

RALLY COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

Revolution in Health Care Demands Revolutionary Vision

The crisis in health care shows the inability of capitalism to function as a viable economic system. The crisis is conditioned by the development of electronic forces of production. Revolutionary change in the way goods and services are produced, including in health care, necessitates a corresponding revolutionary political solution if we are to get the health care we need.

HISTORY

The needs of capital have defined the State's role in health care in this country. Under the laws of the plantation South, a slave's health and survival depended entirely on the labor needs of his owner and the brutality of his or her labor. Slaves "sold down the river" had a scientifically calculated life span of seven years. In the 19th century, some slaves received crude health care because the planter understood that "to save his capital was to save his Negroes (slaves)."

To resolve wage-labor productivity problems as the economy transitioned from a manufacturing and rural economic base to an urban industrial one, the State elevated its role in providing health care. The 1909 Rockefeller Sanitary Commission launched the first public health program to increase productivity of Southern mill workers by eliminating lethargy-producing hookworm infections. Increased productivity led to reduced labor costs and increased profitability. That lesson was not limited to the textile barons of the South.

The struggle over the needs of the two class forces, the workers and the capitalists, shaped the period of industrial capitalism in the mid-to-late 20th century. Intense trade union struggles, especially among coal miners and auto workers, tied good health care benefits to the conditions of employment. The so-called Cadillac plans of a generation ago were necessary to maintain the productivity of the worker and insure the extraction of maximum profit by General Motors and Ford. The rope that tied opposing class interests together found political expression in the marriage of the trade unions to the Democratic Party, ensnaring the broad mass of workers far beyond organized labor.

Accommodated by capitalism's expansion, the powerful civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s secured the passage of Medicare and Medicaid. Governmental policy assumed health care responsibility for those no longer working, reducing poverty for the disabled and those over 65. Medicaid was a very thin thread from the start, however, and neither program challenged poverty. Now both are being painfully dismantled

and privatized in the face of increasing need.

THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY: FROM COTTAGE TO COMMERCIAL

Fueled by funds from union contracts, public health insurance, accelerated scientific advances and the carnage of two world wars, health care was transformed from a cottage industry to a commercial enterprise. The vision of universal Medicare for all was aborted by petit-bourgeois professionals and a compromised trade union movement satisfied with offering negotiated health care benefits as an incentive to unionization. But changes in the productive forces of society (the ways things are produced) began to take hold, forcing changes both in industry and health care.

The 1990s witnessed huge transfers of wealth with the mergers of private insurers and the conversions of "not-for-profit" health insurance companies to for-profit. Commercial private for-profit health insurers were locking in their hegemonic position in the health industry. Privatized public resources and neoliberal governmental policies took hold. Medicaid was turned over to private managers who siphoned off public monies by callously restricting access to care.

An alphabet soup of HMOs, PPOs and HSAs appeared as employment-based private for-profit health insurance options along with soaring premiums and bankrupting deductibles. As robotics and electronics started replacing human labor on the factory floor and supermarket check-out counters, capital's historic "investment" in health care shifted from increasing labor productivity to speculation. By now the huge health care industry already accounted for more than one-fifth of the U.S. economy.

21ST CENTURY REORGANIZATION

The introduction of electronics into the health delivery system is forcing a total reorganization of this huge section of the economy. The birth canal of this reorganization is the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system.

Stimulated by regulatory and funding legislation from 2009 to the recent Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), EMR's primary function is to secure profitability in an increasingly valueless system of commodity production. The patient — a heart-beating, deep-breathing, flesh and blood person — becomes a "virtual" commodity.

What are termed Accountable Care Organizations, a product of the PPACA, are absorbing what's left of independent physician

practices. Huge vertical systems of hospitals, clinics, laboratories, pharmacies, and health supply companies, are being linked by EMR and Internet "clouds." Doctors become workers. Nurses are deskilled. Robotic "care-givers" and pharmacists wait in the wings to replace more health care jobs in a 15 million-person industry. No job is secure. Over 3000 health-care workers including doctors and nurses were recently laid off in Georgia alone.

The crime is that scientific advances are feeding speculative capital rather than being used to yield potential life-saving wonders to humanity. Abundance of resources exists. Scarcity is not the issue. Delivery and distribution have to be brought in synch with need.

Private equity firms are having a feeding frenzy, loaning billions of dollars to hospitals to structure these integrative health industry systems. Vanguard Health System bought Detroit Medical Center for \$1.5 billion, backed by two private equity funds, Blackstone and Morgan Stanley. Private equity firms are the loan sharks of speculative capital. The contradiction between the mega-delivery systems being created and the private insurance and equity firms who require a profitable return on their investment will shake the foundations of the health industry and ultimately the whole economic base of the country.

The corporate consolidation and concentration of health care is nothing like the family doctor of a generation ago or even the HMO of ten years ago. We cannot go back. The very concentration of the resources of health delivery begs the solution of public nationalization of those resources to secure the health delivery we need.

BREAKING THE TIES THAT BIND

Over 50 million Americans are uninsured. Millions more are underinsured. The rope that tied labor to capital has been snapped by

increasingly laborless production. Robots do not need health care.

Last ditch efforts to stave off a total collapse of the health care system can only serve to accelerate it. The PPACA mandate that everyone buy private health insurance has been a useful default for employers to drop health benefits completely, or offer the investment-laced High Deductible Health Savings Accounts — a sure and deceptive road to absolute poverty. Unaffordable insurance that covers nothing, minimally subsidized by public monies to ultimately pay speculative capitalists, demonstrates the folly of a shell game called health care under capitalism today.

The struggle for health care reform in the last twenty years has been characterized by increasing efforts to protect health care benefits and demand single payer national health insurance. Both are being challenged by the transformation in the economic base. The historic policy debates pounding within the confines of legislative halls, union meetings, and Democratic Party gatherings are rushing toward a real political fight. New leadership is emerging that has no option but to go on the offensive. Real lives, not virtual commodities, are at stake.

The Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) agreements of the UAW and others expose the core of the crisis. The auto industry set up an under-funded VEBA trust fund, ultimately abandoning its health care obligations. Originally projected to last 80 plus years, VEBA's security is now questionable beyond a decade. Why would it be otherwise? There are more non-producing retired workers than active workers, despite an abundance of products.

A myriad of bipartisan Super Committees call for "sharing the sacrifice" by accepting cuts and further privatization of Medicaid and Medicare, rearranging the old rope that

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Editorial: To Awaken as if from a Dream

Changes in the way a society produces the wherewithal of its existence inevitably provoke a battle to reorganize society around those new means of production. New forces arise as the old order crumbles, and fighting for their existence helps to give rise to a new society organized around their needs. The battle for existence propels these new forces onward, but what they think — their consciousness — and how they act as a result of that consciousness, determines the outcome of the next stage of human history. This is the process of revolution.

Today a society based on industrial production is being destroyed by the revolutionary means of production, electronics. Every upsurge today is shaped by this reality, its forms deeply rooted in the history of its origin, but its character transformed by the meaning of the qualitatively new content of the times.

The article “Revolution is the Only Answer for the New Proletariat” shows that a new class of proletarians is being created

from electronic production as surely as the industrial working class was created from the machine and the assembly line. Its demands cannot be met within the confines of capitalism, and the results of this reality can be seen everywhere in the world. The article looks at what this new class is, the contributions of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America to the understanding of the rise and importance of this new class, and engages in the ongoing debate over its significance to the revolutionary process.

“Third Party: Breaking the Ties That Bind” shows that the upsurges of last year are an expression of not only the deteriorating economic situation but the growing realization among the American people that the existing political party system does not represent the interests of the majority. The motion toward a third party is part and parcel of all the other struggles arising on the new foundation, these various strands interacting and intermingling to influence and shape the movement as it develops.

Struggle by itself cannot create transfor-

mation, no matter how great the potential. The battle to change society to conform to the new means of production is determined almost entirely by the consciousness of human beings. “Future Turns on What We Do Now” shows that consciousness develops in stages, and that at each stage of the struggle revolutionaries disseminate propaganda that points out the next step for the movement and explains why.

The article “Consciousness of Society’s Ills Fuels U.S. Upsurges” examines these stages of consciousness in more detail and assesses where the thinking of the American people is today. Knowing where the movement needs to go, the revolutionaries can present the kinds of ideas and answers to problems that are needed in such a way that prepares the class for its tasks at every step along the way.

“Revolution in Health Care Demands Revolutionary Vision” is a model of this approach. After analyzing the corporate concentration of the health care industry to the present time, the article shows that national-

ization of the health care industry in the interests of the entire working class is the only solution to the problem of health care in America.

The article shows that even though the words might be different, this is in fact what people are demanding because they cannot live without it. Although it is a stage, not an end in itself, nationalization is a step toward the reorganization of society made necessary by the new means of production.

Revolutionaries today are fighting for the same ideals and vision upheld and fought for by the generations before them. That vision is of a society that provides the wherewithal for all its members to benefit from the material and cultural progress of humanity. It was this deep continuity of hope and intention that Karl Marx referred to when he wrote so long ago. “The reform of consciousness consists only in making the world aware of its own consciousness,” he wrote, “in awakening it out of its dream about itself, in *explaining* to it the meaning of its own actions.”

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tied labor to capital into a noose strangling the whole working class. Arizona and Southern states go to great lengths to exclude the undocumented from access to health care alongside other human rights. Medical students in debt, militant nurses forced to strike on their own and their patients’ interests, and the health and welfare of the people of New Orleans abandoned in the wake of Katrina all sharply define dispossession. They all

make it perfectly clear that governmental power and resources cannot be negotiated, only taken, signaling the potential emergence of new activity and consciousness.

Increasing calls for National Single Payer Health Insurance and the elimination of the private insurance industry reflect the direction towards health care provision for all in this country. The current system of health care was built to support the productivity and

reproduction of an industrial working class, and no longer fits a society that replaces labor power with technology. Governmental policies that have paved the way for this unprecedented corporate health industry have to be met with a fight for control over the healthcare system as a whole, for nationalization of health care in the interest of the entire class.

Hopes for legislative victories within the

framework of the Democratic Party have soured. New leadership is arising and grappling with questions of power and political independence. The antagonism between the private ownership of the corporate health industry and the unmet social need for real health care is confronting us with a vision of what is possible, and turning a total transformation of health, wellness and healing into a revolutionary necessity.

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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LRNA: 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 co-operative, 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.

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.

Consciousness of Society's Ills Fuels U.S. Upsurges

Over the last couple of years, numerous objective factors have combined to effect a quantitative change in the struggle. These factors include the developing economic depression, the intervention by the state in the economy on behalf of the corporations, the state and federal budget cuts and the growing assault on democracy and human rights. They include the impact of the crisis on the so-called "middle class," which has resulted in the social response developing in the Rust Belt and elsewhere. The Presidential election campaign and the developing third-party motion will further define the struggle. All kinds of propagandists have been actively influencing the struggle. The objective necessity for both the working class and the capitalist class of nationalizing areas of the economy automatically politicizes economic questions and makes nationalization a battlefield on which the working class forms politically.

THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE

There are impulses within the social struggle today to raise demands that can only be fought out in the political arena since there is nowhere else to address these demands with the economy falling apart. The government will be forced to act to solve the crisis, and the people will be forced to try and influence the government's actions in some way.

The Occupy Wall Street movement and the response to it – by the ruling class and the rest of society – embodies what is going on right now. OWS is both an expression of a stage of struggle and consciousness, and a catalyst that is pushing things forward. The OWS movement has a populist, a-class character derived from the historically evolved populist movement. It is in the main a movement for a more equitable distribution of wealth and a more regulated capitalism. Although most of its adherents are opposed to the corporations, but not to the capitalist system, the OWS does contain a discernible anti-capitalist thread.

OWS marks the beginning of a process of pulling the disparate currents of struggle together into a mass movement. This sets the basis for revolutionaries to raise fundamental questions about the system itself and what kind of society we are going to have. In this sense it represents a quantitative step forward in the American people's awareness of the real problems in society, and helps set the stage for the development of future stages of consciousness. The violent attacks on OWS by the ruling class indicate their fear of any motion that challenges the system.

We are at the early stage of an epoch of social revolution. Social revolution draws in every sector of society. There are all kinds of motions, ideas, and forces at play. Frederick Engels' description of the immense battle in the superstructure fits today: "History is made in such a way that the final result al-

ways arises from conflicts between many individual wills, of which each in turn has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life."

The OWS is of huge importance because it draws its strength from being part of an overall motion that is striving to solve problems that are irresolvable within the capitalist system. This larger movement will develop in stages but it will not be able to solve the problems it faces without overturning the system and reconstructing society on

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a new foundation.

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STAGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

As the struggle develops, new history-making ideas can be gripped by the masses. Vladimir Lenin, in his path-breaking work *What Is To Be Done?* describes the level of consciousness of the Russian working class at the time. Despite the widespread nature of the spontaneous movement, and despite the "flashes of consciousness" and the formation of definite demands, the revolts then under way were simply the resistance of the oppressed; simply trade union struggles. They marked the awakening of the workers, but consciousness of the contradiction between their interests and the whole of the political and social system was not yet there. Lenin concluded that class consciousness had to be brought from the outside to the workers. This lesson holds true despite the epochal differences and the limitations of that moment.

The consciousness that the working class has to go through develops in stages – social awareness, social consciousness, and class consciousness. The first two stages develop more or less objectively or spontaneously. The latter stage develops subjectively or consciously, from the introduction of new ideas by the thinkers and conscious revolutionaries.

Generally, the level of consciousness today is social awareness — the becoming aware of what society is as it really is. The next stage is social consciousness, where the workers understand that they are members of a class and that they need class solidarity. They understand their class is exploited and

that they must fight that exploitation. This stage is generally expressed in the formation of some kind of political party of the workers.

It is important to note that the American mass has never achieved even the stage of social consciousness. There was a moment following the Civil War when people came close to it. A certain level of unity existed around the abolition of slavery and for integrating the Freedmen into society. With the murder of Abraham Lincoln and the assump-

tionally. The development of consciousness is a process, which reflects the stages of development and interaction of the economy and the social response of the masses. Ideas are constantly in formation, and the stages of development of consciousness interpenetrate one another.

POINTING THE WAY FORWARD

We are entering a new stage in America's political development. Revolutionaries need to function like generals. The role of the general is to figure out how to destroy the enemy's strategy. The strategy of the ruling class is to preserve and strengthen the political and ideological "middle" that binds the workers to the ruling class. The strategy that will defeat this is to smash the middle. Labor-less production is in antagonism to private property. Robotics is destroying the economic foundation for the middle. This creates the opportunity to cut the political and ideological ties binding the workers to their enemy.

Revolutionaries summarize the people's demands and present them back to them in the form of programmatic agitation and propaganda that points them along the line of march toward achieving state power. The workers need to take political power and create a communist society in order to solve their practical problems.

You Need *Rally, Comrades!* *Rally, Comrades!* Needs You

The world is in the midst of rapid change. You or those close to you might have been threatened with or suffered loss of job and home. You are deeply concerned about what's happening to our world.

Rally, Comrades! stands out, offering a sound and clear analysis of the way forward. *Rally, Comrades!* shows how capitalism is coming to an end. *Rally, Comrades!* and the League receive no donations from corporations, foundations or government. We rely completely on volunteers and donations from readers like you to carry out this urgent work.

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Revolution is the Only Answer for New Proletariat

The protests and uprisings sweeping the globe are firing the imaginations of millions of people fighting for a new world. Although the history, ideologies and immediate aims of the various social motions differ from place to place, what ties them together are the underlying objective factors. That is, the historic shift in the global economy from production with human labor to production without human labor. Capitalism, based on the buying and selling of labor power, is coming to an end — destroyed by the labor-replacing robot.

Humanity has the possibility, for the first time, of leaving the dog-eat-dog animal kingdom and of becoming truly human. Today, humanity can enter a whole new epoch of human existence. These concepts and conclusions, made by the League of Revolutionaries for a New America and its predecessor organizations, were arrived at by intensive philosophical, theoretical and practical study and research over a 43-year time span. As early as 1975, it was possible to see how the fundamentally changed economy was creating a “huge qualitatively new army of the permanently unemployed, and that every technical advance makes the position of the proletarians more untenable.”

By 1993, this process had advanced so that “increasing numbers of proletarians cannot sell their only commodity — labor power. Production with high technology is forcing industrial production (i.e. human labor coupled with electro-mechanics) off the market,” the League wrote. “The economy — based on the buying and selling of labor power — is being irreversibly destroyed. The destruction of the economy will force society to reorganize to change ownership of socially necessary property from private to public. Only then will the economy conform to the productive capacity of robots and computers.”

An antagonism is developing between the qualitatively new means of production and private ownership. This process is ushering in an epoch of social revolution. It is creating a new class — a new section of the working class — that has the potential to lead society to a new stage of world history, where the abundance the new technology makes possible is owned by society as a whole and distributed to those who need it.

History shows that the subjective — new history-making ideas introduced into the minds of the combatants — plays the decisive role. Only a class that understands its historical interests and has a vision of the desired outcome can enforce its will. Preparing the new class of proletarians for its historic role in leading society toward a new communist world is the leading factor of revolutionaries’ work in this epoch of social revolution.

WHAT IS REVOLUTION?

Revolution is an historical process in which a subordinate class overthrows its ruling class, establishes itself as a new ruling class and creates a new political system. The first stage is an economic revolution in which one qualitative means of production is re-

placed with another, such as the transformation from agriculture to manufacturing, and from manufacturing to industrial production.

Humanity is entering such an epoch of change today. “The early development of computers and robotics called forth the semiconductor and micro-chip. Together with the superconductor, they are creating the electronic technological revolution,” the League wrote in 1993. “The introduction of qualitatively new productive forces is putting formerly productive workers in the soup lines and homeless shelters. Many heavy industrial jobs that paid \$15 per hour are now performed by robots, eliminated or shipped to low wage areas. They are replaced by minimum wage service and light industry jobs.”

At that time, few social scientists understood or accepted the actual cause of the

where the ruling class is overthrown and a new society based on the interests of the victorious class is created. This process is emerging before our eyes. Today we are witnessing the beginnings of a historically new type of class struggle.

The new global proletariat is drawn from almost all social strata. Within the employed sector, some are part-time, contingency, below-minimum-wage workers. Many are youth, abandoned by the society and without a future. Many are recent immigrants. Growing numbers are formerly secure workers who once were the stable base of political support for capitalism and are now being reduced to destitution and homelessness.

Permanently unemployed workers in the mid-West, the former US industrial heartland, now the Rust Belt, are precariously sur-

stabilities and divisions that this new class can produce in society if something is not done. He advocates reforms where the State provides a basic income to the precariat and a redistribution of wealth to ease the economic inequalities of the capitalist system.

But will this solve the problem today? Such a reform was possible in an economy based in electro-mechanics, when capitalists and workers struggled over distribution of income. Then, capitalists had an interest in the State providing minimally for the needs of workers whose labor was necessary to make profits. Such a reform is impossible in an economy where robots replace workers in production, and workers are expendable. Capitalists will not provide for workers they can no longer exploit. The solution lies in the qualitatively new situation. Robotics makes it impossible for the new class to coexist with private property. It is increasingly outside of and therefore exists in antagonism to the wages system. Robotics has made reform of the capitalist system impossible. The only way for the new class to prevent being crushed is to make the gigantic means of production public property.

The objective program of the new class is therefore communistic in the true sense of the word. Owning no property, without employment or resources, it cannot move in the direction of securing individual property. Its objective demand makes economic sense: each for all and all for each, from each according to ability to each according to need.

If conscious of their role in history, the new class will launch a fight over who will wield the political power to restructure society so that electronics becomes an instrument of human liberation rather than destitution.

THE ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARIES

The new class cannot become class conscious without revolutionaries bringing them an understanding of their historic role. Just as something qualitatively new — the microchip — was introduced into the productive process, shattering the contradiction between the productive forces and relations of production, new history-making ideas must be introduced into the minds of the combatants, shattering the unity between the social struggle and reformism.

Therefore, the urgent, essential task of conscious revolutionaries is to make this decisive new class conscious that it is fighting for a new society, and give it a vision of the economic paradise that is possible if the marvelous new electronic means of production are taken over by the people.

Today, the productive power of electronics can raise the standard of living for global humanity overnight. The electronics that, in capitalist hands, is strangling humanity can set us free if it is in people’s hands.

Humanity stands on the cusp of liberation. Revolutionaries must instill in the new class the consciousness that history is moving toward communism and that they have the critical role to play in leading society toward its achievement.

Electronics makes it impossible for this new class to coexist with private property. Its program is communistic in the true sense of the word — each for all and all for each.

growing destitution. The phenomena of the destruction of jobs were seen as a quantitative rather than as a qualitative process. Many said that capitalism would find a way to produce more jobs, “like they always have.” Recently, more and more writers are discussing the irreversible economic and social effects of electronic and robotic production.

In 2011 Marshall Brain, author of “Robotic Nation,” projected that robots will permanently displace 50 million U.S. workers by the year 2030. Workplace robots eliminate labor costs, giving corporations an edge over competitors, and increasing profits. He says that robot-run (drone) airplanes could eliminate 66,000 pilots by 2015. McJobs will also be wiped out as companies like Wal-Mart and Target introduce a totally automated inventory management system where robots identify, locate, stack, shelve and re-shelve merchandise. Further, competition will force all big box retailers to install automated checkout lines and robotic help systems to guide shoppers, eliminating about ten million workers.

Brain recognizes that the robotic revolution will not create jobs to replace the ones lost. “The unusual thing about the robotic revolution is that the robots will displace millions of workers throughout the economy, but the robot industry will create very few new jobs. Millions will be unemployed in America.”

THE NEW PROLETARIAT

Just as the steam engine created an industrial working class that replaced the existing manufacturing class, electronic production is creating a new section of workers that is forced out of the productive process and that cannot survive in the old society. New classes disrupt and disorganize the existing society. This process culminates in a revolution

living with little hope of government assistance. Michigan, where robots have replaced workers on the auto assembly lines, recently announced it is permanently cutting off welfare benefits for tens of thousands of unemployed workers; other states will follow. While farmers receive subsidies not to produce food, more than two billion people worldwide fight hunger on a daily basis.

The struggle for survival of the new global proletariat is out of necessity more and more butting up against private property and the State that protects it. Darcus Howe, a British broadcaster and writer, originally from Trinidad, illustrates this in his writing about the recent London uprising. He says, “The young people involved in this spate of violence suffer from a deeper, more dangerous alienation of being utterly surplus to capitalist requirements, irrelevant and ostracized, and thus doomed to subsist on the margins, functionally illiterate, without hope or aspiration.”

As globalization generalizes these social ills throughout the world, and the existence of this new class is making itself felt everywhere, writers are grappling with its significance and how its very real needs can be met under today’s conditions.

Guy Standing, author of the well-researched *Precariat: the New Dangerous Class* (2011), speaks to the growth of this emerging class. Standing says, the “precariat,” a term first used in the 1980s to describe temporary or seasonal workers, are people who today lack labor markets, employment, jobs, work, skill reproduction, income and representation, and security. He writes, “Every progressive movement has been built on the anger, needs and aspirations of the emerging major class.” He describes the features of the new global class in great detail. He also focuses attention on the political in-

Third Party: Breaking the Ties That Bind

The U.S. two-party system that has protected the economy is in crisis and in the beginning stages of self-destruction. The capitalist class knows that it can no longer rule in the old ways. From the state budget battles to the fight for immigrant rights, for decent health care and the protection of public education, to the Occupy Wall Street movement, the American people are increasingly aware that something is terribly wrong. They are demanding that the government solve their problems and they are growing increasingly restless at the government's refusal to do so.

The impulse toward a third party is arising from historical tendencies. At the same time, it is being formed and shaped within the context of the qualitatively new conditions and the struggles that are arising on the basis of those conditions. Regardless of the form, these struggles can all be traced back to the same content — the disruption and destruction of the capitalist system, caused by electronic production — and the battle to reorganize society on the foundation of that new means of production.

The struggles are intense, but in a historical sense they are just beginning. The political consciousness that is injected into the motion now will help to shape its content as the struggle develops.

RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE RUST BELT

The response to the economic crisis began to play itself out on the level of the cities and states of this country following the 2010 elections. These elections helped push forward open attacks on the working class while furthering the shifting of wealth to corporations and the wealthy.

The struggle against the state budget cuts and against the attacks on collective bargaining in the spring of 2011 went through inter-related and overlapping phases. Open protests against pending legislation took the form of occupation in the various cities. The struggle moved into various petition campaigns for repeals or recalls and then to elections to recall elected officials or overturn legislation. This process varied in different states according to political conditions on the ground.

The first phase saw the open demonstrations at state capitals throughout the Rust Belt. Daily occupations and protests took place as the first volley was fired at the public employees, state-by-state. Even though those protests were some of the largest of such gatherings since the 1930s and 1960s, they still were not enough to stop the onslaught, as the state legislatures moved to reshape the government to serve the corporations over those of the people. Wisconsin, Ohio and Michigan became the front line battle grounds.

The response to the attack expressed different degrees of intensity. In both Wisconsin and Ohio the budget bills proposed were passed by their legislatures, and their governors signed them. The bills were di-

rect attacks on the collective bargaining rights of all public sector workers in those states. The attacks in those two states opened a militant response from all sections of organized labor. This helped to unite the workers in both states in the private and public sectors.

Rapid, decisive and successful recall and repeal campaigns in the first phase were carried out in Wisconsin and Ohio against the Republican representatives. In the next phase, Wisconsin workers needed to win three recall seats in the Senate to have the majority. They were successful in winning

The political ties between the workers are beginning to fray and break. A third party accelerates this process, and becomes a new environment for the workers' political independence from capitalist rule.

only two seats. So, the Republicans maintained the majority.

In the case of Ohio the repeal process was very successful. They needed 300,000 signatures statewide but were successful in getting one million more. In these two campaigns, the struggles were intense. The fight has polarized the population of each state as the workers attempt to beat back the corporate control being imposed upon them.

In Michigan the attacks were different. Governor Rick Snyder and corporate forces relied on the old divide and conquer strategy of setting one group against another. Thus all public employees are not under attack, just the state employees. Not all seniors pensions are being taxed, just those at a certain age bracket. The Governor of Michigan has been successful in this attack on one entity at a time; thus the solidarity across the state was less rapid.

The Democratic Party of Michigan openly declared it would have nothing to do with either of the petitions, the "Recall of Governor Snyder" or the "Repeal of Public Act 4" (Emergency Manager), which has the power to take over cities, townships and school districts. Labor unions in the state only gave lip service to the efforts. However, AFSCME and the teacher unions helped with printing costs for the "Repeal of Public Act 4" petitions.

The petitioning was strictly an all-volunteer effort in Michigan. A broad section of individuals collected signatures on both the "Recall of Governor Snyder" and the "Repeal of Public Act 4", even though there are only 3 cities — Benton Harbor, Ecorse and Pontiac, Michigan and the Detroit School District — that are currently affected by Emergency Managers.

However, the state is already extracting concessions from other cities. In the city of Northville the school teachers ratified a contract that increases their health care out-of-pocket costs from \$300 to \$3,000. And

Detroit police had to sign a contract ending their pensions, forcing them to use 401Ks.

Michigan is experiencing one of the worst economic crises in history: people are being cut off welfare, and more cuts to safety net programs are on the way. The Michigan Legislature voted for Governor Snyder's 48 months (4 years lifetime) "time limitation" for people on welfare (part of Clinton's so-called welfare reform of 1996), which will affect tens of thousands of people, including up to an estimated 45,000 children. Almost 25% of Michigan's children already live in poverty. How will the families feed their

number of Americans would look favorably on the creation of a third or fourth party. Two pollsters, Patrick Caddell and Douglas Schoen, pulled together the results of these polls in an August 25, 2011 *Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed piece entitled "Expect a Third-Party Candidate in 2012." "A Rasmussen Reports poll conducted [in August]" they wrote, "found that 'just 17% of likely U.S. voters think that the federal government today has the consent of the governed,' while an extraordinary 69% 'believe the government does not have that consent.'"

"More than half (51%) of voters favored having a third major political party," the article went on. "Nearly one-third (31%) said that having a third major party in our country is very important. Voters favored having a major third party run a candidate for president in 2012 by a margin of 58% to 13% — with one in five saying they were absolutely certain or very likely to vote for a third-party candidate."

"In line with these findings, 52% of all respondents in a May Gallup poll said there is a need for a third party," and for the first time in Gallup's history, "a majority of Republicans polled embraced the idea."

Historically the working class has been economically tied to the capitalist class at the point of production. It's been politically tied to the capitalist class through the Democratic Party. Today, the Democratic Party remains the glue that ties the workers to the capitalists politically. That's why the League's strategy is to throw the blow at the middle — the Democratic Party — to break that connection as a first step towards the development of working class political independence.

Is the development of a third party a blow that strikes at this middle? It is, and revolutionaries should welcome and embrace motions towards a third party. As workers are increasingly thrown out of the production process and out of the capitalist economy, the subjective political ties are beginning to fray and break. The process is accelerated with the development of a third party, which becomes a new environment and school for political independence from capitalist rule.

Tactical alliances with bourgeois third party developments are temporary and necessary alliances that are totally consistent with and along the revolutionary line of march. While the League fights side by side with other forces to create a third party, it remains poised to fight those expressions that advance any form of exploitation and private property.

As revolutionaries we are integrally, intimately and forever committed to the development of working class political independence and development of class consciousness, to take each step and complete each stage along the revolutionary line of march.

children, pay their rent or house notes, and what about their health care? The people of this country are in a war, and revolutionaries need to educate the working class about their role in this war.

As a result of all these struggles, there is a bubbling of interest in the Rust Belt toward building all kinds of parties. The "legitimate" institutions and organizations are not part of this process. What is left is anger, frustration and a large mass of people that have no organizational expression, no leadership speaking on their behalf, who at any point can explode.

U.S. THIRD PARTY DEVELOPMENT

Motion toward a third party development is underway in the U.S. The trade unions are widening their independence from the Democratic Party. Obama's base of independent voters and what is left of the old Roosevelt coalition is adrift. While there is no widespread, organized popular call being made at this time for such a party, preliminary underground developments are occurring through pre-party probing in the form of articles, declarations, meetings, discussions, conferences, etc.

While most of this talk appears unconnected, it represents a third party motion that has one foot inside the Democratic Party pushing it do the right thing, with the other foot outside, discussing the need to create new reformist political parties to the left of the Democratic Party. After (and possibly before) the 2012 general elections we should expect to see more rapid motion and organization directed towards the development of third parties.

We must always ask ourselves a fundamental question during each and every step along the revolutionary line of march, "What are the American people prepared to understand at this time?"

Recent polls indicate that an increasing

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Future Turns on What We Do Now

We live in a time when a fundamental antagonism is destroying the very basis of society. Our economic system depends on the exploitation of human labor. Laborless production therefore means that for the first time since our founding as a nation we face an objective revolutionary situation. America's government of and by the people must overcome government for and by private property.

It is a time when fundamental transformation, the goal of every revolutionary, is also possible. Transformation becomes a reality when it becomes the cause of the mass of society, when the scattered demands for food, housing, education, health care and an opportunity to contribute to society are summed up as the political demand for a cooperative society. It is a transformation made possible when a new class created by laborless production achieves the political power to give life to a new society based on a new economy.

The future will unfold based on how mass consciousness develops at each stage of quantitative development of society towards class or political consciousness. Revolutionaries who understand objective laws of development can guarantee that the new world that is possible will in fact take place.

REVOLUTION DEVELOPS IN STAGES

These laws of development are knowable but they must be studied in motion and in context. There are two aspects to any quantitative process of change, the objective side

and the subjective side. In an objectively revolutionary period, revolutionaries emphasize the development of the subjective side of the process because that is where revolutionaries can and must play their role. The context for subjective development is the objective development, the stages of the quality of the time we live in.

Revolutionaries study the line of march that describes this process and these stages. In general, this process is from scattered economic to united political struggle. Each stage is the result of an increasing class polarization and instability throughout society.

Every process is based on the relationship between the poles that make it what it is. The process of growth of capitalism was the result of a give and take between two class poles, between workers and capitalists. Antagonism creates a process of polarization. As the struggle polarizes, both sides become increasingly implacable, creating new political conditions. What is destroyed is ultimately any and all connection between the two poles that made the process what it was. The process of destruction also allows new connections to form, for the possibility of reconstructing society on a new basis.

The recent upsurge in activity of Occupy Wall Street is a concentrated expression of the beginning of the wrenching apart of the poles in the class make-up of our society. The general understanding of the 99% as "us" vs the 1% as "them" reflects the initial stages of awareness within the mass movement that something is wrong in society today.

Revolutionaries who are guided by a deep

understanding of this objective process keep the revolution itself on course.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND REVOLUTION

The task of revolutionaries is to guarantee that an intellectual leap takes place as a reflection of the leap in the objective sphere. While the process of destruction is a more or less automatic process, the process of transformation is not. It consists of a leap forward, stagnation, backsliding, polarization, destruction, and leap forward. The struggle must pass from the defensive to take the offensive against a system that is itself the central problem.

Revolutionaries politicize through propaganda that anticipates at each stage what is the next step for the movement and why. Each stage of development of the objective process kicks up revolutionaries created by this process of polarization. The more concrete and specific the connection to these leaders, the more effective the propaganda can be.

Our class can go no further until it learns to fight politically in its own interests. Developing consciousness is a process of politicization, of guaranteeing the political formation of the class.

Revolutionaries know what our society is up against. Either the corporations will control society or society will control the corporations.

The American people are angry at the two-party system but they still believe that political parties can represent all classes and

that they need to "work together" to reflect national interests. Our class needs to identify what the government will do, what class it serves, and that class itself is based in a relationship of production and therefore is a relationship of power (i.e. that the "1%" holds "99%" of the power). The political coalescence, identity, voice, and consciousness of independent class interests is still several steps away. The subjective, conscious understanding of any new situation lags behind objective reality. But it can catch up in waves and leaps.

The developing polarization within the main political parties is setting the stage for breaks in the continuity of the current political party system and creation of a revolutionary process that leads to a political rupture overall. The formation of a third party will accelerate this political development, and it is in this context that the struggle for a third party can be considered a school for revolutionaries. It is part of the struggle of the mass as it becomes conscious of the need for class power.

For the first time an objective communist economic class is forming to become the foundation for a communist political movement. In spite of worsening economic conditions, nothing can be accomplished until the American people hold a vision of where they want to go, what they want to be and how they can get there. Providing this is the overriding tasks of revolutionaries.

This Building Block article is one of a series which explains a basic concept of the revolutionary process, challenging readers to explore its meaning for political work in today's environment.

Third Party: Breaking the Ties That Bind

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INVESTIGATE, STUDY, LEARN FROM HISTORY

Philosophy teaches that things develop as sublation – destruction and preservation. What will be destroyed? What will be preserved?

To answer these questions and plan ahead, a deep understanding of American politics and the political apparatuses is necessary. Some inquiry is needed into what are the rebellious groupings or cores within the existing apparatuses that can attract all these loose groups that today are putting out feelers for a third party. A third party will not come from someone's wishes. It will arise from historical tendencies, and the development of the tendencies over a long period of time.

When we talk about a third party we must keep uppermost in our minds that we are talking about a bourgeois party, a party that will be formed to save private property – if not capitalism. The formation of such a party does not require the same kind of radical break with tradition that a worker's party will demand.

What do we learn from the last big effort toward forming a third party? The Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) in 1948 was in a very difficult situation. It seemed that fascism was going to take over in the U.S. In this difficult situation, the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) became the chief organizers of the PPP, dropping its independent role entirely. It was correct to accept the goals of the PPP, but they never identified their own independent positions. As a result, it was crushed right along with the CPUSA. The CPUSA did as well as it did because Henry Wallace, an anti communist, was a decent person who wouldn't red bait within the PPP.

The people who are moving toward a third party today are much more bourgeois, more anti-communist and less experienced.

Finally, we have to understand what is driving the third party motion today. In 1948 It was the hold-over's of the Roosevelt coalition and all they represented. Today there is an objective process forcing this process forward. It is the irreversible development of electronics, with the resultant decline in the value and standards of labor and

the inevitable leap to a qualitatively new social order.

TASKS OF THE LEAGUE

At the heart of all the struggles today is the effort by the ruling class to realign the political superstructure to protect private property and the naked rule of the corporations, and the resistance to those efforts by a growing section of the American people.

The ruling class has no intention of allowing the growing mass of propertyless to have a political voice. In the face of the ruling class juggernaut, the American people have no representation, and there is nothing on the horizon that speaks for the people, who themselves are scattered and divided as to their true interests.

We will now see the importance of a line of march. Now that calls for a third party are emerging it is important to move carefully, not so far ahead as to lose the connection with other revolutionaries, but not too timidly to end up simply following behind. It will be essential to visualize a progression from where and how political resistance

evolved in this country, to learn how to develop it as a basis for the qualitative step into a worker's party.

The war must be won on the political battlefield. The League concentrates on the political aspects of the struggle, defending democracy for everyone. But democracy is impossible without defeating the economic power of the corporations, and the only way to do that is to take over the corporations.

Nationalization of the corporations in the interests of the workers is the next step in achieving the ultimate goal of gaining the political power to guarantee that the socially necessary means of production are finally placed in the hands of the people.

The call for nationalization sums up the demands of the people, and offers a solution. The fight to unify around this next step is the environment in which the League can assist the class in seeing its historic mission, present a vision of the future that is possible, and disseminate a strategy to achieve it.

Political Report of the Standing Committee, League of Revolutionaries for a New America, September 2011.