

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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Being a Revolutionary Today

Those of us in the fight for the basic needs of survival – food, clean water, housing, health care, education and peaceful communities – battle every day. We need to be aware of the most important things on the battlefield (the terrain) in which we must fight. We need to fight with a clearly defined vision. Can we answer such questions as where are we going? Who or what are we up against? What must be overcome? What is the “enemy’s” strategy and what is it they are trying to win – what is their vision?

Too often our battles are confined to the smallest possible goals, and we accept the smallest momentary concessions as “victories.” Every day we get up with our sword and go fight windmills. We can never secure the basic necessities of life without clarity – therefore the role of conscious leaders means everything. To be conscious means to understand the big picture, to have a clear vision of where the movement is heading, and to understand the moment we are in right now.

THE BIG PICTURE

The central issue for us to understand is that we are in the midst of a huge transformation in our economy, from the industrial age to something really new – the age of electronics. The electronic revolution is unlike every other economic system humans have ever lived under, because this one is actually getting rid of human labor. It may not be complete yet, as there are still jobs for humans, but to understand this moment in history, we need to understand the significance of this process going on before our eyes.

Our main concern about this transformation in the economy is the fact that millions of people are being made redundant each day. The jobs that are disappearing are not coming back, and there will not be “replacement” jobs created. Each day robotics is being perfected to the point where they can perform the most delicate tasks (like surgery) and dangerous jobs (like rescue operations during disasters). We must face the facts that “lights out” factories are our future – where raw materials enter and finished products leave with little or no human intervention.

The working class understands that their jobs are under threat, and they may know computers are replacing them, but they may not understand that this is the main contradiction in the society today. When people don’t understand their problem, they can be easily misled. This is one explanation of why economically devastated workers are vulnerable to politicians like Trump, who blame immigrants for their job loss.

The truth is that as people become unnecessary to production, a new class of people is being created. Without resources, this new class must fight just to survive. But be-

cause they are being forced to fight, this so-called “useless class” becomes the hope of the future.

Most of the growing numbers of this new class are not yet aware of the historic and revolutionary role they are playing. They are not yet aware that who controls the technology will determine life and death for millions of people. That’s why leaders who are conscious of this big picture are truly the midwives to a society that is pregnant with revolution.

WHY YESTERDAY’S TACTICS WON’T WORK TODAY

What is the difference between today and yesterday in fighting for reforms? Why can’t we fight in the same way, and why can’t we win anything with yesterday’s tactics? Before the electronic revolution had gained momentum, when capitalism was still mainly industrial and labor intensive, the economy would go through busts and booms. During the booms there were lots of jobs, during the recessions and depressions large numbers of workers were unable to get work. This idle workforce was kept alive by such things as welfare, public housing, food stamps, and county hospitals. The unemployed were granted such reforms because when the economy went into an upward swing, some of them would be returned to work, until the next downturn pushed them out of the economy again.

During the Civil Rights era and before, reforms were granted. Different sections of the population were able to organize successfully and win some demands. Because of this, a notion was formed that what was necessary to wrench reforms from the capitalist system was to gather your troops around a militant stand and persist until victory. The belief that capitalism would grant us victories, and the slogan, “when we fight, we will win,” made sense at that time.

But today, things are different. People organize, take a stand, make demands, petition, protest, march, and go to jail. But no matter what we do, life for the working class continues to deteriorate. Good jobs continue to evaporate, public housing keeps disappearing, public services and benefits keep shrinking, community resources dry up, schools close, police terror increases. We are not failing to get the reforms we need because we don’t fight well enough. It’s because our rulers will not grant reforms to people they don’t need. Booms and busts still happen, but now a reserve labor force is no longer needed, because computers and robotics step in to provide the skill and energy that humans once provided.

So the old ways of gathering our forces and “fighting back,” are not working anymore, and they are not going to work. Faced with this situation, some people advocate for aiming small. Their strategy is to win a little



Michigan workers protest in Lansing, Michigan against Governor Snyder’s attack on their standard of living. Photo by Daymonjahartley.com

tiny bit at a time, piling up mini “victories” until we get relief. Defeats are often twisted around and labeled as victories. Even though these tactics are proven to lead nowhere, there are those who persist in steering the movement for reforms in this head-butting fashion. Unfortunately there are no short cuts for winning the battle for survival today.

THE CENTRAL TASK OF REVOLUTIONARIES

The central task of revolutionaries is to figure out how to bring consciousness to the movement. The workers who are fighting for their survival need to unite around a central idea. That idea is that, in a society where machines do the work, the distribution of what these machines produce will have to be based on need. If it’s based on money in the pocket, then the workers will not survive. People who are fighting for their survival are already fighting for a new way of distributing the necessities of life, whether they know it or not. If the present system cannot provide the basics of life to the people, then the present system must be replaced. How can the new class

thrive, or even survive, without a cooperative society?

The job of the revolutionary is to be more than just a part of the movement for survival. We get in there in order to explain the “big picture” and the need for unity around the survival issues. For example, if you are homeless, you must struggle to get shelter. If you can’t pay your rent without sacrificing food or medicine, or you are on the verge of losing your home to foreclosure from taxes, you face a survival issue of shelter. All of these sections of the new class have a primary need that they can unite around – that housing is a human right and must be guaranteed to all regardless of their ability to pay.

A winning strategy can only be built on what unites us, not what divides us. The role of a leader is to fight consistently for a unity based on the fight for the basic necessities of life. From petty differences to ideological disparities – a revolutionary must navigate around the potholes and roadblocks of potential division, to steer a course towards the larger goals that are only obtainable through class unity. This requires thinking outside the

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Class Unity Today is Most Urgent

Inside Rally, Comrades!

We are living in rapidly changing, dangerous times. Polarization of all kinds is expressing itself. To protect and expand its private property interests, the U.S. ruling class is attempting to build a fascist social base to support its austerity, deregulation and repression policies at home, and its war policies abroad.

At the same time, American workers are losing faith in the government and beginning the process of separating from the political system. The American people are increasingly becoming more disgusted and distrustful of the government. A new social movement is forming. It is making demands on the government to respect human rights and protect the environment, while also demanding the government provide food, healthcare, housing, water, and more to those in need.

The demands of this movement are objective. The workers need housing, food, health care, and other basic necessities of life. This movement is coming into conflict with the State, which is standing in the way of them securing these basic necessities. We are dealing with the beginning stages of revolution. The demands of this movement are class demands. Therefore, building the unity of our class on the basis of these demands is the decisive and central task of revolutionaries today.

"From the Editors: Who is Donald Trump?" points out that the fight against fascism is the fight to acquire the necessities of life that moves beyond resistance. The ruling class is making every effort to contain

and divert the movement of the workers. This points to the necessity of the development of an independent class politics, not tied to either of the ruling parties, and breaking the bonds of reform solutions constrained within the system.

In the article "Organized Crime and the Mexican State," a friend of the LRNA from Mexico shows how there are few places on the planet where organized crime rivals the power of the State as much as in Mexico. The problem in Mexico is not only the out-of-control violence caused by the drug trade throughout its territory, but also the infiltration of organized crime into the State apparatus. Organized crime has become a central player in contemporary capitalism, both in Mexico and across the planet.

The article, "Without a Vision, the People Perish," explains that in times of crisis, society's spiritual leaders step forward to address the defining moral issues of the day. But spiritual and religious groups do not speak with one voice. In fact, their ideas polarize along class lines. One section of the spiritual community responds to the suffering by speaking up for the status quo, for the government, the rights of property and the privileged. Another section of the spiritual community responds to the suffering by emerging as a "moral movement" that aligns itself with the workers, the outcasts, the poor, the immigrants, the sick and incarcerated.

"End of Bribery, Dawn of Class Unity" points out that until this time, the struggle against capitalist class ownership and control of the economy could not take root. Working class unity was always blocked by the strength of divisive ideas of race and nationality,

which rested on and were reinforced by bribery. Today, robotic production and sophisticated computer programs are permanently eliminating more jobs than they will create, step-by-step eliminating both the industrial-era working class and the system in which it grew. We are witnessing the emergence of a new class, a section of workers being pushed outside the economy, hence beyond any material bribe.

Our cover article, "Being a Revolutionary Today," shows that revolutionaries have an important and special role to play in those organizations that are engaged in the day-to-day struggles for the necessities of life. Revolutionaries explain the bigger picture in the context of building class unity. Most of the growing numbers of the new class are not yet aware of the historic and revolutionary role they are playing. They are not yet aware that whoever controls the technology will determine life and death for millions of people. A winning strategy can only be built on what unites us, not what divides us. The role of a leader is to fight consistently for a unity based on the fight for the basic necessities of life. From petty differences to ideological disparities – a revolutionary must navigate around the potholes and roadblocks of potential division, to steer a course towards the larger goals that are only obtainable through class unity.

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

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 cooperative society. Such a society must be based on the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need.

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

Organized Crime and the Mexican State

Editors' note: The writer is a friend of the League in Mexico, who has written and published extensively on the subject of Mexican organized crime and the authoritarian State in Mexico.

There are few places on the planet where organized crime rivals the power of the State as much as in Mexico. The problem in this country is not only the out-of-control violence caused by the drug trade throughout its territory, but also the infiltration of organized crime into the State apparatus.

Neoliberalism, along with the globalization of Mexico, reinforced by NAFTA, began to take shape last century in the mid-1980s, facilitating the spread of organized crime throughout the fabric of the State. However, in 29 short years from 1988 to 2017, spanning the period from the Carlos Salinas de Gortari presidency to Enrique Peña Nieto's government, Mexican organized crime as a whole and the Sinaloa cartels – Jalisco Nueva Generación and Zetas – in particular, became prime actors in the international drug trade.

Of course, there's a before and after in the history of Mexico's drug trade, pivoting during the decade of the 1980s. The coming to power of neoliberal governments accelerated the pace of globalization of organized crime. Since then, drug trafficking has been one of the main generators of capital in Mexico and we've had to add criminal capital to industrial, financial, agricultural, commercial, and IT capital. As a result, there's a new bourgeois sector, the criminal or delinquent branch that gets mixed with all the rest. Crime capital feeds financial, industrial, commercial, agricultural and services capital. Regardless of the party in power, crime capital and the State either confront each other or negotiate, depending on the circumstances, at the international and/or national levels that affect each state and municipality. Also crime capital negotiates with the legal sector of the capital on how to launder money, and how and where to invest.

HIDDEN POWER WITHIN THE STATE

Organized crime's great win was that it permeated the State and all the social sectors. It has enjoyed the protective arm and legitimacy given it by broad layers of the citizenry. Through bribery and violence, it has appropriated the services of almost all the police, many judges, the military, and above all, those strategically placed individuals and groups in almost every political party and at every level of government.

Governors in the states of Tamaulipas, Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila Sonora at the border with Unites States, Sinaloa, Durango, Nayarit, Michoacán, Guerrero, Veracruz, Quintana Roo, etc., have been in the service, or at least allied with, one or other sector of organized crime.

While the drug trafficker is not as powerful in every state (much less so in Yucatán or Tlaxcala, in the south, than in Tamaulipas, Chihuahua, Sonora, Baja California, and Sinaloa, in the north, or Michoacán and Guerrero, in the southwestern coast), the truth

is that its dominance in several strategically important states has turned it into the hidden power within the State.

However, organized delinquency does not have to penetrate every single township to show that the State has failed its citizens by not guaranteeing the safety of millions. Knowing that hundreds of municipalities and thousands of square kilometers of the land are under the rule of the capos suffices. The State now shares a monopoly on the use of violence with organized crime, and many times in entire regions it is subordinate to it. But worst of all is when the State, especially its security forces, the police and military, get confused with those of crime. In other words, the State grazes the criminal because in many parts of Mexico it serves organized crime. It follows leaders and interests outside of the law.

“ The drug trafficker is not merely one more political player, but rather an integral component of the capitalist bloc in power in Mexico. What's new is that, rather than being just a part of the legal sector of capital, the drug traffickers are clandestine political operators. That is to say, often the population at large is not even aware that it is dealing with, or voting for them. ”

The number of deaths and the disappeared in Mexico have soared from 2006 to 2015, numbering about 150, 000. The armed forces and police, as well as the judicial system and political class, have been corrupt and often unpredictable, in dealing with the criminal element. At times, their response has been to confront the delinquents and at other times to follow them, depending on circumstances, their deals and their international, national, state, and local strategies and tactics. A political, military, or police boss may just as easily serve crime, usually for a substantial payoff, as confront it when pressured by civil society, international agencies or parties outside of the government. It is all decided by the situation or the balance of power.

Many of those studying the issue think Mexico could go the way of Colombia—that is, become a failed State—when in the 1980s and early 1990s Pablo Escobar and other drug traffickers paralyzed the population and State. However, to understand the situation in Mexico, one has to see that the power of the Colombian drug dealers, while shaking their society, never reached the levels of covert financial dominance and political influence of the Mexican organizations. Colombians made business with coca and marijuana. Mexican cartels are the most important global crime entrepreneurs of coca, marijuana, design drugs and heroine.

SINALOA CARTEL

Even with Chapo Guzmán locked up in New York, the Sinaloa cartel in particular, now divided in two fractions, is in full global expansion and has become the most powerful in the history of the drug trade globally. It is truly a transnational crime syndicate. Its massive incomes, international ramifications, the great number of people serving, and loyal to it, are examples. Probably over a third of the more than 500,000 jobs, estimated for organized crime in a 2013 study of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, owe their loyalty to the Sinaloa cartel. Likewise, its might in terms of finances, blackmail, firepower and all, make this organization, even though now divided, a daunting challenge.

While the Sinaloa operation had control only at the local level before the 1980s,

that matter – matches their range or capital resources. They have the great advantage of sharing the duopoly over the use of violence with government forces.

Being a global power with a local power base, they look for political hegemony in order to continue to grow. Without their territorial roots as a base, they would lose their global power, which is constantly expanding. Neither Calderon's and Peña Nieto's wars, nor Chapo's arrest could stop them.

The Sinaloan drug operation is active in much of the country, including Mexico City the nation's capital, but control over its primordial territory is a life or death question. Without it, they disappear. Most of its members or strategic assets are born and replaced in Sinaloa. Here, a large part of its commodities for export is produced, much of its money laundering takes place and many of its laboratories for drug manufacturing operate. Their main social base resides in this home region, and the symbolic production infusing them with cultural legitimacy among wide swaths of society is created here. The bodies of their drug traffickers rest forever in Sinaloa's cemeteries.

So, for the drug dealer, control over his territory and political action stem from old histories and are fundamental for his propagation.

NOT JUST ONE MORE POLITICAL PLAYER

What makes the situation worse is that the drug trafficker is not merely one more political player, but rather an integral component of the capitalist bloc in power in Mexico. And by now, how could it be different when they already form a part of the economic elite of the nation, as one of the largest business, dirty money, and money laundering players of Latin America?

What's new is that, rather than being part of the legal sector of capital, the drug traffickers are clandestine political operators. That is to say, often the population at large is not even aware that it is dealing with or voting for them.

Plainly, the Sinaloan cartel of contemporary Mexico is an extremely complex and sophisticated social actor in many ways. It has many facets and manifestations. It operates at all levels: illegally and through violence, but also through the law, consensus, and politics. It acts politically, with or without political parties, with or without violence, within or outside of institutions. It has subordinated mayors, legislators, and governors; generals and rank and file soldiers, police chiefs and ordinary officers. It has negotiated with Los Pinos—the President's residence – the DEA, the FBI, and the CIA. It knows how to act within any political regime – liberal democratic, authoritarian, or totalitarian—and with or without Peña Nieto or Trump.

Organized crime has become a central player in contemporary capitalism, both in Mexico and across the planet.

End of Bribery, Dawn of Class Unity

As the technological revolution continues to rip industrial capitalism apart, it is also creating the possibility of uniting a growing new class of workers displaced and excluded from production. Computer-assisted systems are entering production everywhere, fueling an eruption of global poverty and homelessness, which has reached America's inner city "ghettos," as well as the mainly white towns of the Rust Belt. Like lava flows that harden into rock, this new equality of poverty is laying down a foundation for class unity across lines of color and nationality.

So many millions are suffering that even the billionaires and the politicians admit that America has entered a crisis. But their explanations never reveal the truth of this crisis. Instead, the ruling class is intensifying its propaganda, blaming one section of the masses for the problems of another, masking the real basis of today's economic disruption. Unemployment is blamed on immigrants and workers in other countries taking jobs from U.S. citizens. Crime is blamed on gangs of minority youth. And the police abuse of people of color is blamed on individual white racists and not on the shift to systemic police brutality of all poor people.

Such divisive propaganda has deep historical roots – for over 100 years, the capitalist ruling class has used the political tactic of material bribery of key sectors of workers, who got better jobs, housing and social privileges in return for loyally supporting colonial super-exploitation of other peoples. Such bribery was justified in each imperialist country by vicious propaganda, dividing workers along lines of color, nationality, religion, and immigration status. The particularities of American capitalism resulted in bribery and propaganda being focused first on turning white workers against African Americans.

U.S. BRIBERY A PRODUCT OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

White supremacy played a crucial role in the conquest of Native Americans and the enslavement of millions of Africans. But a new stage in American capitalism and its manipulation of racial ideas emerged after 1877, once the Reconstruction alliance of freed slaves and poor whites was crushed by pulling federal troops out of the South and unleashing the Ku Klux Klan. An American form of fascism was imposed on the region of the South known as the Black Belt, a system of brutality and racial division later cited by Hitler as providing a model for the Nazi system. Soon Northern finance capital had turned the Black Belt South into its first American colony, a region of widespread poverty for both Blacks and whites, from which super-profits were extracted and invested into the expansion of industrialization in the North. This is when the political tactic of bribery emerged, to win the loyalty of an upper stratum of workers for the imperialist exploitation and wars that soon expanded the new American Empire.

An American working class split by such bribery simply could not unite, despite the best efforts of activists and revolutionaries. Workers in the North were granted a material bribe compared to those in the South, soon reflected by a flow of whites and Blacks out of

"Dixie," and by laws and chain gangs aimed at limiting that migration. Native-born workers in the North were bribed with high skilled industrial jobs, to block their uniting with European immigrant laborers confined to unskilled work. During the Spanish American War of 1898, the bribed sectors and their leaders in unions and political parties organized these workers into supporting the imperialist takeover of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guam and the Philippines. During the Great Depression, bribery coupled with white supremacist ideology ensured that the struggle for industrial unions led to the 1935 Wagner Act, which achieved union rights for factory workers, but not for the field work where African Americans and Mexicans were concentrated. And even as American workers fought European and Japanese fascism during World War II, bribery and divisive ideology allowed fascism to continue to rule America's South, ultimately provoking the heroic Civil Rights struggles.

“ For over 100 years, the capitalist class used the political tactic of material bribery of key sectors of workers by giving them better jobs, housing a social privileges to ensure their support of the capitalists' program. Today a new class is emerging — a section of workers being pushed outside the economy, and hence beyond the material bribe. Today, class unity is possible. ”

Until today, the struggle against capitalist class ownership and control of the economy could not take root. Working class unity was always blocked by the strength of divisive ideas of race and nationality, which rested on and were reinforced by bribery. That formula limited the workers to isolated victories and reforms within the system. Today, robotic production and sophisticated computer programs are permanently eliminating more jobs than they will create, step-by-step eliminating both the industrial-era working class and the system in which it grew. We are witnessing the emergence of a new class, a section of workers being pushed outside the economy, hence beyond any material bribe. Their very survival is at risk until society is reorganized to distribute the social product according need, instead of by ability to pay.

BROAD CLASS UNITY IS POSSIBLE

Reorganization of society is the essence of the rising struggles for housing, education, health care and a safe environment. For example, homelessness is so widespread; the homeless are organizing and making demands on local governments in every corner of the country. Their struggle includes people who are not homeless, yet know that they might

be one job, or a paycheck, away from it.

From Flint, Michigan to Standing Rock, North Dakota thousands have united across lines of color and ethnicity to demand that the government guarantee clean water as a human right. In every region of the country, immigrants and citizens are working together, to stop raids and arrests of the undocumented – those who fled poverty in their homelands only to be blamed for the growth of it here. That they are not to blame is understood by the millions who oppose the raids and by those organizing to recreate the Underground Railroad and Fugitive Slave Rescues. Clearly, the limited unity of the past is giving way to new expressions of broad class unity.

Even though robotics and laborless production are eliminating the ability of the ruling class to control society through bribery, class unity won't automatically be achieved. The old ideas that bribery once sustained continue to be promoted by the political operatives and

in January, promising them jobs building the Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines, which had been opposed by the nationwide Standing Rock movement of Native American tribes, environmentalists, and others. Terry O'Sullivan, president of the Laborers Union praised this decision and condemned any unions who supported the Standing Rock movement.

Those words clearly invite a brutal crackdown against the movement in return for the promise of jobs, and it reveals the dangerous role such misleaders will play in the implementation of fascism. The main misleaders of the working class have always ensured that the biggest movements and mobilizations stay safely locked into capitalist ideas and corporate structures. However, because the system cannot resolve today's rapidly growing poverty, new leadership is emerging from the ranks of the new class, those who are dedicated to the struggle to meet the people's needs.

UNITING WITH A VISION OF A SHARED FUTURE

From homeless activists taking over vacant private property, to the unemployed rising up against the constant killing by police, people have no alternative but to fight, yet there is no way they can win without a vision of a new kind of shared, communist system. The growing new class is a threat to the system itself, because the new class cannot solve its problems within the system of private capitalist ownership. But they cannot break free of that system without understanding that it is what they are fighting against, and without a vision of the new system that is becoming possible. Achieving that vision will require the development of class unity.

The good news is that despite the growing suffering, class unity is more possible today than ever, for objective and subjective reasons. Objectively, the equality of poverty is a growing, material reality. Subjectively, ideas of equality have taken root among the masses in our country as never before. The Civil Rights era and later struggles cleared away some of the obstacles to interactions among people across color lines, so today many Americans have interacted through union struggles and electoral campaigns and by living among immigrants. Millions have also developed greater awareness about America's diverse people through cultural forms like hip hop and social media. Combined with the reduction in bribery, especially of white workers, these ideas are helping make class unity more possible than ever.

What is needed now is for the revolutionaries to enter into the struggles not just with activism, or with being anti-racist. People are already fighting back against the attacks on their workforces, families and communities. What they lack is an understanding that the new technologies are ending the era of capitalism, where a few billionaires own everything. Instead of a fascist future aimed at maintaining private property, the millions who are under attack can use the new technology to create a new society, where the new technology is utilized to meet the needs of humanity. The long nightmare of conquest, division and exploitation is reaching its end. Let's awaken humanity to the dawning of its shared future!

Without a Vision the People Perish

In times of crisis, society's spiritual leaders step forward to address the defining moral issues of the day. This happened in nineteenth century America, when the abolitionist movement arose to challenge the slave power in the years leading up to the Civil War. It happened in the 1930s with movements like the Catholic Worker, in the 1960s with organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and it is happening today. But spiritual and religious groups do not speak with one voice. In fact, their ideas polarize along class lines.

A fundamental dislocation in the economy is causing the profound political, moral, and spiritual crises that we are experiencing today. Advanced labor-replacing technology is creating abundance capable of ending altogether the human competition for material necessities. But powerful economic interests are doing everything they can to block this from happening. The result is deepening social displacement, escalating wars, environmental destruction, unemployment, and poverty. A sharp antagonism is breaking out between the owners of private property and large, increasingly desperate sections of the working class. This is reflected in the intense spiritual crisis that is step by step gripping America and the entire world.

One section of the spiritual community responds to the suffering by speaking up for the status quo, for the government, the rights of property and the privileged. It defends the political measures necessary to protect them, even up to and including a fascist dictatorship. It parrots the corporate agenda and preaches the sacrifice, austerity, and obedience. A group that calls itself the Presidential Prayer Team, for example, urges us to pray for cutting regulation and taxes, repealing Obamacare, strict enforcement of America's immigration laws, building up America's military and punishing those who "leak" information to the news media.

Another section of the spiritual community responds to the suffering by emerging as a "moral movement" that aligns itself with the workers, the outcasts, the poor, the immigrants, the sick and incarcerated. In the past, this section spoke for the slave in the battle for emancipation. Today it speaks for the millions of Americans of all colors, who make up our working class, especially those dispossessed by the automation of the economy. It strives to practice the ancient religious values of justice, mercy, and faithfulness, without favoritism toward those with temporal power or position. Benjamin Franklin famously summed up its spirit when he said, "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."

SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Revolutionaries have long understood that society cannot move forward without the organizing, mobilizing and transforming power of new ideas. In times of social revolution like today, our battles take place in the complex realm of social, political, and intellectual currents that make up our social lives. Spirituality and religion are therefore at the

heart of our campaign for the new world that is struggling to be born. Spirituality and religion have historically been the areas where the vision and morality of society are worked out. There can be no revolutionary movement without a moral vision of the new society that is fighting to be born.

For that very reason, these are the identical arenas used by the ruling class in its desperate attempt to retard, divert, and block the revolutionary movement at every step of its development. In recent years, religion has increasingly been used as a "wedge issue" to divide and debilitate the working class movement.

“ A “moral movement” within the spiritual community is emerging that aligns itself with the millions of workers of all colors, the outcasts, the poor, the immigrants, the sick and the incarcerated. It strives to practice the ancient religious values of justice, mercy and faithfulness, without favoritism toward those with temporal power or position. ”

As long as society continues to be divided into classes, neither the ruling class nor the working class can or will retreat from the spiritual and religious arena. In the 1970s, as part of a counteroffensive to shore up capitalist ideology, the ruling class made major new investments in religious organizations and movements, both in the US and overseas. Groups like the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition became significant players supporting ruling class political agendas both domestically and internationally. The government and CIA stepped up their active cultivation of reactionary leadership in the Catholic Church and deepened relationships with Islamic fundamentalist organizations in Iran, Afghanistan, and across the globe.

The working class has been compelled to resist these developments. The only way to fight religious ideas is with other religious ideas, by "rightly dividing the word of truth." Modern religions all arose from freedom movements, like the historic deliverance of the Hebrew slaves from the oppression of Pharaoh. But religions repeatedly became corrupted when kings and entire ruling classes co-opted them and began transforming them for the uses of power and privilege.

The Biblical teaching that "the poor will always be with us" for example, has been twisted from its original meaning, "to always be generous and openhanded," to one that justifies exploitation and misery by claiming that nothing can be done about poverty, so it is useless to try. Martin Luther King Jr. rebuked this interpretation when he explained, "There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that we now have the techniques and

the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will."

Ideas that appear moral in one context can become immoral in another, if they are not correctly applied. A good example of this is the old Biblical admonition that says, "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat." The origin and spirit of this rule was that in a cooperative, religious community, each person should contribute according to his or her ability. In class societies it was manipulated and distorted to justify one or another form of forced labor. Capitalists used it to advocate starving the poor to force them to work for lower wages. In our modern high tech-

practical revolutionaries.

This overarching economic crisis makes it both possible and necessary to break with the religious and political sectarianisms of the past. By driving the masses into poverty, the brokenness of the capitalist system necessarily creates these practical revolutionaries, where earlier periods of economic expansion did not.

By uniting around immediate demands of the people, the most successful efforts have learned to mix and balance spirituality and politics without allowing either to narrow the scope or effectiveness of the movement as a whole. The Moral Monday movement in North Carolina, for example, learned how to organize through churches to advance practical issues, while at the same time not limit their reach or appeal to churches alone, but extend it to the community at large. It practices what it calls "fusion politics" in a deliberate effort to organize across boundary lines of color, religion or political background. Many "faith collaboratives" are arising all around the country to address the issues of expanding homelessness.

ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARIES

During this current period of political formation of the newly dispossessed, the role of revolutionaries is to join and assist in the gathering of the scattered revolutionaries on the basis of the people's demands for the necessities of life. Religious revolutionaries play a key role in this process because of their articulate leadership, deep influence, and connections among the organized faithful masses.

Part of their role is to keep the movement on course. America has built an entire structure of "loyal opposition" organizations that are allowed to enjoy funding and social status, as long as they do not question the fundamental structure of the economy and the government. As Thoreau said, "There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root." But true religion calls its adherents to obey God rather than human beings.

Within the battle for basic necessities, revolutionaries always point out how a cooperative economy can definitively address the spreading poverty and economic injustice, making it both necessary and possible. A cooperative economy can use the same technology that is today destroying our lives to provide abundance for all. Housing and other basic necessities can be transformed from commodities traded for profit, into goods distributed on the basis of each person's need.

Being true to our calling means working to make that cooperative society a reality. This requires political education and organization of the workers, while participating in a politicization process that moves beyond charity and beyond incremental reform. It means getting involved in the complex and impure political battles necessary to challenge power. Above all it means using our spiritual training and expertise to shape the culture, to create the vision of the kind of society that our deepest aspirations call on us to build.

nology society it makes no sense at all, since the automated forces of production increasingly mean that all of humanity can eat with virtually no labor expended. As a result, this scripture is now being distorted to justify the system's abandonment and impoverishment of millions, who have no access whatsoever to land or means of production and therefore are physically denied the ability to work at all.

In American history in particular, religious revolutionaries were absolutely instrumental in the Revolutionary War, the abolitionist movement, the cooperative movement, and the great agrarian and labor movements of the nineteenth century, as well as the labor and civil rights struggles of the twentieth century. Most recently, we have all witnessed the indispensable role of spirituality in the movement of the Water Protectors at Standing Rock.

PRACTICAL REVOLUTIONARIES

Because we are in a period of social revolution, the antagonism between workers and owners is creating tens of thousands of revolutionaries from all walks of life and all religious and spiritual traditions. When people experience climate change, endless war and the millions being cast into destitution, they question old ideas that would attempt to justify or rationalize such misery in the midst of such abundance. Their conscience does not allow them to pretend to love the people they minister to, if they do not challenge the cause of their suffering. "True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar," wrote King. "It understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring." People become

From the Editors: Who is Donald Trump?

There is probably no other question foremost in the minds of the American people. Trump has seen to that. So is he just the master show-man, reality TV celebrity gone political? Is he crazy? Or is there a method in his madness? Is he a fascist? Where is the country and the world headed with this master of chaos and instability in charge?

For millennia the ruling classes have rewritten history in their own image, so it appears that it is the “great” men of the time who really make history. So it is that Trump puts himself forward as the great maker and shaker of our time.

In truth, the world is in the midst of a vast and huge process of transformation. We note at this particular moment the exponential advance of the new electronic technology and its impact upon the economy. We see an acceleration of the efforts by the ruling class, from Bush to Obama to Trump, to grapple with and to maintain their hold on private property as polarization and crisis in the world has deepened.

Within the ruling circles both nationally and internationally a struggle is underway, grappling with changes in the world economy and geopolitics. The world order that has been in place since the fall of the Soviet Union, a unipolar hegemonic order dominated by the U.S. is being challenged by the rising of a new multipolar world order, which includes in particular the roles of Russia and China, as they rise to contend with U.S. hegemony. The overriding quality of the process is deepening polarization and instability. The ruling class fight for the development of a fascist world order and the conceptualization

of a fascist world-view is necessary to carry out the program of the entire ruling class. It is here that Trump is playing his role. He is shaped as much by this world-historical process as he is a player on the stage of history.

In the name of economic nationalism, disguised as a championing of the interests of the working class, a massive assault is underway, directed precisely against the economic and social status of the workers, especially that new section that is being displaced and excluded by the new technology. Across the spectrum of society we see the acceleration of this process. Access to health care is being cut off, public schools are being destroyed, diverting funds into private and charter options, that will ultimately become education for the rich and nothing for those whom the ruling class no longer needs. The military budget is being increased, matched by the cutting of funds to the public welfare, including food stamps, Meals on Wheels, Planned Parenthood and others. Executive orders, that are designed to line the pockets of the corporations and the rich, roll back and cut environmental protections. Families are being torn apart as migrant workers are especially targeted, and there is an exponential increase in the numbers being deported.

In response we see the massive development of a broad movement, that signals an approaching new stage in the subjective development of the new class of workers, who are being cast out of production. It takes the form of “Resist”, of fighting Donald Trump, but it goes much deeper than that. At its foundation, it is the fight to acquire the necessities of life that moves beyond resistance, and in

that sense, is objectively against the fascist solutions of the ruling class. The ruling class is making every effort to contain and divert the movement of the workers, particularly to divert it back into the Democratic Party. What is necessary is the development of an independent class politics not tied to either of the ruling parties, and breaking the bonds of reform solutions constrained within the system.

Delegitimizing of the media, delegitimizing of the courts, delegitimizing of the Congress – there is a systematic process of assault upon the basic institutions of the government – from fake news to the gutting of administrative bureaus – all designed to prepare the way for the acceptance of a State organized along fascist lines. It is a State that is fully merged with the corporations, bearing no responsibility to meet the needs of the people and serving only the interests of the corporations, with a massive military to impose its will upon the nation and the world, paid for with ballooning debt.

Trump’s “foreign policy” is revealing itself to be a continuation of a ruling class strategy, that in a time of deepening polarization and crisis, is being accelerated along the inevitable march toward global war. It is a recipe for prolonged wars designed to create even more instability and even more failed States.

War is an objective part of capitalism; it is not a mere reflection of someone’s bellicosity.

The contending for power and control of the global economy is evidenced in the Syrian conflict, where both Russia and the U.S. each have their own plans to construct oil pipelines that will transverse Syria. The military presence of the various forces could easily spark war between them. The effects of the U.S. interventions in Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and now Somalia serve to further destabilize and undermine the region.

Tensions are mounting as the U.S. moves closer and closer to confrontation with North Korea. No one doubts that the real target is China. The great fear is what such a conflict might lead to, and the possibility of nuclear war.

Peace is a life and death question for the masses of the world’s working classes, and for the rising movement here at home. We cannot go forward without it. We gain nothing by fighting against the workers of other countries. With class unity here at home and class unity with the workers of the world, we can create a world free from war, constructive rather than destructive, with an abundance shared by all. This can truly be a new world that workers make, and Trump will be a footnote.

Being a Revolutionary Today...

(Continued from page 1)

moment and putting forth a vision that all can unite around. Do we want and need shelter to survive? We can have it if we keep our focus on the destination, if we can all agree that the only kind of government we can live with is one that guarantees shelter to all.

REACHING REVOLUTIONARIES

A revolutionary has to understand, explain and provide answers to people about how to accomplish the enormous tasks before us. While it’s important to bring clarity to those we have day-to-day contact with, we need to consider how we can reach the millions of potential revolutionaries that are scattered throughout our society. Lately, everyone is talking about the role of the media, and it’s clear that ideas are circulated throughout society by the media, and opinions are shaped for good and evil. This is a truth no revolutionary can ignore. Widespread distribution of revolutionary ideas and struggles through our own presses, leaflets, pamphlets, speech making, artistic creations etc. stretches out

and strengthens our reach beyond the narrow limits of our locale.

Revolutionaries should not miss any chances they get to put forward their understanding at public events and meetings. But it is also vital for us to create our own platforms, to engage with the leaders of the survival movement. We have to create our own opportunities, to get away from the constant interference and blocking tactics of misleaders and paid agents of the ruling class. When so-called leaders attempt to stifle the voices of revolutionaries, then they must be gotten around. Revolutionaries boldly and creatively make a way to be heard.

Being a revolutionary today is about more than being involved in the daily battle for survival. It’s about more than having a good understanding of what’s going on in society. It’s about embodying both. Being active, teaching and learning, keeping the big picture in mind and the vision of where you are leading in your minds eye at all times.

Put an End to Homelessness Once and For All

Homelessness is at the cutting edge of the fight for survival gradually embroiling millions of displaced workers. It lays bare the irreconcilable antagonism between the splendid abundance of electronic technology and the cruel scarcity on which private property is based. We live in a system that would rather destroy a family than provide the sustenance necessary to keep it together with food, clothing, and housing.

Homelessness cannot be ended without understanding its economic root: the inability of the private property system to meet the needs of human beings. Ultimately, the solution to homelessness will require abolition of private property and the organization of a cooperative economy that distributes society’s vast wealth on the basis of human needs and human rights. The League of Revolutionaries for a New America is dedicated to such a proposition. Join Us!

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