

Fighting for our common interests: Lessons from the 2022 midterm elections

By the Executive Committee for the National Council of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

The 2022 midterm elections showed the power of the people fighting for their life-or-death needs and rights. Clearly, the working class and poor people are the vast majority. That can and will change everything. The Trump MAGA movement was held at bay in the electoral arena. In particular, a number of candidates for secretary of state were soundly defeated. These Stop the Steal/MAGA candidates were meant to secure election denial for 2024. Gun control and anti-slavery initiatives were passed in Oregon and elsewhere. In Michigan, the governor created an anti-poverty commission to secure steps to end poverty while a pro-choice referendum on the ballot helped Democrats win both chambers of the Legislature for the first time in more than 40 years. Struggles for the right to choose; the right to healthcare; the right to housing and a good living along with the right to protest energized the electorate across the country.

The working class forced gains on many fronts in November 2022 and we proved that we are building an understanding that we can and must build real political power as a key to our survival. But there is no time to relax. We are in a transformation of society. The elections and campaigns contribute to that transformation. It is clear that the working class is awake and in motion, fighting for the lives of the vast majority of the people. It is time to celebrate these gains and keep the momentum, to keep fighting and ensure changes for the good of all.

Women's and young people's votes again

made all the difference. More people voted in Michigan than ever before and a powerful coalition of connected groups helped elect pro-reproductive rights and pro-economic rights allies. The powerful movements that have been in motion for decades in that state will now push for all the gains they fought and voted for in elections. They know we cannot vote our way out of our problems. We need to keep building power and systems that will bring and maintain the gains we must secure for the good of all society and the very earth we live on.

Results were mixed – both across the country and within the same areas. Some initiatives addressed the needs of the 50 percent (and growing) of people in the United States who struggle with housing insecurity and/or homelessness. All of Oakland's affordable housing measures passed including authorizing the construction of 13,000 affordable, social housing units, effectively exempting the city from a racist law in California called Article 34 that requires voter approval to build low-rent housing. Florida elected the first Gen Z member to Congress, 25-year-old Democrat and gun control advocate Maxwell Frost.

These are all samples of inspiration, yet we have not forgotten videos of handcuffed voters being arrested and charged with voter fraud in Florida and armed militia in many locations "guarding" ballot boxes and terrifying voters. DeSantis, Kemp, Abbott and many others not only won but they will regroup, learn from the losses and double down on social control, taking away our rights to our bodies, to protest, while continuing to create policies to ensure that the rich get richer and the



People with life-or-death needs cannot stop fighting. Will the Democratic Party listen?
Shutterstock

poor get poorer. We cannot forget the women, and others, who have already been put in prison for having abortions in Oklahoma, Texas, Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arkansas. You risk being charged with Level One felonies, murder, homicide, child abuse or child trafficking if you take your daughter over state lines to receive services and/or care.

The Democratic Party continues to polarize. Moderate or "corporate" Democrats did not do well and lost many seats. Again, Socialist-leaning Democrats were enthusiastically elected and they nearly doubled their ranks. In San Jose, the Democratic mayoral candidate moved to the right and lost the election while the moderate New York Democratic governor almost lost to a Trump follower. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is again calling for the resignation of the Democratic Party chair. This increasing polarization is an important struggle for our future. Will the Democratic Party listen to the

people and rise to the occasion? Or will it fail us all? People with life-or-death needs cannot stop fighting. Calls for a third party are emerging out of struggles for housing, clean water, healthcare and other basic needs.

We must unleash this new power. But the ruling class will not sit idly by. Vicious voter suppression tactics are in place and more can be inflicted. We must continue to fight and expose the lie that resistance is futile.

The accession to fascist rule is more than a shift from one party or administration to another. It is a substitution of one state form of class domination for another – a change in

Continued on page 2

CONTENTS

Inside Rally! New Year, new struggles	2
The South leads the nation's healthcare system to the brink	3
From the Editors: Annihilation or revolution	3
Los Angeles battle cry: Don't criminalize homelessness	4
Not one penny for war	4
We will never be the same: the George Floyd rebellion and the arc of Black history	5
Inflation is extractive capitalism's new weapon	5

Latinas/Latinos and the midterm elections of 2022

The midterm elections of November 2022 are over, and the anticipated "Red Wave" tsunami of wins by Republicans over Democrats in the U.S. Congress never materialized. Yet, the fight is far from over. Valuable lessons can and must be extracted and used both in the electoral arena, and in the battles in the streets such as occurred with the George Floyd protests. The elections also came amid this year's massive mobilizations against the Supreme Court's decision on Roe v. Wade, led by women both on the streets and at the electoral urns, and built upon the legacy of the Latina/Latino (also called "Latinx") Mega marches for immigration reform, the protests over children

in cages at the border, revulsion over separation of families, and deaths of asylum seekers in the deserts.

2022's first lesson is that an overt and covert war is going on for control of the economy and the political machinery of the country by corporate and moneyed interests. To do this, democratic freedoms of everyday Americans are being curtailed and the thinking of a critical mass of the American people won over. Even before the swearing-in of President Biden, efforts reminiscent of the Jim Crow South to control state governments and suppress voting spread far and wide.

Another important development is how

the composition of the Latinx electorate in Texas and Florida has been changed by the addition of wealthy Mexicans and entrepreneurs fleeing Mexico to avoid the crackdown on tax evasion and corruption in Mexico by Lopez Obrador, the current President. They come with sufficient funds to bypass hurdles that are insurmountable for less fortunate immigrants from their home countries. This is reminiscent of wealthy Cubans who fled the Cuban Revolution in the 1950's, and who largely vote Republican.

Continued on page 6

New Year, new struggles

In preparation for 2023's struggles, let's look at what our working class recently accomplished.

These elections followed the 2020 George Floyd rebellion, a "completely transformational moment in our collective history" says the article *Defund the Police is Not a Slogan, it is a Demand*. Fighters for reform or even abolition of the system of policing mobilized in city councils, state houses, and Congress. In California, they helped elect reform prosecutors and county sheriffs. In Tennessee, Oregon and Vermont involuntary penal servitude was abolished.

The *Statement on the 2022 Midterm Elections*, by the National Council of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America (LRNA) reports that millions also used elections to continue their struggles for the right to choose, for healthcare, housing and the right to protest. However, "the real, underlying polarization we face is not between blue and red, but between the wealthy corporate elites and the masses of working people of all ethnicities, colors, religions and sexual identities."

This class polarization was expressed in changing voting patterns among Latina/o's, who have historically voted Democratic. *Latinas/Latinos and the Midterm Elections* explains that in 2020 many South Texas Latinos supported Republican Donald Trump because they saw his calls for oil drilling, the border patrol and law enforcement as providing stable employment.

"The struggles of Latina/os for basic needs, human dignity and rights at the border and in the interior overlap with the needs of the rest of the working class." As a result "many are concluding that sooner or later they will need their own political party – not abuelita's Democratic party, but not Jim Crow's

Inside Rally!

Republican party either."

FIGHTS FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Disunity among our class facilitates the restructuring of health care in the interests of capitalists instead of people with the greatest needs. *Health System's Collapse Shows Need for Revolutionary Change* reports that over the last 20 years "private equity investments in healthcare have increased 20-fold to over \$100 billion," through buying up hospitals and physicians' practices in low-income communities, then raising prices and diverting funds to more lucrative markets.

This is being challenged in organizing campaigns among doctors and nurses, including in Southern states like Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, and Texas., who "are acting on their burning desire to employ the wonders of science and technology for the public good."

Throughout Los Angeles, both activists and residents are demanding the abolition of policies criminalizing homelessness, especially by making it illegal to sleep on the streets. Such policies also worsen police abuses of Blacks, who are only 8 percent of the city's population but comprise 60 percent of the unhoused. A recently released recording even caught members of the City Council conspiring to disenfranchise Black city council members and their constituents.

As General Dogon, a resident of Skid Row and Fight Back organizer from LA CAN states..."it's all about revolution now, taking it to the next step, organizing the people and creating a serious fight back on the streets. It all starts where it is profit over the people."

NOT ONE INFLATED PENNY MORE FOR WAR

The chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, claims that price inflation results because workers make too much money, but fails to identify corporate profits as part of rising prices. Since the 2008 housing crash, the U.S. government put some \$30 trillion into the financial market to bail out banks with inflated housing prices. The so-called experts never refer to this unheard-of creation of new money as inflation.

The United States manipulates inflation to pay for its wars and global political maneuvering, all in the name of defending U.S. business interests. The Pentagon spends \$2 billion a day, yet no money can be found to fix the water system of Jackson, Mississippi, which would cost about \$1 billion! Inflation is in essence a "hidden tax" that extracts wealth from households and transfers it to the financial system. We all saw how when COVID hit, schools were immediately turned into free food outlets. Government can abolish all forms of corporate financial extraction, but it will not do so unless we force it to.

The hypocrisy of the U.S. government is exposed by the recent Statement issued by the National Council of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America: "[A]s we claim to be defending democracy in Ukraine, government entities in the United States are actively fighting to take away our own democracy." That fight can only be won if millions of Americans stop our own ruling class' neglect of poverty and violence here. The Statement challenges this state of affairs: "Let's end the carnage in Ukraine and on our streets and homes ... Not one penny more for the war. Fight to retain and expand our own democracy." **R**

Fighting for our common interests

Continued from page 1

how the ruling class exercises its authority – from "democracy" for the capitalist class to dismantling democracy altogether, from democratic rule to rule by lies and terror.

And the best way to fight against it is to use every bit of democracy we still have to hit the ruling class where it is strategically weak, where it is not meeting the basic needs of the vast majority of the people. Unity in the fight for the immediate economic and political interests of the working class is the starting point for the struggle against fascist rule.

Pundits say the people are still polarized. But the real, underlying polarization we face is not between blue and red, but between the wealthy corporate elites and the masses of working people of all ethnicities, colors, religions and sexual identities. We are one class around what we all know is necessary and what we all need – housing, food, safety, freedom, etc. These are our common interests. The danger is still there. But people are waking up to their power to join forces and create a society where meeting those needs becomes the basis for a whole new world. **R**

Stay connected with the League of Revolutionaries for a New America and be informed about upcoming events by following us on social media:

YOUTUBE: [youtube.com/@LeagueofRevolutionaries](https://www.youtube.com/@LeagueofRevolutionaries)

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/LeagueofRevolutionaries>

INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/Leagueofrevolutionaries/>

TIKTOK: <https://www.tiktok.com/@leagueofrev>

TWITTER: <https://twitter.com/leagueofrev>

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.

Editorial Board: Danny Alexander, Allen Harris, Brooke Heagerty, Kimberly King, 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 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.

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

**Visit the *Rally!* website!
rallycomrades.org**

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.

The South leads the nation's healthcare system to the brink

Your local hospital just closed. It happens behind the scenes, unless it's in your city, town or neighborhood. The paradox of massive numbers of hospital closures, most of them in working class communities of color and in a time of pandemics, makes no sense to you. As care and healing disappear, a patient's value is reduced to a virtual commodity – or completely abandoned and treated as worthless.

A spasm of cardiac proportions rippled across Metro Atlanta when Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center (AMC) abruptly closed in November 2022. AMC was one of only two Level 1 trauma centers in North Georgia. Wellstar had already closed its Southside Medical Center, reneging on a promise to the working-class Black community that its needs would continue to be met at the Atlanta site.

The Georgia Baptist Hospital, founded in 1901, was originally sold in 1997 to the for-profit corporation Tenet Healthcare and renamed Atlanta Medical Center. In 2015, the “non-profit” Wellstar hospital chain bought five Tenet hospitals for \$575 million, including AMC, which is in the gentrifying Fourth Ward of Atlanta in what remains of a majority poor Black neighborhood and which employed 1,742 workers and over 500 doctors. The closure means the destruction of a century of deep community roots and without doubt will lead to more needless deaths and debilitation as COVID, flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) infections grow unabated, not to mention ongoing traumatic and chronic illnesses.

“People need this hospital,” said a warehouse worker after visiting his hospitalized mother days before the closing. Nurses, doctors, technicians, cafeteria workers, maintenance men and community members have gathered outside the hospital and collectively mourned this loss. “I really hate what it's doing to the community,” said a technician finishing a shift. Many have worked at the hospital for decades. One doctor remarked about the rareness and value of a medical staff that was more than 63 percent Black or multiracial in a country where less than 5.2 percent of doctors are Black.

The 25-acre Wellstar AMC is a gentrification gateway which solicited property value assessments as early as 2020. The closure left Metro Atlanta reeling, leading Mayor Andre Dickens to issue an executive order prohibiting bidding on the site through April 2023. The white supremacist nature of closing two facilities in Black communities while leaving three opened in better-heeled white communities was transparent.

Medical residents, students and other health workers held rallies politically demanding the expansion of Medicaid that would at least benefit the impending influx of uninsured patients to the already overcapacity public Grady Hospital.

Located just blocks from the AMC, more than 25 percent of Grady's patients are uninsured and now it stands as the only Level 1 trauma center north of Interstate 20. State and county authorities have issued small flur-

ries of monies to Grady, but the situation is not sustainable. The whole story of AMC's closure is a microcosm of the underlying economics of fascist motion in Georgia. Witness Georgia governor Brian Kemp's Medicaid plan that includes a work requirement and would cover only 50,000 of the more than 400,000 federally eligible recipients.

Shockingly, Georgia has a surplus of more than \$5 billion, much of it from federal COVID relief packages. Kemp called the distribution of \$130 million of state funds to Grady “sufficient.” There has been no accountability for years of tax-free status from the Wellstar chain that holds more than \$2.8 billion in assets. The bundled deal of Wellstar's purchase of Tenet hospitals is incredibly complex and often brokered by private equity companies that finance through debt. The assets are then sold for huge profits over a three- to five-year time span of the initial loans.

The AMC closure is newsworthy because of its history and critical role in Atlanta. But scores of other hospitals and clinics have closed or will close throughout the South.

In Texas, the number of hospitals at risk of closing has doubled in the last two years. Twenty-four rural hospitals in Texas have closed since 2005, the highest number in the country.

In Mississippi, news reports say that ALL of that state's 111 hospitals are in crisis with more rural hospitals at immediate risk of closing than any other state.

The federal government reports that 80 percent of rural communities are “medically underserved.” These communities are disproportionately in the South.

One resident summed up the impact of a hospital closure in Belhaven, North Carolina: “This is a big deal, it's going to put the town out

of business. We lost all the employees, the income, and now people have to figure out what they're going to do with medical care.”

A 2021 report by GoodRX® using seven metrics concludes that 80 percent of the country lacks adequate access to healthcare, including hospitals, primary providers and pharmacy locations. When a rural or small-town hospital closes, it not only increases people's morbidity and mortality, it is also a death knell for the town itself. Population and incomes decline. Long-term relationships between healthcare providers and communities are broken.

U.S. HEALTHCARE ON THE BRINK

This precipitous deterioration marks a shift in the driving forces behind this healthcare debacle. Underway for a decade, this process has been opportunistically powered by private corporations throughout the pandemic. The healthcare industry accounts for 18 percent of U.S. GDP and constitutes the largest work force in the country. The social disruption from its restructuring is profound. The players may have changed, but capitalist private relations remained the same. Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic compounded a tipping point of collapse for community-based hospitals and independent practitioners. Medicaid expansion and hospital preservation alone cannot provide the answers to America's healthcare needs. The problem is that nothing rises in their demise.

Over the past 20 years private equity investments in healthcare increased 20-fold to more than \$100 billion dollars. Their money is made buying up hospitals and physician practices, raising prices, cutting staff, diverting funds away from hospitals like AMC to facilities in more lucrative markets and ultimately by shutting down “unprofitable” departments

or hospitals. From artificial intelligence (AI) and apps to telehealth and electronic health records (EHR), digital production in healthcare is reorganizing all aspects of the medical-industrial complex and it's a zero-sum game. EPIC now controls nearly 40 percent of all hospital records with many incorporating high-interest “Patient Payment Plans” (PPPs) into their records' systems. Private equity firms like “Credit” from Synchrony or “Access One” promote interest rates of 13 percent.

Technology companies not only make these arrangements possible, but they also drive the shift away from the hospital as center of gravity in healthcare to “home alone” health. Amazon has a huge footprint in telehealth. Siemens, GE, and Abbott lead in home “remote patient monitoring” systems; Apple with “wearable apps” and Microsoft and Google lead in iCloud technologies, big data collection and intrinsically biased predictive analytics. If a small hospital, clinic, or provider cannot afford this technology, they are pushed out of the whole market-based economy of healthcare. One analyst summed up this “epochal” development: “*The vendor owns you.*” The organization of healthcare is structured around these corporate technologies and finances, NOT our health needs.

Healthcare workers feel the scope of the invasion of technology corporations and financing first. Nurses have been militantly sounding the alarms for not only health and safety on the job, but also in the community. The very absence of touch, compassion, safety and healing care that this commodifying reorganization has wrought is igniting union drives. National Nurses United has won critical union drives during the pandemic in North Carolina, Florida and Texas, all right-to-work states and

Continued on page 6

From the Editors: Annihilation or revolution

Rally! isn't just a name for this publication; it expresses our role as the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America (LRNA).

Before this moment in history, calls to rally and regroup often came after a defeat of working class by the rising industrial system and its ruling class of capitalists, like after the Paris Commune of 1871.

The famous proletarian anthem The Internationale is an example. The 1990 English-language lyrics by British singer Billy Bragg proclaim: “So comrades, come rally.” A Merriam-Webster definition of the intransitive verb “to rally” is “to come together again to renew an effort.” And that is what our paper strives to do.

Today, qualitatively new means of production like robots and artificial intelligence (AI) have completely disrupted the operation of markets for basic goods, for labor, and for financial investment. Electronics are objectively destroying the capitalist system and

are creating the material foundation for a world that provides for the needs of humanity and the planet without corporate private property.

Our articles come from revolutionaries within battles which are absolutely necessary to human survival, like those for housing, healthcare and equality. They clarify why the growing class of displaced workers at the core of these struggles is also becoming a class that can and will lead the world-historic struggle to abolish the system of private property. How can a class that includes the poor, homeless and incarcerated achieve such a victory?

By relying on the developing practical unity within the battles for basic necessities, conscious revolutionaries have a basis for rallying fighters to act as a class, against the class whose corporate private property produces poverty, climate catastrophe and a new fascism aimed at crushing the displaced and abolitionist class's struggle. The strug-

gle to end these abuses by the ruling class and its fascism is therefore a struggle to end capitalist ownership of everything we need, and demand.

The dream of the heroic Communards now can finally be realized. The mission of LRNA and its political organ Rally! is to unite with other revolutionaries around the demands of 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.

However, this solution must be fought for before it is too late. The use of digital technology within the private property system is driving billions of the world's people towards extreme poverty and homelessness. It is also speeding up extraction and pollution that threatens to destroy planet Earth. This rapidly accelerating risk of extinction has forced humanity into a race between revolution and annihilation. ■

Los Angeles battle cry: Don't criminalize homelessness

Currently in Los Angeles, the ruling class is expanding the use of police to enforce municipal code 41.18. This ordinance mandates no "sitting, lying, or sleeping or storing, using, maintaining or placing personal property in the public right of way." The end of the moratorium against eviction and rent increases, initiated because of the COVID epidemic, was to end on January 31.

Prior to the moratorium, there were about 40,000 to 50,000 evictions per year but at the height of the pandemic evictions dropped to 13,000 annually. More than 30,000 people would have faced eviction by the January 31 deadline. Evictions are associated with severe health and psychological consequences for families and children. Since landlords often turn away applicants with recent evictions on their records, families will experience increased periods of homelessness and restricted residential mobility.

In the 2022 midterm election for mayor of Los Angeles, Rick Caruso, the billionaire mall developer, spent \$100 million of his own money campaigning on a platform of "fighting crime" by expanding the police department and "fighting homelessness."

ABOLITION OF CRIMINALIZATION

Throughout the city, both activists and residents are demanding the abolition of criminalizing homelessness. Organizations throughout Los Angeles such as L.A. Community Action Network (LA CAN) promote and engage in monitoring and documenting Los Angeles's actions that crim-

inalize residents who have to sleep on the streets because housing is too expensive. These organizations have created community watch teams which integrate the affected person into the fight through Know Your Rights training while politicizing encampments with signs and demands. Efforts include organizing unhoused residents to go to City Council meetings to speak out and introducing lawyers to people who are being affected by the policies of criminalization such as LAMC 41.18.

To understand this fight, one must look at the history of Los Angeles. When homeless workers first came to this city with the completion of the Santa Fe Railroad rail line from Chicago to Los Angeles in 1885, they arrived at the train station and were immediately put to work. If they didn't like the working conditions, they were thrown into the L.A. County Jail which was just across the street from the train station. Without work and shelter the city's first chain gang was created out of the homeless people.

THE BATTLE FOR HOUSING

Blacks comprise 60 percent of the city's unhoused residents but are just 8 percent of the population. A recently released recording caught members of the City Council conspiring to disenfranchise Black City Council members and their constituents. This involved Council President Nury Martínez (who resigned afterward), Kevin de León (who refused to resign), and Gil Cedillo (who had already been defeated for re-election).

Such backroom dealings were loudly challenged by the resounding victory of Karen Bass, the city's first Black woman mayor, but an ugly scar of racism remains on the city.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are being presented as providing economic development and opportunity, though they barge into a community, take it over, and gain revenue from gentrifying the property. BIDs hire their own poorly trained police to harass and intimidate impoverished residents in areas on the verge of gentrification. Until organizations like LA CAN protested, these police were armed.

These ideas of complete control of public space were first generated by Bill Bratton and his theory of "broken windows" policing when he was New York police chief in the 1990s before he ran the Los Angeles police in the 2000s. In the name of the "safer cities initiative" the city brought in 110 additional police officers, making Skid Row the second most heavily policed area in the world after Baghdad. These deadly ruling class policies resulted in Los Angeles being declared the "meanest city in the U.S." (National Coalition for the Homeless, Sept. 8, 2022).

Currently, in Los Angeles there are five homeless people dying every day and that is a very conservative estimate. The 2028 Olympic games will take place in the city, leading to ever more deadly consequences, just as the building of a corporate-owned arena for basketball games has significantly changed the downtown area from an area with reasonable rents (by L.A. standards) to

an unaffordable entertainment locale. This kind of development is happening all over the globe.

A BETTER WORLD

However, this city is hopeful. A very significant number of Latino voters helped elect Bass.

As Martha Escudero, a Reclaimer occupying a vacant house in El Sereno, states "we're also utilizing electoral politics in this, and I feel we should use every tool possible in conjunction with direct action so they hear us." Martha explains that "we are developing a people's assembly where from the ground up we hold our politicians [accountable] in some way to demand the elected officials represent more of the people in our community." She adds: "We are part of nature, that we must abide by nature, that's the law we abide by, we don't abide by other laws. We deserve housing, we deserve safety, we deserve beauty. So, we need to create a system that is sustainable for living beings."

Homelessness is caused by poverty, driven by lack of jobs, high rents, gentrification, and lack of access to mental and physical health care. The city of Los Angeles must be held accountable to act to bring rents down to 30 percent of income.

As General Dogon, a resident of Skid Row and Fight Back organizer from LA CAN states: "It's all about revolution now, taking it to the next step, organizing the people and creating a serious fight back on the streets. It all starts where it is profit over the people." **R**

Housing for all: Not one penny for war

By the Executive Committee for the National Council of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Nearly a year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, events continue to validate these conclusions: with millions hungry, homeless, and without health care in our country, we oppose the United States pumping more than \$50 billion in weaponry to support the Ukrainian military. We oppose American leadership as their weaponry prolongs a war that is wreaking death and destruction on the Ukrainian and Russian people.

How is it that we can spend nearly a trillion dollars a year on our military budget, but we cannot find the money to build a public health system that will prevent the COVID, RSV, and flu viruses that are running rampant and choking our hospitals? These are the class interests that define this war: Will we fuel an ongoing proxy war in which the United States and NATO have maneuvered

Ukraine into armed conflict with Russia, or will we fund the basic needs of the people in rural and urban America?

Since the beginning of the war, the United States has sabotaged every effort to mediate the war and attempt to reach a diplomatic conclusion. In fact, the war is a strategic outcome of a 1997 position taken by former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski: "Ukraine, a new and important space on the Eurasian chessboard, is a geopolitical pivot because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire." (The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives by Zbigniew Brzezinski). And in 2019, The Rand Corporation delivered a report arguing for the arming of Ukraine in order to destabilize and weaken Russia.

We can view every step along the way, from the invitation to Eastern European countries (including Ukraine) to join

the NATO military alliance as moves on Brzezinski's "Eurasian chessboard." In that sense, regardless of any culpability of Russia, workers of the United States cannot ignore our government's provocation and continued prolongation of the war.

The current situation is much more dangerous than when the Russian incursion began. U.S. military aid has led directly to the advance of Ukrainian forces. Propped up by Western arms, Ukraine is demanding that Russia leave the four eastern areas and give up the Crimea. This is territory that has been long contested. Russian missiles have struck the electrical power grid of the nation, but they have avoided the nuclear power plants that generate electricity. But how long can a nuclear accident be avoided? And Ukrainian missiles falling on Poland recently threatened to involve NATO in what might have become a nuclear war. Thus the war danger further threatens to explode.

For revolutionaries in the United States,

we have to be very clear about our responsibilities. No U.S. government has fought in defense of democracy in another country, at least not since World War II. In fact, as we claim to be defending democracy in Ukraine, government entities in the United States are fighting to take away our own democracy. We have responsibility for our own state, our own ruling class. As this is written in December 2022, Congress is preparing to pass with overwhelming bipartisan support the nearly \$1 trillion National Defense Authorization Act. It will continue to fund not only the war in Ukraine, but also military adventures around the world. Let us make it clear to our elected representatives: We could solve the housing, healthcare, education and many other basic needs issues with the dollars the United States spends on war. Let us end the carnage in Ukraine and on our streets and homes. Not one penny more for the war. Fight to retain and expand our own democracy. **R**

We will never be the same: The George Floyd rebellion and the arc of Black history

The police murder of George Floyd in May 2020 on top of the murder of many others birthed the largest protest movement in American history. Up to 26 million people participated in the rebellion that year against police violence and systemic racism from May 26 to mid-June, with an average of 140 organized protests per day.

The U.S. ruling class, through their corporate media, police departments and politicians, has been trying to squash the movement ever since.

Rally! interviewed Brian Kaneda, Deputy Director and Los Angeles coordinator for Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB), to get an update on the movement to defund and abolish police and prisons since the 2020 rebellion. CURB's mission is to get people free, close down prisons and shift resources away from incarceration and towards community-based services. Brian has been active in abolitionist prison and police reform work for more than 10 years.

We discussed that despite a backlash against the movement, it has not succeeded in halting the people's works to stop police from terrorizing and killing us, to end racist policies and to redirect public money from policing to the resources our communities need.

DEFUND THE POLICE IS A DEMAND, NOT A SLOGAN

The rebellion spread awareness of police violence throughout society. The multiracial unity of the movement was a significant blow to the brutality, white supremacy and racial division that the U.S. capitalist class has used for centuries to prevent us from uniting around our common interests to get the political power to transform society.

Revolution is a process and each time people rise against the rulers, it strengthens the struggle to transform society. As Kaneda notes, "[I]t's clear that the movement for Black lives and people who were inspired by their leadership and outrage helped transform the world and push people not just in this country, but across the planet to really consider the experiences of Black people in America and the relationship police, jails and prisons have to Black suffering and Black death."

The rebellion's call to defund the police has drawn attention to the huge city and county budgets being used to militarize police forces while youth programs, housing and healthcare go dry.

The rulers' backlash includes media coverage of conservative and liberal politicians attacking "defund the police" as a misguided slogan, but as Kaneda and other leaders like him point out: "Defund the police is not a slogan, it is a demand."

It directly challenges the U.S. State to fund human services not violent and racist social control.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND THE LIBERATION OF SOCIETY

The first to die in the American revolution

against the British crown was a Black worker, Crispus Attucks, who escaped slavery and became a sailor. In the early 19th century, anti-slavery abolitionists like Frederick Douglass invoked the memory of Attucks in the cause of freedom and equal rights.

From the 17th through the 19th centuries Black and white abolitionists risked their lives to make America fulfill its promise. The Civil War was fought to decide the question of slavery and the emancipation of African Americans in the South helped win the war for the North.

After the war, three Reconstruction amendments to the Constitution expanded democracy for all working people. The 13th outlawed slavery except as punishment for crime. The 14th made all people born or naturalized in the United States full citizens. The 15th gave Black men the right to vote. This latter right had to be re-won after the federal government prematurely pulled federal troops out of the South in 1877 and left Black and white Republicans (then the party for civil rights) to be violently disenfranchised. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, known as the second Reconstruction, because it fulfilled some of the promises of the first, secured the right for all people to vote, live, work, learn and travel in integrated spaces.

Today, Black voters are resisting Republican-led voter suppression and are demanding guaranteed voting rights for all.

Also today, Reverend Dr. William Barber, co-chair of the National Poor People's Campaign, is calling for a "third Reconstruction" in which the U.S. government finally fulfills its promises of freedom, justice and equality. Two of the campaign's principles are that "We believe that people should not live in or die from poverty in the richest nation ever to exist," and that "We recognize the centrality of systemic racism in maintaining economic oppression must be named, detailed and exposed empirically, morally and spiritually"

A TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENT IN OUR COLLECTIVE HISTORY

When asked about the 2020 rebellion, Kaneda replied, "I don't think that the impact of the uprisings could possibly be overstated." He noted that it was a "completely transformational moment in our collective history" that will continue to bear fruit for a long time to come.

What fruit has it borne?

Kaneda said the only way to get the things we really need is through a new system that divests from punishment and invests in communities with the goal of eliminating policing and prisons; preventing and responding to harm and creating a thriving world for all.

Election results nationally suggest that the political and moral values of the rebellion and the defund and abolition movements are withstanding the rulers' narrative. Kaneda observes: "[W]hat we saw is the fear mongering isn't landing the way we're being told it is

and that tells me that our ideas are resonating with people, no matter what the polls say."

In the last two elections, abolitionists and police reformers entered city councils, state houses, and Congress. In California, reform prosecutors and county sheriffs were elected in Los Angeles and Alameda counties. Tennessee, Oregon and Vermont outlawed involuntary penal servitude, the 13th amendment exemption. Although progressive San Francisco district attorney Chesa Boudin was ousted by a recall orchestrated by the city's ruling class, progressive Los Angeles district attorney George Gascón, Boudin's ally and predecessor, triumphed twice over recall efforts that failed to gather sufficient signatures to get on the ballot.

In November 2020, Los Angeles County voters passed Measure J to redirect 10 percent of the county's unrestricted funding (estimated at between \$300 million and \$900 million) to address racial injustice through community investments and services such as youth programs, good-paying jobs, mental health care, affordable housing and alternatives to incarceration.

As part of the fascist backlash, law enforcement unions successfully sued the county in June 2021, with a judge ruling that Measure J was constitutionally invalid because it took budget decision-making power away from the board of supervisors and gave it to the voters. Too much democracy? Organizers managed to get the current Board to redirect \$200 million this year. It must be re-deliberated annually (whereas Measure J would have made it permanent).

Kaneda notes that it is clear "how big of an impact our movement has had because it's directly related to the intensity of the backlash." Misinformation about crime ignore the facts that property crime has been declining since the 1990s, that although violent crime did increase in 2020, it is still at a 50-year low, and that the primary causes of violent crime are poverty and social neglect, not a lack of police.

THE MOVEMENT CONTINUES

Kaneda notes it is a victory to have defunding and abolishing the police in the public conversation. Many leaders understand the significance of the demands and are not going back. New consciousness has led to new advocacy groups and coalitions. Organizations such as Mothers Against Police Brutality, whose founder testified at the United Nations in October 2022, are educating and uniting people. Budget 2 Save Lives, is a promising new coalition that Kaneda says is teaching how to fight for divesting from incarceration and investing in services through budget advocacy.

Such movements are revolutionary because their demands can only be met through a political revolution. The role of revolutionaries is to unite around these working-class demands. The solution is a cooperative society where social wealth is owned in common and distributed according to need; a society organized for humanity and our planet to thrive. Our eyes have been opened, but it will take strategy, tactics and ongoing effort to keep our movement on track. **R**

Inflation is extractive capitalism's new weapon

Seemingly out of nowhere for many people, prices for the basic necessities of life are skyrocketing. The United States today is verging on the greatest inflation since the Civil War. So-called experts portray inflation like "an Act of God." In reality, inflation is a policy. It is another policy of extractive financialized capitalism to divert society's wealth from the poor to a class of billionaires.

The chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, said his goal is "to get wages down." Powell claims that U.S. workers are making too much money: "Employers are having difficulties filling job openings and wages are rising at the fastest pace in many years."

In fact, since COVID hit, working people have backed away from low-paying jobs, which force them to work just for childcare or to pay student loans. Meanwhile, many working people have been replaced by the new tech-

nology in production. Rather than raise wages, inflation is used to force people to go back to work.

In fact, inflation is a burden that monopoly corporations impose on working people, a hidden tax to increase corporate private profits. Powell makes the deliberately deceptive argument that prices of commodities are based on the costs of raw materials and labor. He fails to identify corporate profits as part of rising prices. Corporations are deliberately increasing prices to make more profit because the law allows this. One reason for this is that government has broadly de-regulated the economy to give capitalists more freedom to extort private profit.

Corporate profiteering is the major contributor to the inflation problem. Corporations had record profits in 2021. Nearly 100 of these

Continued on page 6

Latinas/Latinos and the midterm elections of 2022

Continued from page 1

REPUBLICANS CHALLENGING “ABUELITA’S DEMOCRATS”

It is in this light that we must view the Latino role in the electoral process. Traditionally, Latina/o participation in the electoral process is much less than their population share, due in part to immigration status, a feeling of being abandoned, and distrust. Nevertheless, Latina/o’s represent one in eight voters in this country and are one of the fastest-growing groups in the electorate. When they vote, they have historically voted Democrat, but this may no longer be guaranteed.

Due in part to the better-than-expected performance by Trump in the 2020 Presidential campaign among Latinx, particularly males in South Texas, money and resources were poured into 2022 midterm campaigns such as the “Triple Threat” of three Latinas in South Texas running as Republicans for Congress, bucking the traditional support of the Democratic Party in that heavily Latino region. When first promoted by Republican strategists, the Triple Threat was intended as the Republican counter to “the Squad” in Congress, which includes Democrats such as AOC.

The ruling class is fostering a divisive “us vs. them” mentality that promotes conflict and division among Latinos, by capitalizing on the Democratic Party’s failure to deliver on its promises and its tendency to take the Latino vote for granted. This also relies on some Latino family and religious conservatism, their desire for the “American Dream”, and generational differences between established Latinos and recent immigrants. With a “family, God, and country” banner, Monica de la Cruz led a break from the Democratic Party in South Texas, stating that the Republican Party is not “her abuelita’s party” (English translation: grandmother’s), meaning Latinos would no longer vote Democrat by default.

Still, of the three Republican candidates from South Texas -- all endorsed by Trump, only Monica de la Cruz won a seat on the McAllen 15th Congressional District as the first Republican, let alone Latina woman, to hold that post. Mayra Flores, who had briefly held the 34th congressional District, and a former Ted Cruz aide Cassy Garcia lost, all despite much fanfare.

For most Americans, their economic concerns play a significant factor in their actions. Just as Rust Belt workers went against their union leadership in 2016 to vote against a Hillary Clinton when Trump promised to

force industry to bring back jobs to America, in 2020 many South Texas Latinos supported Trump because they saw his calls for oil drilling, Border Patrol, and law enforcement as providing stable employment.

LATINX NEEDS OVERLAP WITH CLASS NEEDS

Wooing the Latino vote away from the Democratic Party is part of the divide and conquer strategy of the ruling class towards achieving its goal of remaking society and the economy in its interests. It is only one of many tools in its arsenal, including state voter suppression laws, gerrymandering, a proposed U.S. constitutional amendment, control of the Supreme Court, and the overturn of Roe v. Wade. We have even witnessed the attempted forcible takeover of the United States Capitol by an angry mob that included white supremacists and neo-Nazis, but also a smattering of Blacks, Latinx, and Native Americans --all won over to the great lie that the 2020 elections were stolen.

The struggles of Latina/os for basic needs, human dignity, and rights at the border and in the interior overlap with the needs of the rest of the working class. The Uvalde, Texas school massacre placed safety of children and gun control squarely on the national agenda and shamed law enforcement. Latinos and Latinas are becoming involved in the political process to improve their neighborhoods and schools, whether by running for office and winning as in Utah, by supporting other progressive candidates, and by advocating for safe schools and neighborhoods and other basic needs, even if not eligible to vote. And the fact that over 40% of Latina women live in states impacted by abortion restrictions had much to do with their role in preventing a red wave of take overs in Congress in the midterm elections.

As Democrat leaders are being challenged, there is much that is not yet revealed about the failure of Republican elected officials Ted Cruz and Abbott to respond to the failed power grid in midwinter during the height of the Covid pandemic. This harmed everyone, but disproportionately the working poor. Increasingly Latinos are forging relations out of necessity with others who share their plight. Whether through pressuring the Democratic Party from the inside, by running for office or supporting Progressive candidates, many are concluding that sooner or later they will need their own political party—not abuelita’s Democratic party, but not Jim Crow’s Republican party either. **R**

Inflation is extractive capitalism’s new weapon

Continued from page 5

corporations did report profits in 2021 that are 50 percent above profit margins from 2019. Petroleum corporations spiked their prices through the ceiling, even though these companies got \$230 billion in government subsidies in 2022. Furthermore, ConocoPhillips, Chevron, and ExxonMobil pay negative income tax; they got \$1.95 billion back in domestic taxes between 2015 and 2022. The Ukraine War drove up petroleum prices. These companies could have kept prices low by increasing production, but they didn’t.

Proctor & Gamble and Kimberly Clark control the market for diapers. In the spring, they announced that they would start charging more for everything from diapers to toilet paper, citing “rising costs for raw materials, such as resin and pulp, and higher expenses to transport goods.” By September, their profit margin increased 24.7 percent! Diapers, like food and oil, are produced by a few monopolies that control the market and can charge whatever they like.

Since the 2008 housing crash, the United States has created some \$30 trillion that has been directed into the financial market to bail out banks by inflating the price of housing. The so-called experts never referred to this unheard-of creation of new money as inflation. This policy, however, inflated housing by turning it from a human right into a financial asset to extract ever more rent from the 99 percent.

Funny thing! All the fearmongering about inflation that never mentions the soaring salaries of corporate executives? Nor that medicine, health insurance and housing prices that have been skyrocketing for years? Record corporate profits are likewise ignored. Inflation actually benefits people whose wealth is in stocks and financial assets. When those prices go up, they can sell them for a greater profit! Biden and the corporate Democrats tell us

that inflation is a result of Russia’s invasion of the Ukraine. But inflation increased dramatically *before* the war. And it was the United States, not Russia, that forced Ukraine to mine its ports, which cut off its massive grain exports to the world for several months.

The government’s response to inflation is to raise interest rates, which makes the dollar more attractive for the billions of dollars that are invested in money markets every day. As capital flows out of Europe and the world and into the United States, these countries are forced to raise their own interest rates to stop the flow. The result is that the United States is deliberately exporting inflation around the world, which makes the global proletariat pay more to capitalism for the basic necessities of life.

One source of constant inflationary pressure is that the United States has about 750 military bases around the world. The United States incurs massive foreign debt and accepts dollar out-flow that these bases require. The United States manipulates inflation to pay for wars and its global political maneuvering, all in the name of defending U.S. business interests. Here the inflation as a policy is quite clear. The Pentagon spends \$2 billion a day, yet no money can be found to fix the water system of Jackson, Mississippi, which would cost about \$1 billion! That’s only 1/730ths of the military budget!

Inflation is in essence a “hidden tax” on America that extracts wealth from households and transfers it to the financial system. Government’s role is critical here. In a real economic democracy, government could easily use its powers to guarantee the distribution of the necessities of life to people without any cost at all. We all saw how when COVID hit, schools were immediately turned into free food outlets. Government can abolish all forms of corporate financial extraction, but it will not do so unless we force it to. **R**

The South leads the nation’s healthcare system to the brink

Continued from page 3

lacking Medicaid expansion. Doctors too, like the Committee of Interns and Residents, are struggling for union recognition because of the mutual trauma and devastating consequences that a broken healthcare system has on their patients and themselves. The People’s CDC, formed by scientists, public healthcare workers, artists and others, is challenging government institutions’ acceptance that preventable deaths and disabilities are simply the cost of doing business. They are acting on their burning desire to employ the wonders of science and technology for the public good by disseminating scientific pandemic information free of corporate and political agendas of both ruling parties. Rob Wallace of the People’s CDC notes that: “Working people need to organize themselves to force the state to act in their class interests, which in this case, is focused on the weird notion that everyday Americans have the right to their very lives.”

The new forces in motion, both productive and social, necessitate the end of capitalism’s

stranglehold on our collective human potential to live and thrive in a healthy society and heal a harmed planet. Our freedom resides in grasping this necessity. History is on our side. **R**

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!

You Need Rally! Rally! Needs You

SUBSCRIBE TO *Rally!* ONE FULL YEAR FOR \$20

Please send a check or money order payable to “LRNA” to:
LRNA, P.O. Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____