

# RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

## After the Elections: Class Interests to the Fore

The 2012 elections are over. The \$6 billion has been spent, the defeated candidates have gone back to their offices and board rooms to lick their wounds, and the victorious are parceling out all those campaign promises to their friends and donors. There are those who say we are right back where we started, facing the same proposals for cutbacks, tax protections for the rich and austerity programs for the families of everyone else. And of course they are right. But the capitalists' campaign to convince the American people to act against their interests goes on.

Revolutionaries understand that poverty never made a revolution. It is the human mind that makes the difference. The American people are beginning to awaken, even if they are not united about what they are going through. Millions enthusiastically voted for one of the two major candidates. In many states, people stood in line for hours determined not have their right to vote denied them. Many held their noses and voted. Many voted for third parties. Others didn't vote at all, disgusted with the whole process.

This environment of questioning, turmoil, and in some quarters, growing readiness to seek out new answers has created the environment for a real debate about change in this country. Revolutionaries must characterize the problems the workers face and determine how to shape their thinking in line with the reality that the changing economic and social conditions make possible — a world where austerity, poverty and deprivation are a thing of the past.

We must do this in a way that teaches our class its real interests, shapes its conception of the world, and prepares it to act in those class interests. Our class must separate itself from the thinking and mechanisms of control of the capitalist class and begin evolving politically independent forms that are capable of putting up a fight for the future. Revolutionaries play a central role in this fight and cannot cede the battlefield to the capitalist class.

### THE NATURE OF ELECTIONS

Elections are always about control and power. But electoral battles are only superficially between the political parties of the day. Elections are about the capitalist class gaining intellectual and political control over the working class. There is an "election day", but this day is preceded by many months of agitating the working class about the nature of the problems they face, the roots of those problems and how to solve them.

The success of these months of campaigning is gauged, on the face of things anyway, by the "election results". In reality, the ruling class measures its success by how the working class reacts to, and to what extent supports or resists, the program of the ruling class.

### CHARACTERIZING THE PROBLEM

The central ideological battle today is over the characterization of the changing American economy and society. This was so during the election and it will continue far past the election. Less than 24 hours after the U.S. election results were announced, stocks had dropped, debate raged in Europe over the future over the European Union, and the parties were lining up over how to resolve the so-called "fiscal cliff". Whatever happens there is little doubt that whatever the solution presented or compromises made, they will benefit the capitalist class and force the workers to bear the costs.

The economic situation is not simply another cycle of boom and bust of the capitalist system, where industry, finance and the global economy just need a few more months (or years) to get on their feet. This picture is simply part of the illusion the ruling class is trying to create. The reality is that qualitatively new technologies have spread throughout the world, driving down the cost of production of everything, including workers. The deterioration and crisis in the economy can only continue, making greater polarization of wealth and poverty inevitable.

Growing unrest, a clamor for change, the emergence of different visions of society, and an alternative means of governing society — on the left and the right — are already emerging. How revolutionaries characterize and disseminate the truth about these changes in the face of the ruling class onslaught against our people will have a lasting impact on the direction these struggles will take.

The goal of the ruling class is always the same whether they are fighting each other in an election, squabbling on the floor of Congress, or brawling over this or that policy decision. That goal is to guarantee their rule at whatever cost, and to protect the foundation of that rule, private property. When they fight, they are fighting only over *how* to guarantee that common program.

To maintain its hegemony the U.S. must continue to dominate the markets of the world, but globalization has made this increasingly difficult. The ruling class in the U.S. needs the political wherewithal to make the changes in the economy and society to carry out this program. For a period of time at least, they have been able to convince the American people to accept constant war abroad, the deepening poverty among broader and broader sections of the population at home, the transfer of wealth to a handful of billionaires and multi-millionaires, and to accomplish all this, the consolidation of the merger of the corporations and the government to uphold corporate power.

The world economy is on the brink of yet another disaster which no amount of sovereign bail-outs or austerity programs can contain. Competition for markets is already

fierce. The U.S. and Europe, Russia as well as the rising powerhouses of China and India are all part of the scramble for not only existing markets but also those that promise greater profits through investment and development such as Southeast Asia and Africa. While global economic integration continues apace, no country is going to relinquish its national interest. As the avenues narrow and the competition intensifies, the saber rattling, limited conflicts and trade wars of the past will inevitably break out into large scale shooting wars. This will be accompanied by the demand by the ruling class — a demand for which they have carefully prepared the ground — for even greater sacrifice from the workers as the wealth of the country is channeled into the pockets of the capitalist class.

### SHAPING THINKING

Yet, at the same time, the rise of a global economy, the generalization of labor-replacing production through that system, and the polarization of wealth and poverty, have steadily eroded the historical means of control of the workers. In the past, the ruling class was able to control the working class by rewarding a section of the class with a higher standard of living, benefits and opportunities because the economy was expanding and they needed workers. Under today's conditions, the ruling class has nothing to offer but the ties of ideology, and beyond that, full blown fascist rule to maintain their control over the economy and the society.

The election reflected elements of this, whether it was the outright racism or the woman hating rhetoric spewed by the Republican Party candidates or the Democratic Party's designing of an electoral strategy based primarily on the separate agendas and all-class compositions of identity politics. Fomenting racial and other forms of division are intended to prevent any conception of class interests to come to the fore.

Yet conditions are changing, undermining these old methods of control and opening the way for new thinking to take hold — if revolutionaries play their role.

In this election, we also saw the appearance of what was the elephant in the room that no candidate wanted to talk about — the

growing poverty and insecurity of those who have been the bulwark of the ruling class support in this country. Their plight illuminates how the most basic of economic concerns are coming to the fore. People need food. They need shelter. They need the means to support and care for their families. They cannot eat ideology.

The various upsurges of social struggle — the Chicago teachers' strike, the battles in Wisconsin last year, the fight against the Emergency Manager law in Michigan, and the array of battles against plant closings, budget cuts, school closings and home foreclosures — reveal that, even as the old ideas retain their hold to a certain degree, the concrete and practical nature of the questions people are being forced to fight through is reshaping how they see themselves and what they must do.

The claim by both parties that they are defending the "middle class" was simply the same method of pitting one section of the workers against another, clothed in a different form. Defending the "middle class" — a fictional category in any case — pits the employed against the unemployed, makes invisible the millions of those who once had something but who are now struggling to survive, and erases any trace of their voice in politics today.

These claims deliberately seek to mask the economic reality of this country. There is no lower class, middle class or upper class. There are only those who own and those who don't. The ruling class has used the recent electoral process to reinforce its efforts to block the development of consciousness among the American people that their economic interests, their *class* interests, are opposed to those of their rulers.

Both the economic and social conditions themselves and the emerging debate to interpret them have placed the reality of class and class interests on the agenda. The question of the interests of which class should determine the welfare of the country — that of a tiny handful of billionaires or the vast millions of workers — is being pushed to the fore. The debate is not simply about abstractions, or ideology, or somebody's good idea. It is about the real, the practical, the necessary. And the answer will determine the future of humanity.

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# Strategy, Mission and the Way Forward

In order to be effective, revolutionary organizations must constantly step back, assess and examine the environment and conditions within which they work. From this examination they must develop a strategic overview that directs them in the overall class struggle to achieve the goal of a cooperative, communist society. This means revolutionary organizations must always be asking — How do we get from where we are to where we need to be? How do we accomplish our tasks? What kind of organization is needed for this stage of history?

## FINDING THE CENTER OF GRAVITY

The term center of gravity is a scientific term most often used in military contexts. In his book, *On War*, the great military strategist Karl von Clausewitz described centers of gravity emerging from the “overruling relations of both parties”; that is, a center of gravity is relevant only in relation to an enemy. It matters because of its effect on an enemy or a situation. “One must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind”, Clausewitz wrote. “Out of these characteristics a certain center of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed.” There “is no higher and simpler law of strategy” he wrote “than to focus military force on the most vulnerable part of your enemy’s defense”, dubbed the center of gravity.

For the League, the center of gravity is a political question. The League uses the concept as a means of developing an assessment and a plan to address the overall class

struggle. We ask ourselves: What is going to be the heart of that struggle? Where do we concentrate in order to push the process forward?

We look first at what is objectively happening in America, where the enemy is the most vulnerable. We have to determine the group which at *this* time, under *these* particular conditions we see developing in the real world, that can pull the whole process forward along the path to a communist society. Once we identify this “center of gravity” it is essential to develop a plan that has the goal of politically influencing this group as a means of politically influencing the class as a whole. At the same time, through taking this strategic approach, an organization of revolutionaries not only shapes the political and intellectual formation of the class, but seeks to influence the coming revolution in America.

## THE DISPOSSESSED AND LRNA STRATEGY

For many years, the League has written about the emergence of a new class. Part of the working class, this new class is being created by the qualitatively new means of production of electronics.

The current electoral rhetoric showed quite clearly that the discussion over jobs is directed toward those who have had decent jobs and are now falling into economic instability and poverty. It is directed to that group of people in America whose economic situation puts them in a position to move the entire revolutionary process forward. These millions of people we call the *dispossessed*, and are at the core of the new class.

The dispossessed are relatively

well-educated, (with at least a high school education), have had jobs, have lived in a fairly decent situation, and have been socially active and socially aware in that they vote, attend church or participate in some kind of civic or community activity.

The foreclosure crisis and loss of income have widened the gap within the class, but whites are not the only members of the dispossessed. Along with a large number of whites, a disproportionate number of African Americans and Hispanics were victims of the foreclosure crisis, which resulted in wiping out 90% of their wealth.

The dispossessed are not at all a cohesive political entity, and have been pitted against one another along color, ethnic, gender and religious lines. Because they are part of the unraveling “middle” of American politics that supported the policies of the ruling class, they tend to be the most socially and economically conservative.

Yet, their deteriorating *economic* position puts them in a position where they have to move against their conditions. It is impossible to predict which way they are going to move, but when they do they are going to pull — by virtue of their position in society — a huge section of society with them.

## MICHIGAN IS HARBINGER

We can see the beginnings of this process in the situation faced by the workers in Michigan. There, the dispossessed are among the tens of thousands of workers who have been battling valiantly for their very survival, fighting to have the needs of the people met, in some cases struggling to defend against more cuts to vital services and a continuing decline in their standard of living.

Now, democracy itself is at stake. Public Act 4, (also known as the “dictator law”) displaces the duly elected representatives of local governments and imposes a state-appointed “Emergency Manager” to rule over the people, without the consent of the governed.

Seeing their democracy going down the drain, the people have mounted an effort to repeal Public Act 4 through a referendum on the ballot in November. Despite a spirited campaign, the State moved at every turn to block their efforts. Leaders of the movement ran into a wall: the question for them, and for us, is how do we move forward if there is no legal or political redress of our grievances? Finally, it was placed on the ballot and the people of Michigan voted it down. Undeterred, the ruling class is now gearing up to force through another round of Emergency Manager legislation.

The handwriting on that wall is: “No more reforms are possible.” Or, in other words, it has never been more clear that these are revolutionary times. From New Deal to No Deal, the ruling class is shutting the door on reform, on even the most incremental amelioration of the misery of the people.

This predicament is being manifested in many ways and on all fronts around the world. The workers of Greece waged a massive and intense struggle for reform, or just to maintain the reforms won in a past period, but the ruling class did not budge. The uprisings of the Arab Spring have seen their efforts turned back.

Across the U.S. we see, as in Michigan, cities and states teetering on bankruptcy even as they absorb one wave of budget cuts after another. Where is the ability to turn that

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## 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:** Cynthia Cuza, Nelson Peery, John Slaughter

**Reach us at: RALLY@LRNA.ORG**

## League of Revolutionaries for a New America WHAT WE STAND FOR

Tens of thousands of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions. The League’s mission is to unite these scattered revolutionaries on the basis of the demands of the new class, to educate and win them over to the cooperative, communist resolution of the problem.

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

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

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

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

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

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

# INSIDE: The Elections and Our Actual Tasks

What now? The elections are over, and after corporate America has spent over 6 billion dollars on the presidential elections alone, and after the candidates have offered us their truncated visions of “forward” (with more of the same, only more so,) or “a new tomorrow” which differs little from yesterday, nothing has really changed. No real solutions, no real reforms have been proffered.

Reality intrudes. Like the aftermath of a superstorm, after the fog has lifted, after all the ideological smokescreens have dissipated, the clear picture of the American landscape that emerges is much like the scene that we saw in the wake of Hurricane Sandy: a devastated society in which many shiver in the dark and wonder where their next meal is coming from. And the ruling politicians have no answer for this.

For those who are seeing their livelihood slip away, and who are being left behind, it is becoming clear that in one way or another people are going to have to fight to improve their conditions. As “Strategy, Mission and

the Way Forward” points out, when families are living on the streets and going without food, talk of social and ideological questions is empty. From now on every struggle becomes a struggle over actual interests.

We should not be deluded, however, into thinking that all of the political posturing is only just so much white noise. There is method in their madness. In their strident efforts to protect and defend private property at all costs, they understand that the greatest threat to that rule is precisely that the dispossessed will begin to move in their actual interests. Camouflaged beneath the debate over jobs and joblessness is the fact that the political rhetoric and media spin were aimed at those who had jobs and who are now falling into economic instability and poverty — the dispossessed.

The ruling class recognizes, as do we, that this dispossessed section of the new class is the center of gravity of a class that, when it begins to move, can pull everything forward. The ruling class is throwing everything at blocking the development of that class. Revolutionaries understand that

everything depends upon the development of class consciousness and unity.

As it has done throughout history, the ruling class uses race to camouflage and cover up actual conditions and to block the unity of the working class. “Death to Slavery: Ending the Myth of Race in the United States” spells it out: “Race is used to justify inequality and poverty in society and repression and brutality by the State.”

“The Rising Brutality of the State Against Women” has a similar message: “The ruling class uses the weapons of history such as the ideology of male supremacy just as they use white supremacy.” The ruling class will use everything in its power to prevent the new class from becoming conscious of itself and its historical mission.

A new kind of corporate/market State is also emerging to stem the revolutionary process. This market State was also a major question that emerged during the electoral process. The politicians of the two ruling class parties put forward no real solutions, as the State blocks any effort at real reform and accelerates the process of the destruction of

any remnants of the social contract.

Our very democracy is at stake. The merger of the corporations and the State makes it clear that the only solution for the ruling class is a fascist solution. The question for the revolutionary class and its leaders is then, what is the way forward if there is no legal or political redress of grievances?

On the one hand, as the article “The Future of Property” points out the State is moving toward fascism to protect private property. On the other hand stands a new class of propertyless people, with no ties to private property, whose actual interest is the abolition of private property.

So perhaps all of the electoral mayhem has done us a favor. Perhaps through the smokescreen the air is clearing. The emperor has no clothes. We are beginning to see now the lay of the land; when all of the tired rhetoric reveals no solutions, we can dispense with all of that. We can be about the real task that history has placed before us. We can begin the actual tasks of a new class destined to obtain the political power to reorganize society in the interests of all humanity.

## *Strategy, Mission and the Way Forward* (Continued from page 2)

around, or even to slow it down? The doors are being shut.

Anaheim and many other cities have felt the full brunt of a police state bent on exacting its control through brute force. The G8 and NATO meetings as well as the Republican and Democratic national conventions were armed camps.

Even the elections, that last spectacle of bourgeois democracy, were an exhibition of the two ruling political parties who have no real solutions to offer. In other words, no real reforms are possible. More important is what is coming, after the elections. The likely scenario is a continuing stalemate in Washington, the inability to address the cause of this epochal crisis — the growing permanent joblessness — and an accompanying fiscal crisis that threatens to drag us off a cliff.

This is not a doomsday scenario, however. Not to fight, or to give up all hope, is not an option. The question is not whether or not to keep on fighting, but how we fight. This is where matters of strategy and identifying the political center of gravity come in.

### **STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP**

Revolutionaries base their work on what is arising. At this time, under these conditions, that is the political and social motion of the dispossessed. They are not going back to work. They have no redress for their grievances. The capitalists have nothing for them. They are being pushed outside not only capitalist relations, but out of bourgeois society, where they no longer play any role whatsoever. They are pitted against one another by the ruling class and told that their problems are the results of one another.

The ruling class understands the significance of this grouping, but it has nothing to

provide them but ideology. America is getting close to the stage economically when the American people cannot keep talking about the social and ideological questions in the face of their families living on the streets or going without food. The strategy of the ruling class is to prevent awareness and identity of different classes in America, and to stop people moving in their own interests along those lines. The League makes sure that class interests and class identity are part of every discussion.

To influence the movement, revolutionaries also have to figure out how to work within this section at this time. Masses are moved through the people who influence them. We commonly call these “leaders”, but we do not mean this in the traditional sense. Leaders are those who influence others, who step forward and seek to solve the political problems they and others face.

When it is no longer possible to reform the system, then the only solution is for the oppressed and exploited class to gain the political power to reorganize society in its own interest. The task for these leaders is to begin to look strategically at the question of how are they going to play a role in shaping the consciousness of their class so it can move forward step by step in the fight for political power.

If revolutionaries understand the significance of developing leaders so they can influence the people they lead, then the question we must answer is, how are the leaders of this revolutionary class to be developed as strategic thinkers, as revolutionaries positioned to shape class consciousness as a condition of moving along the path to revolutionary solutions? This gets to the heart of the question of what kind of organization the League is building, and what the tasks of the

League are at this particular point.

The League is the place where the revolutionaries can receive the tools necessary to resolve the problems facing society today. By bringing the revolutionaries who are the leaders of the dispossessed into the League, the conditions can be set not only for their development and training but also for the League to build as the type of organization that can be about really changing things.

### **WIDESPREAD PROPAGANDA**

These leaders are scattered everywhere. How do we reach them?

In the words of one seasoned revolutionary fighter in the escalating battles in Michigan, “When you look at what we are faced with, it means that there is nothing left for us but widespread propaganda.”

Doing widespread propaganda does not mean that revolutionaries step away from the heat of battle, or propagandize from a distance. Revolutionaries accomplish their mission by working within the practical struggle. From within the struggle, revolutionaries offer solutions to the questions of the day, pushing the movement forward along its line of march from scattered defensive battles to united political struggle. Every struggle becomes a battle over actual interests and a school for revolutionary ideas.

When the doors are being shut by the ruling class, for example, the development of third parties such as the Green Party is inevitable, and this helps to open a door to take us along the path in which the struggle must go to achieve its goals. When the government puts the needs of the corporations above those of the people, the struggle for nationalization of vital resources and services pushes the struggle along the path to taking over the

corporations in the interest of the people. When public education is attacked on every front, the teachers’ struggle for better conditions for students and for decent public education for all allows for bringing into the struggle the vision of a cooperative society.

All of League propaganda is aimed at getting the LRNA in a position to influence this growing discontented mass in America. We do widespread propaganda, but we recognize that simply by attacking everything we attack nothing. We aim at the center of gravity, that core that can pull the whole revolutionary process forward. Therefore in line with our estimate, the League directs its propaganda at the conditions and concerns of the growing core of dispossessed and particularly those who are emerging as leaders from its ranks. This is the meaning of the League’s mission: “To unite the 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 League has the weapons to accomplish its mission. The presses and their inter-relationship each play a particular role. The presses of the movement cast the net wide, providing the basis for League propaganda. At the same time, particularly through *Rally, Comrades!* and other forms of propaganda, and through education, the League is able to present to the leaders of the dispossessed an understanding of the problems they face and a strategy for victory.

*Political Report of the LRNA Standing Committee, September 2012.*

# The Rising Brutality of the State Against Women

“New forms of violence have emerged, and in some countries advances toward equality and freedom from violence previously made by women have been eroded or are under attack... On a global scale women are being assaulted, raped, and even killed.” — United Nations, *Ending Violence Against Women: From Words to Action*, Study of the Secretary General, 2006.

The epoch of social revolution is bringing about an overall offensive against women worldwide. While some might see it as an attack on women’s civil rights only, or as a gender war, the new attack on women is the outcome of their revolutionary actions. Women are leaders in the revolutionary process as humanity is at the edge of paramount societal change — the transformation of society from a capitalist mode of production and distribution to a mode of production and distribution based on cooperation. This transformation can only happen if the laboring masses understand their role in history and move to make it happen. Here lies the answer to the rising violence of the State against women today.

This rising State violence against women is rooted in the historical and continued oppression of women under capitalism. From this oppression derives culture and customs amplified and asserted by the ruling class propaganda machine. But a new form of State violence — physical and economic — is rising.

While the form is still brutality, rape, burnings, mutilations, and killings in the hands of criminals protected by the State, and in some cases by the hands of the State, the content of this violence is different. Though linked to the historical relations of oppression and exploitation of the capitalist system, it’s different because of the epoch of social revolution enveloping the globe, the social destruction being witnessed, and the growing fascist culture being propagated by the ruling class.

The rising violence against women is part of the overall State’s offensive on the new revolutionary class. Women, because of their economic and social position in society, are objectively a key component of this revolutionary class. The ruling class aims to disarm women leaders and make them examples to hold back the social revolution.

This new trend of State violence against women can be defined both as crimes directly perpetrated by State forces (police and military) and as economic, i.e. a regressive agenda and draconian fiscal austerity actions by the State.

## AS WOMEN STAND UP, REGIMES STRIKE BACK

Women led the teachers’ strike in Chicago and are leading water struggles in Detroit and the fight against foreclosures in the U.S. In Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, they’re fighting against the brutality and ineptness of a State that can’t or won’t stop the killings of young girls and women. In the Middle East they led rallies and marches during the Arab Spring. These are working class leaders who have no option but to throw their lot in with the fight

to change society. As a result, they are in the direct line of fire between the State and the new masses of poor.

## MEXICO

Susana Chavez Castillo, a writer and a leader against the femicides in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, was found dead in December 2011. She was strangled to death and her right hand cut off. Social activists did not fail to see the symbolic dismemberment of her right hand as a political action to silence her and others. Those behind the murderers aimed to send a message: “If you speak out or protest, you will be next.” Susana was killed because she dared to use her pen to denounce the complicity between the Mexican government officials, the drug cartels, and the murderers of young girls and women.

## EGYPT

In 2011, the world watched in shock as the Egyptian military police dragged a veiled woman protester while beating her senseless and ripping off her abaya — her robe — in Cairo’s Tahrir Square. What was her crime? She dared to take part and protest during the Arab Spring. Her beating was a warning to all protesters who attempt to stop these attacks. A man and a woman, who ran to assist the veiled woman protestor, were met with the pounding of billy clubs, kicks, and rifle butts that caused them to be hospitalized.

## UNITED STATES

On October 17, 2012, police and Secret Service seized Green Party Presidential candidate Jill Stein and Vice-Presidential candidate Cheri Honkala as they attempted to enter the Presidential Debate in New York. Taken to a warehouse and handcuffed to a chair for eight hours, they were released at 11:15 at night and thrown out on to the streets.

These candidates were seized because if they could have spoken at the Debate they would have presented a program to confront the growing poverty and the looming threat of war and fascism. If this can happen to nationally and internationally known candidates, it can happen to anyone. This is a step on the path towards fascism.

## POVERTY AS A STATE CRIME

On the economic front the State’s actions are just as cruel and deadly. The State’s attack on women’s standard of living is leaving millions homeless and in abject poverty. In the world, 925 million people are undernourished. Women represent a disproportionate percentage of the world’s poor. The UN Development Fund for Women in its 2005 report, “Progress of the World’s Women: Women, Work and Poverty”, described it as “the burden of poverty borne by women, especially in developing countries.”

Here in the United States women are not faring better. Women are poorer than men in all racial and ethnic groups. Recent data shows

that 26.5 percent of African American women are poor compared to 22.3 percent of African American men; 23.6 percent of Hispanic women are poor compared to 19.6 percent of Hispanic men; 10.7 percent of Asian women are poor compared to 9.7 percent of Asian men; and 11.6 percent of white women are poor compared to 9.4 percent of white men.

## RULING CLASS IDEOLOGY

The new trend of State violence against women is part of the ruling class strategy to disrupt and thwart the political formation of the new class of workers. The attack on women is surrounded by an ideology of male supremacy — a centuries-old cluster of ideas on women — that uphold and perpetuate a patriarchal society. Given this ideology the perpetrators of State violence rejoice and vent their fury and frustration, as they attack, push and manhandle women protestors in demonstrations, rallies and marches.

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ons of history such as the ideology of male supremacy, just like they use white supremacy, in their favor. With bourgeois ideology they aim to keep the workers divided and under their fold. But let’s not be fooled, the ruling classes are aiming their fire at everyone — regardless of gender or color — who represent a clear and present danger to their power.

## WOMEN’S HISTORICAL OPPRESSION

The end of “primitive communism” brought the end of mother-right. Frederick Engels in *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* called this, “a revolution over the family.” In the earliest stage of human society all was owned in common by the entire clan or tribe. The only division of labor was between the sexes. Man fought the wars, hunted, searched for raw materials for food and had the tools to do so. Woman, in charge of the house, prepared food, washed clothes, sewed and weaved. Man and woman were each masters of their own domain, each owner of their instruments, and what was made in common was used in common; it was common property of the tribe or gens.

The division of labor within the family had regulated the division of property between men and women. While the division of labor remained the same, and it had guaranteed women their supremacy in the house and family, it had become a fetter as production increased. Domestic labor did not count against the gain of the necessities of life that produced the surplus of goods. Women’s labor became the private property of the men.

Women became the first slaves.

Surplus of goods gave rise to the division of society into classes. Classes gave rise to the State. The State rose with private property and private property rose with the division of society into classes. Through history the State has been the State of the oppressor classes. It became the State of the slave owner to keep down the slaves; it became the State of the feudal nobility to keep down the peasant, serfs and bondsmen, and it’s the State of capitalists to exploit and control the masses. The nature of the State has not changed. Its pillars continue to be the police, a standing army, prisons and, institutions of coercion of all kinds.

The key to women’s emancipation is in their joining social productive labor. This happened in the U.S. during World War II. While men were fighting the war at the battlefield, women were encouraged to join the labor force in the home front. But after the men came back home women were pressured to go back to their traditional roles at

home. However, millions of married women in the 1950s continued to work and millions more entered the workforce in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This trend has continued through the years. By 2009 almost 60 percent of U.S. women ages 16 and older, or about 72 million women were active members of the workforce, according to U.S. Census data. The increase of women in the workforce was also due to the need for families to have additional income in order to have a decent standard of living.

Yet today, the maturing of the electronic revolution is turning back the progress achieved by families in the past period. The ruling class’ solution to the economic crisis is to force a closer unity of the corporations and the government. Their solution to the growing social misery and instability is a full-blown police state and fascism. The 21st century is seeing a new form of State, a corporate/market State to enforce austerity and the destruction of last century’s social contract.

## WOMEN LEADING FIGHT FOR NEW SOCIETY

Society is at the end of one epoch, the private ownership of the means of production, and confronted with the possibility of the means of production being owned in common by society. The introduction of labor-replacing technology is objectively presenting this opportunity with the rise of a new class of workers — the majority of which includes contingent, below-minimum

*Continues on page 6*

# The Future of Property

**W**ebster's Dictionary defines property as: a) something owned or possessed b) a piece of real estate c) the exclusive right to possess, enjoy, and dispose of a thing d) something to which a person or business has a legal title.

To fully understand the dynamics of property, it must be defined more specifically.

*Private property:* Private property is the infrastructure of the economy and the wealth that exceeds any human's personal needs. Private property arose in history when society developed to a point that communities produced enough surplus (especially food) that one section, or class, of society could be freed from hunting and gathering and live off the labor of another class.

*Personal property:* Personal property is the things we need to live and function, as individuals or families: Food, clothing, shelter, computers, phones, personal transportation, etc.

*Public property:* In the United States there is a massive amount of public property, property which belongs to the government such as schools, roads, airports, libraries, and hospitals.

But these are not static, unchanging categories.

of profit for the owners of private property. The major items of personal property such as cars and houses are usually acquired by going into debt and the corporation which owns the note owns our "personal property." Increasingly, our debts are bundled together into financial instruments which are then sold and re-sold. At times no one knows who owns a particular house or car. But we always know which class owns these debts and the property they stem from — they belong to the owners of private property.

The ownership of property is not as an individual question. It is a group question, a social question, a class question. Private property is a contradiction. We create it but another class owns it.

## PROPERTY IN A COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

People are taught to fear a cooperative, communist society so they can be convinced that the abolition of private property means the confiscation of what little they personally own. In a cooperative, communist society the only thing that will be confiscated is private property, including all corporate property, in order that it may become public property for the benefit of all.

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The nature of private property is changing. In its capitalist phase, private property has been based on the exploitation of labor at the workplace. But with the replacement of labor by technology, private property is shifting to intangibles such as currency dealing, financial derivatives, oil futures, etc. The owners of private property are shifting from making money from the work of other people to making money from money.

*The erosion of personal property:* In order to acquire personal property, we have to have jobs, we have to have money. In order to get money we have to be able to sell our labor power, our ability to work, to the owners of private property. But the fundamental shift from human labor to computerized, robotic production and services is making it impossible for a vast section of the people to sell their ability to work. The masses are being pushed rapidly from the ownership of personal property.

*The decline of public property:* Public property is being sold off or given away to corporations. A complete merger between the corporations and the government is well underway. The very concept of public property is now under attack.

We obtain personal property only if the sale of our labor power creates the possibility

In a cooperative, communist society everything used by society to guarantee our well-being — hospitals, airports, factories, schools — will be public property. Our personal property will be securely in our hands. That will be guaranteed by law, by custom, and by the nature of a society where there is no longer any reason anyone would want to take it away.

## PROPERTY AND DEMOCRACY

In the United States, democracy has been limited mainly to property owners. At one time only white males who owned property were allowed to vote and the dominant property owners were those who owned slaves. As chattel slavery was eliminated and the ranks of property owners grew via the family farm and high-paying jobs, democracy expanded. But this meant only voting rights. The strategic economic and political decisions have always been made only by those who own private property. Today, some of those who call the shots are women, some are minorities, but all are owners of private property or are politically controlled by them.

A propertyless class has no role in capitalism or any other system of private

property except to provide the labor-power necessary for the production of private property, and cannot be allowed any say in how it is run. With mass foreclosures and evictions, the end of the family farm, and the destruction of small business, capitalist democracy is no longer possible. It is rapidly being dismantled.

There can be no political democracy unless there is economic democracy.

Under communism, everyone will be a co-owner of public property so everyone will have a say in the direction of society. We will move from a society based on the control of people to one based on the control of things. Scarcity will be gone, swept away by universal abundance. Under systems of private property, someone else controls your ability to eat and to live, so you can never be free. With the elimination of private property, bountiful personal property for all, and universal access to public property, freedom will become a reality for everyone.

Under communism, corporations will no longer exist. Privatization will be reversed and the private property we paid for but didn't own will return to us via public ownership. There will be no foreclosures. No tax sales. No real estate market and the terror that goes with it. Everyone will have a place to live, guaranteed. No repossessed cars. No hungry children. No sick people without access to medical care. Artists will have access to all the tools they need to create.

We own our ability to work, with our bodies and our minds. It is our personal property. Living under a system of private property we still own our ability to work but cannot use it. That is just another form of slavery. Under communism, abundance will be distributed to all and we won't have to desperately try to sell our ability to work in order to live. But we will still own our ability to work, to use our bodies and our minds. We will be free, truly free, to use those capacities to make the contribution to society that we want to make.

## PROPERTY AND IDEOLOGY

We are encouraged to see ourselves as "middle class" property owners who have nothing in common with the poor and propertyless. We are not separate. We are all people who need to sell our labor power in order to survive under a system of private property, a system that no longer needs to buy our labor power. We can come together when we envision ourselves as owners of all the personal property we need and co-owners of all public property. Then we are revolutionaries moving with history to save our country.

Many individuals and organizations talk about "going back" to a time when a huge chunk of America owned property. But technology under a system of private property will not allow that to happen. In the end, all the blather about property rights only has real meaning for the ruling class, which owns all the property. We should be concerned instead with human rights, including the right to own the personal property and

use the public property we need to live a full and meaningful life.

## PROPERTY AND VIOLENCE

Living under a system of private property we fight each other over access to resources that are deliberately withheld from us. In a cooperative, communist society there will be no more prejudice, discrimination, or street violence. The underlying cause of it, enforced scarcity, will be gone.

In America, a country still defined by its legacy of human slavery and the violence necessary to control slaves and their descendants, police violence grows worse each day. The function of the police is to protect private property by any means necessary. In a cooperative, communist society we won't have to fight each other over access to personal property. There will be no need for a police force and police violence will exist only in the history books.

## PROPERTY AS A PROCESS

For most of human history, people lived in primitive communist societies where there was no private property. Over the past several thousand years, private property has developed and grown. It has taken over and consumed almost all other forms of property.

The rise of private property was eventually accompanied by the emergence of money. Little by little, money conquered all forms of natural economy until it overtook the productive economy. The world economy is now becoming based on making money from money. Those who have no money cannot participate.

Under communism there will be no money but not because getting rid of money is a good idea. Money will be gone because money is a medium of exchange. Under capitalism, the form of private property humanity is now passing out of, we exchange our ability to work for money. Then we exchange money for the commodities we need to live. Under communism, abundance will be distributed to all but not by exchange. Without exchange, there will be no role for money. It will no longer exist.

## THE END OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

This is a very dangerous time in history. All around the world, the state is moving toward fascism in order to protect private property and the class which owns it. To make the transition from private property to universal abundance in a cooperative society we must rely on the new class of propertyless people. Since this new class owns no property and is without employment or resources, it cannot move in the direction of securing individual property. It has no ties to any system of private property and so it is free to lead humanity toward a cooperative, communist society. It is of the greatest importance to make this new class aware of its role in history and to spread that awareness throughout society.

# Death to Slavery: Ending the Myth of Race in the United States

Today, African Americans as a group are overrepresented in almost every social and health problem facing the American people. At the same time, the growing equality of unemployment and poverty is making possible a new class unity across racial or ethnic lines, that can create the change needed for all of humanity and the earth to thrive. For revolutionaries to play their role in this process, it's important to understand how the ruling class uses race to attempt to divide the American people to prevent class consciousness and to justify poverty, oppression, and State violence against the working class. Today's advanced technology makes it possible to organize a society where all of our needs are met. But the promise of a cooperative society will only be achieved when the American people become conscious of the cause of our problems and the solution.

In 1864, one hundred years before the passage of the Civil Rights Act that outlawed major forms of discrimination in the U.S., Karl Marx and the International Workingmen's Association sent a letter to President Abraham Lincoln with the following opening sentence, "We congratulate the American people upon your re-election by a large majority. If resistance to the Slave Power was the reserved watchword of your first election, the triumphant war cry of your re-election is Death to Slavery."

Later in the letter Marx noted that the working people of the U.S. had "allowed slavery to defile their own republic, while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell himself and choose his own master, they were unable to attain the true freedom of labor, or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation; but this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of civil war." What remains of "this barrier to progress" is the lingering myth of race and the racism, racial divisions and the confusion it brings with it.

Contrary to common usage, race is not a valid biological reality, but rather a social and political construction formed by the ruling class as part of the capitalist system. Most scientists today agree that human beings cannot be separated into clearly demarcated separate "races". The Human Genome Project, completed in 2003, determined that all humans are genetically 99.9% alike. Although variation in skin color and other physical features can be observed, all humans derive from the same origin, the earliest fossils of which have been found in Ethiopia. What we today think of as different "races" are in fact just part of natural human diversity.

## ORIGINS OF RACISM

In the earliest days of the colonization of what would become the U.S., slavery was not yet solidified and clearly distinguished from other forms of forced labor, such as indentured servitude. Before then, 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, something that needed to be crushed for the ruling class to maintain its power.

The concept of "race" as a biological division within humanity was created and reinforced by the ruling class to justify chattel slavery and divide people who have the same class interests under capitalism. It is clear that before "capitalism" Brooke Heagerty and Nelson Peery write in their book *Moving Onward: From Racial Division to Class Division*, "enslavement could be the fate of any person, no matter his or her color. Whites enslaved whites by the millions. Divisions in society were not related to color. Who ruled society and who was considered a part of society had nothing to do with race. Such status was instead defined by wealth or by force."

The agricultural economy of the British colonies in America required toiling in the hot sun 12-18 hours a day. Slavery was a way to solve the wealthy planters' need for the backbreaking labor made necessary by the agricultural base and the scarcity of labor. The construction of race and the accompanying concepts of white supremacy and Black inferiority were required to justify brutal chattel slavery in a developing country where Christianity and democracy would otherwise appear to contradict legalized inequality among humans.

The U.S. Civil War was one of the great revolutions in history, even though it was a war between two different sections of the capitalist class (industrial capitalists of the North and agrarian capitalists of the South). Why? Because it ended with the greatest redistribution of wealth that had taken place up to that time by expropriating \$4 billion in property in the form of slaves. However, following the Civil War, the industrial economy of the North still needed the raw materials provided by the agricultural economy of the South. Therefore, African Americans were unable to free themselves from slave-like conditions perpetuated by sharecropping (which was also done by poor whites) and maintained by Black Codes, Jim Crow, and the violent terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan, until the invention of the mechanical cotton picker after WWII and the accompanying Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

Our country has a contradictory history of freedom and slavery, hope and genocide. Today's advanced technology could be utilized to provide high quality living standards for all. Yet, under capitalism, the "rights" of the capitalist class to the accumulation of private property, and the power of the current State to enforce these rights, stands in the way. Understanding the legacy of racism in the United States will enable the American people to move forward together to contribute to the revolutionary process that is already underway.

The technological revolution that is leading to laborless production has been particularly devastating to African Americans because those who migrated to cities of the North and South during the Civil Rights era were often

the lowest skilled and the last hired. When automobile and other factories were automated and/or moved to other countries, these Black workers were the first fired. This process has escalated since the 1970s and continues today, with 27% of African Americans living below the poverty line (as do 27% of Latinos).

In each state, the Black unemployment rate is higher than the overall unemployment rate for that state. Due to the poverty of their parents, Black children are more likely to attend underfunded schools where textbooks are damaged or outdated, school facilities are not well kept, and the teachers have less training. African Americans have the highest rate of infant mortality, HIV infection, cancer, diabetes and heart disease. The imprisonment of African American youth and adults has reached epidemic proportions, as clearly presented in Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow*.

## RACIAL IDEOLOGY

Today, the continued myths of race, including stereotypes of Blacks as violent and lazy and of whites as wealthy and privileged, lead to blaming the Black victims of society and ignoring the white ones. Racial ideology is used to justify inequality and poverty in society and repression and brutality by the State. It is used to attack all those who are forced out of the economy, and who are forming the dispossessed of our country.

The common popular message is that "they" are poor because they are lazy and not very intelligent. "They" are stopped by the police and incarcerated at a high rate because they are naturally violent. "They" don't do well in school because they are unintelligent and their parents have a ghetto culture that devalues education. These racist myths are used to justify inequality and poverty in the wealthiest country in the world.

These myths can then be applied to anyone who is suffering from the injustice of the capitalist system (e.g., unemployed, homeless, without health care): it's their fault and they deserve what they get. This justifies state violence, harassment and repression, especially in Black and Brown communities, and

increasingly in all working class communities.

These ideas camouflage the effects of the dying capitalist system on the millions of Americans being destroyed by it. Many people in the U.S. don't realize that the majority of poor people in our country are actually white, not Black.

By characterizing the major social and health problems of Americans as "Black problems," the ruling class attempts to divide the working class along racial lines. The main target of this effort are the white workers. The ruling class is attempting to convince working class whites to unite with the ruling class rather than uniting with their class brothers and sisters. This racial division also prevents many African Americans from seeing their common interests with working class people of all colors. All of this is done to prevent class unity, dissent and revolution.

## END SLAVERY OF ALL HUMANKIND

In reality, it is the decreasing "value" of humans under capitalism that is the problem, and that problem is increasingly affecting Americans of all colors. When the American working class understands this, they will be able to fulfill their historic role, to construct a society based on "to each according to her or his need and from each according to her or his ability."

The role of revolutionaries is to spread consciousness of our common interests to the members of our class so that, together, we can move forward along the path to a society that provides for all. We recognize the diversity of humanity and we proceed from this recognition in the efforts to unite our class. We also understand that the solution for all people, across race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexual orientation, is a new cooperative society organized in the interests of humanity and based on the public ownership of the necessary means of production and distribution. Let us move forward so "death to the slavery of humankind" can be a reality.

## Rising Brutality... (Continued from page 4)

wage and part-time workers. Increasingly driven out of the relationship between worker and capitalist, they are forced to fight for a new society where society owns the means of production and the social product is distributed according to need. Women are at the core of this new class. The actual program of this new class is to abolish private property.

We are living in an historical moment where the full emancipation of women and the laboring masses is objectively at hand. But only if the class that has "nothing to lose but its chains" acquires the consciousness to seize this historical moment.

The ruling class recognizes the danger of the new class becoming politically conscious. As a result they're doing everything

within their power to stop the new class from becoming conscious to move as a class. We revolutionaries who understand this moment are doing everything within our power for the class to become conscious. We recognize that humanity is at the threshold of a new world. History has spiraled to a higher stage of development, from primitive communal property to 21st century communism. This new world can be based on communal cooperation and organization with distribution according to need. The plethora of abundance produced with the new tools of electronics will rid human societies of scarcity and want forever. Women are objectively leading the fight for the whole of society.