

A World to Win

Any approach to planning, whether it is a corporation, a military unit or an organization, has to start off with an estimate of the entire situation. Once we understand what we are facing we are then able to talk in terms of the specifics of what and how. This approach allows revolutionaries to think strategically about what the ruling class is doing and to use the objective processes that are underway to defeat them.

Today capitalism is on the strategic defensive. This wasn't true 50 years ago. Then, the means of production were such that there was still room for the expansion of the capitalist system. The means of production were such that value — not just money — but value, could still be created.

As a result, the capitalist ruling class was on the strategic offensive everywhere. This was clearly seen in the breaking up of the direct colonial system and its replacement by a system of neo-colonies throughout the world. National liberation movements arose on the side of the people that were tactically offensive, but most of these were absorbed into the orbit of capitalism's domination of the world economy. There is a fundamental change in the world situation today.

RULING CLASS ON THE STRATEGIC DEFENSIVE

Why is the ruling class on the strategic defensive? The fundamental reason is that the capitalist system as a process of creating social value is coming to an end. The historical evolution of the productive process has brought it to a point where it no longer relies on the creation of value in order to make money. Money is now being created without creating value. The result is polarization that the world has never seen before.

According to the OXFAM's January 2014 report, "Working for the Few", 85 people own more wealth than 3.5 billion of the world's poorest population. World leaders consider the situation serious enough that the growing gap between global wealth and poverty became a prominent topic at the Davos World Economic Forum in January. The ruling class understands the explosive situation they have on their hands. Its leaders are discussing how they are going to take control of the world's growing social upsurges, including those beginning to develop in the U.S. These upsurges are a reflection of the growing polarization, and their spread is absolutely inevitable.

The ruling class can neither reverse the technology nor save the capitalist system. It is forced to deal with the social results of the inequality. That is, tactically, they have to go on the offensive against the people. They have to secure the ways and means of controlling them. We see this offensive all around us — people being beaten to death by the police, tanks patrolling the streets, the government

moving against those who are speaking out.

This tactical offensive is an admission of weakness on the part of capital, not of strength. It shows us that the ruling class is so weak that it has to turn to naked and open violence in order to enforce some element of social cohesion.

Every step the ruling class takes only makes the situation worse. They have to keep developing the technology and producing more with less and less labor. In turn, less and less value is being created and more and more money is being created throughout the whole world. Globalization is undercutting the system of social bribery everywhere. For the first time in American history the objective base is developing for a major section of the working class to unite.

TACTICS TODAY

Fascism in America today is developing in a different way than in the past.

In Germany in the late 1920s, for example, there was a battle in the streets for the political power to control the fascist relationship between production and the State, to move the State into a position of absolutely protecting and being an arm of industry. The political and social features were created first, and on that basis, the capitalists were able to create the economic foundations of fascism, that is, the unity of the government administration and the State, and the corporations.

It has happened upside down in America. Here there has grown spontaneously a development between the unity of the corporations and the State. The objective foundation of fascism developed first. Everything else that has followed is the subjective expression, a feature of this reality. America has always been a capitalist country, so there has always been a unity between the monopolies and the government, but today we are seeing the emergence of fascism on a higher level.

A social movement is arising in response to the ruling class' fascist offensive. This rising social movement is anti-fascist. The problem is that it is also anti-communist. It is directed toward restructuring the capitalist system. The reality is that objective factors make reform of the capitalist system impossible.

So this is what revolutionaries face: the established foundation of fascism and its growing social and political features, and the rising of an anti-fascist movement that does not have the slightest possibility of success without a recognition that communism is the solution. This outlines the very difficult situation in which the revolutionaries find themselves. Yet this outlines our strategy and tactics.

DEFEAT THE ENEMY'S STRATEGY

Whether in military war or in political war, it is not possible to defeat an enemy without

defeating that enemy's strategy. Simply attacking the enemy's tactics cannot win the war.

What is the strategic goal of the ruling class today? It is to protect private property. It is not to defend capitalism. Whether they want to or not they are going to have to let the capitalist system go. This is because objective factors are absolutely putting an end to the capitalist system. The ruling class understands that they cannot go on in the same way. They know they cannot continue to create money and not create any social worth, where the people of the world are becoming poorer and poorer as the world becomes awash with money.

If we look at the history of the world we can see that the letting go of one system and fighting to rebuild another has happened over and over. Feudalism, slavery, and capitalism are quantitative stages in the development of private property. But they themselves were not strategic. The strategic goal was private property. If the rulers have to change the form in order to maintain that content, they have proven they will do that. They are doing that now.

What are their tactics to achieve this? They are going on the offensive, attacking the rights and standard of living of the masses of people while at the same time, step by step, evolving a new system based on private property.

Frederick Engels wrote of this new system in his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. He described a society in which the State controlled the major sections of the economy, the corporations were owned by billionaire "coupon clippers" who sat back and collected profits from these corporations, and the working class was reduced to a service element. This new system is evolving right in front of our eyes.

TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES

Revolutionaries recognize that to win, our class must move from the defensive — defending the capitalist system and what they once had — to the offensive — fighting for a cooperative society that is possible.

The last trench of the ruling class is the defense of private property. Therefore, it is here

that we must orient all our tactics. Sections of the intelligentsia are already questioning capitalism. Revolutionaries do not have to make that our line of attack, but we can take advantage of that opening to go on the offensive with our tactics. We want to add what others cannot.

Revolutionaries attack the system of private property. We point out the necessity, this time, of overthrowing private property and transferring these gigantic means of production into public property.

The attack against private property cannot succeed without vision. The goal of all of our work today is to give the American people a vision of what is possible. It is a vision of a world where no one has to fight another for the daily bread of existence. It is a vision where cooperation and fulfilling the needs of humanity are the guiding principles.

The first step is that the American people have to be won over to the reality that private property can be brought to an end. We can take inspiration from the famous statement by the former slave and abolitionist Harriet Tubman when she said, "I freed a thousand slaves. I could have freed a thousand more if only they knew they were slaves." The workers do not understand they are slaves. The first thing in liberating the slaves is to make them understand their slavery.

That can only be done if revolutionaries have an answer. In the past, it was sectarian to say that what we need is communism. Today, proposing communism is not sectarian, but the practical solution to the problems the workers face.

It is only through widespread propaganda that we can get this vision over. This propaganda must reach into the life of the workers. It must bring the message that private property can be brought to an end. It must show that a cooperative society is not only possible, but is the only practical solution to the problems they face.

Nothing has been done in America except in small groups, but it is small groups relying on gigantic processes that are underway. If we can grasp that dialectic we can do something important in history.

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Inside: Abolish Private Property

Eight-five of the world's richest billionaires possess more wealth (over one trillion dollars) than 3.5 billion of the planet's poorest population, according to the January 2014 report by Oxfam International, "Working for the Few." As a consequence, over one billion people suffer from chronic malnutrition, and 30 million die of malnutrition every year, 100,000 every day, according to Global Policy Forum, cited in "Only a Cooperative Society Can End Hunger," in this issue of *Rally, Comrades!* The developing polarization of wealth and poverty which has reached a level unequalled in all of human history is rooted in the fundamental antagonism at the base of society: the new technology has created productive forces that can produce unparalleled abundance while the economic system based in private property stands in the way of distribution according to need.

Revolutionaries today must understand the world in which we live, but as "Understand the World, Make History" points out, we understand the world in order to change it. We live in the time of the "leap," a kind of transition period in which the laws of motion that governed the development of the old society are dying away, and a new law system is emerging, wherein we see a new social force developing, a new class that cannot survive with private property. Distribution according to need becomes the practical solution to the

real problems facing this new class. A communal, cooperative communist solution is a new world without private property.

"Vision of a New World" shows how as private property has gone through its various forms of development, its latest version, capitalist private property, has reached its end. We don't have to fight the battle to end capitalism.

We must reach into the life of the workers. We must show them that private property can be brought to an end.

Our point of attack must be to abolish private property, because the ruling class, while they have no choice but to let capitalism go, will defend private property at all costs. With a new tyranny of corporations, the ruling class has moved to take over the State in order to impose their will and maintain their rule by brute force.

"Detroit: One Year a Slave" provides a concrete and graphic example of just how the tyranny of private property is being imposed in America today. The Emergency Manager Act has deprived many cities in Michigan, including Detroit, of any semblance of democratic government, and the current bankruptcy

proceedings are moving to privatize, sell off assets, and gut worker's pension funds. The article aptly puts it: what is happening in Detroit is not unlike the Dred Scott decision made by the Supreme Court in 1857. It said at that time that African Americans in the United States had no legal rights whatsoever that any white man was bound to respect. The

situation in Detroit today serves notice that in America the *working class* has no rights that the ruling class is bound to respect.

A new social force is arising to confront this fascist offensive of the ruling class. "International Women's Day: Women's Revolutionary Role" celebrates the contribution that women have made in the revolutionary process, and particularly their position in society today and the leading role they are taking. Women are in the fight, whether it is against foreclosures, for education for their children or opposing the police state; their emancipation is bound up with the emancipation of the new class as a whole.

This new class, this new social force, at the very beginning stages of its political development, is fighting for its very life. The main obstacle that stands in the way of humanity's advance is private property. It must be abolished; the only solution for this class is distribution according to need, a cooperative, communist solution.

This is the way forward. As our cover article "A World to Win" proposes, the fundamental responsibility of revolutionaries today is to connect the fight for the necessities of life with the strategic goal of the overthrow of private property.



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 WHAT WE STAND FOR

Tens of thousands 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, health care and an opportunity to contribute to society are summed up as the demand for a co-operative society. For the first time an objective communist economic class is forming to become the foundation for a communist political movement. A new fascist state form, the naked rule of corporate power, is arising to oppose this motion.

Society must take over these corporations or these corporations will take over society. The new class must have political power to achieve these goals. In the effort to achieve this political power the

League supports all political organizations and sections of society that fight against the growing poverty, social and ecological destruction, fascism and war.

Nothing can be accomplished until the American people hold a vision of where they want to go and what they want to be. Creating and imbuing them with such vision is the overriding task of revolutionaries and the foundation of our organization.

Destruction of the ecology, the threat of nuclear war and the looming pandemics are calling the very existence of the human race into question. The battle is class struggle. The war is for the existence of humanity.

We in the League face the future with confidence. We call upon all revolutionaries to abandon sectarian differences, to unite around the practical demands of the new class and to secure that imperiled future.

Detroit: One Year a Slave

“An emergency manager is like a man coming into your house. He takes your checkbook, he takes your credit cards, he lives in your house and he sleeps in your bed with your wife. He tells you it’s still your house, but he doesn’t clean up, sells off everything and then he packs his bag and leaves.” — Donald Watkins, Pontiac, Michigan city councilman, quoted in, “Lessons for Detroit in a City’s Takeover”, *The New York Times*, March 14, 2013.

March 2014 marks a grim anniversary. On March 14, 2013, Kevyn D. Orr was appointed Emergency Manager of the city of Detroit by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder. On March 28, 2013, Public Act 436 took effect in Michigan. This law gave the Detroit Emergency Manager extraordinary control over all Detroit financial matters. The law replaced a similar law that had been explicitly rejected by the voters of Michigan in the November 2012 elections.

This anniversary presents an opportunity to step back and examine the extraordinary crisis that has intensified in Detroit over the last year and its lessons for the entire country. In Detroit, the attack on local self-government, on political rights, is being used as the entry point for an attack on economic gains which were once relatively secure for many of the city’s workers.

This could clearly be seen in the bankruptcy proceedings. On July 18, 2013, Detroit filed for bankruptcy. This step was taken not by the elected mayor at the time, David Bing, or by the City Council, but by Emergency Manager Orr — a man who has never been elected by anyone. In fact, the City Council and many analysts said the move wasn’t financially necessary.

Orr made the decision as a way to attack the one major thing he could not unilaterally undo: the pensions of Detroit’s public employees. In Michigan, an Emergency Manager can throw out union contracts, can sell public assets, and can even abolish entire school districts. However, despite all the dictatorial power granted to him by the Emergency Manager law, Orr could not simply gut the pensions of Detroit’s public employees, because the Michigan State Constitution explicitly protects the pensions of those employees.

COURT RULING

On December 3, 2013, a federal judge ruled that Detroit could formally enter bankruptcy. The judge, Steven W. Rhodes, declared that public employee pensions were not protected in a federal Chapter 9 bankruptcy, even though the Michigan State Constitution specifically protects them. No bankruptcy court had ever ruled this before.

The judge went beyond asserting the supremacy of federal law over state regulations, ruling that the pensions workers earned were a mere “contractual obligation,” no different from any other bill that the city owes, but lacks the money to pay.

As one news source report noted: “In perhaps the most contested portion of the case,

the judge made it clear that federal bankruptcy law trumps the state law when it comes to protections for public employees’ pensions, making the pensions of 23,000 retirees fair game for the city to include in the plan of adjustment.” (“Detroit Ruling Lifts A Shield on Pensions,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 4, 2013.)

The ruling was front-page news across the country. The constitutions of seven states bar any reduction to public pension benefits. As one lawyer said just hours after the ruling: “Last night, as a public employees’ union leader, you went to bed thinking, ‘My workers’ pensions have special protection.’ ... This morning you woke up and found yourself in a new world.” (“In Detroit Ruling, Threats to Promises and Assumptions,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 5, 2013.) As Bruce Babiarz, a spokesman for the Detroit Police and Retirement System, said: “If this ruling is upheld, this is the canary in a coal mine for protected pension benefits across the country. They’re gone.” (“Detroit Ruling Lifts A Shield on Pensions,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 5, 2013.)

While the “canary in the coal mine” anal-

ogy is true, it does not go far enough. The events in Detroit since March 2013 represent much more than an attack on unionized public employees.

EERIE RESEMBLANCE

When the judge sitting in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Michigan declared that the pension rights of Detroit public employees were “not entitled to any heightened protection in a municipal bankruptcy,” he echoed one of the worst decisions ever rendered in an American courtroom.

Rhodes’ statement bore an eerie resemblance to an infamous passage in the U.S. Supreme Court’s notorious *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision. In the 1850s, Dred Scott, an African American slave who had been taken by his owners into free states and territories, attempted to sue for his freedom. In a 7-2 decision, the Supreme Court denied Scott’s request.

On March 6, 1857, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney infamously declared that the authors of the Constitution had viewed all Blacks as “beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations, and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.”

In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court ignored the fact that numerous states in the Union had passed “personal liberty” laws to protect

escaped slaves and free Blacks settled in the North. These laws barred state officials from turning over individuals to slave catchers without a trial by jury. Instead, it ruled that its interpretation of the federal constitution trumped the attempts of states like Indiana, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Maine, New Hampshire, and Ohio to protect their residents. In 2013 Judge Rhodes expressed the same disregard for the state constitutions of Michigan, Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana and New York. (All have provisions protecting public employee pensions.)

Just as the Dred Scott decision declared that no African American living in any part of the United States had any legal rights whatsoever, so the decision in the Detroit bankruptcy case served notice that the working class of the United States has no economic rights that the ruling class is bound to respect. This should sound a death knell for the illusion that having a good-paying job somehow makes a person part of the “middle class.” Just as the Supreme Court’s 1857 decision meant that a slave master could take his slave anywhere in

March 2014 marks one year with an Emergency Manager. The crisis in Detroit calls for a class, political response.

the United States with impunity despite what the laws of individual states decreed, the Detroit ruling declared that the ruling class can undo even those benefits to workers explicitly protected in the constitutions of individual states. Just as the rights of slave property were elevated over the rights of free men in 1857, today the rights of corporate property are elevated over the rights of people.

SEA CHANGE

This elevation of the rights of corporate property is a sign of a sea change in the way society functions. If the pensions of once seemingly secure public employees can be ripped apart with one legal decision, what chance do other workers have? How far will this onslaught go? Can it be turned back? This raises more fundamental questions about class rule and class power.

Detroit’s year of living under dictatorship has harshly confirmed the stark truth that political power is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another class. Over the last year, Detroit’s civic “leaders” have relentlessly attacked workers’ democratic rights in a calculated effort ultimately designed to destroy hard-fought economic gains and undermine the fight for economic wellbeing.

This move to utterly obliterate long-accepted gains — gains that have been understood by many to be actual economic “rights” — shows the profound shift underway in the relationship between labor and capital. No

city in the United States more sharply illustrates the end of an era than the once-mighty industrial juggernaut of Detroit. Today, the factories are gone — or increasingly run with robotized production. A new class of the unemployed and the barely employed workers has replaced the stable work force of the city’s past. As a result, the old social contract is being torn apart. The unwritten agreement that proclaimed that if a certain section of workers simply worked hard and “played by the rules,” they would be rewarded with high wages, the possibility of home ownership, and secure pensions — is no more. Gone is the supposed guarantee of becoming part of some ill-defined “middle class.”

While the attacks on democracy by the Emergency Manager and the assault on the pensions of public employees are clear signs of this ripping apart of the social contract, they are hardly the sole indications. Over the last several years, Michigan has seen the systematic gutting of social welfare programs for the unemployed, including devastating assaults on welfare mothers. While Detroit’s elite had to go to court to batter the pensions of public employees, they were able to destroy programs for the unemployed much more swiftly, without the irritating judicial complication of a provision in a state constitution.

Given this, revolutionaries misread the situation in Detroit if they see it simply as an attack on public workers and their unions. The attack on democracy in Michigan is an orchestrated, well thought-out campaign by a class that has carefully chosen its political goals. This all-out assault is directed at the whole of the new class being created out of the crucible of the world’s new economic reality. The traditional methods of protest will not suffice as a response. Once the old institutions are closed to this new class and do not serve its interests, the struggle will inevitably step outside the old institutions. This urgent situation cries out for a class response, that is, a response from the class under assault, determined to build the political power to assert its class interests and to establish a true democracy for all.

Today’s crying need is for revolutionaries to step forward and help develop the class awareness among fighters in the day-to-day struggle that will lay the basis for a class political response. That will be an important first step in challenging the control of society by a ruling class which has shown so graphically that it is completely unfit to rule.

Vision of a New World

We are entering an epoch of revolution, as has occurred in past periods, only much more profound and consequential. At moments like this, it helps to stand back in order to see the significance of our time, and more critically, the importance of new ideas and of our acting upon them.

To many it may seem that the world as we know it is unraveling. The rules we lived by in bygone times don't seem to apply. The social contract, where it functioned, is in tatters. We contemplate a world full of contradictions, where labor-less production produces an unheard potential of abundance. Yet people are condemned to starve, die homeless, or go without basic necessities for lack of a job. Our freedoms are fast disappearing, victims of the Patriot Act, Homeland Security, and National Security Agency. Like sheep led off to slaughter, we are being prepared by our leaders mind, body and soul for perpetual war.

Europe at the time of the arrival of the Europeans to the Americas in 1492 was still mired in the dark ages of feudalism, despondency, and despair as described by Barbara Tuchman in her book *A Distant Mirror*. Much as today, society was unraveling. The people were losing their faith in the established order in the face of pestilence, incessant wars and peasant uprisings. Jaded by corruption and schisms within the Catholic Church, brutally suppressed when they rose up against the kings and feudal lords, the people were mired in a rigid, hierarchical system and traditions that stifled the development of society and any new ideas. To many, the world was flat, their knowledge of the outside world was limited, and world trade was the tortuous and dangerous Silk Road described by Marco Polo.

The discovery and subsequent exploitation of the Americas changed everything. The plunder and pillage of the New World fueled the development of capitalism in Europe. In 1869 Karl Marx wrote in the first volume of *Capital*: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation."

The world became knowable, navigable, exploitable, and appeared to offer Europeans almost boundless opportunity. The conquest of America and the rise of capitalism forever changed the world, leading to world-wide trade and a new social order.

A NEW DIVISION OF LABOR

From the beginning, a division of labor developed in the new, increasingly interconnected world. Some, like the aborigines of the Americas, were enslaved, forced into missions or exterminated, if they did not flee captivity. When their scant numbers did not suffice for the demands of labor required in

the new world, Africans were introduced as slaves to replace them. Their labors were primarily directed towards enriching colonial empires of Europe. Slavery in the Americas, including the West Indies, as Eric Williams in his pathbreaking work *Capitalism and Slavery* showed, was the foundation upon which world-wide modern capitalism developed

For common everyday Europeans the new division of labor meant being obligated to work for a wage or else starve, as the European peasant was increasingly being driven off the land, much as today, Mexican peasants are being driven off their land by NAFTA. Back then, the burgeoning capitalist enterprise in Europe required a plentiful supply of cheap, readily available manpower, as well as soldiers for its wars of expansion. Stripped of feudal protections and despoiled of their claims to the land, the wages system meant that the former peasant, though nominally free, became a slave to the employers.

The new reality calls for new ideas. We need a communal society where distribution takes place according to need, not profit.

GLOBALIZATION

From the beginning, a difference appeared between the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the Americas, on the one hand, and the English colonies on the other. In his book, *Open Veins of Latin America*, Eduardo Galeano shows that, for the former, the colonies served as a means of enriching the nobility, though it came at the cost of stagnating the mother country's industrial development compared to the rest of Europe. This static, feudal, hierarchical system, with the Catholic Church at its center, was imposed on Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Latin America.

This rule was reinforced by the Spanish Inquisition, which quelled dissent and innovation, both at home and in the colonies. The English, by contrast, were forced to develop a system of mercantilism, and subsequently their industrial capacity. The ethos of Protestantism facilitated these developments.

The North American colonies became a central leg in the triangular trade of the 1600s, operating between the American colonies, the Caribbean, West Africa and Europe. The West Indies plantations depended almost exclusively on slave labor, because a monoculture of sugar or tobacco was more efficient with a large slave labor force than with small, independent white farmers producing the same products. English ships transported slaves from Africa to the islands, and the thirteen colonies provided them with supplies. Sugar, cotton, and tobacco were shipped back to Europe and in turn helped to purchase slaves and finished goods for the trade. This division of labor allowed England to concentrate on shipping, refining and customs revenue.

As commerce and industry developed, especially in the Northern part of the thirteen colonies, the colonial relation with England put a damper on their further economic development.

A PROMISE YET TO BE FULFILLED

The New World offered the English mainland colonialists the hope of a new beginning with religious freedom, abundant land, and economic opportunity. Puritans, displaced farmers, and ruined artisans flocked there, seeking to escape the rigid class structure that stifled their Latin counterparts in the New World and in Europe. Their existence and independent development was tolerated, even encouraged by England, which grew to depend on their participation in the new global trade arrangement.

The American Revolution was born out of the birthing pains of nascent capitalism amid

by U.S. law and politics. Chattel slavery festered and grew into a large-scale industry that ground down human beings to meet the world demand for cotton. It led to wars of aggression such as those against Mexico, fought with the intent of expanding the territory for slavery and countering the political influence of the industrializing Northern states. It took a Civil War to end slavery, yet another century elapsed before full civil rights were granted to the descendants of the former slaves.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NEW IDEAS

Today, we are at a crossroads. As in the previous revolutionary period, everything is in turmoil. All that was sacrosanct is now turned upside down. An economic crisis has been fostered by new means of production as momentous as the conquest of the Americas. The microchip and the computer are creating a social and political crisis. Goods do not sell because jobs are being replaced, and people are starving because they do not have jobs. Yet there is a wealth of goods out there that are not distributed because people do not have wages to buy them. Thus we face the contradiction of starvation in the midst of plenty. Worse yet, we face incessant wars and perhaps a catastrophic nuclear war, as world powers struggle for a shrinking market to sell their goods.

Today we face a new tyranny of heartless corporations that control government in their interests. Without jobs for us, we are worthless to them. That is why they are eliminating unemployment benefits, pensions, and food stamps among other social services.

Capitalism, like feudalism and slavery before it, is coming to the end of its road. The time is ripe for new ideas that correspond to the new reality. The reality is that we need a communal society where goods are distributed according to need and not for profit. The means are within our grasp if we only realize our potential. We can end forever the tyranny of human exploitation.

To get there we have to organize ourselves to achieve the task. The corporations and those that serve them will not voluntarily give us what we need, just as the feudal lords and kings in Europe and the Southern plantation owners in the U.S. did not voluntarily relinquish their power. If we do not rise to the challenge, we face a bleak and heartless world of fascism and destruction that would make the Spanish Inquisition, Hitler's Germany, and the terror of the Ku Klux Klan seem like child's play. But history is with us. We are in a position to achieve the vision of peace, freedom and abundance of which our forbears could only dream.

the decay and destruction of the dying feudal system in Europe. It is no coincidence that Adam Smith's bible of developing capitalism, *The Wealth of Nations*, and the American Declaration of Independence both were published in 1776. The American Revolution was inspired by new ideas born in Europe compatible with the new, developing capitalist system. In 1679, the English philosopher John Locke had promoted a vision of a different world — the universal, natural Rights of Man, particularly the right to own property, democratic governance with checks and balances, and the right of the people to use force against an executive if it did not govern in accordance with those rights. In America, Thomas Paine's 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense* crystallized the essence of what Americans were fighting and dying for by belittling King George III and the tyranny of despots.

The American Revolution inspired revolutions in all of Latin America, and even in Europe. News of its success spread quickly throughout the Americas, leading eventually to wars of independence in Mexico, Haiti, and the rest of Latin America. In its revolution of 1789, France, the U.S.'s ally in defeating the British in the American Revolution, rose up against its monarchy and feudal order. In Latin America, the disadvantages of feudal structures, lack of industrialization, and later, U.S. interventions delayed progress towards the vision of what had been fought for.

Despite the vision of a different world, other contradictions prevailed. In the U.S., rights were only for property owners who were white and male. Though slavery was abolished in Mexico and most of Latin America by 1821, in the U.S. it was so profitable to the Southern planters that it was protected

Only a Cooperative Society Can End Hunger

“More than a billion people suffer from chronic malnutrition... More than thirty million people die of malnutrition and starvation every year - nearly 100,000 every day.” — Global Policy Forum, “World Food and Hunger”.

U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in the 1970s said, “Control oil and you control nations, control food and you control people.” The demand for food is a powerful force, perhaps the most powerful force in social conflict and revolutionary motion: Food riots during the French revolution and the Russian revolution’s banner of Bread and Freedom are two of many examples.

The uniqueness of humans began with our ancestors’ mastery of fire. Fire offered many advantages, including the ability to roast meat. Roasted meat, easier to chew and digest than raw foods and thus a richer source of energy, made possible our larger brains and smaller teeth and guts.

From this remarkable achievement over a million years ago until recent times, a principal activity of human society has been the acquisition, preparation and consumption of food.

For most of human history everyone contributed to acquiring food and consuming it. Human society was organized in a simple form of communism, procuring and producing what was needed with distribution according to need. Everyone worked; everyone ate.

Tools and skills advanced. Flints and spears contributed to more successful hunting. The use of starch grains, pounded into flour with crude mortars and pestles, mixed with water and baked into bread, which was portable, nutrient dense and resisted spoilage, goes back thousands of years before early humans started settling in agricultural communities around 12,000 years ago.

Agricultural production kept pace with human population growth, which numbered around 500 million people by 1500 BC. As populations increased, people extended agriculture to more land and new areas, sufficient to support growing populations. Natural resources were abundant.

With the domestication of animals and cultivation (rather than gathering) of grain and corn, humans started settling down, and more complex organized societies developed over hundreds of generations. The relationship between production and distribution of the earlier communism gave way to new social and political organization in settled agricultural lands. Tools and products now became the possessions of those who used them. Communal ownership or non-ownership of land of the simple hunter-gatherer communities broke down.

Those who controlled the land, tools and food controlled society. With the ability to produce surplus over and above the immediate needs of the family or tribe, those who controlled the surplus controlled how it was distributed over time and to whom.

Some of the surplus was held as seed for future cultivation, or held in storage for

communal use in event of drought, fire or other environmental hazards, and some went to the owning class for their personal satisfaction. This was the beginning of class society, with some owning property and the vast majority working without owning and thus at the mercy of the owning class.

PRIVATE PROPERTY, CLASS AND STATE

Settled communities gave rise to the need for defense against raids and attacks. Now a special group no longer involved in food production came into being — those who governed and those who served as armed defenders and protectors of the owning class. The State — a special apparatus dominating through force — came into being with the beginning of class society.

By the 11th century European improvements in the use of plows and draft animals (whose primitive use began many thousands of years earlier) greatly increased farmers’ ability to cultivate larger fields. Farmers learned how to maintain soil fertility. Within agricultural society, as productive capability grew and surpluses increased, new divisions of labor arose, including artisans, craftsmen, usurers and merchants with expanded trade between communities, trade over continents, and travel and trade across seas to distant continents.

Stage by stage the surplus provided by the increased productivity of agriculture paved the way for the beginnings of manufacture and production of commodities for sale. By the 1800s food surpluses were sufficient to support urban populations and factory workers.

Commodity production provided the capital that made possible the industrial revolution. Wool and cotton provided the raw materials for the textile industry, while the peasants thrown off the land provided labor for the factories. No longer fed by the land they worked, their survival depended upon wages.

A new class of owners of private property arose to challenge the supremacy of the landowners and kings and feudal lords. Fierce revolutionary battles were fought as society made the transition from an agricultural base to an industrial base of production and from feudalism to capitalism, (and in the case of the Soviet Union, to industrialization under the leadership of the proletariat.)

Agricultural productivity increased dramatically, requiring fewer and fewer workers on the land. In the 1850s, in the U.S., rural labor was 60% of the total workforce; 40% in 1900; 15% in 1950; and 2% since 1995.

FROM INDUSTRY TO INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE TO SPECULATION

The 1960s marked the beginning of industrial agriculture. Chemical inputs, mechanized methods of farming and food production became the norm. Industrial animal agriculture began as large numbers were raised in

crowded indoor facilities. These developments resulted in dramatic yield increases along with significant hidden costs to society in disease and environmental degradation.

Corporate giants linking consumers and producers have subordinated both to their will. By controlling international markets for grains, fertilizers, pesticides and seeds, corporate giants Cargill, Nestlé, Monsanto, ConAgra, and Archer Daniels Midland dominate the world’s food system from the farm to the supermarket. Large supermarket owners and farm equipment manufacturers also profit as agribusiness giants.

At the present time, in the era of electronic production, with capital seeking financial gain through asset inflation and financial manipulation, speculation is causing havoc with prices at both producing and consuming ends. To secure favorable positions in the financial market, the corporate giants and speculators are rapidly creating a global market for agricultural land, bringing other powerful actors into the system of profiteering from food.

They shape government food policy. They squeeze out small farmers, promote energy-hungry industrial agriculture, and create an unsustainable system of production and distribution.

MERGER OF STATE AND CORPORATIONS

This orgy of speculation was made possible by deregulation in the U.S. financial sector, which began with the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act in 1999. More recently, and particularly in regards to food policy, the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000 (CFMA) exempted commodity futures trading from regulatory oversight.

Speculators withheld huge amounts of food from entering the market, contributing to volatile price increases. Edward Miller, in an article published in the October 5, 2011 issue of *Global Research*, wrote that “Between 2005 and 2008 the price of maize nearly tripled, wheat prices increased by 127%, and rice by 170%. Throughout the crisis at least 40 million people were driven into hunger, and the number of people driven into extreme poverty rose from 130 to 150 million.” Food riots erupted across the developing world, from Haiti to Mozambique.

“And worse,” he continued, “this speculation wasn’t limited to the 2007-2008 period. While commodity prices fell again in 2009, the latter half of 2010 saw them again skyrocket, reaching an all-time high at the end of that year and remaining high into this year. Today over a billion people remain hungry while wealthy investors continue to reap huge profits by gambling on the stomachs of the world’s most vulnerable.”

Attempts to reestablish control over speculation through the Dodd-Frank bill of 2010 have been thwarted by the corporations and speculators who dominate the federal government.

Further, instead of alleviating the distress of impoverished families unable to afford

the increased prices of food, the U.S. government cut food stamp benefits by 13.6%. 48 million Americans — that’s one in seven — receives the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. In almost half of the households receiving help someone is working. This means a loss of approximately nine dollars per person per month.

People who rely on food stamps are facing their second threat in less than three months. As lawmakers finalize a new farm bill it’s widely reported the law will cut another \$9 billion from food stamps over the next decade, depriving more than 800,000 households of up to \$90 in aid per month.

The demand for food is at the heart of uprisings around the world. With the increasingly extreme polarity between those with gluttonous wealth and those who face hunger and starvation, such uprisings are inevitable in the U.S. also.

FROM COMMUNISM TO COMMUNISM

Scientists have estimated that when society was organized in the simple form of communism, the world population was under 3 million people. Today the global population is greater than 7 billion. During the ensuing millennia humanity has made tremendous strides in producing food. In the days of hunting and gathering all or almost all humans were involved in obtaining food for the family or tribe, and even as agricultural settlements became the norm, the vast majority of people were needed to work the land. Hardship and privation were common.

The astonishing increase in technology and agricultural knowledge has freed humans from agricultural labor. Instead of most people working the land, now the world can have all their food needs satisfied by the work of only 2% of the labor force, thus freeing the vast majority for other pursuits.

What stands in the way of distributing this potential abundance for the benefit of all the peoples of the world is the system of private property, the private ownership of land and resources, and the State which protects the interests of private property.

The end of hunger and starvation — providing nourishment for the billions who are malnourished, and saving the lives of hundreds of thousands who die daily of hunger in a world of agricultural richness — can only be achieved by ending private ownership of land and resources, and establishing a system of communal ownership with distribution according to need.

Understand the World, Make History

Revolutionaries need to understand the world in order to change it. We have to understand the laws of change and development that define what's possible. The content of our time lies in an electronic revolution that makes possible advanced economic communism. By this we mean a society based in an economy that distributes life's necessities according to need, in which human effort and natural resources are shared in a sustainable process, not plundered for private profit.

Society is in transition from an economy based in labor power as a value-producing commodity to one based on laborless production. Political laws cannot overturn economic laws. We can use this understanding to fight for the kind of society this new law system makes possible. We can unleash revolutionary forces and impulses to change the world for the better, which depends on how we understand the world and humanity's place in it.

Dialectics defines how change happens. Philosophical materialism recognizes a material world exists outside of our imaginings. Dialectical and historical materialism is a scientific approach to social human development and is fundamental to understanding the revolutionary process.

What have revolutionaries using this science concluded? The world is an interconnected whole; humankind lives interactively with the environment. We need to master the laws of, not over, nature. These laws allow us to define the particular, indispensable stages of historical development.

For most of human history, people have lived in societies without private property.

Our ancestors lived with natural production and cooperation about 50,000 years ago, and only about 5,000 years with private ownership of wealth. There is nothing natural about humans and private property.

Humankind is, however, a social, tool-making species. Humankind produces, and uses its physical and mental power to satisfy human needs. Every major leap in human development is marked by a leap in our ability to manipulate our environment, for good and evil.

The tools or technology we create, the way we organize ourselves to use these tools and the human interactions that arise in this process, change and develop both humanity and nature itself. One of the best, most succinct statements from Karl Marx is in his *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, "In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces..." Progress is a question of progression, of change through time, not a moral thing. In this sense, humankind makes history.

Today, systems of private property have consumed almost all other forms of property. This was not the choice of individuals or even classes. Although individuals or small groupings of individuals can and do separate themselves from this process, the process itself cannot be undone.

With the latest form of private property, capitalism, human labor itself became a commodity, bought and sold on the market. The law of maximization of profit in a capitalist

International Woman's Day: Women's Revolutionary Role

International Woman's Day serves as an excellent opportunity to celebrate the continuing and historic contributions of outstanding women in every field of human life. It also offers an opportunity to consider the roles played by women in general within society. This day is heavily politicized and calls forth attention to women's role in revolution. However, no analysis would be complete without acknowledging the injustice of women's historic economic and social inequality that calls for such a day.

In every society organized around private property male supremacy in one form or another has reigned. Under the exploitive conditions demanded by various forms of property both men and women have been forced into roles independent and outside of their wills. These positions were class positions. Because of women's subjugated position in the revolutionary class, they play a leading role in the revolutionary process.

At no point in time in any given society has each and every woman individually accepted the subordinate role demanded of her. Many women throughout history have rejected the notion that their contribution to society should be constrained or limited simply because they were born women.

Women played leading roles in every revolution of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Women as women had a particular stake in leaving the bondage of agrarian life and moving towards industrial society. Women today are at the forefront of every struggle. Whether it is the fight against foreclosure, the struggle to save education, or resisting the growing police State, women are leading the fight. The demand for the basic equality of half our population is inextricably bound to the emancipation of our class as a whole. A new day is on the horizon; new victories are possible. Women continue to lead the way.

system can function because of the law of value; that is, humans can create surplus value, more value than needed to reproduce the human species itself. As Karl Marx pointed out in Volume I of *Capital*, labor power is the only commodity "whose use value possesses the peculiar property of being the source of value."

Through much of the history of private property, appropriation, production and exchange of things took place on the basis of individual ownership and use of tools. With industrialization, production became social.

In industrialized capitalist countries individual capitalists appropriated the value created by human labor, guaranteeing class struggle between the producers and owners of wealth. In those industrial societies where working people used their class power to capture the surplus value of society for the social needs of society as a whole, revolutionaries, relying on the program of a new industrial working class, fought to make whole nations operate collectively. These revolutionaries made government the administration of things rather than the administration of people. The Russian, Chinese and Cuban communist revolutions did this, but before the era of electronic production and abundance, before human labor power as a commodity became redundant.

These valiant experiments have much to teach us. Humans have fought throughout class history to establish collectivization and cooperation among small sub-sets of society. These communist revolutions, however, went far beyond utopian impulses for collective ownership. They won the hearts and minds of generations of revolutionaries around the globe because for the first time they replaced State (class) power based in private property relations with State (class) power based in common public ownership.

But today the objective basis for communism exists. The laws of capitalism are based in the law of value-creating labor. Global investment capital strides the earth, pirating humanity's inherited wealth while grabbing vast reservoirs of earth's resources, but the dominance of labor-replacing electronics ultimately means the end of the production of value. Eliminating human labor in production creates a break in continuity with capitalism as well as private property itself. This lays the basis for a social revolution on an entirely new scale.

A new law system is beginning to operate. The growth of fascism today is a result of the rulers' attempts to protect private property relations without a producing class. It is a time of great danger. But the changing conditions are also creating a new social force, a new class that cannot live with private property. It must break the political power of the capitalists and in doing so break the power of private property in any form. It is objectively communist.

As a species our self-consciousness strives to put us in right relation to ourselves and to the planet we live in. Human consciousness and the creative property of human labor can be applied to the struggle for a society consistent with the new economic realities. That consciousness depends on revolutionaries who will do everything within their power to make this new class realize its historic potential.

Building Block articles help explain a basic concept of the revolutionary process, challenging readers to explore its meaning for political work in today's environment.

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