemic, the progressive think tank Institute for Policy Studies reports that "the \$1.8 trillion increase in American billionaire wealth over the last 17 months could pay the entire 10-year cost of making healthcare more affordable for 9 million people more than 10 times over." In other words, our ruling class's profits could make health care affordable for 90 million people, twice those who have been infected with the virus worldwide.

Based upon pandemic gains, a June Forbes article estimates global wealth will grow by \$65 trillion in the next five years. Those who own more than \$100 million, called "ultras," will get richer faster than any other group, especially in Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Their callousness is clear since "With a sluggish vaccination rollout in most developing countries and coronavirus still rife in others, poorer nations are likely to be left out of this pandemic recovery."

Today is the first time on record that inequality increased in virtually every country on Earth simultaneously, according to the Oxfam report "The Inequality Virus". While the world's billionaires saw their wealth increase by nearly 4 trillion dollars during the pandemic, 500 million more people have been added to the

ranks of those living in poverty.

We know why this is happening, because the abandonment of our class began long before the pandemic. Though new technologies could be used to heal the world's sick, restore our environment, and liberate humanity, in the hands of our ruling class, the technological leap drives down the value of our labor by automating away more and more jobs every day. When labor loses value in this economic system, people's lives also lose their value. The pandemic has vividly illustrated the ways our current economy strategically upholds the goal of making money over saving lives.

Our class needs a shared global and scientific understanding of health, the environment, and politics to defeat this fas-

cist strategy of the ruling class. Global pandemics are defeated by protecting the global population, not just its most affluent sector. Leaving billions of the world's poorest people unvaccinated only creates a breeding ground for virulent new strains of COVID-19 or other diseases.

Though the current spread of the pandemic is often referred to as "the pandemic of the unvaccinated," the delta variant has also infected and endangered the lives of many already vaccinated. We now know that yet another variant is developing, and these will continue to develop if the disease continues to spread. Teams of medical scientists who understand the situation are uniting across national borders to expand access to vaccinations, but that alone will not stop the threat of future variants and future diseases.

What we learn from this pandemic must not be limited to this pandemic. In a global economic system that places wealth and the security of those who control it above everything else, even the global environment that sustains our lives, we will face other diseases in the future. Or, the Earth's billions can take control of this planet and liberate ourselves from the rulers who have treated us so irresponsibly. We face an urgent, practical need for a new system that works to benefit everyone. However, to make these necessary changes, we must struggle for class consciousness and a scientific understanding of the world around us. This perspective is essential to our fight, and it is why we study and share these rays of light. <https://rallycomrades.org/ray-of-light-inside-the-pandemic/> **RC**

Join the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

The goal of all revolutionaries' work today is to give the American people a vision of what is possible. It is a vision of a world where no one has to fight another for the daily bread of existence. It is a vision where cooperation and fulfilling the needs of humanity are the guiding principles. It is a vision that satisfies the deepest yearnings of the people for peace. Society can now create the abundance the new technology promises, and so a new world: a cooperative society, with this abundance distributed according to need.

In spite of worsening economic conditions, nothing can be accomplished until the American people hold a vision of where they want to go and what they want to be. Creating such vision with them is the overriding task of revolutionaries and the foundation of our organization.

Join us!

For more information or a free information packet, email info@lrna.org, or call 773-486-0028, or write LRNA, P.O. Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647.

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

Jack Hirschman, Poet and Revolutionary 1933 – 2021

The world and the movement for social transformation have suffered the loss of one of our great lights and souls with the passing, at age 87 (in his sleep at his home in San Francisco), of the revolutionary poet and organizer Jack Hirschman. Jack was a founding member of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America and, previously, the Communist Labor Party. He gave his life to spreading the revolutionary message of transformation and human equality, and love. He always said, “everyone is a poet,” in the most profound acknowledgment of the equality of the visionary creative impulse in the human heart and practice.

In addition to those named above, Jack was a founding member of too many organizations to name: among them the Jacques Roumain Cultural Brigade, the Roque Dalton Cultural Brigade (named for leading revolutionary poets in Haiti and El Salvador), the Union of Left Writers, and the Revolutionary Poets Brigade (now with many chapters and in several countries). Recently he was made the General Coordinator of the World Poetry Movement. He traveled widely on reading tours and international festivals, always as an active revolutionary.

Jack was the fourth Poet Laureate of San Francisco. During that time, he organized two large International Poetry Festivals. He continued ten years beyond his tenure organizing weekly poetry readings with the Friends of the Library and yearly readings in the neighborhood libraries, featuring poets from those neighborhoods.

Jack took his visionary poetry many times to Italy (where Multimedia Edizioni publishes his work), France, Colombia, Sarajevo, Peru, Iraq, and Haiti, to name just some of the places. His renown circles the globe, which he traveled widely. Internationally honored and loved, Jack translated more than 14 languages — from Albanian to Yiddish — and was extremely generous in his encouragement of poets everywhere, some unknown and published for the first time because of his support. His dozens of books included three volumes of the longer poems he called his Arcanes, each a thousand pages, with a fourth that will be released posthumously in English by Casa del Poesia of Salerno, Italy.

Jack was born and raised in the Bronx by Russian-Jewish working-class parents. He wrote his first poem about the “bells of freedom” to celebrate the ending of WWII and the defeat of fascism in Europe. He recently wrote of an awakening experience in a call for a national Culture Conference sponsored by the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. The Conference, held October 17, 2021, was also one of many tributes to this great poet and man.

In the call for the Conference, “Toward the Cultural Offensive,” Jack wrote, “On a day in 1943, when I was ten years old and



playing with friends in the alley alongside the four-family house on Wheeler Avenue (now Amadou Diallo Street) in The Bronx where I lived, the window on the second floor was opened and my terrified mother Nellie cried out: ‘Jackie if the Russians don’t defeat the Nazis in Stalingrad, the Nazis are going to go to London and then they’re going to come here!’ My mother’s fright began my life-long struggle against fascism.”

Inspired by this early experience as well as his love for literature, Jack entered City College of New York and attained his Ph.D. He first taught at Dartmouth and then at UCLA, where his classes were very popular and attended by many who would become well-known poets. He was connected to an avant-garde group of poets, painters, actors, and intellectuals in the Los Angeles area, and he had two children, Celia and David. His son David died of leukemia at age 25, shortly after Jack left his marriage and teaching career to become a street poet in the streets of San Francisco. During the height of the Vietnam War, Jack announced to his UCLA classes that he would be giving all his male students A’s so they could maintain their student deferment standing and would, out of fairness, provide an A to any female student who asked. Jack chose not to fight to keep his position when fired from his job. He left his career, moved to San Francisco, and became a full-time poet there.

During the following decades, he became central to the vibrant cafe and street poetry scene in San Francisco. He lived and worked in his beloved neighborhood

the rest of his life, though his reach and influence were global, especially in the last thirty years of his life. For decades, because of his unashamed communism and support of revolutionary struggles everywhere, he couldn’t get a paid reading or a book published. However, nothing slowed down his output or his commitment.

He became a street poet in the truest sense, not unlike such Beat poets as his friend Bob Kaufman, and in brotherly communion with the people who were

objectively falling into the streets from the 1980s on. One of the greatest American poems about homelessness, his “Home,” was written for the founding convention of the San Francisco Union of the Homeless. Jack participated in various direct actions such as housing takeovers, and he went to jail several times. Decades later, he is remembered as a wonderful comrade in action, and the guy who had the tiny bottle of vodka he passed around in the back of the police van, despite the handcuffs! Everyone who knew Jack had an unforgettable story about the man he was.

A copyboy with the Associated Press while still in his teens, he later called himself the “oldest paperboy.” He sold the movement paper the “People’s Tribune” and *Rally, Comrades!* for many years in the streets and cafes of his beloved North Beach, at readings, protests, housing takeovers, marches, and on his travels. He considered *Rally, Comrades!* to be the most important paper in the country.

He gave his life to the revolutionary struggle and to poetry, its most intimate language. His words and life-long practice were pledged to love, vision, the end of division, and the positive fight for a life that would allow all their full humanity and creativity. Toward this end, he worked joyously and tirelessly to his last day.

We mourn his passing but are left with his stupendous and illuminating body of work, some of the most outstanding poetry ever written, with its positive forward vision, along with his fiery exposure and condemnation of the cruelties of a dying and mean system of exploitation.

Outpourings of grief and remembrance sound around the globe. Love and truth never die.

Jack Hirschman Presente! **RC**

Defending Democracy

Continued from page 3

Congressmembers leading what might be called the basic needs section of the Democrats — is forcing Biden and the corporate Democrats to fight for the infrastructure bill. It coordinated with a #SealTheDeal mobilization by groups like the Sunrise Movement, Indivisible, and Movement for Black Lives to keep the bill alive despite a massive corporate lobbying effort to kill it.

If passed, the \$3.5 trillion would have included universal pre-K programs; wage increases for childcare workers; a child tax credit; paid family leave; dental, vision, and hearing benefits for Medicare recipients; lower prescription drug prices; expansion of the Affordable Care Act; free community college tuition; investments in historically Black colleges; increased Pell grants; investments in public

housing, the Housing Trust Fund, and community land trusts; benefits for immigrants; collective bargaining; a Climate Conservation Corps; pollution fees; forest fire prevention; reduction of carbon emissions; and development of clean energy.

The basic needs victories won in these battles along the way are key to developing a strategy for defeating fascism and defending democracy. Next steps include expansion of the Squad by electing more progressive challengers against corporate Democrats in 2022. At the same time, every victory serves as an indispensable platform for the further education and organization of the dispossessed class, taking further steps toward political independence from both the major pro-corporate parties. **RC**