

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

Water: It Belongs to All of Us

In 2014 the City of Detroit began shutting off water services at 59,000 addresses where low-income residents lived, whose water and sewer bills were delinquent. A political struggle exploded, rallying around the concept that “water is a human right, no shutoffs!” and “water is life, no water = death.” A civil suit on behalf of delinquent customers sought to stave off the shutoffs and turn the water back on; however, federal judge Steven Rhodes refused the request, coldly stating, “there is no such right or law” that low-income residents have a right to water (*Detroit News*, September 29, 2014). In setting forth this judgment, Judge Stevens ruled that Detroit’s unemployed and low-wage workers are sub-human, and can be denied basic access to life-supporting services within an economically devastated region that lost 26 percent of its employment since 2000.

The United Nations contends that water is a human right (UN Resolution 62/242), and sent a team of officials to investigate the Detroit water shutoffs. UN Special Rapporteur Catarina de Albuquerque remarked that “we were shocked by the scale of the mass disconnections and by the way it is affecting the weakest, the poorest and the most vulnerable” (*Aljazeera*, October 20, 2014). There is evidence that afflicted households experienced increased e.coli, salmonella, pneumonia, and blood infections, and one courageous individual, Nicole Cannon, limited by work disability and Sarcoidosis while fighting repeated water service shutoffs, succumbed to death.

While Detroit’s poorest and most vulnerable are being shut off, the city’s delinquent businesses are not. “More than half of the city’s commercial and industrial users... (owe) a sum totaling \$30 million,” including two professional sports arenas (*The Guardian*, June 25, 2014). These businesses are not being shut off because the corporate class that holds political power has respect for businesses, but none for ordinary working people.

The UN is powerless to regulate private property even when it demands payment in exchange for life-giving water. Mass water shutoffs in Detroit continue with the next round of shutoffs that started in May 2015, with a fresh 36,000 new addresses targeted. This draconian practice is being rolled out in cities like Flint, Michigan and in Baltimore, Maryland, already the center of working class unrest. Shutoffs threaten the lives of thousands, and duly express the fascist political culture developing in Michigan in relation to the emergency manager’s regime, signaled further by the unlawful jailing of Benton Harbor, Michigan community leader, Reverend Edward Pinkney.

Water is necessary for all life, and is a means for producing agricultural commodi-

ties, and to a greater or lesser extent, all other commodities. The capitalist class is defining water as a property right. The working class cannot survive without safe drinking water and sanitation. These two classes have antagonistic positions within the present transition to a laborless economy. The ruling class is trying to convince workers that the State and the private corporations have the right to commodify water in order to extract payment, and that they further have the authority to divert water toward the most profitable uses. As electronic technology eliminates work and cheapens labor, the working class is losing its ability to pay for water, and is compelled to turn to political means to survive. This struggle will inevitably lead to a class struggle to wrest political power from the State and the corporate owners of the means of life.

WATER SHOULD NOT BE PRIVATE PROPERTY

Water is the foundation for human life and a healthy planet. This simple statement is in flat contradiction to the logic of private property seeking to commodify water. Capitalism developed by establishing the social conditions where labor power became a commodity, where the worker had no means of survival other than to work for a capitalist. Labor power is the only commodity that creates value when consumed, and is the fundamental basis for profit. Because electronic technology is abolishing the role of labor in production, it is eliminating capitalist profit and setting into motion the conditions for the destruction of capitalism. Capital, refusing to go quietly into the night, is endeavoring to save itself by any means necessary, including merging with the State, massive financial speculation, manufacturing profits with endless wars, and by redefining as private property, those things that used to be publicly provided such as water, education, and city services.

Within the current stage of a new epoch, which marks the end of capital, two significant developments are occurring in relation to the commodification of water: 1) urbanization has reached a stage where the majority of the world population now lives in cities, and 2) climate change is creating instability in global fresh water supplies. These conditions are favorable for commodification because urbanization separates the supply of water from its consumers, and supply instability fuels speculative price swings.

In urban society water consumption depends upon sanitary infrastructure, and in the United States this infrastructure is aging and in need of replacement. Private interests stand ready to profit from this situation. The two largest private water compa-

nies worldwide are Veolia Environment and Suez Environment, and have operations on every continent. Their reported annual revenue in 2013 was \$24 billion and \$16 billion respectively.

The United Nations estimates that globally 783 million people lack access to safe drinking water (11% of total world population), and 2.5 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation (34% of total world population). These numbers will continue to increase due to the electronic revolution in the economy, climate change, and the ability of powerful interests such as Veolia and Suez to conspire with politicians to sustain and extend their hold over water.

Private water suppliers stand on the threshold of gaining U.S. market share as desperately underfunded community water systems deteriorate due to aging pipes and obsolete treatment facilities. Private interests will resolve the cost dilemma by providing services based on the ability to pay and by discontinuing services to those unable to pay. This is already happening in Detroit under the cover and authority of the dictatorship imposed by emergency manager laws.

The urban system in the United States, in particular in the Midwest “rust belt” region, is being made over by the electronic revolution in production. Affluent areas are consolidated to exclude vast impoverished neighborhoods, while financial interests seek the highest rate of return by investing in water and city services for the affluent and denying services to the poor.

PRIVATE INTERESTS CONTROL CALIFORNIA’S WATER POLICY

On April 1, 2015 California Governor Jerry Brown issued an executive order to ration water statewide. In response to the fourth consecutive year of record drought, the plan is focused on residential and municipal users, even though 80% of the state’s controllable water resources are devoted to private agriculture. Because Governor Brown’s plan protects the interests of private property, his plan can only exacerbate the drought, because

these interests are determined to value profit over environmental sustainability.

Half of California’s water runoff flows through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta that provides water to 70% of California’s 39 million residents as well as to 3 million acres of farmland. Private agricultural interests obtain the lion’s share of this water. For example, the Kern Water Bank, the largest water storage facility in the world, originally built to protect residents from drought cycles, was privatized in 1995, and is now controlled by agricultural interests. These interests have put forward a publicly funded proposal to build “twin tunnels” diverting more water from the Sacramento River toward agricultural interests in the San Joaquin Valley. This proposal, supported by Governor Jerry Brown and Senator Diane Feinstein, threatens to further degrade the delta’s ecosystem, exacerbate the drought cycle, increase pesticide build-up in the soil and water, and intensify salinization of the water table.

The motivation of private agricultural interests is profits from California’s vast agricultural sector, for which water is a strategic resource. However, the benefits of this quest are largely restrained by the small number of owners of private wealth because technological development is reducing and eliminating the role of human labor in production. For example, it takes a shaking machine, on average, five seconds to harvest pistachios from one tree (*Bloomberg Business*, November 11, 2010). Combined with other technologies such as low volume water delivery, relatively little labor is needed to grow, harvest and process agricultural commodities grown in California.

MAKE WATER A HUMAN RIGHT, HEAL THE PLANET

The development of a new kind of economy based on an electronic technology that eliminates human labor has created the conditions for a revolutionary struggle over private ownership and access to water. As the monetary value of labor-power continues to decline, and is eliminated from production entirely by

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Inside: The Front Line—The Battle for the Basics of Life

There is a profound disruption taking place in the economic foundation of society itself. A consequence of the new electronic tools of production is that fundamentally the economy is becoming increasingly “laborless.” The result is that the ruling class is employing every means at its disposal to maximize its shrinking profits by denying access to the basic necessities of life to a growing section of workers it no longer needs. That puts these new laborless workers in direct antagonism to the class which rules society. They must fight to survive and to secure the necessities of life — food, water, shelter, health care, education.

A broken economic system reveals the strategic weakness of the ruling class. The failure and clear intention never to provide for the food, housing or other basic requirements of life are exposed as a moral atrocity. How can a ruling class that so callously regards a growing section of the working class as superfluous be allowed to continue its rule? Nowhere is this immoral bankruptcy more apparent than in the conditions of millions of homeless in our society. It is the clearest indictment of the failure of a system based on private property, and deteriorating conditions of work, education, healthcare and access to food and water are all tied to homelessness.

This most impoverished section of the workers, across all color lines, is rising to combat their intolerable conditions of life. The article on “Baltimore: The Struggle Against Police Violence and the Fight for Class Unity” shows how in the growing response of the workers the ruling class is forced to drop any pretense of democracy and to unleash a police state as “the political attempt to maintain

a social system of privilege by force and violence after its corresponding economic base has changed.” The only response must be to “use every instance of oppression and brutality to fight for the unity of our class.”

As the article “Water: It Belongs to All of Us” expresses it “Water is life. No water = death.” On the one hand, as the capitalist class moves to define water as a property right, the workers on the other hand are losing their ability to pay and are finding themselves cut off. They have no choice but to fight for free access to water for all.

The article on the “Impulses Toward Third Party Opens Way for New Ideas” shows how the disregard of human rights, the rampant police killings and brutality, the militarization of the police and their expanding role as an “occupying force” are part of the expression of the polarization in society that is weakening the ties that bind the working class ideologically to the ruling class. It is in the context of this destruction of the capitalist system that third party motions develop. They are on the one hand an attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie in an unstable political environment to “misdirect” the working class in a time when the bribe that ties the workers to the ruling class can no longer be delivered.

On the other hand the people are losing faith in the system and see no future for themselves in it. They are searching for alternatives. This makes revolutionary propaganda even more critical. Without it, “the populist movements will only lead the workers back under corporate control and into the arms of the fascists.”

The article on the “New Politics Emerging

in Chicago” is a concrete case in point. The growing disparity between wealth and poverty is reflected in the recent mayoral election campaign there, and shows the beginnings of the development of an independent politics. The agenda of the political elite there is to maximize profits wherever they can and in the process to eliminate a superfluous population. “Those whom they do not need, they will not feed.” But “the fight for Chicago’s dispossessed to have political representation is emerging.”

We are standing on the cusp of a new stage of the revolutionary process in

America. “From the Editors: The Pursuit of Happiness,” recognizes that while we are embarking on a march that is qualitatively new, our revolutionary times are grounded in and arise out of the revolutionary beginnings and the history of America. Ours is a uniquely American revolution, and our cause today is to realize the aims and vision of a revolutionary class that has struggled so valiantly over the centuries to achieve a cooperative society, where all of the basic needs of humanity are fulfilled.

Water... (Continued from page 1)

developments in technology, workers are losing their ability to pay for water and sanitary services. This is creating the conditions for a life and death struggle over access to water. There is no doubt that the capitalist class will endeavor to privatize water for private profit, thus endangering the ecosystem by sacrificing water for the sake of private gain.

Our planet and our class need leadership based upon scientific knowledge and the political will to make water a public trust, and not subject to private ownership. This leadership must be independent from corporate interests that seek to use water for private gain. Such leadership will protect access to low-income populations and won’t allow private access that threatens our planet’s ecosystem, while polluting the lifeblood of our people. Gaining control over public access to water and sanita-

tion is in the interest of Mother Earth, of humanity, and for a sustainable planet. Such a battle cry is both a necessary goal of the revolution, and a necessary activity for keeping our class alive.

In fighting for the revolutionary transformation toward public water ownership, we need to be cognizant of the threat that corporate/State private property poses to humanity and to our planet. Modern technology is replacing the role of labor in production, and is creating the means to unleash the productive power of humanity in a socially responsible and sustainable manner. Such a new world is possible, but only if the private ownership of technology is abolished. Private property in the hands of the corporate class must be ended if humanity is to survive.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Rally: to bring back together and put in a state of order, as retreating troops [to return to attack]

Comrade: a person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause

Rally, Comrades! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally, Comrades!* provides a strategic outlook for the revolutionaries by indicating and illuminating the line of march of the revolutionary process. It presents a pole of scientific clarity, examines and analyzes the real problems of the revolutionary movement, and draws political conclusions for the tasks of revolutionaries at each stage of development in order to prepare for future stages. It is a vehicle to reach out and communicate with revolutionaries both within the League and outside of the League to engage them in debate and discussion and to provide a forum for these discussions. Articles represent the position and policies of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

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League of Revolutionaries for a New America WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

The demands of this new impoverished class for food, housing, education, healthcare 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, has arisen to oppose this motion.

Society must take over these corporations or these corporations will continue to 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 humanity’s imperiled future.

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New Politics Emerging in Chicago

Politics, a concentrated expression of economics, is the struggle for political power. Elections are a narrow stage on which part of this struggle takes place. Chicagoans had a rare opportunity to see this up close when challenger Jésus (Chuy) Garcia forced Mayor Rahm Emanuel into a runoff. He did this despite the \$30 million war chest amassed by Emanuel and despite endorsements of Emanuel from nearly the entire political establishment, including President Obama. On April 7, Garcia lost by 55% to 45%.

When revolutionaries evaluate the Chicago elections of 2015, we look at more than the winning or losing tactics. Revolutionaries need to understand how far the workers have traveled along the path from allegiance to the Democratic Party toward the formation of a political party that represents their interests. At the same time elections are held in order for the ruling class to make estimates of the thinking of the people, and thus to corral popular movements. What can revolutionaries say about the thinking of the people? How does the growing disparity between wealth and poverty — the growing permanent unemployment matched by the potential for abundance — how was this polarity reflected in the election campaign? To what extent is a class politics emerging, as the old ethnic rivalries struggle to survive?

CHICAGO'S ECONOMY CHANGES

As the 19th century ended steel mills circled the southern end of Lake Michigan; stock yards emptied their offal into the river running through the city's center; Pullman raised a "model city" for workers building his railroad cars; Marshall Field captured consumption fantasies by "giving the lady what she wants." Chicago, the iconic rust-belt city, had by 1900 become the largest transportation hub and center of heavy industry in the country. Carl Sandburg, in 1914, lauded the city thus:

*Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and
the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:*

The struggle for which political party would control industrial Chicago drew to a conclusion in 1931. From then on Democrats won every election for mayor and came to dominate the city council.

Post World War II expansion of American industrial capitalism reached a domestic plateau. More mobile industry moved elsewhere to find low wage factory workers. Federal contracts fled the Rust Belt. Electronic innovations began to replace workers through robotics and computerization. From the early 1950s to the 1970s Chicago saw a steady decline. Richard J. Daley became mayor of Chicago in 1955. He presided over the city as its industrial strength declined, its tax base eroded and the infrastructure of the city began to wear through. The Democratic Party's patronage system — more than 40,000 municipal workers, political appointments at the ward level, and a disciplined ward machine organization — drained the city. When Daley

died in office in 1976 the Democratic Party seized the opportunity to develop the city's transformation of capitalism based on financial speculation and information technology.

These economic changes are nearing their conclusion. The 14-county World Business Council plan for the development of greater Chicago has called for converting the area into a Rust Belt version of Silicon Valley. The problem is, this expansion has led to an expansion of lower wage jobs, and displaces more workers who can no longer participate in the economy. Chicago must now determine the politics necessary to maintain control of the means of producing wealth, when the changing economy calls for the public control of these means.

Just by forcing the April run off election the workers of Chicago rejected the union of corporate and political power in the hands of the Democratic Party. The fight for Chicago's dispossessed to have political representation is emerging.

Mayor Richard M. Daley, son of Richard J. Daley, was the architect of austerity and privatization in Chicago politics. Rahm Emanuel has gone further. The agenda of the current political elite, to conform to the new economy, is to make profitable everything they can, while eliminating a superfluous population. If that means street wars, so be it. If that means warehouses for our children rather than schooling, the elimination of health care and other services for the people, the installation of military-like equipment to police the neighborhoods (beginning with "red light cameras"), so be it. Those whom they do not need they will not feed.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE CHICAGO ELECTIONS

The Chicago public education struggle, characterized by the city's orchestrated forced march to privatize schools, illustrates the new capitalist economy. It also is central to this year's election campaigns.

The Mayor appoints the school board and a CEO of the schools, a power granted by a 1995 act of the state legislature. Under Emanuel and Daley the mayoral-appointed school board has been dominated by corporate friends such as investment banker David Vitale (who chairs the Board). Penny Pritzker, billionaire member of the family that owns the Hyatt hotel chain, was a Board member before being appointed President Obama's Secretary of Commerce. Vitale and Pritzker played key roles in obtaining toxic loans and diverting funds to charter schools and private corporate developments.

After the April election a Federal investigation targeted a no-bid contract for principal training with an entity called SUPES Academy. As the investigation proceeded it revealed ties between SUPES and Rahm

Emanuel going back 4 years, and to the Chicago Public Education Fund. The Board of the Fund includes Pritzker, Vitale, Governor Rauner, and a who's who of the wealthy capitalists who run Chicago.

In 2013, following the 2012 Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) strike, Mayor Emanuel's school board closed 49 schools, the largest number closed at one time in U.S. history. The Board ignored the needs of the children; even more, they failed to take into account the growing objective unity being forged between different elements of a dispossessed working class. Teachers, parents and students found a common front as hopes for an educational path out of poverty were dashed.

Currently a member of the Cook County Board of Commissioners and floor leader for the President of the Board, Garcia has both the credentials of a community leader and a member of an insurgent Democratic Party caucus.

The unpopular (but considered invincible) Mayor Emanuel needed an absolute majority to win in February. He only garnered 45%, Garcia ran second, and the other candidates got 17% of the vote. All but a handful of leading African American politicians and church leaders endorsed Emanuel. MoveOn.org and Democracy Now both characterized the battle as a fight for the soul of the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party no longer has the pretense of a soul: the Party can't meet the demands of the people for the means of survival. Elections explore how to carry out the mission of the powers that be — to protect the private property of the corporations. The ruling class needs to assess and manufacture the buy-in of the public, in order to carry out their plans in the name of democracy. They know that those who were fighting in the streets are looking for political ways to express their dissatisfaction. Elements of that dissatisfaction threaten to split the Democratic Party.

Now the Democratic Party sits on a fault line. The new economy of Chicago has destroyed the old industrial relations between capital and labor. Only a tiny labor force is required to perform the functions associated with the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, now handling even more transactions than the New York Stock Exchange.

Rather than tired clichés, offering an unachievable return to past glory, revolutionaries can offer a vision of a new society to the leaders emerging from these campaigns, leaders who will not be satisfied with what Democrats have to offer.

The recent elections do not represent a complete break with Democrats. However, they do establish a new direction. Revolutionaries need to be closely connected to this motion, relying on the objectivity of the demands of the class for the means of survival. While being dispersed into the midst of these battles we have to evaluate what we are seeing and where are the revolutionaries.

Just by forcing an April 7 runoff election the workers of Chicago rejected the union of corporate and political power in the hands of the Democratic Party. By overturning some of the sitting aldermen in the 18 council runoffs, workers created a chance to increase the "progressive caucus." Still, 60% of the electorate did not find any choices compelling enough to actually vote. Every majority African American ward voted for Emanuel. The significant efforts to build Black-Latino working class unity met some obstacles, which can only be addressed by recognizing the common demands for the means of survival.

The fight for Chicago's dispossessed to have political representation is emerging. No matter how hard the Democrats try to stop it the new economy is forcing them to splinter. Our task at this stage of the revolution is to gather the revolutionaries in these political campaigns and show them what they are already fighting for: a cooperative society that can guarantee the means of survival to all according to need.

Impulses Toward Third Party Opens Way for New Ideas

The motion toward a third party is part of the splitting, wrecking, and destruction that we call polarization. This third party motion is arising on the basis of the destruction of the capitalist system and the battle to reorganize society around the new means of production. It is an expression of the economic and political process that influences everything else in that general process and how it unfolds.

When we refer to a third party, we are not simply looking at the emergence of this or that grouping. We are looking at something that the ruling class is attempting to accomplish within the process of the two parties' inability to function. A third party will not come from someone's wishes. It will arise from historical tendencies, and the development of those tendencies over a long period of time. The third party motion we are talking about is toward a bourgeois party, a party that will be formed to protect and preserve private property.

The impulse toward a third party 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 the new means of production.

Above all, the capitalists are strategically united as a class to protect private property, but they remain tactically disunited on how to do it. The ruling class must develop alternative forms and parties in its failed attempts to maintain a unified political middle. It is at this middle that we concentrate our political fire — our agitation and propaganda.

Is the development of a third party a blow that strikes at this middle? Yes, and revolutionaries should welcome and embrace motions toward a third party. As workers are increasingly thrown out of the production process and 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. We influence the consciousness of the participants. All our work is based on uniting the class in the fight for basic necessities, as opposed to uniting against the right.

A grasp of the process of cause and effect in relation to the third party helps us to see the opportunities for the development of consciousness the situation presents. The political consciousness injected into the developing motion now will help to shape its content as the struggle develops.

THINKING OF THE PEOPLE

American society is in a state of transition. It is becoming impossible to ignore. Sections of the ruling class are recognizing that to maintain their position, they must change how they operate and how society is organized. They see that without major changes, automation and the resulting social

economic polarization will tear apart society. Some capitalists call for quixotic reforms of massive wealth redistribution, but they will not go as far as to call for socialism, let alone communism, since they seek to preserve private property.

No longer able to tie the masses to private property with a bribe through capitalism, the ruling class is trying to figure out how to reorganize society in a way that will protect private property within a new robotics-based economy. The capitalists are exploiting historic social divisions and pushing fascist policies because they have nothing else to offer the working class in a world of automated production.

The concepts of “lower,” “middle,” and “upper” class are categories made up to confuse the working class about the true relationship between themselves and the capitalists. The purpose of this misdirection is to lead the working class to believe that income determines class, rather than the relationship to the means of production. The concept of the “middle class” has always been of paramount importance to the ruling class; it has been the bribe of comfort and security for a section of the American working class, tying their hearts and minds to the capitalists, while shunning the most exploited workers. As long as the bribe was paid (in the forms of higher wages, access to better education and healthcare, etc.), the ruling class could pit the divided sections of workers against each other, and the working class could never unite to challenge the capitalist ownership of the means of production.

As the capitalist crisis worsens, the bribe is being destroyed. Living wage jobs are disappearing and the workforce is being polarized. Research from the Brookings Institute explains that since the 1980s, the only sectors of work showing increasing employment are largely low wage jobs, and to a much lesser extent, high wage jobs. Meanwhile, the numbers of jobs that provide living wages and benefits, to both blue and white collar workers alike, are being eliminated.

As the economy worsened for the working class over a period of decades, their thinking has lagged behind as they adjust to the new conditions. But since the 2008 financial crisis, major shifts have begun taking place. A January 2015 Pew Research Center report illustrates: “The share of Americans who identify with the middle class has never been lower, dropping to 44% in the latest survey from 53% in 2008 during the first months of the financial crisis. At the same time, the share of the public who says they are in the lower or lower-middle classes rose by 15 percentage points, from 25% in 2008 to 40% today. As a consequence of these shifts, the difference in the proportion of Americans who say they are middle class and those who say they are in the lower classes has fallen from 28 percentage points in 2008 (53% vs. 25%) to a statistically insignificant 4 points today (44% vs. 40%).”

Most of the change in perception has happened in the three years since the “Great Recession” officially ended — the end of the recession meant the rebound of the economy

for corporations only; the last three years ushered in the highest corporate profits in history and record-breaking bonuses for their executives. Yet today, 39% of American workers earn less than \$20,000 a year, and 72% earn less than \$50,000, with more than half the workforce working less than 30 hours per week, according to data from the Social Security Administration.

The ruling class can only push the “middle class” as an idea. But people are suffering and the *idea* of the middle class cannot put food on their tables, keep roofs over their heads, or pay off their debts. Despite Obama using the term “middle class” nearly forty times in his 2015 State of the Union Address, politicians only have words to offer — not jobs, not food, not security. The people find no redress in Republicans or Democrats; a recent Gallup Poll shows that only 7% of the population has faith in Congress, the lowest in history. People are losing faith in the system and see no future in it. *The Washington Post* recently reported that both Democratic and Republican contenders are recognizing the dangers of reminding Americans of their deteriorating lives, and have stopped using the term on the campaign trail altogether.

As people are alienated from the economy, they are also being alienated from the “law and order” of society. Human rights are being completely disregarded, as evidenced by the Chicago Police black site where people were held in secret without booking, phone call, or access to lawyers for hours and days at a time, sometimes handcuffed to benches or pipes. Rampant police killings and brutality have sparked rebellions and widespread protests through the country, brought to millions of Americans through the recent surge of “citizen journalism” of social media.

The militarizing of police has become ubiquitous from large cities to small towns, as the U.S. military sells off surplus equipment and vehicles to local police departments, demonstrating the expanding role of the police as an “occupying force” across the United States. What started in the inner cities is expanding to all of America's streets.

Society is becoming increasingly polarized around the issue of the police, pushing some to embrace a fascist agenda and pushing others towards a rapidly growing movement against police brutality and state violence. This widespread resistance to intimidation and violence shows the increasing alienation of the working class from the capitalists.

Just because workers are separating from the system doesn't mean they are consciously anti-capitalist or that they are becoming class conscious. But it does mean society is polarizing and the ties that bind the working class ideologically to the ruling class are weakening. Many workers will seek other solutions to the crisis. Some of those will gravitate towards emerging third party formations.

IMPULSE TOWARD THIRD PARTY

Third parties in America have historically emerged in times of crises, as responses to bipartisan consolidation and control by domi-

nant sections of capital at particular times. The significance of this process today is dramatically heightened by the content of our times.

Bipartisanship — and the impulse toward a third party today — is a political reflection of the economic revolution that is destroying the foundation of private property itself. The spread of automation and robotics is rapidly eliminating jobs and driving down wages in the remaining jobs to below poverty levels. Declining demand and the declining rate of profit are forcing corporations increasingly to merge with the State in order to guarantee a market to circulate their products.

In the past, the success or failure of third parties depended on the economic strength of the respective classes they represented.

In the 1850s, the “slave power” dictatorship of Whigs and Democrats trampled on the interests of northern industrialists and free soil farmers, causing them to organize the Republican Party. The Republican Party arose to represent the rising Northern, wage-based industry against Southern slave based agriculture. As a result the Republican Party grew rapidly, won a presidential election, and ultimately led the way to Civil War victory and reorganization of the State to serve the industrial economy.

In the 1890s, the People's Party arose to challenge the bipartisan domination of monopoly corporations that were tightening their stranglehold on the economy. However, this third party was unsustainable because it was led by a class of yeoman farmers that was already well on its way to extinction by corporate agribusiness by the turn of the century. Later third party efforts in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s emerged as equally short-lived attempts to corral the working class protests against further consolidations of corporate power.

Bipartisanship today is developing around the process of the merger of corporations and the State. Behind a veneer of partisan division, the ruling class is increasingly united in its determination to transition from government by “social contract” to corporate fascist state rule. Step by step, they are removing any and all obstacles to corporate profit: economic, legal and political.

Economically, they are moving to raise profits by reducing taxes. Hidden behind its populist rhetoric, the January Obama budget includes dramatic multi-billion dollar tax breaks for corporations and has bipartisan support. Obama's proposal is to lower the overall corporate tax rate from 35% to 28%, lower taxes on past overseas profits from 35% to 14%, and cut future overseas profit taxes from 35% to 19%. The negative impact on overall tax revenue will inevitably lead to renewed and redoubled calls for austerity.

Legally, they are trying to organize bipartisan support of the new trade agreement called the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) in an effort to introduce profound international legal reforms. The TPP would not only accelerate automation and globalization, it would establish an international corporate tribunal to eliminate the ability of democratic governments to regulate corporations or

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From the Editors: The Pursuit of Happiness

“When it can be said by any country in the world, my people are happy, neither ignorance nor distress is to be found among them, my jails are empty of prisoners, my streets of beggars, the aged are not in want, ... the rational world is my friend because I am the friend of happiness.”
— Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, 1791

Around this time of year, and in the wake of the events of the past year, we think about our history and how we arrived at the place where we are now. The deepening poverty and homelessness, uncontrolled police violence and murder, war around the world, and now the mass murder of eight church members and their pastor in South Carolina. Many are looking at our past and reciting that old saying, “The more things change the more things stay the same.” But we should look closer. The situation we face is something altogether new.

We are witnessing and we are participants in the birth pangs of a profound transformation. Qualitatively new labor replacing technologies are tearing apart society, provoking a struggle over what the future society will be. This struggle is shaped by a history of race, genocide, and the class rule of property, but it is also shaped by the historical strivings of the American people for “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Our deepest history is often forgotten, or

not recognized. It is not taught. The American Revolution of 1776 played a most important role in the world historical process toward human progress. It ushered in an entire “Age of Revolution,” which spanned some two hundred years. It inspired the French Revolution of 1789 and revolutions in Mexico, Haiti and throughout Latin America. This process reached its peak with the tidal wave of the national liberation uprisings between the 1940s and 1970s.

The American Revolution was an expression of some three hundred years of profound economic changes and accompanying intellectual turmoil. The conquest of the Americas, the rise of world capitalism, and the pivotal role of African slavery forever changed the world, leading to a new social order. As the old bonds began to loosen, new ideas began to break out in the Americas and Europe, ideas that not only resisted the existing order, but envisioned a new one. These ideas were espoused not only by the rising bourgeoisie. The ideas of the time inspired and mobilized the impoverished and oppressed masses.

These ideas defied submission to hierarchy and the inherited rights of monarchy. They asserted the “rights of man,” liberty, equality, freedom of religion, and a government “of the people.” They embraced the possibility of change and upheld science and reason over tradition, religious dogma and superstition. The new ideas opened the

minds of all to understand, as Thomas Paine put it in his 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense*, “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”

These revolutions, and the conditions and ideas that birthed them, changed the world forever, but for most, their full liberating power remained unrealized. In the U.S., private property was upheld and with it the genocide of native peoples and slavery enshrined. The ideals for which farmers, indentured servants, free blacks and slaves had fought were suppressed. But they could not be destroyed.

There are two sides to revolution: one is the overt, objective economic side; the other is its subjective expression, the political goals, its cause and the mobilizing, inspiring vision it creates. Successful revolutions achieve their cause, but the conditions are not always quite ripe to actually achieve the revolutionary vision — the mobilizing, social, subjective side. The cause in the Revolutionary War was independence. The vision was stated in the Declaration of Independence. Since that vision was not fulfilled, another revolution was inevitable.

People fight for ideals. People fight for their vision, even when they cannot achieve it. Each time they gain at least part of what they fought for. As technology advances, the further development of the means of production creates new causes, visions and demands amongst the new generation. They cannot be satisfied with the partial victory their forbear-

ers had won. So again they go about intellectually and organizationally preparing for revolution.

Today, we are embarked on such a task once again. A movement is arising in this country against the immorality and the violence and despair created by the capitalist class and the new fascist order it is imposing. At the center of this movement is the mass demand for the most basic necessities of life — food, shelter, health care, a cultured existence.

Embedded within this demand is a vision of society that expresses the deepest historical strivings of the people: independence from the chains of exploitation, the guaranteed ability of every person to contribute to society, freedom from want, and the expectation of a better life. The pursuit of happiness. Today, the qualitatively new means of production finally make it possible to realize this vision.

Revolutionaries create nothing new; they do not invent or discover. They merely express in general terms, the character and aims of the struggle, the historical movement going on in front of our very eyes. We in the League face the future with confidence. Drawing strength from the historical strivings of the people, we show the meaning and possibilities of the times we are in. We put forward a solution to the ills of transformation. We present a revolutionary strategy to win the political power to reorganize society in the interest of human progress.

Impulses Toward Third Party... (Continued from page 4)

protect the general welfare of their people. Devoid of any public accountability, the tribunal would be empowered to seize tax dollars from any country daring to enact laws interfering with corporate profit, be they environmental, health and safety, minimum wage, government health care, bank regulation, or consumer protection.

Finally, politically they are using a bipartisan series of federal and state laws and court decisions to steadily restrict and narrow the right to vote and strangle democracy. Obama’s “administrative relief” for immigrants, while providing a welcome stay of deportation for some, nevertheless establishes a whole new category of workers who will be required to pay taxes, yet have no right to vote and no eligibility for unemployment insurance, health benefits, or Social Security.

Voter suppression has taken diverse forms and has proceeded state by state, with the blessing of the Supreme Court, just as it did in the Jim Crow era. It has included “caging” and “cross-checking” of working class voters, purging hundreds of thousands from voter rolls; restricting polling places and times; and photo ID laws that by themselves are capable of disenfranchising over 10 million voters. As a result of measures like these, voter turnout in the 2014 elections was the lowest in 70 years.

Just as it has done historically, bipartisanship today is again creating the conditions

for emergence of a third party. Bipartisanship cannot include the entirety of the two major parties, but represents their respective centers. This can be seen in the maneuvering around the “fast track” vote for the TPP. As the two party centers converge, the left is splitting from the Democrats and the right from the Republicans around opposition to the pact. The fact that both the left and right express a form of populism demonstrates the limitations and the opportunities around the unfolding of this objective process.

As they spontaneously develop, third parties will necessarily be bourgeois parties and reflect bourgeois attempts to maintain political control in a time of great turmoil. However, the third party movement today is happening during the opening stages of a social revolution, based on the antagonism between modern electronic means of production and private property relations of production. It is happening at a time of the rapid creation of a new class of workers without any connection to social production. This creates the opportunity for revolutionaries to work within the emerging motion wherever we encounter it, to carry on revolutionary agitation and propaganda; in doing so, we can influence the process to allow for class separation to take place and a real workers party to emerge. Without revolutionary propaganda, left to their own devices, populist movements will inevitably lead the workers back under corporate con-

trol and into the arms of the fascists, just as they did in the 1890s.

The recent victories of Syriza (an 11 year-old party) in Greece and of Podemos (a one year-old party) in Spain, indicates just how rapidly dramatic political realignment can take place. It is not an accident that such realignments are happening first in the poorest countries in Europe, with the highest unemployment. As the crisis spreads, no amount of “American Exceptionalism” can prevent the economic and social polarization from escalating in our own country, and ultimately expressing itself in political polarization as well.

TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES

It is only the start of the 2016 presidential election cycle, and already it is beginning to dominate political discourse. Over the next year and a half, tens of thousands of people will be swept up into electoral organizing efforts. Alongside the mainstream candidates pushing the fascist agenda of the ruling class, there will also be greater motion toward third party impulses as more people are pushed out of the economy and become alienated by the corporate Republican and Democratic parties.

Revolutionaries must be involved in this process as the third party motion unfolds. We will find ourselves pulled in many directions as the demands of the social movement in-

tensify in step with the worsening crisis of capitalism, and as they link up with electoral campaigns. But our primary mission as revolutionaries is to teach, and to share our message throughout the spontaneous movement. Our overarching task for this time is to influence the thinking of the working class leaders that emerge — to keep the program of the new class at the forefront. In this way, we prepare the conditions for the emergence of a real workers party to emerge.

As the foundation for old ideas is weakening and dying away, just as with the idea of the “middle class,” revolutionaries have an extraordinary opportunity to introduce new ideas. Throughout the spontaneous movement there are more and more opportunities to reach people who are beginning to think differently. The third party motion is a crucial battleground for this work.

Revolutionaries must supplant the despair spawned by the continually worsening economy. We put forward a vision of hope, showing objectively how society can provide for everyone through the public ownership of the means of production and replace poverty with abundance for all. This vision is indeed the only solution — the only alternative to the fascist program put forward by the ruling class.

Political Report of the LRNA Central Body, May 2015

The Struggle Against Police Violence and the Fight for Class Unity

The recent uprising in Baltimore showed African American, Latino, and white workers with their children out in the streets protesting the Baltimore police murder of Freddie Gray. What we saw in Baltimore was an impulse toward unity around the issue of police brutality and police killings.

It is significant that this uprising took place in Baltimore. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was forced to evade assassins on his journey to Washington D.C. for his inauguration. Baltimore was rife with defenders of slavery who were determined to halt Lincoln's presidency.

The fact that today the mayor of Baltimore, the prosecutor, the police commissioner, and three of the six police involved in Freddie Gray's murder are African American undercuts the attempt to make this case and others about race only. The ruling class however, is thwarting any effort to make the outcries against the police more than a question of the police themselves. They must stop any impulses toward class unity around the conditions of life the people are facing — the poverty, lack of health care, and especially homelessness.

It is in the best interests of the ruling class to keep people fighting around specific issues, such as police brutality, separate from those conditions that call into question their rule. They are determined that the unity against police terror never advances to unity founded on a struggle of the class for the basic necessities of life. The ruling class can take an issue like police terror and tie it up in a morass of legality.

The League of Revolutionaries for a New America aims to show the true meaning and purpose of the escalating police terror. Modern fascism is more than a political

system hostile to democracy. It is more than monopoly capitalism without the restraints of democracy. It is the political attempt to maintain a social system of privilege by force and violence after its corresponding economic base has changed. Ruling class privilege rises from scarcity. How is it possible to maintain those privileges while the emerging economic structure produces undreamed-of abundance? Today, this social motion is taking the characteristics of a police state, a state wherein the police, charged with protecting the social relations, become a law unto themselves answerable to none. This fascist danger is real and it is near.

The ruling class does everything in its power to disrupt any impulses toward working class unity. Their future depends upon this. The police murders in Baltimore, Ferguson, North Charleston, New York, Los Angeles, Albuquerque, and Anaheim have stirred people to speak out and protest. Within the struggle over the police, some people are trying to interject the question of class, the growing commonality of poverty, unemployment and homelessness. They are being blocked by leaders who tell them that race and police brutality are the cause of their problems.

In every instance of brutality, oppression and exploitation the League of Revolutionaries for a New America fights for the unity of our class. The League gets out its message far and wide. We seek out those who have a sense that no degree of concession within this system will resolve these killings.

At the same time, we stay firmly grounded where the ruling class has no standing. When it comes to providing the workers with basic necessities, they have nowhere to go. They will not feed, clothe or house workers who are making no contribution to produc-

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tion and their profit. They will not even allow access to water.

What is the League's strategy? In general, our strategy is to rely on the spontaneous movement, which is the objective movement of the working class for food, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities of life. We rely on the spontaneous movement because it is already objectively headed in the direction of communist revolution. More specifically, our strategy is to strike the enemy where he is weak, by waging a propaganda war that focuses on the inability of the system to provide the workers with the basic necessities of life, and in the process we put forward a vision of the new society that is both possible and necessary.

Technology is replacing labor, and the bourgeoisie has no intention of feeding labor they don't need. Thus, on the one hand, the objective process is for the bourgeoisie to allow the workers who are no longer needed to starve to death (or massacre them); on the other hand, the workers are forced to fight for the necessities of life. The confrontation between classes is inevitable, and from the workers' perspective, it can only be resolved by making the means of production public property and building a cooperative society. Our strategy (striking the enemy at the weak point in his lines) is based on what is objective; we align ourselves with the direction

history is already moving. We show that a cooperative society is the only solution to the problems of today.

We are living in a country where children living in cars leave "home" to go to school. Thirty nine percent of the homeless are made up of families. Homelessness extends into every aspect of life. Millions are on the verge of becoming homeless. Deteriorating conditions of work, education, health care, and access to food and water are all tied to homelessness.

Homelessness is the clearest indictment of the failure of a system based on private property. There is an element of class unity that has emerged around the question of homelessness, and the immorality of the laws and brutality directed at the homeless.

As an organization of revolutionaries the LRNA is about influencing how the new class — a new communist class — thinks of itself and its historic role. As issues come to the fore we take this perspective to the participants, but do not lose our connection to the fight for the basic necessities of life. At each stage of these struggles, we introduce the new ideas that can move the thinking of the class towards unity based on their common interests as a class and prepare that class to reorganize society in its own interests.

LRNA Central Body, May 2015

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