

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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The Wall Will Fall – The American People Don't Separate Families

The struggle to unite Americans against the government's attacks on immigrants and the separation of their families is growing. Recently a revolutionary, who is part of that nationwide effort, traveled to Tijuana, México to talk with members of the Migrant Caravan, who had arrived from Honduras:

She writes, "As a child, I was not allowed to go to sleep-overs. I hated that all my friends went, but I was not allowed. Now I understand that my undocumented parents never felt safe, and they avoided all scenarios that might bring them in contact with law enforcement of any kind. Recently I was in Tijuana as part of the humanitarian efforts of thousands of U.S. workers, who bring blankets, diapers, baby formula, and toiletries for the refugees from Central America. I spoke with Tania, 22, who left her two children in her native Honduras, because she was afraid of not being able to protect them during the dangerous journey. She cried as she revealed that she left at 2 am, without saying goodbye. Sandra was also afraid of what would happen to her children if she left them. She brought her kids with her and watched them cry and suffer from too much walking and little nourishment. Now that they survived the arduous journey, she is afraid her children will be taken from her by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)."

TERROR AT THE BORDER

Most Americans cannot imagine the terror and trauma of parents, who are ripped apart from their children by ICE, or any government agency that separates (or tear gases) hungry and desperate families. A recent memo and federal audit confirm that the Trump administration separated thousands more children than was previously known. The Trump administration and then-Attorney-General Jeff Sessions implemented a policy of terror against refugees to keep them out of the U.S. The separations began in 2017 but were never formally announced until May 2018 by Sessions, as part of the administration's "zero-tolerance" policy.

In mid-December 2018, the population of migrant children was approaching 15,000, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) was running out of bed space in its network of 130 shelters. When the largest shelter, the desert tent camp in Tornillo, Texas, refused to extend its contract, ORR made an abrupt policy change that streamlined how it screens sponsors. As reported by National Public Radio, an email from Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) stated that as of January 20, 2019, the number of children in its care had decreased to 10,700 because of releases to



Members of the Migrant Caravan maintaining their tent city at Campo Benito Juarez in Tijuana B.C. Mexico. This man is one of the 7,000 migrants who arrived there from Central America in December 2018. Photo: Margarito Diaz

sponsors – down from a peak of 14,600 the previous month. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported that the ORR part of the HHS arrangement with ICE uses "children as bait to catch the sponsors and put them into removal proceedings. We know because they've put it in writing and said that they're doing it."

Numerous lawsuits claim the government is using child confinement as a way to punish and deport kids and their families. When family members step forward to take a migrant child into their household, ICE agents will arrest the sponsor if they're in the country unlawfully. According to lawyers involved, over the past year 170 sponsors have been arrested and put into deportation proceedings. They used the children as bait for people willing to sponsor them – knowing this would cause longer detentions for children.

Now we have learned they never bothered to develop a tracking system, so even though the administration was court-ordered to reunite families, they don't know where thousands of children are – they are "lost" in the system.

GLOBALIZATION SEPARATES FAMILIES

Family separation policies are part of the ruling class strategy on how it plans to deal with growing numbers of desperate and hungry people on both sides of the border. Today we face a globalized capitalist class that operates factories with more robots and fewer people, pushing millions of workers worldwide

out of production and into the growing class of the permanently jobless and impoverished.

Poverty leads to incarceration in the U.S. In fact when asked about the policy at the border, Kirstjen Nielsen, former Secretary of Homeland Security said, "We do it every day in every part of the country." According to the *New York Times*, an estimated quarter of a million American children have a single mother in jail, many awaiting trials, accused of committing minor offenses.

Part of the ruling class strategy is to attack and build walls to divide us. They attack and blame migrants to deflect from the fact that they are abandoning all workers. Research shows that on average, families need an income of about twice the federal poverty level to cover basic expenses. Using this standard, 43 percent of children in the U.S. live in low-income families. This is why there are 400,000 children in the foster care system,

and many of these children are also torn from their parents. Sociology Professor Christopher Wildeman from Cornell University, explains that children are often placed in foster care because of "abuse," but that it is not abuse. It is more a form of "neglect" that is related to poverty. For example, when families cannot afford to pay water bills and the water is turned off, children are removed by social services departments.

These attacks on families from both sides of the border may seem unrelated, but they are not. Every ruling class attack is an attempt that is designed to divide and isolate us. This is why they are whipping up fears of unemployment and terrorism among U.S. workers, whose hunger is making them more and more desperate.

As the visitor to the Caravan explained, "This is in stark contrast to my father's era, because he was able to take free welding classes at a community college and get a welding job at a shipyard that operated almost 24 hours a day, employing thousands of workers on three shifts. On one salary, my migrant parents bought a little house in Compton, California and took mini-vacations. It cost them about \$75 per quarter to send their daughter to the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA). Today, this is no longer possible for most workers in this country."

This is why they are peddling fear and hate among hungry and increasingly desperate people. These violent attacks on migrants and violence against U.S. workers are all inter-related. The ruling class has no meaningful solutions for workers they do not need. This is their weakness. They have no choice, but to continue these attacks to maintain control, in a new era where the production process is excluding more and more workers.

According to U.S. immigration policy, hunger does not qualify people for asylum, just like they are telling California fire victims and Puerto Rico hurricane victims they do not qualify for assistance. The rulers want the hungry and increasingly desperate people

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Common Thread Connects All Struggles

Inside Rally, Comrades!

The 2020 election season is already upon us. A crowded field of candidates is vying for the support of our class and its allegiance. Our class is engaged in struggles taking place around the world, where people are protesting for their basic needs, for the political rights to guarantee those needs, and to put in place leaders who are accountable to their demands.

There is a common thread that runs through and connects all of these struggles. That common thread is a vision of new society that fulfills all the needs we are fighting for – food, clothing, shelter, clean water, full access to healthcare, but also something more than that. We also demand a society that unleashes all its knowledge and resources to guarantee its people an increasingly secure and cultured life. This vision is not only realizable today, it is the only practical solution to the problems we face.

"Change in Thinking Key to Our Future" shows that whoever who wants to change a given situation operates under given conditions. If there is not a scientific understanding of those conditions, it is difficult to achieve their goals. The political and ideological preparation of the people for revolution can only come through the struggle for reform. There is no revolution without a struggle for reform. At the same time, no reform can be won without the political power to get that reform. How do revolutionaries develop the consciousness of those fighting for their food, shelter, and

clothing, while at the same time showing them a vision of communism and the necessity of gaining the political power to achieve it?

What are the favorable conditions for achieving this vision today? "The Coming Crash" shows that robotic, computerized, digital electronics replaces human labor. That means the end of wage-labor, which means the end of capitalism. As electronic, laborless production expels more members of today's new class of workers from the economy, they are drawn into a fight for their very survival. They constitute a powerful force, capable of putting humanity on course towards constructing a new society that is compatible with the new tools of production, a society organized to create an abundance that is distributed to all those in need. None of this is automatic. It requires human agency. A class conscious of itself, which understands how we got here and where we have to go, can begin to think strategically about how to move the whole process forward, from a world dominated by private property, to a cooperative communist society that can provide for all.

These new conditions also bring our class new strengths it did not have before. As explained in "Juneteenth: 'Bottom Rail on Top this Time!'" our country's history and the policies of the ruling class caused African American workers to suffer disproportionately from the electronic revolution. Yet, this same economic revolution is also moving towards an equality of poverty among the new class of workers, regardless of color or national origins, creating a material foundation for breaking the formula of control that has divided and exploited workers since the inception of the country. Because the African

American question always has been at the center of American history, the historical aspirations of the African Americans for full equality, have driven the struggle for democracy for the entire working class. Today that struggle is finally realizable.

"The Wall Will Fall: American People Don't Separate Families" shows what the struggle at the border teaches us about the potential for unity, which lies in the growing equality of poverty. The attacks on families from both sides of the border may seem unrelated, but they are not. Every ruling class attack is designed to divide and isolate us as a class, both nationally and internationally. Understanding that our conditions are related to our new position in society – as "unnecessary" workers – is a first step towards being able to improve our conditions. The first step is always the hardest, but by taking this one we become clear that it is the corporations and the ruling class that are the "unnecessary" ones.

"Citizens United and the Future of Democracy" shows that the fight for political democracy today can no longer be separated from the battle for the basic economic demands of the workers: food, water, housing, health care, and education. By providing an in-depth historical look at the political current of "Progressivism" in American politics, the article allows revolutionaries to discern the difference between the progressives of the past, who sought to corral workers to support capitalism, and those calling themselves progressives today whose campaigns can unleash real working class politics, based on the demands for human necessities. **RC**

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.

Editor: Brooke Heagerty

Editorial Board: Bob Brown, Kimberly King, John Slaughter, Steve Teixeira, Mary Kay Yarak

Photo Editor: Daymon Hartley

Design: Brett Jelínek

Reach us at: RALLY@LRNA.ORG

League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Today, whether through words or deeds, vast numbers of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions. The League's mission is to unite 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 cooperative society. Such a society must be based on the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need.

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

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

Change in Thinking is Key to Our Future

From the Editors

Millions of people are starting to engage in an effort to reform our society. Success depends on understanding under what conditions reform can be achieved. America is a very special place. It is so big and so rich that the American people have this idea that they can do anything they want to do. They believe that all they have to do is organize for it and gather the forces to do it. As the study of society became scientific, it was established that while it is true that human beings create their own history, they do so under definite conditions. This applies doubly so in the fight for reform.

Whoever who wants to change a given situation operates under given conditions. If there is not a scientific understanding of those conditions, it is very difficult to achieve their goals. There is an objective view and a subjective view about reform and its relationship to revolution. The objective view is that society is built upon and reflects the economy. What this implies, is that every quantitative change in the economy demands a corresponding change in the social relations and the social order. The word “reform” means to restructure, to change the situation into an improved form or condition.

When the fundamental economic base of society changes, the superstructure (expressed in society’s institutions, and relations between classes and people) must be reformed. Any discussion about the struggle for reform has to begin with an examination of the changes in the foundation that will allow for that reform actually to take place.

Today any further reform under capitalism is absolutely impossible, because there are no reforms left within the quantitative development of capitalist industrial production. The capitalist system is over. The computer, and everything the computer means – globalization and robotics – is spelling an end to the capitalist system. When jobs are replaced by electronics in one sector of the economy after the other, the whole cycle of distribution through buying and selling is disrupted.

It is very important that we see this; otherwise we just hang onto the idea that we can make a reform, if we just get enough strength to force this reform. You can force a concession, but there is a distinction between what a concession is and what is a reform. A concession can be won one year and taken back the next. This has happened over and over

as it exists today. America is at an important nodal line in history, and revolutionaries have to think this process through, to be able to fight forward and win. How do we develop the consciousness of those fighting for their food, shelter, and clothing, while at the same time showing them a vision and the necessity of gaining the political power to achieve it.

The political and ideological preparation of the people for revolution can only come through the struggle for reform. There is no revolution without a struggle for reform. Yet, no reform can be won without the political power to get that reform. Revolutionaries fight for the basic demands of the class while at the same time showing them a vision of communism and the necessity of gaining the political power to achieve it.

again through things like congressional budgets and union contracts. There has to be a fight for concessions – we can’t just let the ruling class attack us and get away with it, just because we can’t immediately revolutionize society. But we’ve also got to understand that there is no foundation to make that concession permanent.

Generally, a reform cannot be taken back. The dialectic is that whatever reform is achieved today is going to come as the result of a revolution. The other part of that dialectic is, that the political and ideological preparation of the people for revolution can only come through the struggle for reform. There is no revolution without a struggle for reform. At the same time, no reform can be won without the political power to get that reform. We cannot get that political power without the destruction of the State apparatus

The ruling class knows what they are doing. They have ruled for a long time. They have what the army calls standard operating procedures for how to rule the country. The capitalist class knows that if they control the minds of the people, it doesn’t matter how militantly people fight against oppressive conditions. So, at the end of a particular struggle, the people may gain a concession but haven’t gained a reform that can be counted upon. No change is possible without a fight, but without new ideas and vision for a new future, the struggle will only go so far.

Revolutionaries have to use the struggle for reform in order to educate. Because of the anti-communist propaganda fostered over decades, putting forward the real solution to the poverty and oppression of today is rejected by the very people who need to think differently about their problems. Revolutionaries

are going to have to find their way through this in spite of the difficulty.

The first step is to get an estimate of the situation. We have to understand what the strong points and weak points are of the enemy that we are fighting. We have to determine the weak point of the enemy and attack there. As long as the people believe what their enemy thinks, the ruling class has control over them. Developing consciousness is an intellectual process.

The economic well-being, and therefore the morality of the American people depends on the transformation to communism, the public ownership of the means of production, and distribution of the results of that production according to need. We can proceed from the poll where 37 percent of the American people believe that socialism is better than capitalism. Human history shows that the people will fight in their economic interest.

The capitalists are ripping the American people off right and left and shutting everybody up with one word: communism. This is not only their strong point. It is their weak point. It is their weak point because, if American people overcome their anti-communism, there is no way to stop them from destroying capitalism as it exists today.

What is the force that can be relied on to win this fight? A new section of the working class is being pushed to the fore. This section has been put in a very desperate situation, with no means to pay for homes, clothing, and food. Among this section are revolutionaries, those who have a sense of being part of a class. They see the need to not only fight for a home for some of the homeless, or to prevent a few families from being imprisoned as they cross the border, or for some children to be fed and educated. They are beginning to see that new answers are called for. With an economy based on electronic production, there is an abundance of everything humans need to thrive. The ruling class encourages the workers to attack their own class brothers and sisters. Any chance for a humane future rests on the unity of our class based on its common interests. **RC**

The Wall Will Fall... (Continued from page 1)

in the U.S. to blame and attack the often hungrier and desperate people on both sides of the border.

Is it working? A recent Gallup poll reveals that 61 percent of the American people oppose deporting all the undocumented in the country, 60 percent of Americans oppose a border wall and 81 percent want a pathway to citizenship for immigrants without green cards.

CLASS UNITY A NECESSITY

Today, working class unity is more than just a dream or a demand. It is the only way actually to ensure survival for millions of people. High-tech capitalism has produced a global ruling class, including billionaires like Mexico’s Carlos Slim Helú, the fourth richest person on earth. As they utilize robotics to make workers unnecessary, they add to the already terrible poverty in the poorest countries, while also creating growing equality of poverty amongst millions of workers in the wealthier countries. In the U.S., millions of workers have lost the standard of living, once given them as

a social bribe for supporting the system’s wars and inequality. Workers of all colors and nationalities are now part of a class, whose conditions provide the material foundation for understanding themselves as an objectively communist class, whose needs can not be met under capitalism.

Understanding that our conditions are related to our new position in society – as “unnecessary” workers – is the first step to being able to move toward improving our conditions. The first step is always the hardest, but once we take it, it will be clear that it is the corporations that are the “unnecessary” ones.

We can end the suffering of our communities, by taking control of the corporations that control both parties. We can use these tremendously productive, new technologies to support our healing, education, and enjoyment, by ending wars and saving the planet. Start today by sharing and discussing this article, do your own research, and join the League of Revolutionaries for a New America! Reach out to us! We deserve a better world. **RC**

Join the League of Revolutionaries for a New America!

Society can now create the abundance the new technology promises, and so a new world: a cooperative society, with this abundance distributed according to need. In spite of worsening economic conditions, 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.

Join us! For more information or a free information packet, email LRNA at info@lrna.org, or call 773-486-0028, or write LRNA, P.O. Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647. Sign up and stay informed at rallycomrades.lrna.org/contact-us

Juneteenth 2019: ‘Bottom Rail on Top this Time!’

During the U.S. Civil War, a formerly enslaved African American Union soldier, upon seeing his former “master” with other captured Confederate soldiers said, “Hello, massa, bottom rail on top this time.” The Civil War was a revolution that ended with the greatest redistribution of wealth the world had ever known, expropriating \$4 billion in slaves as property, and returning it to the formerly enslaved themselves. That war would not have been won without the joint efforts of white Union soldiers and Black Union soldiers (many of whom were recently freed slaves).

But, unlike the Civil War, where the overthrow of Reconstruction led to the virtual re-enslavement of African Americans, today the ruling class has declared war on workers of all colors and national origins. Today is different and the workers can win for good this time, because a new class of workers is being created by the growth of labor-replacing technology in the production process. The new class has been pushed out of the current economy and requires a new society with distribution based on need. The political unity of the new class is necessary to obtain the political power to reconstruct society. To play its historic role, the development of the political consciousness of the new class is of utmost importance.

EQUALITY OF POVERTY OFFERS HOPE FOR REVOLUTION

About 140 million people in the U.S. live in families with insufficient income to meet their basic needs, such as food, housing, and health care. So many people are suffering because decent paying jobs with benefits are becoming rare. At the same time, safety net programs are being withdrawn, accompanied by State efforts to demonize those who need them. This was seen in the recent wrestling to the floor of young mother Jazmine Headley, with babe in arms, by security guards in a public assistance office, and the wrenching of migrant children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border. All members of the new class are facing a deteriorating standard of living that is making it hard to survive.

For much of U.S. history, a material bribe, in the form of better jobs, salaries, and housing opportunities, was provided to some workers as a political tactic to create a loyal mass base for the ruling class. This bribed sector was predominantly, though not exclusively, white. Such bribery was justified by vicious propaganda, dividing workers along the lines of color, nationality, religion, and immigration status.

Today, robotic production and sophisticated computer programs are permanently eliminating more jobs than they can create, step-by-step eliminating both the industrial-era working class and the system in which it developed. We are witnessing the emergence of a new class, a section of workers being pushed outside the economy, hence beyond any material bribe. Their very survival is at risk until society is reorganized to distribute the social product according to need, instead

of according to the ability to pay.

African Americans have suffered profoundly and disproportionately from the revolution of labor-replacing production under the policies of the ruling class. They were often the last hired, due to past discrimination in training and hiring and, therefore, the first fired when factories were automated, placing African Americans at the core of the developing new class.

The aspiration of African Americans for full equality has always driven the struggle for democracy for the entire working class. Today, by uniting on our common class interests, the vision of a new society can be won for good, for workers of all colors and national origins. ‘Bottom rail on top this time!’

In the continued gaps between the economic status of Black and white families today, we see reflected the legacy of slavery and the super-exploitation of the Southern worker, which set the basis for bribery and inequality. In 2016, African Americans and Latinos earned a median household income of \$38,555 and \$46,882, respectively, compared to a white median household income of \$63,155. The poverty rate is almost 24 percent for African Americans but 10 percent for white Americans. While inequality among different segments of the working class still exists, the direction is towards equality of poverty among the new class of workers being expelled from the economy, as a result of digital technology applied to production.

Indicators of health and well-being provide additional evidence that the gap is closing between Black and white workers. Over the past 15 years, white Americans have experienced rising rates of suicide, drug overdose, and poor mental health. Although today’s rate of Black incarceration is 6.4 times that of whites, it is also true that since 2000 the imprisonment rate among African-American women has dropped 47 percent, while the rate among white women has risen by 56 percent, shrinking the racial disparity in women’s imprisonment by two-thirds. The rate of incarceration among African-American men remains high but has decreased by 22 percent since 2000, while the rate for white men went up four percent. The number of fatal shootings by law enforcement is on pace to hit nearly 1,000 for the fourth year in a row, and Black victims were twice as likely to be unarmed as whites. However, although the rate by which Blacks are killed by police is still higher than for whites, the number of whites killed is higher.

The growing equality of poverty of the new class is creating the foundation for po-

litical unity of the class that is becoming a threat to the system of private property, which refuses to provide for its basic needs. In response, the State is forced to attack broader segments of the new class to defend private property.

RULING CLASS EFFORTS TO STOP UNITY

A politically united working class will

challenge the power of the ruling class. Messages that foment division and blame working people’s problems on our class sisters and brothers are highlighted rather than the actual cause – the system of private property. The ruling class is drawing upon the worst aspects of American history, including white supremacy, to sacrifice bourgeois democracy and put in place a new fascist State to maintain its control nationwide. This includes the cultivation of a social base to consolidate and support fascist rule.

President Trump loudly condemned football players for kneeling to protest police murders of unarmed Black people, and he wrote an executive order to separate babies from parents at the Mexico-U.S. Border. He refers to asylum-seeking Central American migrants as “invaders,” but has refused to condemn unequivocally white supremacists or murders of unarmed people by police. This is meant to divide us. The popularity of President Trump’s nationalist rhetoric among some segments of the working class, the increase in white supremacist groups and hate crimes against African Americans, Jews, and others since 2014, suggests the growth of a fascist social base. While the form of the attacks is usually white supremacy, the actual purpose is to prevent the new class from uniting and threatening the system of ruling class private property.

Divide and conquer is a longtime tactic of the U.S. ruling class to hide the nature of class oppression and prevent unity among workers. Before the 1700s, African and European indentured servants and slaves made love, married, lived as neighbors and liked or disliked each other according to personality, not skin color. They also rebelled and ran away together, which needed to be crushed for the ruling class to maintain its power. The concept of race is a political construction creat-

ed, reinforced and used by the ruling class to justify slavery and divide people with the same class interests under capitalism. Racial ideology was used again when there was an opportunity for real democracy following the Civil War.

The industrial economy of the North still needed the raw materials provided by the agricultural economy of the South, and therefore still needed slave-like conditions. African Americans and poor whites found themselves tied to the land of the former slaveowners. Approximately two-thirds of all sharecroppers were white. But, 85 percent of all Black farmers in Mississippi in 1900 did not own the land they farmed, compared to 36 percent of all white farmers. For African Americans, the tie to sharecropping was enforced by Black Codes, Jim Crow segregation laws, and the violent terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan. Between 1882-1968, there were 4,743 lynchings in the United States. Of those who were lynched, 3,446 or 73 percent were Black. Many of the 1,297 whites lynched were lynched for helping Black people or for being anti-lynching. Thus, poor whites were again encouraged to identify with the white rulers, in return for the benefit and the increased safety of not being Black.

SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS

Our class needs to see the world as it truly is, not as the ruling class wants us to see it. The truth is that by uniting on our common class interests, the workers can defeat the plans of the ruling class. The truth is that we need and can have, a cooperative economic system that provides for all, compatible with the new technologies. Achieving this is the program of the new class. The truth is the digital revolution is eliminating the need for human labor in production and creating a new class of workers, who are marginally employed or permanently unemployed. According to research from Oxford University, about 47 percent of jobs will be replaced by computer automation by 2034. The new class – a new section of the working class, is outside of private property relations and has no stake in them. Only with a revolution, that brings into alignment the way the necessities of life are distributed with the way they are produced, can the new class survive.

The truth is that the history of the political construction of race and the bribe explain the relative economic position of African Americans today. However, the elimination of jobs by labor-replacing technology is closing the poverty gap among workers of different colors in the new class. The new class can break free of centuries of thinking that ignores our common bonds of class, if revolutionaries fight for this understanding. The abundance that can be provided by today’s advanced technology will be shared in the interests of all of humanity and the earth. Together, we will fulfill the vision of the freed slave, bottom rail on top this time! **RC**

Citizens United and the Future of Democracy

The 2010 U.S. Supreme Court *Citizens United* decision marked a turning point in the fascist merger of corporations and the State. It also marked the death knell of old, twentieth-century-style Progressivism as a political alignment and ideology. There is no turning back.

Many candidates today call themselves “progressives.” Revolutionaries are responsible for discerning the difference between those trying to corral workers to support capitalism, like the old progressives, and those whose campaigns may unleash real working class politics, based on the demands for human necessities. The fight for political democracy today can no longer be separated from the battle for the basic economic demands of the workers: food, water, housing, health care, and education. Political democracy can only be won with economic democracy: public ownership of corporations and redirection of their resources for public benefit.

America’s crisis of democracy is not an accident or mystery or caused by the will of any individual. It is the result of objective and fundamental changes in our underlying economy. Ever since the 1970s, we have been undergoing a dramatic, step by step revolution in our means of production. Technological advances – microchips, computers, smartphones, software, 3D printing, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and social media – are transforming society as we know it, eliminating the necessity for human labor in production. This is creating a new class of workers, who are politically dangerous to the ruling class because they essentially exist outside the formal productive process. They are increasingly plunged into poverty, and, to survive, they are forced to confront the system politically.

At the same time, corporations that no longer need workers can no longer tolerate interference by those responding to the demands of working class constituencies. They are forced to launch a fascist offensive, what economist James Buchanan called a “constitutional revolution.” By this, he meant that it was no longer sufficient for the ruling class to support candidates, or advise politicians, or advocate for one or another law or reform. He argued that it was necessary to rewrite the U.S. Constitution itself, essentially along the lines of the 1980 Pinochet constitution in Chile, to further protect private property and eliminate the trappings of democracy and majority rule.

FIGHT AGAINST MONOPOLIES

We cannot hope to repel or defeat this fascist revolution, unless we step back and review how we got here. One of the most widely quoted observations in the anti-Trump resistance today is the one by twentieth-century Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis. “We must make our choice,” he said. “We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can’t have both.”

Brandeis was one of the most influential leaders of the early twentieth century American political movement now generally called Progressivism. Progressivism was an all-class alignment of contradictory interests made possible by the expansion of U.S. capital into the South, Latin America, and the Pacific

after the Spanish-American War. It grew out of the bitter defeat of the populist movement of the 1880s and 1890s. The early populists were primarily farmers, farmworkers, and industrial workers, organized around agricultural cooperatives, currency reform, early industrial unionism, and profound democratic ideals dating back to the American Revolution. Led by small property owners, their dominant ideology was one of implacable hostility to the industrial and financial monopolies of the day.

However, by 1900 the farmers that led the populists were rapidly declining as a share of the population. The People’s Party was marginalized in 1896, and the overall populist movement was effectively divided along color lines and crushed by the bloody imposition of Jim Crow in the South.

The fight for political democracy today can no longer be separated from workers’ battle for their basic economic demands. Political democracy can only be won with economic democracy: reorganization of the economy and the redirection of society’s resources for public benefit.

HISTORY OF PROGRESSIVISM

What remained was Progressivism, an uneasy alliance of farmers, workers, and small business, along with the very monopoly corporations that they had been unable to defeat politically. Led by presidents like Woodrow Wilson and the two Roosevelts, Progressivism reached its apex in the New Deal and post-WWII period.

As a political movement, with the rhetoric of defending the common person, Progressivism was used by the ruling class to facilitate the expansion of capital, divide the workers, and bind them ideologically to the system. It succeeded because the rapidly growing economy made reforms possible. Partial working class victories from the early twentieth century through the 1940s included prohibiting railroad rebates to corporations, the Pure Food and Drug Act, the Tillman Act outlawing corporate campaign contributions, the creation of the Federal Trade Commission, and the host of regulations and programs passed during the 1930s New Deal. But all these limited reforms were fatally compromised by their entanglement with Jim Crow fascism in the South and imperialist expansion overseas.

Progressivism from the 1930s on – especially its Democratic Party variety – was the main political vehicle the ruling class used, to tie the decisive sectors of the working class to capitalism and its policies throughout the twentieth century. It was made acceptable by a rising standard of living, based on the super-profits of the postwar, worldwide expansion of capitalism. U.S. working class politics revolved around the so-called Roosevelt Coalition that was built on a split in the ruling class between national industrialists and international financiers. Workers depended on this coalition to deliver union benefits, pensions,

education, and health care to their organized sector. In the 1960s, the civil rights movement set out to spread these benefits to the working class as a whole, regardless of color.

DEREGULATION AND AUSTERITY

The deep recession and “stagflation” of the 1970s saw the dismantling of the Roosevelt coalition. The Reagan administration of the early 1980s effectively ended the split in the ruling class, inflicting sharp interest rate increases that wiped out an enormous section of U.S. industry and agriculture and brought them effectively under the control of global finance. Ever since then, Democrats and Republicans alike, have united around a program of deregulation and austerity.

While Democrats held onto the rhetoric

of Progressivism, their actual programs effectively undid it step by step, as the record of the Clinton and Obama administrations clearly demonstrated.

In the meantime, the ruling class began to launch a sustained fascist assault against the whole litany of reforms associated with Progressivism, claiming that they distorted the operation of free market capitalism. All ruling class discussion of actual monopoly restraint on the market ended, and media exposure of corporate abuses faded. Economist Milton Friedman, one of the key post-war critics of the Keynesian economics of the New Deal, popularized the fable that, contrary to all empirical evidence, monopolies are “generally unstable and of brief duration” and their scope has not increased and “may well have decreased.”

The Koch brothers’ network that promoted this fascist offensive is not just a right-wing conspiracy called out by Hillary Clinton. As Jane Meyer points out in her book *Dark Money*, despite its early connection to the fossil fuel industry, the vast majority of the Koch donor network is now made up of financiers and represents a broad cross-section of the ruling class as a whole.

WORKING CLASS POLITICS

The automation of production today not only creates a rebellious new class, but it also creates an increasing worldwide glut of commodities, as workers without money are no longer able to buy them in quantities sufficient to ensure their circulation. This forces the government to intervene in the economy to protect their markets, and consequently limit democratic influence and participation in government decision-making. When nationalization of the banks was called for by the 2008

economic crash, Obama complained that he could not do it for the political reason that people would be able to demand that he give them back their houses.

Citizens United was an important part of this process of eliminating democracy. The case originated in the James Madison Center for Free Speech, which was established in 1997, with the aim of ending all Progressive era restrictions on money in politics. The Center received unlimited dark money financial contributions, to pursue countless long-shot lawsuits against campaign finance laws. One donor, Betsy DeVos, openly claimed that her goal was to be able to use money to win elections. After the issue was finally settled by the Supreme Court, funds raised by the annual Koch donor summits exploded from \$13 million in 2009 to over \$900 million a year after that.

Historically and ideologically, American democracy has always been based on widespread ownership of small property. Nineteenth-century populism was its purest expression, but populism as a real social movement died over a hundred years ago, even though its all-class rhetoric remains. Progressivism continued to exist because it relied on twentieth-century economic expansion. It maintained its rhetoric even as the base of small proprietors continued to decrease. Today there are virtually no small independent owners left in the traditional sense. A movement based on an ideology of small business does not have the ability to win under these conditions, where the system is broken, and reform is no longer possible. What is needed today is a practical movement based on the demands of the new class that has been separated from the formal economy.

Progressives in the past threatened to abolish the trusts and monopolies, but none actually did so, other than blocking an occasional outrageous merger or acquisition. Political slogans could not repeal the economic law of concentration and centralization of capital. Even more so today, the massive modern, interconnected, global means of production that exist cannot meaningfully be broken up. The only way to actually control them, and redirect them to meeting the needs of human beings, is for workers to take democratic control of government and use the government to take over the corporations to reorganize the economy, so it meets the democratically determined needs of the people. This is what economic democracy looks like.

The role of revolutionaries is to unite and educate the leaders as they struggle shoulder to shoulder with the workers for their basic necessities, both outside and inside the electoral arena. Bernie Sanders has shown that it is possible to counter *Citizens United*, by raising hundreds of millions of dollars from small donors online. The battle is on. The time has come to move beyond twentieth-century Progressivism. Revolutionaries today are called to rewrite the Brandeis dictum about concentrated economic power. We may have democracy, or we may have the private property of the means of production, but we can’t have both. **RC**

The Coming Crash

In his 2019 State of the Union message, President Donald J. Trump boasted, “We have the hottest economy in the world.” Careful what you wish for. This was exactly the same outlook in 2007, on the precipice of what came to be known as the Great Recession.

There is a stark disconnect between the class that rules society today and the great masses that find themselves in conditions of deprivation and even destitution. Great wealth is becoming even more concentrated in the hands of a few. This is a reality that cannot be sustained, yet nothing seems to have been learned from the financial crash of 2008, and nothing has really been done to alter the conditions which led to the crisis. We are being set up for a crash of even greater proportions.

HOW WE GOT HERE

What is behind all of this? Why are we in this situation? We are living in a time that is marked by instability, disruption, and crisis. Every day we are becoming more aware of the way electronics is impacting human society. It is actually a qualitatively new technology that has world-historical significance and is at the root of the developing revolutionary transition period that we are currently experiencing. We are in the middle of an epochal shift, in which the old is being destroyed, and something altogether new is being born.

Science “discovered” electronics and introduced it into capitalist production. Capitalism is based upon the exploitation and expropriation of human labor-power, but electronics does not enhance human labor-power, as have all previous tools of production. Robotic, computerized, digital electronics replaces human labor. This means the end of wage-labor; it means the end of capitalism. Thus begins a new epoch of social revolution. The destruction of the old is underway. The sequence of one financial crisis after another is how the destruction of the old and the leap to something new is expressing itself.

There is another crisis looming. What are its signposts? While we are not doomsayers, and while we cannot predict exactly how or when it will break out, history teaches us that it is an inevitability. Capitalist production creates commodities that must be circulated for their value to be realized. They must be sold in the marketplace for profits to be pocketed or reinvested for more value to be created. The expulsion of millions upon millions of workers from the system of commodity production by laborless technology constitutes a severe disruption of the process of circulation. When you lose your job, you don’t have the money to buy and consume.

WHEN YOU CAN'T CIRCULATE, SPECULATE

A ruling class, which has relied upon capitalist production for its wealth and dominance, is seeing that system destroyed, and they are prepared to give it up so long as they

can preserve their ownership of private property. In their defense of private property at all costs, they are prepared to transition to some new form of private property without capital, while maintaining their status as a ruling class.

When the ruling class cannot make money from the production of commodities by wage-labor, and from the circulation of those commodities, it resorts to making money from moving money around. Since sufficient returns cannot be made from electronics-based production, increasing amounts of capital seek returns from speculative adventures. The attempt to maintain the circulation of goods through the extension of credit is itself a speculative exercise, a maneuver done in the hope that consumers or debtor countries will eventually be able to pay off their

financial instruments that triggered that crisis are still being traded – there are \$6.7 trillion in Mortgage Backed Securities, while U.S. banks hold \$157 trillion in derivatives, twice the global GDP.

The federal U.S. debt has now risen to \$22 trillion. U.S. household debt is \$13.3 trillion, including auto loans at \$1.25 trillion. Students are saddled with debt they may never pay off, and housing costs are rising beyond the reach of more and more workers.

Central banks around the globe now hold \$325 trillion in debt. Countries like Brazil and Mexico have seen their borrowing double, triple in South Africa and quadruple in Chile and Argentina. Italy’s debt is 130% of GDP. China’s debt has skyrocketed to 300% of GDP. In fact, many economists now say the next global financial crash

less technology of the electronic revolution, and their numbers increase exponentially with each crisis.

As electronic, laborless production expels more and more of these new class workers from the economy, they are drawn into a fight for their very survival. They constitute a powerful force capable of putting humanity on course to construct that something new that is coming – a new society that is compatible with the new tools of production, and that is capable of creating an abundance that can be distributed to all those in need.

This is what the ruling class fears most – unrest, uprisings, and revolution. They are prepared to increase fascist measures, to prevent the advance of this revolutionary process and prevent the unity of this new class that is capable of leading that process to its completion. We are seeing how a massive propaganda war is being waged to win people over as a social base for fascism, to prepare them to accept fascism as a way out of the crisis, to proceed with the full transformation of the State along fascist lines. That war is focusing on winning the hearts and minds of this growing new class of workers, a class that grows exponentially with each developing crisis.

History can go either way. It can move in the direction of fascist solutions, or it can move toward the reconstruction of society as a cooperative communist solution, which operates according to the principle, “From each according to their ability, to each according to need.” None of this is automatic. It requires human agency to move the whole process forward. The future is up to us. A class conscious of itself, who understands how we got here and where we have to go, can begin to think strategically about the line of march forward.

A war for the future of humanity requires strategic thinking and a strategic orientation. Revolutionaries, and organizations of revolutionaries, have to guarantee the subjective development of the class – the consciousness to think strategically, and to develop the unity of the class that can be the most powerful revolutionary force in history.

What is coming? Instability, disruption, crisis. Yes, but the future also brings the growth and development of the force that is the solution to the crises that mark our times. More crisis is what is coming, but it also sets the stage for a great leap forward for all of humanity. We must be prepared for what is coming. **RC**

How do revolutionaries contribute so the outcome is resolved in humanity’s favor? We do so, by developing within our class, the consciousness to think strategically, based on what is possible today. With this understanding, our class can unify our forces around a vision of the new society, and emerge victorious in that struggle.

mounting debt.

Speculative capital has now risen to dominate financial capital, and therefore the entire globalized process of production and exchange. The rising stock market does not reflect earnings from production, but rather from the circulation of money to make money. In 2015, 23 percent of all corporate profits were made from the financial sector. Most of the windfall that the corporations received from the Trump tax cuts were not invested in production but were used to buy back their own stock to drive up stock prices. Mergers and acquisitions are also being made, not to increase production but to sell off assets, close facilities lay off workers, and boost stock prices. The stock market itself is now highly automated, where billions of dollars are traded based on split-second fluctuations in stock prices.

The financial crisis of 2008, triggered by the bursting of a massive housing bubble, was, in reality, a gigantic speculative bubble. Millions of people lost their homes as the financial system waged bets on debt-financed securities. The Transnational Institute reports that “few to no measures have been taken to prevent a recurrence” of the crash of 2007-2008. The big banks have become even more “too big to fail.” They have accumulated triple the cash while doubling the risks. And the fi-

could be precipitated not in the U.S., but in China.

The level of speculative debt today is a disaster waiting to happen. It takes the form of a cyclical crisis; there have always been cyclical crises of overproduction within capitalism, but the underlying cause of the crises we are experiencing today is the electronic revolution that is generating laborless production, resulting in financial crisis.

WHAT ELSE IS COMING: THE NEW CLASS

With each ensuing crisis, millions more workers are thrown out of the system, many having to obtain low-wage, part-time and contingent employment, while others end up homeless and destitute. They compose a new class of workers, created by the labor-

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