



Democrats Ruin South L.A.

Vote Working Class, Vote Juan Rey!

Working people in black and Latino South Los Angeles (the 37th Congressional District) should help build the campaign for Juan Rey for Congress and vote for him on November 5. In a city simmering with racial and ethnic tensions and torn by extremes of obscene wealth and dire poverty, Rey—a train mechanic at L.A. Metro—is calling to unite the working class and build a workers party. He is not only running against Democratic incumbent Sydney Kamlager-Dove, but also crucially states opposition to the whole Democratic Party, which has lorded over L.A. for decades, making it unlivable for the majority of its black, brown and working-class population. Rey's



credit: Juan Rey

campaign is an opportunity to rally the forces for a working-class fightback against the Democrats.

Los Angeles is a poster child for capitalist decay and inequality—soaring prices for basic necessities, decrepit and unaffordable housing, failing social services, racial segregation and the notorious LAPD killing machine. Many workers are a paycheck or two away from joining the legions of homeless living on the streets and in their cars or having to move ever further outside the vast metropolitan area. In winning nearly 9,000 votes (10.3 percent of the total) in the primaries, Rey's campaign has struck a chord among working people fed up with the intolerable

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status quo.

The Democrats did not just ruin the city; they boasted that they were creating a multicultural mecca while doing so. This veneer of multiracial solidarity pushed by anti-racist liberal Democrats covers up the fact that they pit each group against the other in competition for the scraps left over from the table of the bosses and their politicians. Those who protest against losing out in the race to the bottom are denounced as backward—fueling the divisions and hindering the unity of the oppressed in the fight for their interests against the city rulers.

In the aftermath of the 1992 upheaval, the “progressive” Karen Bass continued to build a “black-brown” coalition that jump-started her political career and carried her into the mayor’s office. But this coalition failed miserably when it came to jump-starting real improvements for the black and brown communities because it was based on the same Democratic establishment responsible for the miserable conditions that sparked the upheaval in the first place. To make any advance for social and economic justice, struggle must be waged *outside and against* the capitalist power structure, which thrives on keeping workers and black and brown people down.

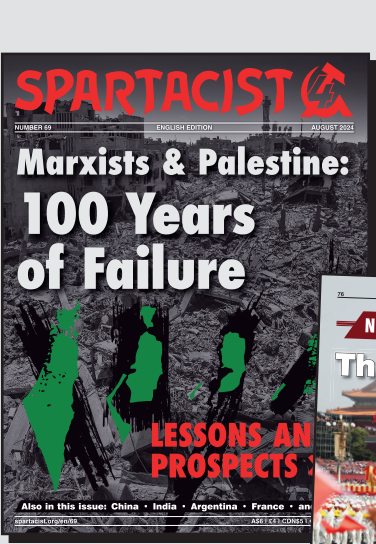
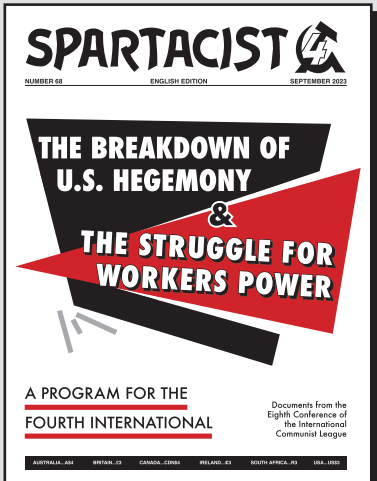
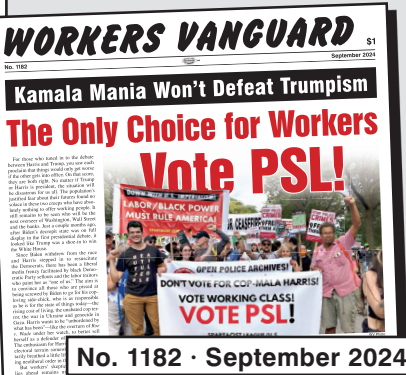
What has been the result of decades of multiracial coalition building? No unity, but lots of devastation!

Decent-paying jobs have evaporated, housing costs skyrocketed, black people have been forced out of the city in droves and cop terror continues unabated. As mayor, Bass enforces these wretched conditions on behalf of the real estate and finance magnates, who have a material interest in maintaining the segregation and division of blacks, Latinos and the working class.

Working people and the black and brown masses can be truly united around a program to fight for what they need in opposition to the common capitalist enemy only by exposing and combating the false unity offered by the liberals. We are critical of Juan Rey for *failing* to do just that; this failure undermines his campaign and the fight for a multiracial workers party. It’s not enough to simply decry police brutality and anti-immigrant bigotry and call for unity. Kamlager-Dove herself says she’s running for “justice” against “systemic racism” and to “help bring us together.” What’s needed is to effect a break with liberal politics, which breed racial animosity, and the Democrats’ multicultural coalitions, which mask the worsening situation of all working-class Angelenos.

Despite our differences, we support Rey’s campaign as a step toward forging the necessary independent working-class pole against the Democrats. Black, Latino and all working people of District 37—Vote Juan Rey! ■

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