

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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Lessons from the Pandemic:

Toward Complete Transformation of U.S. Health Care

Over a year ago, stunned and maskless shoppers faced empty grocery shelves. The commercialization of human relationships and needs were called into question, as demands quickly rose to distribute food and healthcare to millions abruptly losing jobs, and to house the homeless, stop all evictions and water cut-offs, and cancel debt payments. Inherently unsafe conditions called for prisoner release and an end to ICE detention centers. The global necessity to collaborate, coordinate, and administer goods and services based on need advanced a revolutionary challenge to government's role. The Trump administration led the global charge to dash those hopes by abandoning scientific evidence, protecting transnational capital's security at all costs, and reinforcing white supremacy and nationalism.

Fast forward one year, and though there has clearly been a shift in U.S. governmental rhetoric and even some temporary 'relief' measures, the governing structures and/or their absence remain incapable of sustaining an equitable recovery. Moving forward demands the accountability of those complicit in hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths by refusing to distribute necessary resources, siphoning monies to corporations, lying, and withholding critical data, disproportionately impacting Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities. The 'too little too late truth-telling' of former Whitehouse coronavirus coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx reveals the depravity of the government's response: "There were about a hundred thousand deaths that came from that original surge. All of the rest of them, in my mind, could have been mitigated or decreased substantially."

It's not just that the U.S. spends less than three percent of funds for public health measures out of the \$3.6 trillion spent on healthcare; it's the inherent incompatibility of a private healthcare system in the face of a public pandemic. Even the word 'recovery,' meaning a 'return to health,' is inadequate in this epoch of expanding and extreme polarization of wealth and poverty. The corporate privatization of supply chains and decision making caused this uncontrolled pandemic in the first place.

U.S. HEALTHCARE INEQUITY

A portrait of public healthcare in the South offers a window to a world of pain. Before the pandemic, southerners account-



New York City 2020: New York American nurses and doctors, frontline workers expressing gratitude for support.

Photo: tetiana.photographer/Shutterstock

ed for more than 30 percent of all preventable deaths from cancer, heart and lung disease, and stroke. Sixty percent of rural hospital closures and half of the 400 federally funded clinic closures are in the South. Ninety-two percent of those excluded from Medicaid expansion are in southern states. Five southern states are in the top ten of maternal mortality rates, with Black women dying at 3-4 times the rate of their white counterparts. The white supremacy inherent in the fractured healthcare system has its roots in, first, slavery's unspeakable breeding of enslaved women for labor and, then, as Harriet Washington writes, "by 1941, sterilization had been forced on 70,000 to 100,000 Americans," mostly women of color, as their labor became superfluous with the industrial mechanization of the fields and factories. Public health during and after slavery served capitalism.

The 21st-century coronavirus pandemic rendered workers essential and expendable at the same time. The toll was particularly cruel for healthcare workers who suffered more than 3,600 recorded deaths, two-thirds of whom were women of color, and many of those were first-generation immigrants. Disproportionately both unemployed and working low wage frontline jobs, women are at the vortex of the extreme disparities of race, class, and gender exploitation and oppression. Women also disproportionately hold responsibility for online home education of their children and the protection of aging parents from illness and

death. Indeed, the viral exposures and unconsented sterilization of immigrant women at the Georgia Irwin County ICE Detention Center underscored how little has changed.

VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

The horrific toll the pandemic has taken in the U.S. — with over 25 percent of the world's cases but less than four percent of the world's population — doesn't end there. The lack of vaccine access globally is a clarion call for another world, both possible and necessary. High-income countries representing just one-fifth of the world's population own half of all the global vaccine doses purchased. Without intervention, it could be years be-

fore global vaccination is achieved, if ever. The refusal to relinquish private vaccine patents is a testament to the supremacy of corporate property over life itself. Only 0.1 percent of doses have been administered in low-income countries, with North America and Europe taking 57 percent of all vaccinations to date.

Israel's vaccine-for-data trade allowed the stockpiling of vaccines and swift inoculation of its citizenry in exchange for Pfizer's access to all its big health data, yet, Israel refuses to vaccinate all Palestinians. Meanwhile, technologically flush and rich countries are debating "vaccine passports." Worldwide, immigrants and refugees face profound obstacles to vaccine access. Application of vaccine passports to migrants and passport apps on mobile devices allow new forms of inequity and surveillance. Technological acceleration left to corporate ownership continues to reinforce class privilege.

Once again, the southern U.S. provides a telling lens. In Mississippi, 40 percent of COVID-19 deaths have been African Americans, but just 29 percent of the vaccines have gone to Black residents compared with 62 percent for whites. The story is the same throughout the rural South. In Alabama, a decade of cuts to public health has led to a 35 percent reduction in staffing at county health departments, resulting in only once a week vaccine administration. Narratives that put the blame for lower vaccine rates on "hesitancy" mask the truth of the role of white supremacy in healthcare, which includes lack of access to transporta-

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What is Our Country to Become?

Inside Rally, Comrades!

In 2021, the question of the direction in which the country is headed remains paramount. What is this country to become? We have choices to make.

2020 was the year of the greatest pandemic in over one hundred years, precipitating a crisis that upended all of society. It was also the year of the police murder of George Floyd, which sparked a social uprising that brought millions into the streets demanding racial and economic justice. The elections of 2020 were viewed as consequential as the election of 1860, leading to the defeat of Donald Trump, but which in turn led to the insurrection attempt at the nation's capitol to overturn the results of the election on January 6.

The polarization rooted in the polarization of wealth and poverty in the economy is reflected in a sharpening po-

larization socially and politically. But it is more than a matter of choosing sides. It is really about the future, about where humanity itself is headed. The article "Vision and the Music of the Pandemic" quotes from Lil Baby's "Bigger Picture": "It's bigger than black and white: it's a problem of the whole way of life. We may as well go ahead and start here." And Bootsie Collins' "Stars" features 16-year-old Emi Sunshine calling, "We've got to forge a better way."

"The Turning Point in the Fight Against American Fascism" reveals that the ruling class is doing everything possible to block, sidetrack and defeat the rising movement of a new class of workers displaced by the new technology, who are demanding that government address their needs survive. While posed as a going back, a return to normalcy, a recapturing of what has been lost, the leading edge of this motion shows a readiness now to sacrifice even the limited democracy we now enjoy. There is more and more talk calling for the overthrow of the government.

States' political leaders across the country, led by the South, are instituting voter suppression laws designed to rig the outcome of any election, along with the right of the states to overthrow any election they do not like.

The choice is clear: fascism represents a dark future, down which global humanity dare not go. Unity of action in the fight for people's needs is the foundation for the revolutionary movement of the future. Revolution today means embracing this powerful social force that is arising in the battle for the future of life on earth.

"Oppose War and Occupation from Ferguson to Palestine" shows how the growing fascist tendency is not just a phenomenon peculiar to America. Transnational corporations and state-sponsored institutions restrict the freedom and ignore the rights of poor and indigenous people in Palestine, the U.S., and around the world, because this new form of global fascism they are developing transcends borders and recognizes no boundaries.

"Lessons of the Pandemic: Toward Complete Transformation of U.S. Health Care" takes a more in-depth and concrete look at health care as one of the most important of the basic needs required for a secure and prosperous life. It also recognizes that the path we choose forward is indispensable for the survival of humanity and the planet: Humanity is at a threshold. The domination of private property, the inequality it breeds, and the State that protects it can no longer co-exist with human and planetary survival.

"Our Revolutionary History, Today's

Revolutionary Vision" shows how since the beginnings of this country, our history has been about the entwining of the struggles for freedom, emancipation, equality with the dark history of slavery, oppression, and inequality. History moves through stages, and at each point, the struggle advances on a new basis. The American revolution is unfinished: until now, the attainment of the vision and cause of the American project has fallen short. Our vision, our hope, is that now is our opportunity to finally complete our revolution.

Today scarcity is imposed by the ruling class. Private property is standing in the way of the distribution of abundance according to need. We stand on the edge of being able to create a truly human history for the first time. Freed from want and exploitation, we will no longer have to struggle about getting a house, we will no longer have to worry about getting food, no longer worry about getting an education. The age-old divisions of racism employed by the ruling class will no longer have a hold on us. Finally, life, liberty, and happiness will be our destiny.

"From the Editors" focuses on the rampant opioid crisis that is ravaging America. Not just a crisis of white America, it is directed at our entire class. Poverty is the common denominator. Millions are demanding that the government meet more than their basic needs, but start to operate in a way that makes a healthy and cultured life possible. These demands cannot be achieved without a radical reconstruction of society. **RC**

A Vision for a New America

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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

Comrade: a person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause

Rally, Comrades! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally, Comrades!* provides a strategic outlook for the revolutionaries by indicating and illuminating the line of march of the revolutionary process. It presents a pole of scientific clarity, examines and analyzes the real problems of the revolutionary movement, and draws political conclusions for the tasks of revolutionaries at each stage of development in order to prepare for future stages. It is a vehicle to reach out and communicate with revolutionaries both within the League and outside of the League, to engage them in debate and discussion, and to provide a forum for these discussions. Articles represent the position and policies of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

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League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Today, whether through words or deeds, vast numbers of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions. The League's mission is to unite these scattered revolutionaries on the basis of the demands of the new class, to educate and win them over to the cooperative, communist resolution of the problem.

The demands of this new impoverished class for food, housing, education, healthcare and an opportunity to contribute to society are summed up as the demand for a cooperative society. Such a society must be based on the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need.

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Visit the *Rally, Comrades!* website!

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

Vision and the Music of the Pandemic

Born from ongoing cultural dialogue between the poorest European immigrants, the descendants of slaves from West Africa, and America's Indigenous peoples, the concept of American popular music has always had a class character. In the recorded music era, the enormous popularity of genres aimed at racially designated markets synthesized into something new and took over the pop charts. Though the ruling class has repeatedly attempted to control and contain the vision in this music, new forms — hip hop and punk, and metal — continuously emerge to reassert the working-class character of the music. Despite a long history of corporate control, in the midst of the pandemic, the music has amplified the voice of our class, those hit hardest by the devastation.

Of course, most musicians work day jobs to finance their vocation and struggled as members of this class before the pandemic. Over the past year, the vast majority of musicians have not only lost their main means of livelihood, but the entire infrastructure of the industry that once supported them has fallen apart. Many performance venues are gone and aren't coming back. At least for the time being, the tour support systems are gone, and a future when people gather together in crowded rooms to experience live music is yet to fully return.

During the pandemic, the high-profile nonprofit MusicCares "has distributed more than \$22 million to help more than 25,000 music people across the industry, including songwriters, musicians, engi-

neers, producers, bus drivers, crew, guitar techs, label employees, makeup artists, and more." MusicCares has also expanded its support system for musicians suffering from mental health issues in the midst of this crisis.

But the music itself fights for the human spirit. In cities around the world, musicians have been playing on balconies for their neighborhoods. Many more, including DJs spinning records, have been live-streaming weekly shows and have created national and international communities for the kind of support music can bring. They are also providing online spaces where people have filled chat with discussions about conditions at each stage of the pandemic—from the early fight for PPE to the efforts to distribute the vaccine.

Mutual aid organizations have sprung from and benefited from such efforts.

At the same time, thousands of songs have been written about the pandemic, some—like Luke Combs's "Six Feet Apart," Lila Downs' "El Silencio," Gloria Trevi's "Demasiado Frágiles," and Norah Jones's "Tryin' to Keep It Together" — dealing with the mental health issues that accompany a world with little social contact. Some made fun out of the strangeness, romantic songs like the Drive-By Truckers' "Quarantine Together" and dance records like Todrick Hall's "Mask, Gloves, Soap, Scrubs."

Certainly, there is an impulse to take things back to the way they used to be. Songs like Van Morrison's "No More Lockdowns" and Alan Jackson's "Back" even propagandize division and nostalgia as a way to persuade people to turn to old solutions rather than face the new dangers of widespread illness, while a workforce is automated out of existence. Many more songs, though — from Dolly Parton's "When Life Is Good Again" to Alicia Keys' "Good Job" and Adriana Rios's "Esta En Ti" — focus on reflection and reassurance.

The 2020 uprisings against killings by police inspired a wide range of political commentary, from John Fogerty's mournful "Weeping in the Promised Land" to H.E.R.'s claustrophobic "I Can't Breathe" to Lil Baby's simmering "Bigger Picture." The vision in "Bigger Picture" exemplifies the revitalization of so much rap in the wake of the uprisings, Lil Baby declaring, "it's bigger than black and white; it's a problem with the whole way of life." And though he knows revolution isn't coming overnight, he's ready to take it all on, declaring "may as well go ahead and start here."

Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the great voices of the Civil Rights Movement, Mavis Staples, states clearly what we need to fight forward. Her song, "We're All In It Together," co-written with rock musician Jeff Tweedy, makes a pointed statement simply by saying "I need you" and "You need me." Banda MS de Sergio Lizarraga offers a similar call with "Es Hora de Unirnos." Reaching even bigger with his single "Stars," funk legend Bootsy Collins teams up with musicians from all over the world, calling "Power to the people" to "Brothers and sisters, all colors, genders, regional identities sexual orientations," with 16-year-old Emi Sunshine declaring, "We've got to forge a better way."

How we get to the bigger answers to our problems is to see clearly the possibility in the reality we face. On the whole, our musicians are calling us forward. Abandoned by the ruling class, discarded by a collapsing system, we must unite and build a new system—one where we have the power to not only guarantee each of us has what we need to survive but also to make sure we can achieve that better way that lies just ahead. **RC**

Opioid Crisis, an Addiction to Profit

From the Editors

"I think the answer is paying attention to people's needs in the first place." — Lisa Al-Hakim, Harm Reduction Alliance, Seattle, Washington.

Several major lawsuits against major opioid manufacturers and distributors are making their way through the courts. They reveal that the opioid crisis is a social crisis engulfing workers of all colors, producing a breadth of devastation and death largely lost in the fragmented reporting. Poverty is the common denominator.

These trials are unmasking the system the pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors created to flood the country with billions of prescription opioids over the last twenty years. Federal, State, and local governments are bringing the cases to force opioid pharmaceutical producers and distributors to pay for the devastation government has been left to clean up.

Just three companies manufactured 88 percent of the pills, and six companies distributed 75 percent of the pills. They were distributed through shady clinics called "pill mills" or direct-marketed to patients. Physicians were encouraged in various ways to provide unjustified prescriptions, and pharmacy chains such as CVS, Walmart, and Walgreens all profited from it.

Opioid prescription and distribution spread like wildfire throughout the country, especially targeting the South, Southwest, and the Rust Belt states. Between 2014 and 2018, 300,000 people died from a drug overdose, 70 percent involving opioids of some form. Nearly 500,000 people have died from opioid

overdose since 1999. More than 70,000 Americans died from a drug-involved overdose in 2019 alone, including illicit drugs and prescription opioids.

After the Drug Enforcement Agency was forced to reveal its ARCOS database, The Washington Post reported that it documents "a virtual roadmap of the nation's opioid epidemic that began with prescription pills, spawned increased heroin use and resulted in the current fentanyl crisis." Yet, instead of prosecuting these murderers on criminal charges and shutting them down, the DEA, Food and Drug Administration, and Department of Justice let them off with millions in fines, treating the deaths and fines as just a cost of doing business.

"The victims themselves didn't realize they were victimized," Edward Neiger, an attorney for individual victims bringing claims. "They thought of themselves as drug addicts, of their parents or their kids as drug addicts. They did not realize they were addicted to opioids because there were people in a boardroom conspiring to market these drugs to them and lie about the potential harm these drugs would cause." "I didn't realize what they'd do until it was too late," a West Virginia miner wrote. "Within a couple of months, you don't want to admit it, but one pill won't do, and you're running around the streets trying to buy one."

Workers of color face a disproportionate rate of overdoses and lack of access to medical treatment. The opioid crisis is not a crisis of "white America." It is directed at our entire class. Criminal law professor Ekown Yankah has pointed out that at the murder trial of killer cop Derek Chauvin, Courtney Ross's testimony showed that she and

George Floyd were "ordinary people struggling with drug use. Black people end up hooked on drugs for the exact same reasons white people do."

Settlements proposed for the lawsuits do not even propose adequate funds for addiction treatment nor remedies for the larger problems our class faces today — inequality of wealth, the deterioration of our lives accelerated by COVID, the accelerating clamp down on our rights, and our ability to protect ourselves from the rulers. Instead, the money will go straight to the governments and corporate institutions that brought the suits.

It remains for those on the front line of this battle to pick up the pieces. That includes the mothers and fathers, and the decent health care providers and advocates. It also includes the chronic pain victims with little choice but to buy illegal in the face of an inhumane health care system, and the addicts struggling to stay clean, and those who don't make it.

Millions support health care as a human right, free drug treatment programs instead of mass incarceration, helping families to cope with addiction and stepping in to help if we lose our loved ones, and the rebuilding of their communities. By demanding that the government meet our basic needs, we have already given voice to a vision of society that makes a healthy and cultured life its first priority. Is this not the definition of a cooperative, communist society?

Our strength lies in uniting around what we have in common as a class — our demands for life, love, health, and a future for our families. Our strength lies in the vision that arises from those demands. Only our class can make this vision a reality. **RC**

Oppose War and Occupation from Ferguson to Palestine

*Secretariat, League of Revolutionaries
for a New America*

In May, Israel's vaccine apartheid, land theft, and indiscriminate killings left no doubt that we witnessed a new escalation in an ongoing genocide. The world witnessed the brutality of military occupation as Israeli soldiers bombed civilians, apartment buildings, medical facilities, international media offices, and children. The 257 murdered and 72,000 displaced Palestinians alert us to the suffering that fascist militarized states can inflict. Israel declared a formal ceasefire on May 21, but airstrikes on Gaza resumed on June 16. Though the \$3.8 billion the U.S. gives to Israel each year could be used for food and housing, many Americans do not know or care about the atrocities that it funds. A common narrative is that the "Israeli-Palestinian conflict" is an age-old dispute too complicated and intractable to understand. This narrative, however, is being challenged as more people confront the reality and as unions, commentators, and movements recognize Israel's actions as genocide, which is neither symmetric nor ambiguous.

A new generation of youth in the United States is becoming conscious of the treatment of Palestinians by the

Israeli State. The growing consciousness of the life and death consequences of inequality — and the role of government in maintaining it — is apparent in the mass movement against police terror that arose after the police killing of George Floyd. This growing consciousness occurred in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately killed poor people, resulting in the highest death rates among Indigenous, Black, and Latinx Americans.

More and more American workers understand a war being waged on our communities by the ruling class and the government it controls. The call to defund and abolish the police and invest in communities shows the consciousness of the State's role in enforcing both brutality and organized abandonment against the most impoverished communities, particularly Black, Brown, and Indigenous youth. This consciousness has led to calls for solidarity with the Palestinians, as they witness Palestinians murdered by police and military and violently displaced from their homes.

Many organizations and leaders in the U.S. have come out in support of the Palestinians, including Black Lives Matter, the Movement for Black Lives, and others in the movement against po-

lice violence and systemic racism. A new generation of elected officials who ran for Congress to represent their American working-class communities is speaking out within the Democratic Party. Michigan Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, the daughter of Palestinian immigrants, tweeted at U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, "When will the U.S. condemn racist violence against Palestinians? Is it your policy to support settlers stealing Palestinian homes & burning their lands?" And Congresswoman Cori Bush, who felt called to run to represent her community after getting involved in the Ferguson, Missouri protests of the police murder of Mike Brown, also expressed her support on Twitter and elsewhere. A rally in New York City connected the defunding of the NYPD to the demand to end the billions of dollars in U.S. aid to Israel.

New York State Senator Jabari Brisport from Brooklyn said to the crowd, "Whether it's in Astoria, whether it's in Brooklyn, whether it's in Ferguson, whether it's in the West Bank, we say: 'Hell, no.' [when] The choice is made to spend money not on schools, not on housing, not on healthcare, not on transportation, not on childcare, but on oppressing marginalized people."

On the other hand, NY Mayoral Candidate Andrew Yang faced strong criticism for tweeting his support for Israel with no mention of the violence against Palestinians. The old rhetoric is failing as the nature of the occupation is exposed.

The Zionist project to create a Jewish state in Palestine was, like the colonization of America, from its outset antagonistic to the people who already lived there, as it implied their erasure. Indeed, since the Nakba in 1948, in the time between the massacres, Israel has been gradually stealing Palestinian land, erasing their culture, and driving them into occupied territories which the U.N. has called "unlivable."

The majority of Gazans, for instance, are food insecure, and 90 percent of their water is undrinkable. The water crisis is by no means natural. There is no water crisis in the green line territories occupied by Israeli settlers since 1948. Their water is supplied by the Israeli (inter)national corporation Mekorot, which steals water from the Palestinian West Bank Mountain Aquifer. This water is then distributed based on apartheid. Palestinians living in the West Bank receive 70 liters per person each day, while the illegal Israeli settlers attempting to take over the West Bank receive 300 liters per person each day. In addition to the apartheid system of water distribution, Palestinians face inequitable access to vaccines, travel restrictions, housing, and land.

The land Israeli settlers live on is, in fact, Palestinian land. Palestinian homes and olive groves are constantly being demolished. Escalations preceded the May attacks in settler attempts to take over the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of Jerusalem. A video went viral of Sheikh Jarrah resident Muna el-Kurd, confronting the settler who moved into her home. "You are stealing my house!" she says. The settler responds, "If I don't steal it, someone else will." "No!" says el-Kurd, "no one is allowed to steal it." Israeli police terrorized the Palestinian residents by invading and tear-gassing the Al Aqsa Mosque during the holy month of Ramadan. On June 15, far-right settlers, Israel's fascist mass-base, rallied in Sheikh Jarrah chanting "death to Arabs" and "may your village burn." None of them were arrested, but Muna el-Kurd was.

The confinement of Palestinians is mirrored by the transnational dimensions of our globalizing economy. The American corporation Hewlett Packard provides technology for the Israeli army and police to confine and surveil Palestinians. Meanwhile, the Israeli corporation Elbit Systems manufactures military jets in the United States and is contracted to surveil the US-Mexico border. The U.S. government funds the Israeli government with \$3.8 billion every year, providing massive armaments to ensure that Israel can continue to function as its proxy for military dominance of the region as the U.S. maneuvers to secure the Middle East as a base of operations. Meanwhile, United States police officers from Baltimore and many other cities with rampant police brutality have traveled to Israel to learn coercive tactics from the Israeli Defense Force. Transnational corporations and state institutions restrict the freedom and movement of poor and indigenous people in Palestine, the U.S., and worldwide because the new forms of global fascism they are developing transcend these borders.

As revolutionaries within the U.S., we must understand and oppose Israel's fascist rule because it is a humanitarian catastrophe. We also oppose it because U.S. corporations and politicians are preparing the American people to accept and support permanent war and fascist political repression wherever they need it, even within our borders. Palestinian workers are at the forefront of the growing class of people who cannot obtain the food, housing, and dignity they need in a global economy. Their fight for clean water, to keep their homes, for freedom of movement, to return as refugees, for sovereignty in their communities, control over their resources, dignity, and life is the fight against fascism and for a democratic future in Palestine and around the world. **RC**

Stella Sikorski 1933-2021: Dedicated Revolutionary

We honor Stella Sikorski, a founding member of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, for her years of contribution to the future of humanity. We have not forgotten the decisive role she played in holding the organization together under the most difficult circumstances.

The ruling class goes out of its way to laud individuals and their activity



as if individuals create history. No. History is created by the millions of dedicated fighters who, often unseen and unknown, dig the foundations and lay the footings for the movements that inspire the masses to create their history.

We have always found Comrade Stella there — providing the stability when others wavered. Pointing the direction when others were confused. Our organization owes much to Comrade Stella. And yet it was to make such contributions that she joined us.

Her work and her spirit were so visible because she believed that a new society could be built where people did not have to starve, or be homeless, or be without hope. She was a comrade who was respected and loved by many.

"Dzi kuj towarzyszu!" Thank you, comrade!

Turning Point in the Fight Against American Fascism

The spring of 2021 marks an inflection point in America's historic seesaw battle over the future of democracy and freedom. Over 360 pieces of legislation have been introduced to limit, suppress, and overthrow the right to vote in a campaign comparable to the imposition of Jim Crow fascism in the South from 1890 to 1910. What happens now in the statehouses, in the Capitol, and in the streets will determine the fate of the millions who are turning to the political arena to carry out the struggle for the racial and economic justice they need to survive.

The most notorious of the bills passed so far was the one in Georgia: restricting absentee voting, prohibiting people from handing out food and water to voters in line, and empowering partisan state officials to remove non-partisan local election boards. But altogether, some 43 states have introduced voter suppression laws, including 14 that would allow politicians to seize or limit the authority of election officials. These bills would effectively give Republicans the power to overturn election results, just as Donald Trump demanded during his unsuccessful election challenges in 2020.

NATIONAL OUTRAGE

This attack has sparked a wave of resistance to voter suppression. It is a continuation of the bitter battles of the 2020 elections: the heated primary campaigns, the George Floyd rebellion, the massive voter registration and turnout movements, the election protectors, and the united movement to remove Donald Trump from office. The resistance to voter suppression is inseparable from the rising rebellion protesting the upsurge in new police murders during the Derek Chauvin trial. The issues are the same: survival of humanity and the planet in the era of state violence, pandemics, and ecological apocalypse. Through it all, now and in the near future, voting will continue to be an indispensable weapon.

The national outrage after the passage of Georgia's voter suppression law (SB 202) has swept the country and energized the movement. "These are not men and women who are unclear about their motives and their effect," said Stacy Abrams of the people promoting the laws in Georgia and elsewhere. "These bills are being promulgated across the country with the intended effect of blocking voters who are becoming inconvenient to the Republican Party: voters of color, young people, and the poor." Threats to boycott corporations forced hundreds of corporate executives to speak out against voter suppression.

All these battles were and are grounded in the new class of workers, who depend for survival on the fight to force government to address their needs, and are the backbone of the resistance. These are the workers who have lost their jobs and been replaced by digital production

and artificial intelligence, a process that has been dramatically speeded up by COVID-19. With no access to income or resources, they are forced to fight politically for programs to enable them to obtain housing, health care, and education. However, like the 2020 Floyd rebellion, this movement has spread far beyond the dispossessed and to every sector of society. It involves millions of all colors and from all walks of life.

NEXT STEPS

HR 1 (the For the People Act) has been passed by the House of Representatives and offers an immediate opportunity to decisively squash voter suppression and expand the franchise across the country. However, there is only a brief window to make this happen before state legislatures pass Republican gerrymander plans designed to disenfranchise millions. At this moment, it appears that HR 1 will be defeated in the Senate by the filibuster, an archaic rule that has served to help block majority rule and real democracy in America since the days of slavery and Jim Crow. Even though it only requires a majority vote to abolish or bypass the filibuster, and Democrats hold a majority in the Senate, so far, not enough of them have been willing to defend the right to vote and make it happen.

In spite of some attempts to distance itself, the whole voter suppression campaign remains hopelessly entangled with the overt fascism of Donald Trump and the mob that stormed the Capitol on January 6. After all, the objective is the same: a corporate dictatorship. While pretending to deplore the "loss of life and violence at our nation's Capitol," former Vice President Mike Pence supported the same kind of "state-based" reform advocated by Trump, the Proud Boys, and the Oath Keepers. "State-based" reform is limiting vote by mail, restricting registration, ending requirements to count every vote, and banning voting by the formerly incarcerated.

Voter suppression is violence. This was emphasized by Gov. Kemp's signing of SB 202 in front of a painting of a slave plantation, while African American legislator Park Cannon was hauled away in handcuffs for simply knocking on his door. Voting rights leaders are utilizing every tactic available to claw back and salvage the right to vote. The ACLU and the League of Women Voters, among others, are filing lawsuits.

If the Democrats fail to honor their promises and fail to pass HR 1 and its companion legislation, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA), the struggle will not be over but will take place under much more difficult conditions. The same states supporting voter suppression are also moving to restore Jim Crow era restrictions on the right to march and the right to protest. The battles in the streets will inevitably continue,

however, as will the electoral campaigns. The 2022 elections, like the projected re-election campaign of newly elected Georgia Senator Raphael Warnock, will be another test of the strength and determination of all those grassroots Georgia organizations that sprang up and expanded overnight in 2020.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

COVID-19 has taught us how disastrous it can be when government does not do its job to protect each and every person. The job of government, the values it supports, and how it executes its job is called governance. The nature of governance is revealed in the laws and budgets that a government body passes. The purpose of good governance is to meet the needs of the people.

Voter suppression, corporate bail-outs, massive police budgets, and anti-human, anti-nature legislation are characteristic of governance by a corporate dictatorship. The vast extension of corporate governance reveals a ruling class that is defending its interests against the interests of the people.

The fight for democracy is expressed first in the battle for the ballot, but actually extends to every aspect of life, at a time when human survival depends on using government as an instrument to meet basic needs. The right to vote is not just about political democracy, but economic democracy as well — using government to enact and implement an economic bill of rights. Corporations are forced to move toward fascist dictatorship because economic rights for people reduce their profits.

This battle is breaking out in the local governments across the country that provide many of the vital programs we recognize as public services, including transportation, public safety, public health, housing, schools, and human needs. Local governments fund the vast majority of infrastructure projects as well, with varying levels of state and federal

support: roads, buildings, bridges, and transportation projects. And significantly, local governments are where many new class political leaders are running for office and beginning to win positions.

However, since 2008, local governments all across the country have been bankrupted and broken by predatory Wall Street banks and austerity programs, based on the lie that America has no money. At the same time, local police budgets are often over 40 percent of the total city or county budgets. Funding the police acts as a veto over funding for basic needs. Good governance means defunding the police and investing in life-sustaining policies and institutions that make us safe. True democratic governance is not enforcing scarcity for the benefit of corporations. It is managing abundance through economic democracy and reconstruction.

While revolutionaries never stop explaining that the ultimate aim is a cooperative society, they ground all their teaching in the immediate battles of the people. Now is not the time for ideological differences. Ideological preconditions can only block and derail the revolutionary process that is shaking up America. Unity of action in the fight for people's basic needs is the foundation for the revolutionary movement of the future. Digital technology has made the ideological wars of the past centuries obsolete, no matter how hard the ruling class tries to revive and sustain them.

People of every creed and conviction have been displaced and expelled from the private property economy. Now is the time to bring them together, from all nationalities, religious and cultural backgrounds, political tendencies, and social identities, in practical struggles for practical demands. Revolution means embracing this movement, this powerful social force that is arising and participating in working out its aims and strategies in the fight for the future of life on earth. Winning the battle for the right to vote is a key part of this process. **RC**

Transform Health Care

Continued from page 1

tion, complicated online appointment requirements (even in the absence of internet), and the dearth of a trusted public health infrastructure. The nationally publicized death of Dr. Susan Moore, a Black physician, from COVID-19 was all about the racist dismissal of her symptoms, a common experience of Black and Latinx people interacting with the "medical, industrial complex." From bias to barriers to barring, a real public health system is not just about vaccines but a complete transformation to transparent, accurate information, free transportation, home care availability, community-root-

ed healthcare staff, toxic-free environments, and intentional equity.

The pandemic's beginnings and the summer uprisings revealed a growing rift in society. Humanity is at a threshold. The domination of private property, the inequality it breeds, and the State that protects it can no longer co-exist with human and planetary survival. The governance we seek is the abolition of a State where public health is no longer a form of control but a corridor to a caring society. The normal we build lies not in the past but in a future that embraces the truth that it really is all of us or none of us. **RC**

Our Revolutionary History, Today's Revolutionary Vision

In all of life, everything has a beginning, and an end. Revolution marks the time of transition from the dying of the old and the birth of the new. We are in such a revolutionary time. Human history has proceeded from one revolutionary stage to another. Down through the ages an oppressed and exploited humanity has fought for a vision of a world free from scarcity, exploitation and class domination. Now once again we are at an epochal crossroads.

Every society has a material foundation, an objective basis. This material foundation is fundamentally the way in which societies go about organizing the economic production that is necessary to obtain the necessities of life. When in some manner that economic foundation is disrupted, revolution ensues. Society must ultimately be reorganized on a new foundation.

But human beings are the only real agents of change. Everything depends upon the what they think and what they do. This is where the revolution is fought out. Yet human beings can go forward only on the basis of what the material, objective conditions provide.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1776

The American revolution of 1776 was one expression of the emergence of a new world-historical epoch, a new epoch of revolution. For over a thousand years the societies of Europe and across the globe were predominately agrarian societies, in which manual labor prevailed, and in which an agrarian aristocracy crowned a social hierarchy of being, culminating in the divine right of kings.

Yet out of these dark times new possibilities began to emerge. New means and ways of production and the development of world commerce and trade were being developed. The peasantry began to be uprooted, separated from the land, a propertyless mass in formation as a rising new proletariat. Scientific breakthroughs were being made, and the scientific method itself led to a new way of looking at the world. New ideas, new tools began to be introduced.

The conquest and colonization of the Americas was integral to the process of advancing the productive forces and the accumulation of wealth necessary to the launching of a new epoch, that destroyed the old agrarian societies and introduced a new mode of production and property. The native, Indigenous peoples were captured and sold into slavery. Millions of Africans were enslaved and sold to work in the fields of the Americas in what came to be a form of an agrarian capitalism. The "wretched of the earth" being created by the destruction of the agrarian economies of Europe were sold into indentured servitude in the new world of the Americas. It was all of these laboring, propertyless masses, exploited and

forced into one form of involuntary servitude or another, that were to become the new American working class.

In the medieval period, slavery was a common practice across the world, as it had been for millennia. But the development of the slave plantations of the Americas and the American South represented a new kind of political economy, a chattel slavery in which the slaves themselves were a commodity. This kind of slavery developed on the basis of capitalism, and white supremacy developed as a theory of racial inferiority based on skin color.

As slavery expanded and grew, abolitionist forces opposed to slavery developed right alongside slavery, and in opposition to it. Abolitionist societ-

A new epoch of social revolution is underway, to reorganize society to fulfill the ages-old yearnings of humanity to finally be free from all forms of exploitation and oppression.

ies flourished across Europe, as with the Quakers in the American colonies. "Liberty, equality, fraternity" became the clarion call of the French Revolution.

In 1775 the Darien Scots in south Georgia were petitioning the leaders of the Revolution of 1776 to abolish slavery, at the same time that the slaveholding leaders of the Georgia delegation refused to sign the Declaration of Independence unless an anti-slavery provision was removed.

Independence meant freedom from the restraints of a feudal monarchy. It was part of the shift from an agrarian to an industrial society, but it meant that the form of rule had to shift as well, from monarchy to democracy, albeit a bourgeois democracy. Founded on the principle, "All men are created equal," it did not include slaves or Native Americans or women or poor whites. It was really a democracy founded on the equality of white men of property.

Yet it was a social revolution that involved the whole of society, drawing in laboring and exploited sections of a developing working class who themselves had a stake in the revolution and who were fighting in their own interests. By 1760 there were eighteen uprisings aimed at overthrowing colonial governments. There were six Black rebellions, 40 riots. The city of Boston in 1765 was full of working-class anger. There was a growing recognition that something had to be

done to persuade the workers to deflect their anger toward England, to join the revolutionary cause. Free Black men and women and slaves did join the revolution; more than 5,000 joined the American forces. Crispus Attucks was one of the first to give his life during the Boston Massacre in 1770. They were fighting for emancipation and equality, as did other class forces who united behind the cause of independence and a vision of emancipation and freedom.

THE CIVIL WAR

On November 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln spoke on the battlefield at Gettysburg and acknowledged the "unfinished work" of the American revolution. The cause of independence was

attained, but the vision of emancipation and freedom to pursue life, liberty and happiness remained to be fought out another day. It became the cause of the Civil War, what Lincoln described as "a new birth of freedom."

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ers, both Black and white, were bound to the land in a sharecropping system which kept the South mired in an agrarian economy. A rigid segregation was imposed, reinforced by a theory of racial inferiority that bordered on the pathological. The 1960s in the South saw the final completion of the industrial revolution. Technologies were developed in the 1940s that allowed for the mechanization of Southern agriculture, and the opening up of the South to industrialization and urbanization followed. The sharecropping system ended, and the Southern workers fled the farms for the factories of the North and the South. The Southern workers became fully integrated into the industrial workforce. The Civil Rights struggles for equality and freedom resulted in the restoration of voting rights and civil rights. A de jure Reconstruction had been obtained. The transition from labor enchained to the "free" labor of wage-slavery was completed.

ON THE EDGE OF HISTORY

Now, something profoundly new is happening. Now, a new technology that replaces and displaces human labor is eliminating wage-labor and destroying the capitalist system. Electronics, automation, computerized and robotic technology introduces an absolute antagonism into the material base of society. A new epoch of social revolution is underway, but this time it is a revolution to reorganize society on a new foundation, and the fulfillment of the ages-old yearnings of humanity to finally be free from all forms of exploitation and oppression.

Even as society is wracked with instability and crisis we see the vast polarization of wealth and poverty, and for the first time in human history, great abundance.

Today scarcity is imposed by the ruling class. Private property is standing in the way of the distribution of abundance according to need. We stand on the edge of being able to create a truly human history for the first time. Freed from want and exploitation, we will no longer have to struggle about getting a house, we will no longer have to worry about getting food, no longer worry about getting an education. The age-old divisions of white supremacy employed by the ruling class will no longer have a hold on us.

In this our revolutionary time, the cause and the vision of what has propelled the American revolutionary process is realized. Our cause – the abolition of private property. The vision of the toiling masses of the revolution of 1776 for a new America is our vision – what they envisioned as "happiness." The vast movement underway today to obtain the basics of life is in reality a movement to overturn the system of class exploitation forever. This is our American revolutionary moment. **RC**