

The road to real democracy and the midterm elections

The heart of the midterm election battles of 2022 is the struggle of the American people to survive this era of climate disaster, pandemic, inflation, rent gouging, police violence, denial of reproductive rights and economic uncertainty. Because so many of these issues are at stake, the elections are also a battleground over our most basic rights and freedoms, including the right to vote itself.

A recent Quinnipiac University poll showed that 69 percent of people surveyed felt that American democracy is in danger and they are right. The technological revolution in the economy is polarizing society and driving the ruling class to embrace the politics of corporate fascist dictatorship. As automation and artificial intelligence push workers out of the economy, the ruling class is no longer willing to fund housing and health care. As a result, it has no more need for the democracy that people use to fight for these programs, and it is moving to dismantle it.

People sense the danger, but many have been slow to understand it deeply and take action. As Ohio Democratic Party operative David Pepper said, “There are two sides in America, but they are fighting different battles. The blue side thinks their views are largely popular and democracy is relatively stable – and they just need better outcomes in federal elections. The focus is on winning swing states in national elections. The other side, though, knows that our democracy isn’t stable – that it can be subverted through the statehouses. Blue America needs to reshape everything it does for that much deeper battle.”



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FASCISTS SUBVERTING STATES' DEMOCRACY

The battle is deeper than that. Statehouse subversion includes gerrymandering and passing court packing and abortion banning laws. It includes passing anti-immigration, pro-pollution and “Don’t Say Gay” laws. It includes passing election denialism, voter suppression and anti-unionism laws. At its most extreme, it involves the “independent state legislature” doctrine giving state legislatures dictatorial power over courts, constitutions and voters – a doctrine the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule on during this term.

State-level repression goes with an assault on democracy and civil rights. A movement is growing for an “Article V” convention to re-

place the U.S. Constitution with a Pinochet-like document enthroning corporate power. It accompanies legal and extralegal threats to elections and to the safety of election workers and their families. Election officials suffer a mass of Freedom of Information records requests to disrupt and discredit the elections they administer.

While it is critical to point out the dangers, revolutionaries also identify the opportunities that light the way forward and provide hope for the future. Conditions now are more favorable to us than under Reconstruction. The expanding capitalism of the 19th century no longer exists. As today’s automation reduces labor, it reduces the overall rate of profit and restricts the system’s ability to attract investment in new production. It causes the economic decline we have experienced since 2008. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the South could isolate Black workers and the country could isolate the South because the economy grew rapidly.

The ruling class today is on the defensive. It cannot pass laws to protect its profits – i.e., environmental deregulation, anti-unionism, welfare and health care elimination – without also attacking democracy itself because the people rise up to resist. To attack democracy, the ruling class has had to ally with every anti-democratic social force it could find. Through organizations like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and the Heritage Foundation, corporations have lined up with the anti-abortion movement, the gun lobby, white supremacist and anti-immigrant groups

and armed militias like the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys. When these connections get exposed, most corporations disavow them publicly then quietly reconnect.

To splinter and paralyze the working class, the ruling class has relied on white supremacy, male supremacy and what we now call hetero patriarchy. This strategy worked as long as the system met the needs of most workers, and people could envision better lives. Today’s sputtering economy put an end to that. As the George Floyd rebellion proved, the American people are uniting.

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM AND TWO CLASS STRATEGIES

Nothing illustrates this like reproductive freedom. The ruling class in the 1970s elevated the call to ban abortion as a strategy to build a base in the evangelical and Catholic churches and create a “wedge issue” preventing the working class from uniting around its economic interests. The reversal of *Roe v. Wade* upset this strategy. Instead of dividing workers, it tended to unite them against the ruling class, its Congress and its Court. The leaked draft opinion written by Justice Samuel Alito referred to “the domestic supply of infants” and brought back memories of forced pregnancies under chattel slavery. The ruling class is trying to force working-class women and pregnant people, especially people of color, to give birth to satisfy the demands of wealthy people for babies for adoption. It is as grotesque and violent a violation

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Workers use the ballot as an organizing weapon

The midterm elections have been a massive war of ideas. The research site Open Secrets reported that a record \$16.7 billion was spent on the 2022 state and federal elections. Ruling class propagandists waged their campaigns not just in mailers and fascist social media platforms, but perhaps even more so in the so-called mainstream media. They spread the lie that “resistance is futile,” that corporate overlords were destined to take over all branches of the government and tear up American democracy for the working class, especially the rights of women and pregnant people and BIPOC and LGBTQ communities.

But people voted anyway. Early voting figures indicated that 2022 voter turnout was already outstripping the record set in 2018. Voters also appeared to be rejecting aggressive corporate messaging that they could not fight for both social and economic issues at the same time. They also rejected the nonsensical claim that pro-corporate politicians had better economic policies.

The important question is better economic policies for whom – the billionaires or the working class? Really better economic policies mean higher wages, lower prices, homes for the unhoused, health care for all

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Rally! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. It reaches out and into the rising social and spontaneous struggle, where influencing consciousness is critical. To widen its appeal for that role, LRNA’s 2022 Convention decided to change the paper’s name from *Rally, Comrades!* to *Rally!*

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The real choice in the 2022 elections

No ballot for the 2022 elections will show “democracy” running against “fascism,” yet that is the choice behind many of the issues and candidacies to be voted on.

The road to real democracy and the midterm elections explains that the heart of the election battles of 2022 is the people’s struggle to survive climate disaster, pandemic, inflation, rent gouging, police violence, denial of reproductive rights and economic uncertainty.

As automation and artificial intelligence push more and more workers out of the economy, the ruling class will no longer fund the government programs necessary to keep people alive. It has no more need for the democracy that people use to fight for these programs and it is moving step by step to dismantle it.

One of their strategies is to use elections to have their activists take over state government. At its most extreme, the “independent state legislature” doctrine would then give state legislatures dictatorial power over the election process. Meanwhile, the fight for people’s immediate needs is beginning to confront these growing threats to democrat-

Inside Rally!

ic rights needed to build their struggles.

“Public health is under attack like never before,” declares our article ‘Shooting’ the *pro-science messengers of public health*. Those organizing a social base for fascism are mobilizing against public health workers. For example, in California 1,500 cases of harassment of public health workers were registered in one year with 222 people leaving their jobs, as a result. Fully 53 percent of public health workers qualified for a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosis or had symptoms of mental health illness over the previous two weeks in a recent poll.

The “public” interest should be foremost in public health services even if that requires unpopular but necessary emergency measures. Disease prevention and promotion of community health not only prevent needless deaths, but they are also cost-effective. Science should serve the public interest and not the enrichment of pharmaceutical and

other profit-driven interests.

Hurricane Fiona, making landfall in Puerto Rico on September 18, took lives, shut down the power grid and impeded access to drinking water for the vast majority of people. *Behind Puerto Rico’s stormy weather: naturalized social disasters and the profit logic of capitalism* presents an analysis from the front lines of the growing political polarization between neofascist forces and a growing popular movement to defend the people and the island itself.

The media, pundits and politicians blamed the catastrophe on nature. But it was decades of neglect of the basic infrastructure and services for workers which crippled the response to this storm, just as happened when Hurricane María took thousands of lives in 2017. Both nature and humanity have been exploited for gain. We need to learn from their experience and forge alliances with revolutionaries there.

The *Political Resolution* of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America (LRNA) concludes that the ruling class is merging the power of the state with the corporations

to create a new fascism, guaranteeing the dominance of the new speculative economy which emerges as technology disrupts the old jobs and industries. They are also preparing the mass base for a politically violent fascist movement.

The attempted coup of January 6, 2021, the violence and visibility of white supremacist groups and the packing of the U.S. Supreme Court are parts of consolidating a fascist mass base. However, as more workers fight for their basic necessities, a growing number are understanding that they are members of a class and need solidarity against a ruling class whose interests are contrary to theirs.

The intersection of street rebellions and elections make them *schools for social consciousness*. Revolutionaries patiently help their class work toward a common understanding and actions, such as creating a third party. In the long run, workers cannot secure either their basic needs or real democracy without transferring the means of production from private property to public ownership. **R**

Midterms: Workers use ballot as organizing weapon

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including access to abortion, student debt forgiveness, shutting down corporate polluters and opposing corporate-sponsored austerity measures to slash social security and medical care.

Finally, voters rejected the massive doubling down by media on anti-crime and pro-

police narratives. They rejected the lies that blamed criminality on Democrats, as if red states did not have higher crime rates than blue states. They especially rejected the Ku Klux Klan-inspired message that blamed people of color for crime. People showed they did not forget the lessons of the George Floyd rebellion: that the working class is mul-

tiracial and that an injury to one section of the working class is an injury to all.

In 2022, the working class laid ahold of the ballot not just to secure elected positions, but as an organizing weapon. They are creating the terrain and the conditions for the larger battle in 2024, including the fight for elections to even happen and for ballots to be

counted. The struggle for the basic needs of the millions cast aside by the corporate economy is intersecting with the fight to protect and reconstruct democracy. We are step by step beginning to organize and understand that we are a social force. Together we have the power to overturn this dying system and to build a new one. **R**

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

Rally! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally!* 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 to 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 with other revolutionaries around the demands of the working class, especially the class of displaced workers, and show how the solution is a cooperative, communist society, where social wealth is owned in common and distributed according to need.

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

Behind Puerto Rico's stormy weather: naturalized social disasters and the profit logic of capitalism

Hurricane Fiona, making landfall in Puerto Rico on September 18, took lives, shut down the power grid and impeded access to drinking water for the vast majority of people. The island was paralyzed. The media, pundits and politicians blamed the catastrophe on nature. But it was decades of neglect of the basic infrastructure and services for workers that crippled the response to this storm, just as happened when Hurricane María took thousands of lives in 2017. And it was a willful neglect, advanced technology rendering workers disposable for the sake of profits. This scenario is capitalist logic at work, reason guided by the bottom line.

Today, as climate change precipitated by capitalist exploitation floods, dries, freezes, or scorches whole regions, this same logic finds profit and benefits in natural calamities. The workforce can be replaced and the owners feel safe. But an inhospitable Earth will doom everybody. In this context, revolutionaries need to wed the struggle to safeguard the planet's environment with the fight for access to natural resources in order to reveal disparities and injustices in the distribution of costs and benefits."

CAPITALISM'S UNNATURAL DISASTERS

In the last few years, nature has battered Puerto Rico with hurricanes and an earthquake, but these things are a part of life in tropical regions. Capitalism has brought about much more death and destruction since its onslaught five centuries ago with the arrival of Columbus: genocide against the indigenous Taíno people (resurgent through their presence in Puerto Rican genes, culture, and consciousness), the sterilization of a third of Puerto Rican women after World War II and colonial exploitation and oppression of laborers, including slavery and peonage. But Puerto Ricans have had enough.

The current economic crisis has roots in the so-called Great Recession, which hit Puerto Rico's controlled market and workers earlier – in 2006 – and harder, costing a large portion of the class its livelihood, and forcing out-migration. More recently, Covid-19 infected a third of the population, took more than 5,000 lives, and shut down businesses, production and normal life. Owners got another excuse to close unprofitable enterprises, further gut social services and neglect upkeep of the physical infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and day care centers, leaving people more defenseless when future natural catastrophes strike.

The people were already disgusted by the historical racial and gender oppression (today including femicide), the crass greed for wealth and power, the flagrant attacks on people's rights, the barely disguised corruption of politicians and businesspeople. And of course, by the daily violence, whether "legally" enforced or the illegal terror practiced by the drug trade, itself a capitalist enterprise. All that, capped by the new health and econom-

ic crises, brought about a massive exodus of people – workers, managers, professionals and artists – rivaling that of the post-World War II *emigración*.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION GROWS

All this has ignited a growing mass response that has been expressed in several social explosions: the newly arising labor struggle and the women's, LGBTQ+, Afroboricua (Afro-Puerto Rican), ecological and community movements. In 2016, after the deeply indebted government declared bankruptcy, countless thousands protested the Junta, the "financial board" which capital had put in charge of the economy and basic services essential for life.

They had squeezed employed workers and the jobless majority through cutbacks of services and benefits, and the "middle class" through \$72 billion in "public" debt and \$55 billion in unfunded pension liabilities. The savings went to big banks, financial firms, hedge funds and private contractors through a corrupt public utilities and municipalities bonds scheme. Finally, in 2019, one and a half million Puerto Ricans took to the streets to oust the corrupt governor, Ricardo Roselló.

At local levels, as capitalists have turned to appropriating public properties through privatization or brute force, the people are

fighting back. When private interests recently attempted to fence off a public park in the rich enclave of San Juan's Condado district, an outdoors recreation space used by the neighboring working-class community, the community came together and took down the fence. Meanwhile, more people are expressing their anger and indignation in public meetings or private corporate affairs, speaking their mind through social media, and through music, art, film, theater, and other forms. For example, musical artists like Residente and Bad Bunny are playing revolutionary roles, raising consciousness and agitating. (To see a video example, go to: <https://youtu.be/GK87AKIPyZY>)

The current colonial government and local ruling class are now facing the consequences not only of the natural disaster, but also of the far more destructive onslaught of an economic and social system enriching and empowering the rulers at the expense of the masses who have felt in their flesh the erosion of basic life supports. The result has been political polarization, such as between the neofascist and fundamentalist religious groups supporting the ruling class and the growing popular resentment and outpourings of action against rigged, corrupt politics and the attack on people's rights.

REVOLUTIONARY INTERDEPENDENCE

In this environment, Hurricane Fiona may have also brought the perfect social storm, further inciting class and political confrontations. The reigning political parties are under growing criticism and are daily losing legitimacy in the face of the lack of electricity, water, food and other necessities and growing rates of violence, suicide, mental illness, economic uncertainty and other unnatural disasters.

Most significant for revolutionaries today are the stirrings of a motion for the unity of the struggles in Puerto Rico, a critical stage there, here on the "Mainland" and globally. For our mutual success, we need to learn from their experience and to forge alliances with revolutionaries there; they need the collaboration of forces in the imperialist "Mainland," bedrock of the island's exploitation and repression and of the power of local capitalists. The process to put an end to capitalist rule is interdependent.

Solidarity and united action are today emerging in Puerto Rico in an embryonic – though rapidly evolving – form. Yet, the opportunities may be short-lived if the neofascist solution being pushed by the ruling class gains support from sectors of the increasingly desperate masses. Our primary role now is to join the fight for class unity through propaganda, agitation and networking. **R**

No more corporate lies, make opioid addiction treatment available to all

As this issue of *Rally!* was published, people were using the 2022 midterm elections to raise awareness of issues that really were about life and death.

Covid killed more than a million Americans because their government didn't adequately protect public health. Others died from massive flooding in Puerto Rico and Florida, where housing speculation produced enormous wealth, but little government spending to protect communities from climate change. Others were killed by the conscious actions of pharmaceutical corporations, as a deadly opioid epidemic caused immense suffering across the country. Let's look into this epidemic, as a way of seeing how the whole system causes so many of us to die.

More than 107,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2021 and more than 109,000 people died of a drug overdose in the 12-month period ending March 2022, according to data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in September. More than 1 million Americans have died from drug overdoses since 2001.

From the Editors

Throughout the country, protests have demanded that federal and state government leaders expose how prescription drugs greatly increased addictions, and punish corporate leaders for lying about the risks in their marketing campaigns. Fed Up! used the 2022 election season to mobilize in Washington, D.C and directly give Congressmembers demands like "Addiction treatment must be universally available and easily accessible." In September, *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*, a documentary on protests which made museums cut ties with the billionaire opioid-dealing Sackler family, won the Venice International Film Festival's prestigious Golden Lion.

On the other hand, we have seen the emergence of part-time, contingent, temporary workers. They work at or below minimum wage. No insurance, no benefits are the new norm. Temps, part-time and

contract workers already constitute a third of the work force. The growth in the contingent workforce over the past few years has been staggering. In 2020, the number of contingent workers in the U.S. reached 51.5 million. And in 2021 alone, 32 percent of companies replaced full-time salaried workers with contingent

These workers being pushed out of economic life do not add to that wealth and their lives are considered valueless to a U.S. ruling class that is well known for its relentless pursuit of amassing greater wealth. This is the source of increasing overdose deaths, the steep rise in homelessness, evictions, poverty and the degradation of education and health care.

But these workers also represent an entirely new class in the social fabric of America. They are the revolutionary force of the 21st century. In spite of the relentless attempts by the ruling class to sow division and discord, it is a class beginning to unite to resolve the problems created by social destruction of the lives and health of the vast majority of us. **R**

'Shooting' the pro-science messengers of public health

The public's health is under attack in America like never before. We have lost well over a million Americans despite being the wealthiest country in the world. It is estimated that a third to half of those deaths could have been prevented with adequate and timely public health measures, including vaccinations, if we truly had a system of universal health in this country.

The unprecedented level of this attack on public health is central to building a social base for fascism in this country. Fueled by misleading social media sound bites, and newscasters and elected officials with political agendas, the politicizing of public health has to be seen in the context of the January 6, 2021 Capitol insurrection, the multistate attack on voting rights, and the gutting of Roe vs. Wade.

Because essential workers such as food processing workers, grocery workers, and health care workers were often first to succumb to the virus, especially before vaccines and other effective treatments became available, many called them disposable workers. Some businesspeople and even elected officials had the audacity to say of these deaths, "well, that is the cost of doing business."

Similarly, today public health workers, including health officers and directors have become disposable people for speaking incon-

venient truths. Since March of 2020, 17 out of 58 of California's counties have lost their health officer and 27 lost their health director. Some have resigned due to threats against their person, or their families as happened in Orange County. Some have been fired as happened in Shasta County, or their contracts were not renewed as happened in Merced County. In 2021 fifteen hundred cases of harassment of public health workers were registered in California, and 222 people left their jobs as a result. As if dealing with the pandemic and the burnout of health care professionals were not enough, fully 53 percent of public health workers qualified for a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosis or had symptoms of mental health illness over the previous two weeks in a recent poll.

The messengers of public health are being silenced even though they have prevented thousands of deaths. Wearing or not wearing masks has become part of a culture war to further fuel the social base for fascism. Ultimately, this is because prevention and public health are not profitable in a profit driven economy. There are forces that want to prioritize only that which is profitable and are prepared to let people die in order to do so. Misinformation and mixed messages leave the public confused, leading to mistrust of public health and anti-government sentiment,

leaving broad swathes of the nation's population at increased risk.

An anti-science message has even been promoted by some health officials during the COVID pandemic. Florida's surgeon general and Idaho's health commissioner discourage vaccines for healthy kids. Some even promote discredited and dangerous treatment, while rejecting effective and proven treatment and prevention options. Nationally, a similar picture is unfolding, from death threats against Dr. Anthony Fauci to forced resignations of state health officials such as Amy Acton in Ohio.

Delays in taking the threat of disease transmission seriously caused confusion, lost time, and lives lost. Overreliance on market measures to deal with a critical lack of protective equipment, and a dysfunctional distribution system was revealed once PPE and immunizations became available.

In the United States, unlike in other countries, there is a sharp separation between public health and the health care delivery system and pharmaceutical industry. Despite having available the most highly developed technology and scientific breakthroughs in history, effective measures to stem the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic were seriously hampered by the very lack of an effective public health infrastructure in this country.

Pharmaceutical companies are among the most profitable investments to make on the stock market. Pfizer's profits more than doubled in 2021. We pay for their profits with our income taxes, as we pay for the initial development costs of vaccines and pharmaceuticals before they are turned over to private companies. This is called socializing the costs and privatizing the profits. Now pharmaceuticals stand to make even more money by charging individuals for vaccines once covered by the federal government, as the State of Emergency is anticipated to end February 28, 2023.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, few people even knew what public health did. Historically, public health has been invisible because deaths and hospitalizations prevented by immunizations go unseen, and ensuring the safety of food by inspections, hazardous material control, and insuring safe, clean drinking water all happen without fanfare and are taken for granted. Problems are noticed only when they occur, such as mass casualties, a toxic spill, an outbreak of foodborne illness, or a pandemic.

In times of crisis such as epidemics and pandemics, population-wide measures are necessary. Enforcement measures have never been applied equitably for protection of the

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Fascism vs. the people's revolutionary demands

The ruling class in the United States has accelerated its assault on the working class, especially the most dispossessed and marginalized of that class. As they force more and more people to struggle for basic needs, the rulers undercut whatever support they have had among workers. Force and violence replace bribery and privilege as the rulers confront an upsurge of workers' discontent.

The essence of fascism today — its drive and purpose — is specific to this epoch. In the past, the laws inherent in capitalism could guarantee wealth and power. Now the pursuit of wealth depends on changes in the law and political enforcements. Nothing can escape the enforcing arm of the State protecting investors' access to anything that might enrich them. Fascism today stands on the inequalities of the past epoch to defend private property itself.

The ruling class is reorganizing the government to attempt to protect their interests by merging the State, and all its financial, political, and military power, with the corporations. This reorganization openly represents the interests of the national and global capitalists, not the people of the country.

Many recognize that the U.S. government is developing into a fully fascist apparatus. This awareness forces the rulers to dispense with the elements of bourgeois democracy

by which they have been able to control the population.

The legal advance of fascism has attacked the framework of bourgeois democracy. By the spring of 2021, more than 360 bills had come before state legislatures to limit, suppress or overthrow the right to vote. In the past decades we have seen a judiciary heavily infiltrated by a legal cadre organized in the fascist-minded Federalist Society. The rulers have launched legislative and court campaigns around reproductive rights, school vouchers, against vaccinations and public health, and for "states' rights," all of which are intended as code to divide and continue to conquer along racial, gender, and any lines they can.

When legal means are insufficient to guarantee their aims to protect private property, the ruling class resorts to extra-legal means. The attempted coup of January 6, 2021 and the violence and visibility of white supremacist groups (including their infiltration of police and sheriff departments across the country and the armed forces) over the last few years have given us a taste of these extra-legal means.

APPROACHING SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In response, the convergence of crises to-

day has unleashed a torrent of new social organizations that are raising programmatic demands in place of the defensive, incremental campaigns of the past. These demands are also visionary, like defunding and abolishing the police, social housing, canceling student debt, and rebuilding human communities in balance with nature and the rights of all peoples.

The common condition and common interests of low-income and displaced workers, rooted in their fight for the basic necessities, are undermining the old ideologies used to divide the class. The record turnout in the November 2020 elections and the decisive rejection of the fascist dictatorship openly advocated by the Trump campaign demonstrated that elections are now an indispensable arena for class battle.

The Sanders campaigns in 2016 and 2020, electoral victories by the Squad in Congress, and victories in state and local elections inspired independent political activity, like the movements around the Green New Deal, the Ilhan Omar bill to cancel rents, and various bills to create Medicare for All and social housing. Independent voices in Congress reflected the growing unity of the movement and became vehicles for deepening and broadening it.

The ruling class is not giving up without

a fight. Their campaign against voting rights and so-called Critical Race Theory is an attempt to undo all the gains of the 2020 rebellion and divert and block the emerging unity of the displaced workers. In spite of this, a growing number are becoming more socially conscious. With social consciousness, these workers come to understand that they are members of a class and that they need class

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Join the Discussion!

Rally! articles offer revolutionaries a fresh perspective! They offer analysis and vision, and outline a strategy to achieve that vision. Share them with your friends and other revolutionaries, get together and talk about the ideas. Spread the vision of a new world and the possibility of achieving it. Join us!

When we fight, we win: Progressive surge rocks Los Angeles establishment

Thirty years after the Rodney King rebellion, the June 7 primary elections in Los Angeles signified the emergence of a new level of organization and political awareness for the millions of workers who are rejected by today's corporate capitalist economy. The 1992 rebellion marked the first expression of mass resistance by "de-industrialized" American workers and it shook the country. The electoral rebellion of 2022 demonstrated an even more significant mass politicization.

Voters in Los Angeles city and county elected progressive anti-corporate and even abolitionist "defund the police" candidates or sent them into the November 8 runoffs with commanding leads. It was a reminder that the American ruling class is on the defensive. Democratic Socialist community organizer Eunisses Hernández won in an East Los Angeles city council district with more than 60 percent of the vote, defeating incumbent Gil Cedillo. Hernández ran as an abolitionist candidate, advocating dismantling the prison system and funneling funds into mental health care and housing the unhoused.

In the Los Angeles City Council's 13th District, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) leader Hugo Soto-Martínez defeated the pro-real estate, anti-homeless incumbent Mitch Farrell by 15 points. And City Controller candidate Kenneth Mejía won with a 26-point margin over City Council incumbent Paul Koretz (5th District).

In the November 8 race for mayor, long-time community leader Rep. Karen Bass's 54.83 percent of the vote beat anti-homeless, law-and-order rival Rick Caruso's 45.17 percent. Bass's results reflected the progressive surge, but they also benefited from popular disdain and rejection of the billionaire Caruso's creepy attempt to buy the election with \$40 million from his fortune.

REVOLUTION RISING

All these victories were made possible by a coalition of hundreds of grassroots organizations: DSA, Progressive Democrats of America, California Progressive Alliance, Working Families Party, Los Angeles Tenants Union (LATU), SEIU, and more. Although the mobilization for progressive candidates was intentional, well planned and coordinated, what made it possible was a massive upsurge of primarily young workers with no ties and no loyalty to the system. Artificial intelligence, automation, and financialization have created a society where workers are no longer needed and are being abandoned by the ruling class. These workers were the driving force behind the victories in Los Angeles. They have no use for a system based on private profit instead of common good. A revolution is rising and nothing can stop it.

This upsurge broke out into the open after the primary, when unhoused people and their supporters shut down the Los Angeles City Council three times in July and August.

Before newly elected council members could be seated, it was trying to pass the extension of Municipal Ordinance 41.18 to outlaw homelessness in almost 25 percent of the city.

Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) organizer Pete White explained what was causing the rebellion. "Los Angeles does not have currently, or never has had, a real housing plan to address the needs of poor Angelenos," he told Democracy Now!. "What we continue to see in Los Angeles is the march towards criminalization. That is the strategy. And Los Angeles, it's an anywhere-but-here strategy. It's an out-of-sight, out-of-mind strategy. It's a funding of the police department to solve a social crisis. What we saw in City Hall ... was the voices of homeless people, the voices of civil rights organizations and tenants' organizations saying, 'Enough is enough.'"

The key issues in Los Angeles are the demand to house the people, especially the unhoused, and the post-George Floyd demand to defund and abolish the police. These are what inspired so many new leaders to run for office. Contrary to the national media narrative, these demands won decisive victories over candidates who doubled down on historic policies of criminalization and incarceration.

Vilification of the unhoused and glorification of everything about the police caused City Council member Joe Buscaino's mayoral campaign to finish last. Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva, a frequent tough-on-crime guest of Fox News, was forced into a runoff. Community anger was further fueled by new revelations in the Torrance Police racist texting scandal. Not one but two attempts to recall progressive District Attorney George Gascón failed to collect enough signatures to even qualify for the ballot.

As homeless capital of the country, Los Angeles's failure to deal with its housing crisis has become a key issue. Mejía won based on his record of serving the unhoused and fighting for tenant rights. A recent UCLA report on housing documented how politics in Los Angeles has been dominated by developers and speculators. Their policy has been to build luxury apartments, redevelop the areas around Skid Row and do nothing to house the masses in the streets.

POLITICIZATION

The revolution proceeds in zigzags and bursts and includes compromises and/or direct actions wherever needed to move it forward. In earlier, non-revolutionary periods, compromises were generally practiced by opportunist leaders to secure advantages for themselves or some limited constituency. Today, now that the opportunity to win real victories exists, compromises can be and are being made when necessary to move forward the movement as a whole. This is shown by the remarkable leap in political sophistica-

tion among the workers involved in the various campaigns.

In the first place, millions of people have begun to understand the importance of running candidates and voting in elections, in a way that just did not happen before 2016 and 2020. They learned to rally around corporate-free, basic needs candidates who come from and represent their struggles to survive. On the other hand, they are wise enough to avoid a purist approach and also sometimes vote for centrists like Bass, who may not really speak for them, but who are in a position to block fascist, corporate politicians like Caruso. They have learned to work within the Democratic Party, not as a strategy for ultimate social change, but as a tactic to drive forward its accelerating polarization from the inside. They separate out the fighters for a new society from the corporate agents and apologists that are trying to block and suppress the movement.

They are learning how to overcome their various ideological differences in pursuit of common basic needs demands. Many are learning to think strategically, and understand our immediate struggles as stepping stones toward a new society based on human rights instead of corporate cash.

As Richard Moya of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) explained, "For me, the key is to remember that policy reforms are meant as a way for us to also focus and grow the movement. That is something we sometimes get backwards. Sometimes, we think the policy is the thing we are trying to achieve, when really we are using this as an organizing component to win bigger things."

The Democratic Party in California holds the office of governor and the legislature. A viable challenge to the party leadership is emerging statewide and it is coming largely from within the party itself. The increasingly unified working class demands for housing, education, healthcare and defunding the po-

lice have intensified in the course of the 2022 elections. Established Democrats are losing to a wave of challengers.

Karen Bass's endorsers, donors, and the entire Democratic Party machine – all the way up to Biden – supported her, not because they are afraid of Caruso, but because they are afraid of the progressive wave that is challenging incumbents. They see Bass's credibility in the community as the best way to neutralize its demands – but workers can use the Bass campaign to elevate their demands instead, every bit as much if not more than the ruling class does.

REAL SOLUTIONS

While the reproductive freedom movement may not seem as important in blue-state California, the relationship is vital because a national victory by anti-abortion politicians may lead to a national ban on abortions, and because the national reproductive freedom movement, in order to win, must unite with the larger movement for basic needs like the one driving the electoral revolution in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles and the nation do not have a housing insecurity problem, but a billionaires problem. The survival of our people requires us to abolish billionaires and construct a cooperative society to meet all the people's physical, emotional, spiritual and ecological needs.

As Pete White expressed it, "Instead of the criminalization of the houseless community, we are calling for housing preservation. ... We are calling for city-owned and government-owned properties to be turned back over to community trusts, and for those buildings and that land to be converted into housing for houseless people. We are calling for leadership that recognizes houselessness is a by-product of a failed housing system, or a lack of a housing policy, and poverty. ... We're calling for housing for all, housing that's affordable at the lowest levels of affordability." **R**

Leaked audio exposes Los Angeles ruling class as vicious and bloodthirsty

The outside billionaires' attempt to take over the Los Angeles Unified School District board shows once again that they care only about capitalist investment and not the needs of the people. The \$10 million spent on the school board race is significant. This money is coming from outside the district and is an attempt to privatize education.

The Los Angeles Times and the media in this city recently used a recording of a city council member drawing up the council districts they want, have portrayed the recording's contents as a split between black and

brown communities. They are trying to stir up identity politics. The working class and revolutionary leadership immediately rejected the media's attempt.

As long as the working class is mobilized and fighting, the ruling class cannot push this narrative. Young people are mobilized. Put a name on this. This is the capitalist class. This is an opportunity for the fighting class to attack white supremacy and take a large step forward on the class priorities.

People are not being fooled. People are hungry. They need housing, they need food. **R**

The road to real democracy and the midterm elections

Continued from page 1

of bodily autonomy as can be imagined.

The defeat of the Kansas anti-abortion amendment in the election of August 2 stunned the ruling class special interests. The pro-choice movement paid close attention to the audience it spoke to as it fought to take back the narrative from right-wing Christian Nationalist/fascists. The movement understood that the rise of national and state abortion bans is tied to the rise of violent dictatorship and demolition of electoral democracy. It understood that the ruling class's

punishment of single moms in poverty would result in undercutting income and protections for all workers while pitting one section of the poor against the others.

The movement did not accept the enemy's framing of the abortion issue. Instead, it recast the workers' demands in ways that reached the broadest audience. To champion reproductive freedom means to fight for health care access for everyone. It is not about abortion *or* day care; it is about abortion *and* day care, as well as the rest of people's economic needs.

'Shooting' pro-science messengers

Continued from page 4

working class, especially Black, Brown and immigrant workers, but in the early 20th century, capital backed public health measures because they were accepted as essential for industry to flourish. Today, as the global financialized economy increasingly relies on labor-replacing technology, the current pandemic confirms that capitalism's institutions are not constructed to 'protect and serve' but rather to 'control and secure' the value of commodity exchange over human life.

Measures to protect the public's health, and particularly the health of essential workers throughout the Covid pandemic, have been unacceptably deficient given the vast wealth and resources of the United States. In one rare instance, a sheriff ordered the Smithfield meat processing plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota to close because of a large outbreak among the plant's workforce leading to hospitalizations and deaths. This was reversed by then-President Trump's enactment of the Defense Production Act, mandating that "essential workers" continue to work, as the nation's food supply was in jeopardy.

The reality is that public health, particularly in state and local health departments, has been intentionally underfunded, dysfunctional and fragmented for decades preceding the pandemic. Covid is not over, given the current BA.5 surge and looming threat of quickly mutating variants that transmit more easily and evade vaccine protections precisely because large reservoirs exist of unvaccinated children and unconvinced adults in the United States. Plus, there is under-vaccination of poor countries due to lack of profitability – all providing ample opportunity for more mutations, variants and vaccine resistance developing. To make matters worse, poor countries have been denied access to vaccines due to patent laws. We ignore the reality that with global travel, new pandemics in the making spread at the speed of jets.

Declaring the pandemic over has been done in so many words by Democratic President Joe Biden, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state health departments eager to put the pandemic behind us as the midterm elections approach. Unfortunately, we are still losing 300 to 800 Americans per day. Relying heav-

ily on vaccinations and now therapeutics options like paxlovid, gave an unreal sense of getting back to normal. Relaxing public indoor masking on public transit, particularly airlines, are examples of premature and unscientific actions. This gives a false sense of security as more easily transmitted new variants of Covid strike Europe, which typically precedes surges of Covid in the United States. Also, large outbreaks of influenza, preventable with masks and vaccinations, struck Australia and the Far East earlier this year, foreshadowing an influenza surge in the United States this winter.

We already have the technology and the people eager to monitor and treat the public's health. For example, wastewater surveillance for Covid has proven to be a valuable tool not only as an early warning sign of Covid and its developing variants, it also finds and warns us of influenza, antibiotic resistant bacteria, and other pathogens before they strike. Ventilation design and monitoring systems show tremendous potential for reducing the spread of airborne diseases like Covid and TB, as well as improving indoor air quality from wildfires, etc.

Loan forgiveness programs are being promoted to keep young, sharp, fresh-out-of-school minds in public health departments, rather than moving to private companies due to the financial strain of having to repay burdensome educational loans. Science should serve the public interest, not enrich the pharmaceutical and other profit-driven interests.

Our priorities as a nation are wrong and must be repurposed. Every human being is essential and has value, whether a farm laborer, a homeless person, a bus driver, a laundry worker, a nurse, or a public health worker. The "public" interest should be foremost in public health, whether for unpopular but necessary emergency measures or to promote prevention and community health. In the long run, that is most effective in preventing needless deaths, let alone being most cost effective. In truth we have it within our means to remake the health care system for the common good. Let's be clear. We don't want to repair a damaged system. We want to remake it to serve humanity's needs. That's a hard-fought lesson of the Covid-19 pandemic. **R**

Defeating the ruling class strategy of state-by-state subversion offers a vision of giving sanctuary states real protection against criminalization of pregnant and bleeding people, women, providers, and anyone who might face felony first-degree murder charges for defending them. It envisions public funding

for abortions as well as every other form of health care, without the waiting period that only further oppresses and criminalizes women and pregnant people. It envisions that contraceptive care and procedures to protect the lives of the women should be routine in all ER protocols. **R**

Fascism vs. the people's revolutionary demands

Continued from page 4

solidarity. They become aware that there is a ruling class, and that it has class interests contrary to their own.

The intersection of street rebellions and elections make them schools for social consciousness. They create the opportunity to talk about the need for class power to take government out of the hands of the corporations and put it into the hands of we, the people.

Workers are at different levels in their understanding. Where some are ready to revolt, others still feel the system can be reformed. Again, it will take patiently working toward a common understanding and action, including creation of a third party.

The technological revolution is splitting and destroying Democrats, Republicans, and virtually every other political organization today. Part of participating in elections means assessing this polarization and the possible development of a third party. Third parties will not simply be one or another of the individual third-party formations in existence today but will reflect the broad social motion as it develops.

The development of a third party will accelerate the political polarization in society and the political formation of the displaced class. It is part of the process of the scattered economic struggles becoming united political struggles against the government. It is a necessary and inevitable step toward a workers' party and the social consciousness that a workers' party would represent.

GOVERNMENT MUST SERVE THE PEOPLE'S NEEDS

As capitalism collapses, the economy becomes increasingly nationalized in the course

of the inevitable bailouts. This prepares the ground for the eventual battle to be concentrated against the government rather than directed at thousands of scattered capitalists. People are forced to demand government action to meet their needs. This raises the issue of which class the government serves and becomes a battlefield where social consciousness can be learned. In the long run, workers cannot secure either their basic needs or real democracy without transferring the means of production from private property to public ownership. Electoral politics that do not ultimately address the abolition of corporate private property cannot ultimately secure the necessities the workers need to survive.

In the 18th century, few could envision the abolition of the slavery on the plantations of the western hemisphere. But at a certain point, the abolition of slavery became possible and necessary. That private property relation was overthrown. And we can see, in the future, how the abolition of all relations of private property is possible and necessary.

The urgencies of today call for a broad unity of the movement for the life-or-death needs of the people and nature.

Through words or deeds, vast numbers of active and socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries. The League of Revolutionaries for a New America aims to grow, not for any sectarian interests as an organization, but as a place where revolutionaries from all walks of life, experiences, and fronts of struggle can maximize individual and collective energies to politically equip the most revolutionary class for its historical role.

We invite all revolutionaries to join us. rally@lrna.org **R**

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