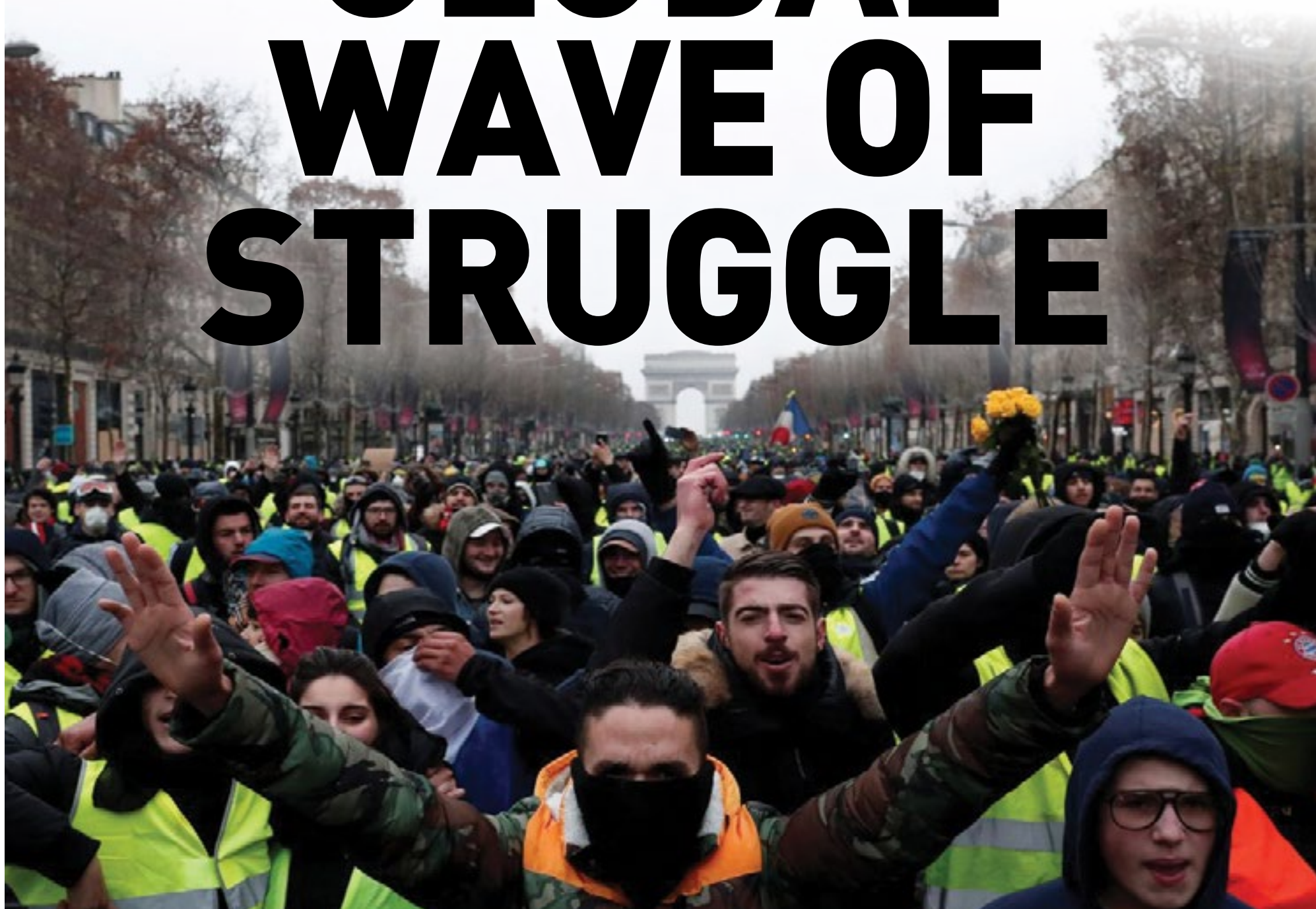


SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

ISSUE #59 • DECEMBER-JANUARY 2019-2020
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GLOBAL WAVE OF STRUGGLE



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WHAT WE STAND FOR

FIGHTING FOR THE 99%

- ✦ Raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, as a step toward a living wage for all.
- ✦ Free, high quality public education for all from pre-school through college. Full funding for schools to dramatically lower student-teacher ratios. Stop the focus on high stakes testing and the drive to privatize public education.
- ✦ Free, high quality health care for all. Replace the failed for-profit insurance companies with a publicly funded single-payer system as a step towards fully socialized medicine.
- ✦ No budget cuts to education and social services! Full funding for all community needs. A major increase in taxes on the rich and big business, not working people.
- ✦ Create living-wage union jobs for all the unemployed through public works programs to develop mass transit, renewable energy, infrastructure, health care, education, and affordable housing.
- ✦ For rent control combined with massive public investment in affordable housing.
- ✦ A guaranteed decent pension for all. No cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid!
- ✦ A minimum guaranteed weekly income of \$600/week for the unemployed, disabled, stay-at-home parents, the elderly, and others unable to work.
- ✦ Repeal all anti-union laws like Taft-Hartley. For democratic unions run by the rank-and-file to fight for better pay, working conditions, and social services. Full-time union officials should be regularly elected and receive the average wage of those they represent.
- ✦ No more layoffs! Take bankrupt and failing companies into public ownership.
- ✦ Break the power of Wall Street! For public ownership and democratic control of the major banks.
- ✦ Shorten the workweek with no loss in pay and benefits; share out the work with the unemployed and create new jobs.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- ✦ Fight climate change. Massive public investment in renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies to rapidly replace fossil fuels.
- ✦ A major expansion of public transportation to provide low fare, high-speed, and accessible transit.
- ✦ Democratic public ownership of the big energy companies, retooling them for socially necessary green production. A "Just Transition" for all workers in polluting industries with guaranteed re-training and new living-wage jobs.

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

- ✦ Fight discrimination based on race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, and all other forms of prejudice. Equal pay for equal work.
- ✦ Black Lives Matter! Build a mass movement against police brutality and the institutional racism of the criminal justice system. Invest

in rehabilitation, job training, and living-wage jobs, not prisons! Abolish the death penalty.

- ✦ Defend immigrant rights! Immediate, unconditional legalization and equal rights for all undocumented immigrants.
- ✦ Fight sexual harassment, violence against women, and all forms of sexism.
- ✦ Defend a woman's right to choose whether and when to have children. For a publicly funded, single-payer health care system with free reproductive services, including all forms of birth control and safe, accessible abortions. Comprehensive sex education. At least 12 weeks of paid family leave for all. For universal, high quality, affordable and publicly run child care.
- ✦ Fight discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ community, and all forms of homophobia and transphobia.

MONEY FOR JOBS AND EDUCATION, NOT WAR

- ✦ End the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. Bring all the troops home now!
- ✦ Slash the military budget. No drones. Shut down Guantanamo.
- ✦ Repeal the Patriot Act, NDAA, and all other attacks on democratic rights.

BREAK WITH THE TWO PARTIES OF BIG BUSINESS

- ✦ For a mass workers party drawing together workers, young people and activists from environmental, civil rights, and women's campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the corporate parties.
- ✦ Unions and other social movement organizations should stop funding and supporting the Democratic and Republican Parties and instead organize independent left-wing, anti-corporate candidates and coalitions as a first step toward building a workers' party.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- ✦ Capitalism produces poverty, inequality, environmental destruction, and war. We need an international struggle against this failed system. No to corporate "free trade" agreements, which mean job losses and a race to the bottom for workers and the environment.
- ✦ Solidarity with the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples internationally: An injury to one is an injury to all.
- ✦ Take into public ownership the top 500 corporations and banks that dominate the U.S. economy. Run them under the democratic management of elected representatives of the workers and the broader public. Compensation to be paid on the basis of proven need to small investors, not millionaires.
- ✦ A democratic socialist plan for the economy based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people and the environment. For a socialist United States and a socialist world.

WHY I JOINED SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

I reached socialist conclusions while struggling to reconcile the fact that we've understood the climate crisis for decades, yet have done little to prevent it. A little research showed that our supposed "solutions" such as the Kyoto Protocol weren't solutions at all, simply international agreements that experts knew wouldn't be implemented, functioning solely to pacify the masses. The massive failure of the UN's COP25, dubbed "COP-OUT 25," most recently demonstrates this. I've realized that the capitalist answer to this crisis is to either pretend that the market will intervene with the creation of miracle technologies allowing for continued growth, or, more alarmingly, to retreat into total apathy.

My family and friends who see no alternative to capitalism thus see no alternative to total environmental collapse. They speak in parables about justice being served by the eventual demise of humanity, a rationale for what they see as the inevitable plunge into barbarism that will oversee the destruction of the planet.

It's our moral imperative not to succumb to despair - but to do so, we need a reasonable alternative for the future. Apathy and hopelessness breeds because the capitalist economy, and by extension the capitalist leaders perpetuating it, doesn't have answers. They tell us to simply recycle, even as our global recycling system implodes in front of our eyes. They tell us that Obama signed the Paris Accord, so please, by god, don't organize! The Green New Deal is just unreasonable! As if it isn't the only barely reasonable response currently on the table.

The fight for socialism is the fight for a democratically controlled economy, with collective responsibility over production - this extends to collective stewardship over the conversion of natural environments - forests, plains, deltas - into resources. If there's a



August Easton-Calabria Boston, MA

future for humans on this planet, we cannot allow the continued economic dictatorship of the few and powerful; not only does that spell the enslavement of the working class, but the enslavement, and eventual destruction, of our natural world.

In Socialist Alternative I saw people coming together to fight for a fundamentally different way of being; one that doesn't conflict with the values instilled in me when I was young - to be kind and respectful, to do meaningful, honest work, to care for our home. I'm a socialist because it's my logical alternative to apathy, an apathy that is the direct consequence of the false narrative that capitalism is the best we've got. We have nothing but a better world to win. ✦

Amazon Comes to NYC: This Time Without \$3 Bil. in Subsidies

Anthony D'Amico

"\$0.00 in public subsidies." That's how much Amazon is getting from New York City to bring thousands of new jobs here, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez triumphantly declared to supporters on December 9. It is a rapid turnabout for Amazon, who earlier this year nearly extorted a \$3 billion government handout from New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio, all in order to bring a proposed 25,000 jobs over 10 years to Long Island City, Queens. "That's what happens when we stand together," AOC added, "even against the most powerful corporations in the world."

Amazon's newly announced plans include leasing 335,000 square feet of Hudson Yards office space for 1,500 employees, more than twice as many jobs as their year-one projections for HQ2's LIC campus. Amazon's desire to locate in NYC was never fully about the subsidies. As we said at the time, it was about proximity to Wall Street and the financial hub of the U.S. The odds are good that Amazon will bring thousand more jobs to

NYC in the coming years. In similar moves, Google has recently added 20,000 jobs in New York, while Facebook plans to lease 700,000 square feet not far from Amazon's digs at 410 Tenth Avenue. Quickly, Big Tech companies are becoming the city's largest corporate tenants, alongside financial firms and banks like JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America.


Amazon's decision demonstrates AOC's remarkable impact as an elected official to amplify the community groups, progressive unions, and socialists who pushed back against Amazon's dodgy deal in 2018-19.

We are proud to be part of the global movement against the untrammelled power of corporate behemoths. Together, we defeated Amazon in Seattle and NYC - saving taxpayers \$3 billion in subsidies. AOC and Sawant, along with a growing layer of activists and left elected officials, are helping build the resistance to the power of big money. Together, socialists are fighting to uplift the people who make New York run and force back the bosses and Bezos. ✦


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Getting Organized to Build the Movement for Socialism

How Can Bernie Win?

Bryan Koulouris

Bernie Sanders is experiencing a surge in the polls; he's ahead in New Hampshire (Emerson College poll, 11/26/2019) and California (LA Times, 12/5/2019) while he is consistently crushing all other candidates among young people (CNN, 12/8/2019). All of this is despite a media blackout and recent negative campaigning by both Obama and the Clintons.

Bernie's call for a Green New Deal, tuition-free college, and Medicare for All excites millions of people across the country. His speeches and slogans go even further than his 2016 campaign when he called for a "political revolution against the billionaire class." Now, Sanders is saying that "billionaires shouldn't exist" while even talking about a "class war" and the need for a "government of the working class."

The echo that Sanders is getting reflects increasing anger at the injustices of capitalism. In 2018, more workers went on strike than in any year since 1986. The strike wave is continuing with union members taking action against low pay, the cuts to public education, and all the concessions made to the bosses in the past. Young people across the world are walking out of school demanding environmental justice with the slogan "system change not climate change." Around the globe, we see mass uprisings, determined ongoing protests and general strikes against oppression and exploitation (see page 6). Tens of thousands of young people are getting

organized as socialists.

At the same time, we should not underestimate what we're up against. The corporate-controlled media is now "blacking out" Bernie and will eventually move to viscerously attack his campaign if it continues to gain momentum. The billionaires will set up Super PACs of unlimited funds to spread misinformation. The Democratic Party establishment will use every undemocratic dirty trick in the book to try to block his nomination if needed. And that's just to get the nomination, even before a head-on collision with the racist, sexist, reactionary "Predator in Chief."

The Other Players in the Field

The Democratic Party establishment is struggling to find their answer to both Bernie and Elizabeth Warren. While virtually the entire ruling class thinks another four years of Trump would be preferable to Sanders, Warren is more acceptable to them than Bernie. Nevertheless, even her proposed wealth tax is too much for many on Wall Street. It would be a nightmare situation for the billionaires to see the two front-runners in the primaries both be candidates who criticize Wall Street and are broadly seen on "the left."

Warren is trying to combine her credentials as a critic of Wall Street with an attempt to appeal to leaders of the Democratic Party. She has recently backed down on Medicare for All, and importantly she doesn't talk about building movements like Sanders. Warren is



currently not taking money from corporate donors, but has indicated she would be willing to get funding from the billionaire class in a general election. Sanders supporters need to patiently explain to those voters looking to Warren that her approach won't win far-reaching change and will be inadequate to challenge Trump and his base.

The pro-corporate leadership of the Democratic Party has not found their chosen candidate yet. Kamala Harris was once seen as a viable candidate from the establishment who could pose left and reference her identity as a woman of color, but she is now out of the race along with Beto O'Rourke who was once seen as an establishment "rising star." Joe Biden, despite his lead in some polls, seems to be able to do nothing right on the campaign trail and is increasingly seen as out-of-touch. The establishment is panicking, and they've thrown new horses into the race at this late stage.

Despite spending millions of his own money on slick ads that pop up everywhere, voters correctly see Michael Bloomberg for what he is: another billionaire looking for more power. Former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick isn't gaining traction. This may leave the establishment with Mayor Pete Buttigieg as a key option which isn't a position they expected to find themselves in (see page 8).

Lessons from 2016 and Britain

The 2016 elections show us that boring corporate Democrats have no clear strategy to defeat Trump. Having been promised "hope" and "change" in the Obama years, young people and many workers were disappointed at bank bailouts, ongoing war, and record levels of deportations. Around the world, the establishment parties are losing authority, and right-wing populists are gaining

ground when the left isn't well-organized or politically clear enough to pose an alternative to capitalism.

In 2016, Bernie made the mistake of uncritically backing the failed Hillary Clinton campaign. Socialist Alternative and Kshama Sawant petitioned for Bernie to "run all the way to November" and build a new party that could defeat Trump. We gathered over 130,000 signatures, but Bernie unfortunately did not agree with us. Bernie running all the way in 2016 could have potentially defeated Trump at the ballot box. Even if we weren't successful in the 2016 election, a new party could have given workers and young people an organizing center to fight back against Trump, the right wing, and the system that brings them into being.

With the recent election in Britain of Conservative Boris Johnson against Labour's Jeremy Corbyn, the establishment is claiming that Corbyn couldn't win because he was "too radical" and are using this to say Bernie can't beat Trump. The opposite is true. One of Corbyn's biggest mistakes was that he was unwilling to wage a struggle against the pro-business wing of his party that undermined him at every phase. Labour's right wing, under Tony Blair, enthusiastically joined George Bush's drive to war in Iraq and imposed savage budget cuts to social services across Britain, but Corbyn constantly compromised with them and refused to organize his supporters into a movement to oppose both the Conservatives and the Labour right. When the media accused Corbyn of being "unfit to govern" or "anti-Semitic," he was left without an organized force to counter this, and he had already given ground to these arguments within his own party. Now, in addition to Trump in the U.S., we have a right-wing

continued on p. 11

Socialist Alternative is Going "All Out" for this Campaign!

Socialist Alternative is building the Sanders campaign across the country, helping to set up labor, community, and campus groups to fight for a revolution against the billionaire class. We will be hosting doorknocking, political discussions at "debate watch" parties, and bringing forward discussions in our workplaces and unions about the Sanders campaign and the path to victory. We bring with us considerable recent experience in winning substantial victories for working people that can help our broader movement defeat Trump and the ruling class.

In November, Socialist Alternative scored a huge victory in defeating Jeff Bezos, the richest man in the world, who tried to unseat our socialist city councilmember in Seattle, Kshama Sawant. We fought back against not only Amazon executives, other corporations, and rich Republicans, but also against the Democratic Party establishment and a section of conservative labor leaders in order to

win re-election.

Unlike in most other electoral campaigns, hundreds of young people facing a dead-end future under capitalism got active to support Kshama Sawant because of our socialist approach. Now we will aim to link the Sanders campaign to mobilizing young people and workers into action against the injustices we face every day with skyrocketing rents, racist police, inadequate social services, and record levels of inequality.

We believe that the Sanders campaign should develop democratic structures to fully engage the tens of thousands of young and working people who want to get involved. This would be a key step towards the new party we need. Working people have the potential power to shut down this system and change society here and around the world. Let's get organized and fight for a socialist future! Join Socialist Alternative today! ✪

Tax Amazon: It's Time to Reignite the Fight for Social Housing

Seattle Councilmember Kshama Sawant



The history of American capitalism is full of corporate bullying, threats, and even violence against working people when we stand up for our rights.

Yet in spite of Amazon's all-out, attempted hostile corporate takeover of Seattle City Hall this year, working people just beat the richest man in the world by running perhaps the strongest grassroots campaign ever in our city. *When we fight, we can win.*

Going into next year, we should take another page from the book of successful working-class struggle: *we need to strike while the iron is hot.*

Most of the time, the institutions of capitalism ensure that the balance of political power is on the side of the super rich, because they own industry, much of the media, and most politicians.

So when working people have momentum on our side, we need to fully seize on it.

We have both an opportunity and a responsibility. According to the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force, King County needs 244,000 additional affordable homes by 2040 to address the Seattle area's deep housing crisis.

We cannot afford to accept the broken status quo.

That is why on January 13, Socialist Alternative and I, along with other progressive, renters' rights, labor, and socialist organizations and activists, will be kicking off the 2020 Tax Amazon struggle with a rally at Washington Hall. This will be combined with the inauguration to my third term on the City Council, where Sara Nelson, International President of the American Flight Attendants Association, will be swearing me in.

At that event, we will be re-launching Tax Amazon as a grassroots organization to fight for a strong tax on Seattle's biggest businesses to fund social housing.

Sara Nelson played a leading role in defeating President Trump's anti-immigrant government shutdown at the start of 2019. By preparing the ground for a general strike, organized flight attendants and air traffic controllers scared Trump and the GOP into submission.

In her must-read article in *Jacobin* earlier this year, Sara Nelson noted, "People think power is a limited resource, but using power builds power. Once workers get a taste of our power, we will not settle for a bad deal. And we won't stand by while someone else gets screwed, either."

I believe this speaks directly to the kind

of solidarity and fighting strategy that will be needed this year in our struggle to tax big business.

Lessons from 2018

In 2018, our movement had a modest and well-founded mission when it initiated the Amazon Tax on our city's biggest businesses: to urgently begin to address one of the nation's worst affordable housing and homelessness crises.

Our state and city also have the nation's most regressive tax system, where working and middle-class people carry the overwhelming burden while the corporate elite enjoy a virtual tax haven.

Yet this didn't stop Jeff Bezos from threatening to move 7,000 jobs out of our city and going all out to avoid paying even a small part of Amazon's fair share in taxes.

Over the same period, Amazon executives met with city governments all over the country trying to extract the maximum in corporate blood money in exchange for HQ2, while working people and activists fought back. Alongside this, Amazon workers have moved into struggle, from joining the Climate Strikes to warehouse workers fighting to organize in the face of horrific conditions to tech worker struggles like #TechWontBuildIt.

I fully agree with what Bernie Sanders said earlier this year: "If there is going to be class warfare in this country, it's about time the working class won that war."

The Amazon Tax is a historic opportunity to win a battle in that war, but first we need to get organized. And we must recognize up front: Amazon and the real estate lobby will fight us tooth and nail every step of the way.

A Mandate for Progressive Taxation

Seattle's election results represent a mandate for taxing big business for vital services. Amazon's candidates were roundly defeated and voters instead chose to elect a more progressive Council. A recent poll showed that an overwhelming majority of Seattle voters – 75% – now support taxing big business.

People are increasingly rejecting supply-side arguments and looking for real solutions. Our movement must emphasize the need for a strong Amazon Tax to fund a major expansion of social housing – publicly-owned, high-quality, permanently affordable rental homes. Like rent control, social housing has played a key role in providing a lifeline of housing stability and affordability where it has been won.

But big business will fiercely oppose our efforts.

Some newly elected or re-elected Councilmembers are already signalling their



reluctance to lead on this issue, including Andrew Lewis and Alex Pedersen, who have indicated they do not support the tax.

Even progressive Councilmember Lisa Herbold, who was re-elected over her Amazon-backed opponent, said she wasn't necessarily prepared to support the tax "out of the gate in 2020" and that perhaps it should be put on the ballot. While a ballot initiative may well be exactly what happens, I don't think Councilmembers elected on a progressive mandate should pass the buck, and my office has already begun preparing an Amazon Tax ordinance.

Our movement can't afford to put its faith in the political establishment. Working people need to prepare to take the lead ourselves.

How the \$15 Minimum Wage Was Won

We can look to the example of the \$15 minimum wage fight in Seattle for how we can win this year.

It took a movement to win \$15.

In January of 2014, when I first took office as Seattle's socialist City Councilmember, Socialist Alternative and I launched 15 Now.

We started with a rally, then held a series of organizing conferences, built neighborhood action groups, and marched for \$15 an hour. We ramped up toward our 15 Now activist conference while we prepared a ballot measure to take to the November election, if necessary.

At that time, our ballot measure was an "insurance policy." If the Council did pass a strong \$15 ordinance, we would not turn in the signatures we had gathered to trigger our ballot measure. But if it didn't, 15 Now was prepared to take \$15 directly to voters in

November.

It worked. And the rest is history, as they say.

On June 5, 2014, the Council passed the historic citywide ordinance on \$15 an hour under pressure from our ballot measure and a broad coalition of labour unions, progressive groups, and activists. Business leaders later commented that they would never have agreed to the ordinance had it not been for fear of a stronger \$15 being passed by voters.

A New Decade, a New Era of Class Struggle

I believe there is a similar momentum now for the Amazon Tax as there was for \$15, following elections where each became the defining issue.

However, we should have no illusions that any promises from big business will hold. Our movement again needs to be prepared to go all the way to the November ballot.

After our Tax Amazon launch rally January 13 we will be holding a second event on January 25, and an activist conference like the one we organized for 15 Now, so that our movement can come together to democratically discuss and decide strategy, including the potential ballot initiative, what it should look like, and how the tax can best be used.

Our goal should be to build the broadest possible grassroots struggle to win a strong Amazon Tax, without limiting ourselves to what is acceptable to the political establishment.

Together, let's start 2020 with a bang and begin a new decade of working-class power. We can again set a historic example in Seattle and inspire ordinary people everywhere. ✪

Youth Continue Climate Strikes

Joshua Koritz

Collins Dictionary has declared “climate strike” as the word of 2019. It’s no surprise considering that millions of people, overwhelmingly young, have participated worldwide in the various climate strikes. The recent November 29 - December 6 strikes had smaller attendance than the millions who participated in September, but the determination has remained strong.

Teenagers are leading and organizing this movement worldwide. While far more resources were poured into national organizing in September, the November-December strike was significant for the breadth of actions that took place. There were demonstrations in nearly every city in the U.S. - from Eugene, Oregon to Gainesville, Florida, and from Boston to Los Angeles. At the protest in Des Moines, Iowa, Bernie Sanders was welcomed to the stage as the only candidate that young climate strikers see as willing to take immediate action.

The mood at the November-December climate strikes was determined, but struck desperate notes. While pointing out that climate change is a fact and bemoaning the current president’s denial of it, the urgency of action was central. Youth everywhere are ravenously searching for ideas and methods that can succeed where the status quo has not. They are increasingly impatient toward the U.S. two-party system and politics as usual.

The search for new ideas has led to putting demands on all levels of governments, shaming corporations and banks, calling for



High school and middle school students participate in the NYC climate strike on December 6.

a Green New Deal, and a relentless criticism of all who pay lip service to the movement. It is no surprise then that the leaders of the U.S. Youth Climate Strike have stepped forward and endorsed Bernie Sanders, citing his Green New Deal plans and his insistence on starting immediately.

In New York City, nearly one thousand high school students marched around City Hall demanding that the city council take environmental action. Afterwards they spoke

about the need for action and to get organized. At the end of their rally, Senator Chuck Schumer spoke, getting a skeptical response that included a portion of the crowd chanting “Green New Deal” during his speech. This is just a further example of the audacity epitomized by teenagers like Greta Thunberg and many others, and their unwillingness to accept the normal platitudes of corporate politicians in the Democratic or Republican Parties.

To win a future in which a just transition to renewable energy and a Green New Deal saves the planet for humanity, further steps must be taken. The next climate strike is planned for Earth Day in April, but we can’t wait that long – further demonstrations should be called nationally and internationally, linking up with organized labor and calling on them to take real action. 🌱

Will Capitalism Make Us Go Hungry?

Keely Mullen

Every year around the same time, the Southeast of the U.S. gets pummeled by hurricanes and the West Coast bursts into a fit of wildfires. Extreme weather events are the most jarring reminder of the ongoing climate disaster. Between 2 and 3 degrees of global warming -- a level the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) now says will be almost impossible to avoid -- will cause the U.S. to see 16 times the amount of damage from wildfires than we experience today. Between 30 to 72 million people living on the coasts will be displaced every year. That means lives and homes lost, trees burned to a crisp, entire cities flooded, and the very soil we depend on to grow our food degraded.

Climate change has already tremendously interrupted global food supply. Soil is being lost between 10 and 100 times faster than it is forming, and with each degree of warming the damage to existing crops increases exponentially. This is because climate change, rather than being a steady march

toward “something worse,” is a cascading crisis whose effects feed into one another with intensity. Worse wildfires means more carbon in the atmosphere, more carbon in the atmosphere means worse wildfires. This same general loop can be applied to almost every component of climate change.

With increasing extreme weather events, land will become less and less suitable to grow vital crops. We are already losing soy and corn fields in the midwest, citrus orchards in Florida and Georgia, and apple orchards in Wisconsin and Michigan. Water-intensive livestock operations the world over are at risk. For every degree of warming, crop yields are projected to decline by over 10%.

Beyond just the availability of food, the nutritional value of the food we grow now is rapidly declining. Since 1950 the nutritional value of our crops has declined by a third -- everything we eat takes on more the qualities of “fast food.” Ironically, in the context of depleting crops, you need to eat more to meet your daily needs. At just 2-3 degrees of global warming, 1.4 billion people could face a dramatic decline in iron, leading to a

potential global anemia epidemic.

In an alarming 2014 statement -- when scientists’ predictions about the rate of climate change acceleration were far more optimistic -- the IPCC reported that by the middle of this century the world may reach “a threshold of global warming beyond which current agricultural practices can no longer support large human civilizations.”

We Need Democratic Planning

Right now, we have enough food for everyone on earth and yet every night nearly one billion people will go to sleep hungry. We produce more food than we need, waste 25-30% of it, and still there is a crisis of world hunger. On the basis of capitalism, where food is produced for profit rather than need, these deep contradictions are inevitable.

Big agriculture corporations’ only objective is to maximize their profit. This means using synthetic fertilizers and pesticides to increase crop yield. It means pumping livestock so full of hormones that their legs can’t even support their weight.

In the long run, these big agriculture

corporations reap what they sow. These disturbing practices have environmental ripple effects that make the land less and less able to grow crops. It is the practices they use to produce more food than we need that could make us all go hungry. For all of humanity, the capitalists’ desire to make a buck today at the expense of enough to eat tomorrow will have dire consequences.

Sustaining our global food supply requires massively reducing the amount of land currently used for livestock and cattle, and therefore decreasing our dependence on meat, reversing decades of land degradation, and dramatically reducing food waste. It will also require extensive research into new sustainable ways to grow crops. Achieving this on the basis of capitalism would require a constant and unrelenting struggle against the super rich who currently control the food industry. At that rate, it would almost certainly be too little too late. We need to entirely do away with capitalism and replace it with a system and society that is democratically planned. 🌱

Young People and Workers Revolt Against Neoliberalism

2019: A Turning Point

Per-Ake Westerlund,
member of Rättvisepartiet
Socialisterna in Sweden

2019 marked a definite political turning point globally. Particularly in the final months, we have seen mass struggles and general strikes around the world with revolutionary characteristics. This is a mass explosion, a result of accumulated anger and discontent against those in power; their neoliberalism and lack of democracy. These protests have also featured some basic elements of a socialist struggle – most notably the strength of the working class and an instinctive internationalism.

At the same time, governments, dictators, and generals demonstrated that the ruling class will not step down voluntarily. In a number of countries, armed counter-revolution and brutal repression have been deployed against peaceful demonstrations and young activists.

Most governments around the world are silent about the violence of the counter-revolution, or are calling for “calm.” The news media talks about “violent clashes” between state forces and demonstrators. In fact, in every case “violence” means attacks by heavily armed counter-revolutionary state forces, while those protesters try to defend themselves. In Bolivia, more than 30 people have been killed by state forces in a two week period, eight of them in a massacre in El Alto on November 19.

For the key imperialist powers, these events are a sharp warning of the weaknesses of their global capitalist system. This wave of protests takes place at the same time as a sharp increase in inter-imperialist conflicts, a likely downturn in the world economy and a deepening climate crisis.

And the protests are still spreading. In late

November, Iran and Colombia became the most recent arenas for mass protests. In Iran, following another drastic price hike on fuel, protests took place in over 100 cities. The economic burden on workers and the poor was immediately linked to the theocratic dictatorship. The “Supreme Leader” Khamenei went on television to condemn the protests, claiming the extra income from fuel price hikes was destined for the poorest. The response was increased anger, including burning pictures of Khamenei. More than 300 have been killed by state forces. In Colombia, the general strike on November 21, with 250,000 on street demonstrations, was followed by a second general strike on December 3, against privatizations and cuts in pensions. The state answered with a curfew in Bogota and a heavy police presence.

Now Macron in France is facing a massive strike wave against his regime’s attempt to undermine the pension system which is one of the key post-World War II gains of the French working class. This began on December 5, with up to 1.5 million marching in the streets. A strike wave is also developing in Finland.

Comparisons with 2011

Commentators have made historical comparisons with 1848 and 1968, when revolutionary and pre-revolutionary struggles spread to many countries. Comparisons have also been made with 2011, when a wave of revolutionary struggles in North Africa and the Middle East overthrew Mubarak in Egypt and Ben Ali in Tunisia. Now, nine years later, the wave of protests is not confined to one region, but global in scope, and with clearer social demands: for jobs, water, electricity etc.

Politically, the masses have also drawn conclusions that regime change is not enough. In

Sudan, the lessons of the Egyptian revolution which ended with al-Sisi establishing a new dictatorship, have led the masses to continue their mobilizations after al-Bashir was overthrown.

Compared to 2011 and other protests in recent years, the struggles of 2019 are much more long-lasting. Protests in February in Haiti and June in Hong Kong are still ongoing. Lebanon’s “October revolution” forced Prime Minister Hariri to resign after two weeks, but has continued through his resignation. In mid-November, bank workers were on indefinite strike, roads were blocked around the country and state buildings were blocked by protests. Algeria has seen mass demonstrations every Friday, which did not stop after Bouteflika was forced to resign, with “New Revolution” as a frequently-used slogan.

Most of the protests have seen youth and women in leading roles, without question inspired by the youthful climate strikes and the global women’s and feminist movement. 7.6 million people participated in the climate strikes in September, with an increasing understanding about the need for a movement for drastic social change. The feminist strikes and movements also have an international character and make use of the strike as a weapon.

Where the working class has taken decisive action with general strikes and strike waves, the balance of forces have been made very clear – the isolated small elite versus the majority of workers and poor. This has also underlined the economic and collective role of the working class, the force that can achieve a socialist transformation of society.

The movements are combining many issues: economic hardship and lack of democracy with the oppression of women and environmental degradation. This was made clear by the movement in Indonesia at the end of September. Student protests at over 300 universities were triggered by a bill making sex illegal outside of marriage, directed against LGBTQ+ people, but the protests also attacked corruption and the destruction of rain forests.

“Fun and Exciting”

Bourgeois “experts” are unable to explain this global political moment. Bloomberg stresses that these are not working-class protests, but rather “consumers” reacting against a rise in the cost of fuel, taxes, or travel costs. This totally underestimates the strong political demands of the movements, although in most countries a strong, organized and unified workers’

movement remains to be built.

The Economist magazine says “The search for a unifying theme is pointless,” stating protests can be “more exciting and even more fun than the drudging daily life,” and warns that “solidarity becomes fashion.” This, of course, explains nothing: why do the protests take place now and why do more people not always enjoy this kind of “fun”?

Marxists consider and analyze both the clear common denominators, the strengths and weaknesses of these movements, as well as the different forces of counter-revolution. Of course, there are national peculiarities, but also many common features.

What is Behind the Explosive Anger?

This is a global turning point, created by the deep political and economic crises of capitalism, its blind alleys and decay. Politically, we see the ruling class relying on right-wing populism and nationalism, in an increasingly parasitic economic system. They have no way out.

Who are these mass protests directed against? What is behind the explosive anger?

1. There is extreme hatred against governments and political parties. In Lebanon, the dominant slogan is “all must go.” In Iraq, the movement wants to ban all existing parties from stand in coming elections, including Muqtada al-Sadr’s movement that was able to divert previous protests. Students in Baghdad displayed a banner with “No politics, no parties, this is a student awakening.” In Chile, people on the streets shout “Away with all thieves.”
2. This hatred is based on decades of neoliberalism and shrinking living standards, and the prospect of no future. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) advises further neoliberalism through reducing state subsidies. This triggered the revolts in Sudan and Ecuador. In Lebanon, 50% of state spending goes to debt payments. New austerity was also the trigger in Haiti, Chile, Iran, Uganda, and other countries. It’s a question of time until it spreads further. This is linked to the extreme rise in inequality.

Strikes and Street Protest

The struggles show many common and important features.

1. Enormous peaceful demonstrations were the starting point in many countries. Two million marched in Hong Kong in June (with a population of 7.3 million), over one million each in Chile and Lebanon, and several hundred thousand in Tahrir square in Baghdad. In most cases, the protests have not been only in the capitals or big cities, but spread over entire



Riot police used excessive force against protestors in Ecuador.



Protestors march in Hong Kong.

- countries.
2. General strikes have been decisive in overthrowing and shaking regimes. 2019 started with the large general strike in India (150 million), and continued with Tunisia, Brazil, and Argentina. This autumn has seen general strikes in Ecuador, Chile (twice), Lebanon, Catalonia, and Colombia, plus citywide strikes in Rome and Milan. Iraq has seen big strikes of teachers, dock workers, medical doctors, and more.
 3. The struggle has developed creative methods of struggle and points toward a new society. Baghdad's Tahrir square has taken up the tradition from its Egyptian namesake in the Arab Spring, with a hospital tent, free transport, and even a daily paper being produced. Ecuador saw the development of people's assemblies and Chile has also seen local organizing assemblies.
 4. Sectarian division has been overcome by common struggle, a feature typical in revolutionary struggles. In Lebanon, Shia and Sunni Muslims struggle alongside Christians. In Iraq, Shia and Sunni also work together, with the struggle spreading to Sunni areas in the north of the country by the end of November.
 5. Internationalism is clear, with the solidarity statement from the masses in Iraq to the protests in Iran, as well as the huge demonstration in Buenos Aires against the coup in Bolivia.

Victories and Complications

The movements have won big victories and concessions. Longstanding dictators in Sudan and Algeria have been overthrown, the government in Ecuador fled the capital, ministers have resigned in Lebanon, Chile, and Iraq. In Chile, President Pinera first claimed the country was "at war" against the protests, then had to "apologize" and reverse all the measures

that initially triggered the movement. Similarly in France, Macron was forced to retreat on fuel prices and increase the minimum wage as a response to the "Yellow Vest" protests last year. In most cases, the protests have continued after these concessions.

Consciousness can take leaps forward based on the experience of struggles. This process has begun but, in the main, the mass struggles lack the organization and leadership necessary to point the way to the socialist transformation of society. No workers' or left parties capable of this task have developed so far. The new left parties formed in the past period have been volatile and politically weak.

The comparisons with 1968 show how far the labor movement – workers parties and trade unions – has retreated in terms of its active base. However, this also means that Stalinist "communist" parties and social democracy have less possibilities to block and divert the struggles as they did back then.

Counter Revolution

This autumn has also shown that the capitalist class does not hesitate to use the most brutal counter-revolutionary repression in order to stay in power. They prefer other, more peaceful, means but are prepared to use violence when necessary.

In Bolivia, there was a military coup, with the support of U.S. imperialism and the Brazilian government under Bolsonaro. The new "president" Anez was "elected" by less than a third of parliament.

More than 300 have been killed and 15,000 wounded in Iraq in the last month. Two hundred eighty-five people have been shot in the eyes in Chile. In France in the spring, 40 people were blinded.

There is still a risk of a major clampdown by the Chinese army in Hong Kong, even if the many warnings of a new Tiananmen Square massacre have not materialized so far. Also, the risk of a return of sectarianism in Lebanon

or Iraq is a real danger.

The ruling class - where they don't seek to crush the movement by force - want to disarm the protests, and derail them into elections or negotiations. In Argentina, this was clearly the case when the Peronist populist candidates, Fernandez and Fernandez-Kirchner, won the elections recently. The masses' main target was to oust Macri, the former big hope for capitalism in Latin America who presided over a new deep financial crisis. The new Peronist government, however, will not have a honeymoon since it will continue implementing the policies of the IMF.

In Sudan, official protest leaders signed a deal over the heads of the masses with the military about sharing power. This left the real power with general Hemedti and his notorious Janjaweed militia. Now there are growing protests again, against the deal and the generals.

However, in general the movement in this period will recover more quickly from defeats than in the past. Mass protests in Iran were crushed in 2009 and again in 2017, but returned again this year. The same has happened in Iraq, Zimbabwe, and Sudan. New protests also show that the dictatorship in Egypt is not stable.

Challenging the Ruling Class

Indefinite general strikes and mass movements of a revolutionary character raise the question of power. Which class should rule?

Most of the present struggles immediately challenge the power of the capitalist class. The counter-revolution is preparing itself for such struggles, but in recent months they found that their normal methods are insufficient to drive the masses back.

Another important historical comparison is with the first Russian revolution in 1905. The working class showed its strength and the Tsarist state hung on by a thread. A final confrontation was inevitable.

Leon Trotsky, one of the leaders of the

workers in 1905, declared at his trial in 1906 that, "to prepare for the inevitable insurrection... meant to us first and foremost, enlightening the people, explaining to them that open conflict was inevitable, that all that had been given to them would be taken away again, that only might can defend right, that powerful organization of the working class was necessary, that the enemy had to be met head on, that the struggle had to be continued to the end, that there was no other way."

In 1905, despite the formation of the workers' councils (soviets), the insufficient organization of the working class alongside the weakness of the struggle in the countryside, gave counter-revolution the upper hand. The experiences of 1905, however, laid the basis for the victory of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Today's situation does not leave room for long periods of reaction with no struggle.

As the 2020s begin, we will without doubt see the wave of struggle spread to more countries and regions including "advanced" capitalist countries as it has now in France. Working people internationally will increasingly understand that determined social struggle is the only way to achieve real change. Anti-capitalist and socialist ideas will be strengthened by the search for an alternative to austerity, oppression, and repression. However, the weakness of the left and workers' organization inherited from the last period means that it will be a drawn-out process, with both leaps forward and set-backs.

The general lesson, however, is the same as in 1905 or 1968 – it is still a question of the need for a workers' government to defend the gains a mass movement can win and to move decisively to achieve fundamental change. 🇨🇪

Fake Progressive Buttigieg Increasingly Exposed

Ty Moore

With under two months until the Iowa caucus, Pete Buttigieg has risen to the top of the polls there, according to the RealClearPolitics.com polling average. His backers hope a victory in Iowa and New Hampshire, where he closely trails Sanders, will propel the South Bend, Indiana, mayor into frontrunner status, wrecking Biden's central appeal as the most "electable" candidate, and elevating Buttigieg into U.S. capitalism's best hope against both Sanders and Trump.

However, whether Mayor Pete can unseat Biden as the corporate establishment's favored candidate, or defeat Sanders and Warren among Democratic primary voters, remains far from certain.

An Anti-Establishment Pretender

"I have never been part of the Washington establishment," Mayor Pete declared, aiming to undercut John Kerry's early December endorsement of Biden. At the core of Buttigieg's appeal is his image as a pragmatic, progressive outsider, with a personal profile that ticks a bunch of boxes. As a 37-year-old gay veteran Harvard-educated mayor of a small mid-western city, his backers have packaged him as a "transformational candidate" who can inspire young people like Bernie and defeat Trump among white workers in the heartland.

Sanders retains a significant lead in the polls over Buttigieg among both young people and African Americans. Yet there is widespread confusion about Buttigieg and, more broadly, about the root causes of our deep social problems. We're in a political moment where mass appeal for the "OK Boomer" meme overlaps with polls showing 70% of millennials would vote for a socialist.

Centrist Policies

Already, facing mounting pressure,

Buttigieg's been forced to open previously private fundraisers to the media, disclose the identities of his big-money bundlers, and release the names of his clients when he worked for McKinsey, a secretive consulting firm with deep ties to the U.S. security state, dictatorships abroad, and big business.

After this news broke, #WallStreetPete and #RefundPete began trending as many of his early small donors, now realizing his claims to progressivism were fake, asked for refunds.

In an election where Sanders in particular, but also Elizabeth Warren, have forced a discussion on what genuine progressive policy looks like, Buttigieg has carefully positioned himself as a reliable corporate centrist, just a few degrees left of Biden.

In a TV ad attacking the popular proposal for universal free public college from Sanders, Buttigieg says: "I only want to make promises that we can keep." This is code for limiting policies to what is acceptable to the corporate establishment, which still dominates Congress and most U.S. political institutions. Not naive to this reality, Sanders correctly links his call for tuition-free college and student loan forgiveness, among his other demands, to the need for mass movements and a broader political revolution.

Buttigieg's alternative proposal is to wave tuition for families making under \$100,000. The history of such "means testing" for social benefits is rife with bureaucratic obstacles intentionally designed to deny benefits to many. Just look at the current student loan forgiveness program - hidden hurdles built into the program mean 99% of applicants are being denied.

Unlike universal tuition-free college, Buttigieg's plan leaves the basic institution of unaffordable tuition firmly in place, alongside Wall Street's student debt profiteers, making it far more likely that Congress rolls back his limited means tested benefits program in the future.

The same problems plague Buttigieg's deceptively named "Medicare for All Who



Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg (L) and Pete Buttigieg (R).

Want It" plan. It is essentially similar to Biden's plan, which centers around a public option which would compete with private insurance for customers. By leaving the for-profit medical system intact, this plan would do little to address the out-of-control costs that have Americans spending twice as much for medical care as most countries with single-payer systems. Yet winning even this limited reform would require an all-out fight with the powerful insurance industry, something Buttigieg has shown no appetite for.

The Electability Debate

Biden's backers and media commentators attack Buttigieg's electability by pointing to his terrible polling numbers among African Americans. But these attacks have a real basis. Protests erupted against how Mayor Pete and his South Bend, Indiana, police chief handled the case of a white officer shooting down Eric Logan, a 54-year old black man, following years of racially biased police violence there which Buttigieg ignored.

More recently, Buttigieg has come under fire for clumsily comparing his experience as a gay man to the oppression faced by Black people. While genuine solidarity between working class and oppressed communities should be welcomed, Buttigieg's cynical attempt to leverage his personal identity fell flat because he is still, at the same time, defending the neoliberal politics responsible for the systemic racism, poverty, and police violence plaguing black communities.

This is why Buttigieg's boosters are dead wrong when they argue that his identity as a young, mid-western, gay veteran will be enough to inspire and turnout the Democrats' leftward trending base to defeat Trump. Most young voters - including a majority of black millennials and women under 45 - are backing Sanders because they understand that winning real change will be far easier with an "organizer-in-chief" in the White House rather than another progressive faker who owes their career to big business. 🗳️

Trump and Supreme Court Target Dreamers

Cora Bergantinos

Since June 2017, 700,000 Dreamers have faced an uncertain future. In 2012, these young immigrants, brought to the U.S. as children, won legal residence and work permits under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA). DACA was implemented by an executive order of President Obama after the 2010 DREAM Act failed in Congress. It requires renewal every two years and lacks any path to permanent status or

citizenship. DACA was from the beginning a temporary patch aimed at the unsustainable situation facing millions of people. But under Trump's presidency, which declared its intention to end program in June 2017, the vulnerability of DACA has become very clear.

Trump's decision to terminate DACA has been challenged in court after court, and now its fate will be decided by the Supreme Court. If DACA is terminated, these 700,000 young undocumented immigrants would be at risk of being deported to countries that many don't even remember, in many case

without even speaking the language.

The Supreme Court is expected to rule on the case between January and June 2020. But the balance is not tilted towards the Dreamers. None of the judges questions the ability of the president to end the program. Rather they're debating the legality of its abrupt termination. Moreover, the conservative majority that president Trump ensured after appointing Brett Kavanaugh has made it clear that they will likely allow the Trump administration to end DACA. As of now, Dreamers' futures are full of uncertainty and

doubt.

Attacks on DACA are an Attack on All Immigrants

The attack on DACA is part of a broader anti-immigrant agenda that the Trump administration promoted from the beginning. Indeed, the current polarization over the issue has been created by Trump himself. In

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British Elections

Vicious Tories Win With Lies – Mass Struggle Looms on Horizon

Socialist Alternative (England and Wales)

The Conservative victory on the general election is a major setback for the working class and youth of Britain. The bumbling bigot Johnson will whip up prejudice and launch further attacks on our services, livelihoods, and environment.

The Tory share of the vote was 43% (gaining 300,000 votes) with no Boris surge. Compared to 2017, when Labour surged to 40%, the turnout was slightly lower and Labour's vote fell by 2.5 million to 32%. Substantial parts of Labour's vote went to smaller parties.

The savage media onslaught against Corbyn and Labour exceeded everything to date. This was not limited to the traditionally Tory press. At the BBC, which covered the campaigns in a scandalously biased way, it was as if all pretence of impartiality had been completely abandoned.

In the light of this pernicious press campaign, some people are likely to conclude that there's nothing that can be done in the face of such forces.

This is not true. Corbyn got more votes than his right-wing Labour predecessors, Miliband in 2015, Brown in 2010, or Blair in 2005.

The colossal swing of voters under 44 toward Labour is the music of the future. The youth climate strike movement has the potential to grow rapidly with Johnson in government.

Brexit Election

It wasn't automatic that this was the "Brexit election." As the polls narrowed the NHS was the biggest issue for the most voters, followed by the economy for male voters. Labour was unable to cut through the tidal wave from the Tories and the media about Brexit.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to suggest that the press campaign was the only reason that this was the case.

The half-million-strong membership of the Labour Party was not mobilized systematically enough. So the Labour manifesto was unheard by many voters, while everyone knows Boris "will get Brexit done."

Some Tory voters will most likely desert the party within a matter of months. Johnson will not be able to deliver Brexit in a way which fully satisfies the Brexiteers without angering huge swathes of the population.

Johnson will rule in a chaotic and populist fashion, but it is now less likely that the Tory party will collapse by itself while it is supported by the capitalist class. It faces multiple political crises including a likely huge

surge for Scottish independence as well as the potential rise of new forms of sectarianism in Northern Ireland and in Welsh nationalism. Central to determining the fate of this government will be the intervention of mass protest and the workers' movement.

Capitalist Crisis Building

The current slow-boil economic crisis threatens to break into an outright recession in the next period. Even now, the service sector is sluggish while manufacturing and construction are declining.

Any attempt to go on the attack against workers' living conditions in the mold of the Thatcher government could lead to a mass revolt, of a similar nature to the gigantic Poll Tax rebellion in the late '80s and early '90s, where 18 million people refused to pay up.

The Brexit trade deal negotiations will drag on for some time to come. So far, Johnson has only got a withdrawal agreement, not an exit deal. The questions on border controls remain as well as negotiating new trade agreements. These are all issues on which the government can easily lose support from both sides. All Tory options will lead to attacks on workers' living conditions.

With the election of a more blatantly right-wing populist Tory government, there is a serious risk of bigotry and discrimination increasing. This could mean a rise in physical attacks on all those that the Tories seek to single out – women, LGBTQ+ people, black people, Asian people, and migrants.

Labour's Heartland Losses

In this election, Labour lost seats in a number of its traditional "heartland" areas. Among the causes is the Tory austerity passed by Labour-run councils. Their continued slashing away of services, along with the legacy of Blairism, has contributed to declining turnout and growing disillusionment with Labour over a long period.

More specifically to this election, Labour also lost a large number of votes from some of its traditional supporters because of Brexit. Corbyn's attempt at a compromise position, arrived at under huge pressure from Labour's right to adopt a wholesale Remain stance, ultimately failed to do what was necessary. To win this election, Corbyn needed to unite voters who supported both Leave and Remain on the basis of an independent, working-class approach to this question. The failure to do so has opened the door to right-wing populism to fill the vacuum.

This mistake, as with so many others that have cost Corbyn since 2015, was ultimately rooted in his doomed attempt to make compromises with the Blairite MPs in the



Boris Johnson led the Tory Party to victory by pledging to "Get Brexit Done" and to not cut public services.

Parliamentary Labour Party, whose pro-austerity, pro-imperialist politics ultimately represents the interests of the capitalist class. This has allowed the right within Labour to conduct a sustained and slanderous campaign of sabotage – seizing on every possible opportunity to attack and undermine Corbyn's leadership.

The capitalist press has tried to explain this result by posing a divide between "lefty middle-class youth" in the metropolitan areas, against a uniformly more right-wing, and especially "socially conservative," working-class. This is completely inaccurate.

In reality, Labour's 2017 vote was taken for granted. Union leaders and the Momentum leadership, together with the right-wing of the Labour party, pushed Corbyn into a non-credible position on Brexit which was widely seen as a Remain position. Corbyn didn't sufficiently explain what "pro-worker" policies he would campaign for in renewed negotiations with the EU. He also didn't successfully expose the neoliberal nature of the EU and which progressive policies would require a left government to defy EU rules in order to implement.

Corbyn's failure to adopt a more combative, class-struggle based approach, coupled with the weak and unclear position in relation to the EU, has allowed the Labour right to shoehorn him into a position of appearing indecisive.

Leadership Contest

The ideas which Corbyn put forward were popular and will become more so, but in this complicated period it's not enough. For them to be implemented, it's necessary to have a mass organization capable of bypassing the capitalist media to take them directly to the whole working class. This means building an

organization which is not focused solely on elections and parliament, but which is also campaigning year-round in defence of "the many not the few." It requires being actively connected with struggles such as those currently being waged by postal workers, university staff, and the climate strikes movement. Labour has not been sufficiently transformed from its Blairite past to that kind of approach as of yet.

We think it's a mistake for Corbyn to step down. Without a sufficient mobilization of the left rank-and-file membership there is a serious risk of a change in leadership marking a shift away from the most radical aspects of Corbyn's policies. This has to be resisted strongly and all socialists must make a clear stand for socialist ideas against the Blairites' offensive. Now we need Corbyn to use his remaining time most usefully, not just to oversee the leadership election but to help transform Labour from a primarily electoralist organization into a struggle-based party.

Mass Movements on the Horizon

In this new period there will be an anti-Tory backlash and a determination to struggle. The scale of media onslaught including the liberal media shows need for a different kind of party.

Socialist Alternative campaigned energetically to see a Corbyn-led Labour government elected. Now we are encouraging everyone who is angry about the election result and keen to organize to fight back and win: mobilize for struggles already taking place; let's organize conferences of resistance to bring them together; let's discuss the need for socialism, and the revolutionary politics ultimately needed to achieve it. Workers and young people are central to that. Don't mourn, organize! ✊

2020 Oakland School Board Elections

Push the Privatizers Back

Rob Rooke

Oakland School Board meetings are no longer the ritualized therapy sessions where those facing cuts come and complain while board members stare into their phones. The Oakland Not For Sale movement, mostly made up of parents facing school closures, is refusing to let the privatization juggernaut rollover their kids' lives without consequences. The lines of demarcation between a school board bought and paid for by the billionaire class and working-class families and teachers have never been sharper.

The Board has gone from turning off the mic on parents and teachers, to erecting a metal fence around the stage where the Board sits. Moving on the offensive against their own constituents, the Board allowed the school police to unleash on protesting parents, arresting six. One of the parents of a closing school, Saru Jayaraman, was thrown to the ground, destroying her knee. She was then taken to the ER and handcuffed to her gurney.

Schools activist Mike Hutchinson summed up the lessons of past battles, arguing "we tried to convince the Board, which was a waste of time. We just have to stop them!" This sentiment was powerfully strengthened during the seven-day spring Oakland Education Association (OEA) strike, which was a huge turning point in Oakland. The union squarely placed itself at the center of a battle framed as one between the working class of Oakland and the billionaire class, with a massive demonstration on the billionaire charter

school headquarters.

Can the Privatizers be Beaten in 2020?

Millions of billionaire dollars will rain down on Oakland in 2020 to keep the city council in the pockets of the big developers and to keep the School Board in the hands of the privatizers. That money will be used to carpet bomb households with TV ads, mailers, and hired door knockers.

The privatizers were beaten in the OEA strike. They can and must be beaten at the ballot box. The strike witnessed the incredible sacrifices teachers, parents and students were willing to endure to fight the anti-public education forces. Despite the complicated ending of the strike, the teachers and parent movement emerged far more confident and more aware of the stakes of this fight.

Ending the Privatizers Election Victories

The greatest danger is that the enormous explosion of enthusiasm and activity during the strike is not able to find its way into the 2020 Board elections. A bold campaign, led by candidates who pledge to not pass cuts and are prepared to end privatization measures can capture Oaklanders' imagination. A campaign that promotes taxing the rich and expanding school resources would draw in a much wider layer of people.

Flowing from last year's teachers strike, the best known union leader in Oakland is



Students at an Oakland School Board meeting.

now the President of the OEA, Keith Brown. No other union leader in Oakland is anywhere near as well known. The union should consider running Keith Brown for School Board. There are many logistical and organizational issues that would need to be addressed by such a move. But seen in the light of what it would mean to overthrow of the privatizers' rule of the District, the movement can find a way to overcome them.

Never has there been a better moment for the public school movement to strike at the heart of the privatizer domination of the

Board. Running one or more strike leaders for Board is the most efficient way to begin to build the forces necessary to defeat the millions of dollars that the privatizers will be pumping into this election.

The national repercussions of teachers' union leaders running for office, not as Democrats, but as pro-working class, pro-public education candidates could be immense. It could be to local politics what the West Virginia strike was to the teachers strike wave. It could also point a way forward to other teachers' unions up against hostile legislators. ✪

Interview with a Massachusetts Paraprofessional

Educators Fight Poverty Wages

Margaret Whittier-Ferguson works in a prekindergarten classroom as a paraprofessional in Somerville, Massachusetts. She is a Building Representative with the Somerville Teachers Association and is helping build a campaign for fair salaries and job security for paraprofessionals.

How are paraprofessionals currently treated in the Somerville public schools?

I currently make around \$21,000 a year as the second educator in a classroom of around 20 students. In our current contract, the most a paraprofessional can make is around \$25,000. There are paraprofessionals that have worked in the district for over 20 years and still don't make a living wage. Most paraprofessionals work a second or even a third job.

We have no job security year to year. Every year, we have to wait for a letter that says

whether or not the district will hire us again.

As we are seeing student needs increase, the job of paraprofessionals has shifted. We're not just making copies, we're supporting behavior management plans, running small and large groups, and making sure students' special needs are met. We work with high needs students and provide 1-on-1 support. While our job descriptions have grown, our salaries are not increasing at a rate even close to the cost of living.

Why are paraprofessionals fighting back and what are your demands?

It's clear that our working conditions are untenable, especially as housing and health care get more and more expensive.

We are calling for job security after 4 years of working in the district, and a starting salary of at least \$25,000.

Educators know that our teaching

conditions are students' learning conditions. We aren't just fighting for ourselves - we are fighting back because when we win, our students win.

Last spring, the Somerville Teachers Association (STA) elected a new leadership slate from the caucus SCORE (Somerville Caucus of Rank and File Educators). This slate was elected on a platform of fighting for schools that students and educators deserve as well as increased transparency. Following a "no" vote on the district's proposed contract for paraprofessionals back in October, we are working to open up the negotiations and to bring union members, families, and community members into the process. A strong contract for paraprofessionals means better learning conditions for students!

How will you win? How does this connect to educators struggles across the U.S.?

This is part of a broader picture of public education being under attack. Increasing numbers of educators are standing up for improved teaching and learning conditions. Paraprofessionals in Somerville are joining educators across the country in fighting back.

Even though Massachusetts just received extra funding for education, class sizes are still too big and we don't have the support services our students need. As support staff, paraprofessionals in particular see the increasing needs of our students not being met.

Across the country, educators have won salary raises, smaller class sizes, more school nurses, and have overall improved the education children are getting. All by getting organized and fighting back. That's what we're hoping to do in Somerville. ✪

How Can Bernie Win?

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regime in the UK that will be met with resistance (see page 9).

Socialist Alternative wants to defeat Trump and the capitalist system that gives rise to monsters like him. Even if Trump were defeated in 2020 and replaced by a corporate Democrat, the right would rise again in an even more hideous form if we had another “liberal” regime that did nothing about inequality, racism, sexism and environmental destruction. Right now, we need to build the type of campaign and organization that can challenge the entire billionaire class and their politicians in both parties.

Campaign Needs to Build a Movement

It is good that Bernie talks about being an “organizer in chief” and uses his email lists to mobilize his supporters to strike picket lines and protests. More needs to be done though to turn this campaign into a formidable movement in order to win.

Socialist Alternative has endorsed Sanders and will be going “all out” for his campaign over the coming months. We will be putting forward resolutions in our unions to endorse Sanders, which is part of a wider debate in the

labor movement. Socialists advocate unions that are run democratically and fight for all working people rather than just trying to snuggle up to big business and their politicians. The Sanders campaign is an opportunity to bring together workers who want to fight against capitalism not just for the next few months but beyond.

We will also be organizing in our neighborhoods and campuses for Sanders. Our campaigning work needs to be a process of political education in struggle with meetings to discuss the best arguments and strategies to defeat Trump and the billionaires. To counter the lies of Trump, the media blackout and the Democratic establishment, tens of thousands of new activists will need to be rapidly educated through this campaign in the need for mass movements, class struggle and uncompromising socialist politics to win victories to improve our lives.

Toward this end, we need a conference of



Bernie speaks to canvassers in Iowa.

all Sanders supporters this summer no matter the outcome of the primaries. Such an organizing conference should discuss the next steps in the fight for Medicare for All, tuition-free college, a Green New Deal and a revolution against the billionaire class. Socialist Alternative would advocate that this conference should lay the basis for a working-class party in this country that is vital in winning the decisive change we need and breaking the power of the billionaire class once and for all. ☘

Trump and Supreme Court Target Dreamers

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March 2018, 84 percent of Americans “generally supported DACA” (Politico/Harvard University poll). The border wall, the separation of families at the border, the raids of poultry factories in central Mississippi last August, the extreme limitations on the right of asylum, and the deplorable conditions of immigrant children under government custody, are just a few of the serious attacks inflicted by Trump to the immigrant community.

The attacks on immigrants are not just a feature of the Trump administration - indeed it has deported 44% less than during Obama’s first three years.

Anti immigration rhetoric has been a key part of rallying Trump’s base, but it serves another purpose as well. The very real fear that at any time an ICE agent may knock on your door and destroy your life creates a lower class workforce forced to accept the worst pay and working conditions, one that is constantly afraid of standing up to demand their rights. This drives down the working conditions and living standards of all workers. While parts of the ruling class favor “immigration reform” and keeping DACA they also favor maintaining immigrant workers as second class citizens.

Moreover, while the Trump administration is keeping the focus on its attacks on immigrants, it has snuck through a whole array of anti-worker reforms such the pro-big business

and billionaire tax reform, appointing an anti-labor NLRB, continuous attacks on Medicaid and Medicare, and serious cuts to the SNAP program (removing food assistance to nearly 700,000 unemployed people).

The attacks on immigrants is just the tip of the iceberg of a broader anti-worker and anti-poor agenda that ensures that Trump and his billionaire friends continue making super profits at our expense. The termination of the DACA program would be not only a huge blow to the immigrant community but also to the working class as a whole, emboldening Trump’s anti-worker, pro-big business agenda.

Defend DACA to build the power of the working class

We need to unite against the pro-billionaire agenda of the Trump administration and the establishment of the Democratic party. We need to not only defend DACA, but improve it with a path to permanent status for Dreamers and other undocumented immigrants. On top of this we need Medicare for All, millions



of well paid unionized jobs as part of a Green New Deal, and to rebuild the power of the American labor movement.

Only by fighting together and building our collective power we can defeat the powerful interests of the billionaire class. Bernie Sanders and AOC, as the leading figures of a growing socialist base, as well as the unions, should be at the forefront of building this broad movement. We need to unite Dreamers and undocumented immigrants with a broader fight for workers rights. This could start tilting the power balance in our favor, paving the way for workers to take control of our societies and our lives. ☘

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE
ISSN 2638-3349

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SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

ISSUE #59 • DECEMBER-JANUARY 2019-2020
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Remove Trump for His Real Crimes

Kailyn Nicholson

Donald Trump's presidency is a threat to working-class people in the U.S. and around the world. His racist, misogynist administration has emboldened white supremacists and contributed to an increase in violent hate crimes. By cheerleading for the fossil fuel industry and rolling back environmental regulation he is actively pushing the accelerator toward global climate catastrophe. His erratic, self-serving foreign policy points toward deeper international tensions and the possibility of more wars. It is urgent that Trump be removed from office as quickly as possible.

While the House impeachment process moves toward its conclusion, Trump has again escalated his attacks on ordinary Americans by announcing major cuts to SNAP, the government's nutrition assistance program for low-income families. The Democratic Party leadership has so far ignored this emergency for the 700,000 low-income families now facing imminent hunger in favor of a narrow focus on Ukraine and impeachment, despite knowing there is almost no chance of the Republican-controlled Senate voting to remove him from office.

Democrats Let Trump Off the Hook

On December 10, House Democrats

introduced two articles of impeachment against Donald Trump. The first article accuses Trump of abusing the power of his office by withholding military aid and a formal state visit in order to pressure Ukrainian officials to do him political favors in the lead-up to the 2020 elections. The second article accuses him of obstructing justice by instructing federal employees not to cooperate with the impeachment investigation.

By insisting on focusing the public's attention on the narrow issue of Ukraine, the Democratic leadership have proven themselves uninterested in launching an effective fightback against Trump's real crimes: emboldening white supremacists, abuses at the border, attacking women's rights and workers' rights, ripping up of environmental regulations, enriching his own family at the public's expense, and more. Mobilizing on these issues represent the best opportunity to build the strongest possible challenge to Trump in 2020.

While tens of millions support impeaching and removing Trump, demonstrating how badly people want him gone, this support is very passive and many feel the Democrats have failed to make a convincing case for removal on the basis of Ukraine. By contrast, following the white supremacist attack in Charlottesville in 2017, 40,000 people took to the streets in Boston. Around the country there were mass demonstrations against Trump's immigration policy in June of 2018.

The Women's Marches protesting Trump's rampant misogyny were the biggest protest in U.S. history! If the Democrats were to initiate impeachment proceedings based on Trump's brutal attacks on working people - issues for which there's already public outcry - these impeachment proceedings and the Senate trial could galvanize far more people.

Pro-Working-Class Politics Can Defeat Trump

We must warn that the strategy of the Democratic Party could seriously backfire. Their uninspiring approach to impeachment, combined with their lackluster establishment candidates in the 2020 race, are not providing any real vision of an alternative to Trump. In fact, there has been a recent dip in support for impeaching and removing Trump just as the proceedings in the House are escalating.

Just how out of touch their approach is can be summed up by an exchange Biden recently had with a voter which has since gone viral. When asked about the implications of Biden's dealings with Ukraine by an Iowan voter during a recent campaign stop, he lost his temper, called the man a "damn liar" and challenged him to a push-up contest. Such a response reveals not just Biden's weakness as a candidate, but the weakness of the Democratic Party as a whole in their inability to respond to the genuine concerns of millions of Americans that the entire

political establishment is corrupt.

Figures like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez are proving that massive support for pro-working-class politics exists among the Democrats' voter base, but also among independents and even Republican voters! By ignoring these issues and doing everything they can do sink Bernie's candidacy, the party leadership is undermining our ability to defeat Trump in 2020 just as they did in 2016.

Working people cannot afford another Trump victory. While the Democratic leadership avoids discussion of Trump's real crimes, Bernie Sanders should use the coming Senate trial as a platform. He should call for mass protests against Trump's brutal attacks on ordinary people and for a government that represents the interests of workers, not billionaires. Such a move would appeal to the frustrations of the majority of American voters across the political spectrum who correctly feel ignored by the entire political establishment. Organizing the mass anger at Trump's policies is by far the most effective way to defeat him and could also raise Bernie's standings in the polls. We need to defend against ongoing right-wing attacks such as the potential repeal of anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people and terminating the DACA program for Dreamer immigrant youth by the right wing dominated Supreme Court in early 2020. ✪