

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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Closing the Gap between Illusion and Reality

This past Earth Day 2017, scientists marched on Washington and around the world to protest the ruling class' war on science. During a revolutionary leap from one mode of production to another – a leap toward laborless production – the ruling class knows it cannot maintain control if people look at what's happening scientifically. By contrast, the work of the revolutionary absolutely depends on science. The heart of the propaganda war between the tiny class of capitalists, who want to hang onto private property, and the great majority of humanity, whose needs must be met through cooperation, is a war between confusion and clarity.

This is why ruling class leaders dismiss scientific consensus and benefit from a “fake news” industry. The weekend of the Presidential inauguration, White House public relations introduced the concept of “alternative facts.” The President calls news that disagrees with his policies “the enemy of the people.” This is the logical outcome of over a decade of Democrats and Republicans calling out various media sources as biased against their parties, as well as the very real lies often told by the mainstream media itself.

More importantly, the ruling class wants to undermine popular understanding of the scientific method itself – those tools, which brought us out of a world of lords, serfs and the Black Plague, to a world of laborless production, ever-expanding biotechnology, and infinite knowledge accessible with the smart phone. The current war on journalism and science is a war against the world we live in. The war on a knowable reality is a war on the people.

We are living in a new era, like no other time in history. At the end of over five hundred years of scientific development, the world's ruling class has reached a point where its greatest enemy is the science that promises to liberate its people. As revolutionaries we must promote a scientific understanding of the world that is possible at this moment.

THE SCIENCE OF HISTORY

To understand this moment, we need to keep in mind that science has revealed history as a series of stages of development. Humans lived cooperatively for most of their history. Over 10,000 years ago this began to change as hunter-gatherer societies began to domesticate animals and plants for trade. Money evolved as a form of exchange, representative of the division of labor behind the trade, and early social classes began to develop. Eventually, trade based on agriculture out-

paced tribal forms of society. A leap occurred from the stage of development known as primitive communism to a class system based on private property.

However, today's rapidly developing automation is destroying the division of labor that shaped the world we know. Out of thousands of years of private property and class struggle, a new leap is occurring into the need for cooperation that dominated 95 percent of human archeological history. The major difference between the communism of most of human history and the communism that is possible today is that the hunter-gatherer society cooperated out of the need to make do with scarcity. In today's world science shows us scarcity can be a problem of the past, but only if we build a new system.

In fact, humanity's survival depends upon a scientific understanding of the world. It depends on the practical solution of a cooperative, communist society to protect the world's life-giving resources and to distribute the abundance made possible by the new technology.

NEW IDEAS AND HISTORY

A struggle over new ideas always arises in periods of great change and transition. This struggle is brought about by the necessity of society to change to align itself with the advances in new means of production, and has taken place throughout history. The more these new ideas explain and solve the problems created by such great change and transition, the more the ruling classes throughout history have sought to suppress and deny them and those who disseminate them.

From that moment in 1456 when Johannes Gutenberg proved the value of movable type, an explosion of shared knowledge unlocked the various European Renaissance movements of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. This ultimately led to new ideas about government, justice, equality, and individual freedom, that fueled the 17th to 18th century revolution in thought known as the Enlightenment. The United States' experiment in a bourgeois democratic republic was launched by Thomas Paine's 1776 revolutionary tract, *Common Sense*, but the groundwork for that experiment started with Sir Francis Bacon's popularization of the scientific method a century before.

Bacon and others of his era systematized how we know the world into a new methodology. Scientific method relied on careful observation and measurement of what was observable through the five senses, but soon



Thousands rally on Earth Day 2017 at March for Science in Detroit. Photo © Daymonjhartley.com

led to microscopes and telescopes to reach beyond what we might be able to perceive directly. Scientists developed models to understand how things might work, test each hypothesis, and create devices to make use of each new level of understanding. Science's rigorous experimentation, testing, and collectivization of results soon led to the navigation of all of the world's oceans and advances in technologies of production.

The scientific method began to be applied to how and why societies function as they do, and to justify the fight for social reform. Objectively, *Common Sense* was a scientific explanation of the feasibility of American independence. Abolitionists fought to end slavery, union activists fought to better wages and working conditions and to end child labor, anti-lynching activists fought to criminalize lynch mobs, and women fought for the right to vote.

Feeding this struggle for reform was a

more scientific understanding of the capitalist system itself. After a series of failed democratic revolutions in Europe, Karl Marx spent almost two decades preparing the first volume of his scientific analysis of capitalism, *Das Kapital*, and his remaining sixteen years attempting to complete the remaining volumes. This objective understanding of the real world bolstered the communist movement, a call to end the capitalist exploitation of the worker and to create a world that could truly be run by and for the workers.

Until the great governmental propaganda machines of the 20th Century, propaganda was commonly understood as a neutral term for any effort to spread, “to propagate,” new ideas. Scientists have long used propaganda to spread health news, for instance, like the 19th Century “germ theory,” that would greatly curb the spread of disease. As the press became increasingly available to the people, it

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The Truth Shall Set Us Free

Inside Rally, Comrades!

The truth that science uncovers for us is more than just the facts. It is about the underlying causes of history, especially these times in which we find ourselves. People know that something is very wrong, but why? The ruling class wants to cover up the answer. Those who are on the bottom, excluded, and who must struggle just to survive, must as a practical necessity understand the real cause of their condition. Once we understand the cause of how we got here, we can then begin to grasp the solutions, the path forward. From grasping reality as it actually is, we can project a vision of what kind of new society we must be about building, and just as importantly, a strategy, a line of march that shows us how we get there.

It is in the interest of the ruling class to deny and to cover up reality, disguising the truth about the world as it actually is. The most important reality that they cannot abide, is that we are in an epoch of transformation, brought on by the introduction of electronic, laborless production that is destroying capital itself and polarizing society. This is the reality, the fundamental truth of our time, and it is this actuality that the ruling class cannot allow to be propagated. They know that once the masses grasp this understanding, it is all over for them.

In this issue, "From the Editors: Sanctuary – Forging Bonds of Class Kinship" exposes the lie that the cause of joblessness is the undocumented immigrant worker. The truth is that the undocumented and immigrant

workers are an integral part of a new class of workers being created by electronic technology. The immigrant workers are at this moment, the focus of an attack by the ruling class to pit the growing new class against itself. In response we see a growing Sanctuary movement of churches, individuals, and cities across the country standing up and saying NO! to the ruling class and the State.

"Closing the Gap Between Illusion and Reality" takes a close look at the current "war on science" and the tremendous social response arising to confront that attack. As the article points out, we are living in a new era like no other time in history. At the end of over 500 years of scientific development, the world's ruling class has reached a point where its greatest enemy is the science that promises to liberate the workers of the world.

"Revolution in Technology Makes Revolution in Society Inevitable" elaborates upon "this profound technological revolution," which dominates our reality, while at the same time is a time of unprecedented suffering among the masses. The new technology is advancing now at an exponential rate, and the polarization of wealth and poverty is keeping pace with it. Something has to give.

Even some ruling class thinkers are beginning to take notice. The article "Is a Universal Basic Income the Solution?" shows they are realizing that the jobs destroyed by laborless technology are never coming back. Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and writers like Martin Ford and Charles Murray, are all struggling with the problem: How do you provide for people who will never have a job? It is in this context that some are floating the idea of a univer-

sal basic income. The proposal seems more like a dead end in the current political process, which is moving in the opposite direction, destroying and taking back what little reforms that remain. But such a proposal does point to the possibility of broadening the actual fight for basic needs and for a new, cooperative world.

"Corporate Money Tries to Control the Movement," provides another example of how the ruling class, in its battle to preserve private property at all costs, attempts to divide, divert and defeat a united movement of the new revolutionary section of the workers from taking an independent course. The ruling class works through corporate social movement funders to impede, divert and block the natural impulses of the workers for an independent political identity and unity based on the workers common economic needs and class interests. At stake is whether the developing social motion will be corralled or whether it can continue to build along an independent political path.

It is in this environment that the revolutionaries being produced in these critical times have to engage in the propaganda war, in the battle for ideas, to both close the gap between illusion and reality and to illuminate the path to power for a new revolutionary class.

Our new revolutionary class has nothing to lose but its chains, but it requires the truth of history to move the process forward to its completion. This is no spin on reality, no alternative version of the truth. We need only tell the truth as it actually is. It is our greatest weapon, and why in the end we will prevail.

The truth shall set us free.

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.

Revolution in Technology Makes Revolution in Society Inevitable

The capitalist ruling class and their advisors at elite universities and corporate foundations are feeling uneasy about rising joblessness during this period of massive investment in new technology. Various explanations for this contradiction have been offered. In his book, *Capital in the 21st Century*, Thomas Piketty is praised for arguing that inequality “normally” increases when capitalists accumulate more wealth. The longstanding discussion about how technology impacts employment is resurrected (see for example *The Second Machine Age* by Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee). While the material situation is indeed unprecedented, the discussion is rarely posed historically and concretely, because doing so would clarify cause and effect, and indicate the necessity for independent and self-interested political initiative by the workers. The ruling class wants none of that.

We are living in a period of profound technological revolution (sometimes called the “electronic revolution”) where robots, driverless cars and trucks, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology are developing at exponential rates. Observers such as Jeremy Howard note that “machine learning” is reaching a level of maturity that creates the possibility for replacing labor throughout the service economy, that employs the majority of the workforce within the world’s largest national economies. Such an event would simultaneously cheapen the costs of production and generate a permanent crisis of massive unemployment.

Now is also a time of unprecedented suffering among the masses, even within the wealthiest country, the United States. Millions of people were homeless in America during 2016, 42 million were “food insecure” (hungry), 43 million were living below the federal poverty line, and 33 million Americans were without health insurance. It should be clear to all that the electronic revolution is increasing the profits of the economic owners and is not serving the needs of the people.

Given fewer buyers in the market place due to rising joblessness, the world’s ruling classes are fighting each other for shrinking market share. They use technology to cheapen the costs of production and increase profits, only intensifying the destruction of the market. This is creating the social conditions for world war and fascism. The current political system is utterly incapable of stopping the rising tide of joblessness. Fascism is essential for the rulers to sustain a bellicose political agenda. They will not allow the people to think and act independently, and are well down the road toward building a State designed to exert the necessary ideological and physical control.

How did we get here? A brief description of the history of class society provides the answer.

TECHNOLOGY AND CLASS SOCIETY

Over the past several decades electronic technology has been used to increase output with decreasing numbers of workers. For example, U.S. manufacturing as a percent of GDP was relatively constant between 1960 and 2011 (about 12 percent), yet the share of jobs in manufacturing during this same period fell from 24 percent to 9 percent. Much of this change was between 2000 and 2011, when one third of all U.S. manufacturing production workers were eliminated.

During prior periods of capitalism in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the deployment of labor-saving technology had the net effect of increasing employment in core countries such as Great Britain and the United States. There are several reasons for this. First, new production methods required additional workers to produce the labor-saving tools. Second, core countries enjoyed a privileged position within the world economy because the rest of the world had uncompetitive industrial bases and consumed a share of core country manufacturing output. Third, productivity increases with labor-saving technology are linear, whereas the electronic revolution produces a technological growth curve that is exponential - technological power doubles over given units of time (see for example “Moore’s Law”). Thus labor-saving technology during the 19th and 20th centuries displaced workers, but the net effect in countries such as the U.S. was increased employment.

Today this is no longer the case, because technology has leaped from linear change to exponential change, and exponential change becomes increasingly nonlinear over time. Exponential change builds upon itself by accelerating to faster and faster rates of change, and is radically different from linear growth at a constant rate. It has recently become evident that exponential change in the power of artificial intelligence is developing to a stage where it can automate entire service industries.

Within the earlier stages of class society organized around agriculture, the direct producers (peasants, serfs and slaves) owned the instruments of production, or were themselves owned, and the ruling classes (Kings, Queens, Mandarins, etc.) owned and controlled surplus food and ownership of land. The ruling class guaranteed food for its table, even if it meant that the producer classes starved. With the advent of capitalism, new ruling classes gained ownership over the in-

struments of production and set about improving these instruments in order to increase output with lower quantities of human labor, thereby increasing profits. It is this process working over time that drives technological development and ultimately creates the conditions for the introduction of qualitatively new means of production.

CLASS SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

When qualitatively new means of production are introduced, there is a class struggle to define new property relations that determine who owns and benefits from the new sources of wealth. This struggle continues until a new ruling class gains hegemony to reorganize society around its self-interest. Agricultural societies gave birth to the first State, defined as the organization of violence to protect class rule. Agricultural societies also created the first cities, irrigation works and organized warfare with metal weapons. These developments set the conditions to eradicate the hunter and gatherer societies. After many centuries, agricultural ruling classes were in turn eradicated by capitalist classes that gained control over society in the context of the developing industrial revolution. Capitalist classes gained hegemony within the core countries and pulled the remainder of the world economy into the capitalist marketplace.

The electronic revolution constitutes a leap, or discontinuity, that is destroying the foundation of capitalist property relations based upon buying and selling. The electronic revolution builds upon earlier stages of development, yet is qualitatively distinct from earlier stages, because it progressively eliminates human labor from social production. At present this leap is disrupting economic distribution within capitalism by diminishing wages, ramping up joblessness, and creating the conditions for a new society to arise. In a March 2017 article “Trump, jobs and robots,” Silvia Ribeiro notes an “exponential leap in the development of artificial intelligence and the convergence with this and other new technologies, such as nano and biotechnology, that is expanding beyond industrial manufacture, to agriculture and food, transport, communication, services, trade,

extractive industries...” Electronic technology is destroying the foundation for capitalist property relations on the basis of exponential change. This objective process poses a question that can and will be decided subjectively by people: will society become fascist or communist?

The entry of electronic technology into capitalist production is creating a new class that must fight politically for its right to live. This objective communist class is the product of thousands of years of technological development and human toil. Its arrival on the world stage is the summation of humanity’s greatest accomplishments, and gives us cause for celebration and a renewed spirit of struggle.

WHAT COMMUNISM MAKES POSSIBLE

Under capitalism, having a job organizes social life, in particular within the core countries. In these countries people are led to believe that a job is necessary for an orderly, happy life. Things will be different in communist society. Human experience indicates that the basis for happiness is contribution to society, or to the betterment of others. Thus the work of society becomes finding ways to guarantee the contribution of all for the benefit of all, rather than guaranteeing the enrichment of a ruling class. Working a job and the pursuit of wealth cease to be a way of life, and happiness becomes the purpose of life.

Ray Kurzweil and other technologists envision revolutionary ways to enhance human capacities with artificial intelligence. Within a communist society, it is perfectly logical to create artificial intelligence to expand our capacity for wisdom, love, humor, music, and sociability, and to distribute the abundance the new technology creates according to need. However, this vision cannot be fully realized until social classes and private property are eliminated. Only then can technology become a force that benefits everyone.

The new class is the agent of history that can learn, and is learning, to fight for its right, not just to survive, but to create a new world of unimaginable happiness.

The Fight for Strategic Clarity

The world is in the midst of rapid change. Human society is at a critical juncture in history, where what people understand and what people choose to do will determine the fate of future generations.

Rally, Comrades!, as the voice of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, offers a vision of an economic paradise of abundance for all. It illuminates the way forward that will make this new cooperative society possible.

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Corporate Money Aims to Control the Rising Movement

The capitalist class has always used the age-old tactic of divide and conquer based on race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, religion, and more to divide the working class. In order to contain, divert and control the independent aspirations of the workers, the ruling class creates its own opposition, doing all it can to guarantee that such opposition remains loyal to ruling class institutions and the protection of its private property interests. With this in mind, what we are seeing today is the ruling class accelerating this process to get a section of the working class to accept its fascist program.

Electronic production is rapidly replacing human labor in more sectors of the economy. A new class of workers created by the electronic revolution is forming. This growing new class is comprised of the millions of workers thrown out of or to the margins of the economy, replaced in the production process by robotics and computer automation. This class ranges from the casual, contingent, gig workers and day laborers, to those who work part-time, the newly unemployed, and those destitute who make up the growing ranks of permanently unemployed. These workers are increasingly denied the basic necessities of life and means for human survival.

Created out of these deteriorating material conditions of life, this class cannot survive under the fascist economic, political and social system that is being constructed to protect the private property interests of the ruling class. Requiring distribution of the necessities of life according to need, this new class is the only revolutionary social force in capitalist society. The ruling class is conscious of this reality. The new class is not. The ruling class works through the State apparatus, the corporate media, corporate think tanks and corporate social movement funders to stigmatize, marginalize and ideologically divide the new class. The aim is to impede, divert, and ultimately block the natural impulses of the workers for an independent political identity and unity, based on the workers' common economic needs and class interests.

CORPORATE GRANT MAKING FOUNDATIONS

Corporate money has always been funneled into the social movement to shape the thinking and the actions of the workers. Frustrated by their rapidly deteriorating conditions, the workers rejected status quo ruling class politics in the 2016 general election. The ruling class is now busy framing the parameters of the debate, aiming to contain and prevent any working class independent political impulses and motion from developing. As Michel Chossudovsky wrote in an August 2016 article in *Global Research* entitled "Rockefeller, Ford Foundations Behind World Social Forum. The Corporate Funding of Social Activism": "The corporations are funding dissent with a view to controlling dissent."

The fascist program of the ruling class is being conveyed by a full spectrum of political views. One example is Robert Mercer. He is the billionaire Chief Executive Officer of Renaissance Technologies, which is one of the most successful and profitable hedge

funds in the country. Mercer is the principal stakeholder of Breitbart News, an openly fascist, "anti-establishment" news outlet formerly operated by Stephen Bannon, who is now the Assistant to the President, as Donald Trump's chief political strategist. The Mercer Family Foundation, run by Mercer's daughter Rebekah also gives millions of dollars in funding to an assortment of interconnected, ideological right-wing non-profit organizations. The Mercers have joined forces with others, including the billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch, the owners of Koch Industries, the principal funders of Americans for Prosperity and the American Legislative Exchange Council, among others.

“ The protests and marches of the past months show that a new social movement is being born. The aim of the ruling class is to block the natural impulses of the workers for an independent political identity and unity based on the workers' common economic needs and class interests. ”

Another example is George Soros. He is also a hedge fund billionaire and is owner of Soros Fund Management. His Open Society Foundations (OSF) gives millions of dollars of funding to civil rights and social justice non-profit organizations in the U.S. as a means of influencing the movement. According to Nicolas Guilhot, who wrote in *Critical Sociology*, the international journal of the Association for Critical Sociology, "...the Open Society Foundations serve to perpetuate institutions which reinforce the existing social order, with the same history of capitalist philanthropy as the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, among others who promote a capitalist view..."

Soros is also a founder of Democracy Alliance, a large donor fundraising club that funnels money to thousands of non-profit organizations throughout the country. With the intention of corralling the movement back into the Democratic party, they are building a "left-progressive" base of support on a local, regional and national level for Democratic Party initiatives and to elect Democratic Party candidates to political office.

Soros' influence was on display at the group's November 2016 meeting, held right after the election. Shocked by the defeat of Hillary Clinton and in need of a new meeting agenda, the gathering reorganized around the need to build a Resist Trump movement and rebuild the Democratic Party on that basis. At the last minute, Soros, who seldom attends Democracy Alliance formal proceedings, agreed to become part of the agenda on the concluding day. Billed as a "Conversation with George Soros," the gathering agreed to redouble its efforts to fund a "new progressive agenda" and channel the rising discontent to-

ward helping to rebuild the Democratic Party.

The Ford Foundation is one of the largest and oldest corporate foundations in the United States. In 2015 it announced that it would refocus its grant making on social justice, including programs centered on gender, ethnic, racial justice, and inclusive economics. It plans to commit up to \$1 billion in grants to non-profits through the year 2020 towards this effort, as a part of their efforts to shape the movement. That part of Ford's new focus called "inclusive economics," is designed to develop long-term partnerships with U.S. social movement organizations. This includes influencing those organizations fighting against the growing conditions of poverty

spreading across the country.

THE BATTLE FOR IDEAS

There are thousands of these corporate foundations in the United States. Constrained by the funding boundaries and ideological outlook of their corporate funders, many progressive non-profit organizations are limited from moving beyond their critique of the results of the capitalist system, to a unified and programmatic strategy to overturn the capitalist system. Instead they are compelled to concentrate their activity on promoting partial, incremental solutions and narrow governmental reforms to address social divisions and inequities that plague capitalist society.

Regardless of the intentions of those who work with or for them, who are drawn to them or helped by them, these organizations are designed to limit the class from addressing the class nature of the systemic ills in society. They often promote single issues or coalition building that highlight the disparities and differences among those with common interests. To maintain their funding, they are forced to avoid any mention of private property relations and the actual class relations of capitalist society, and instead focus on effects rather than cause. Their purpose is to carry out the strategic objectives of the ruling class by diverting and blocking workers impulses towards class identity and class unity. Increasingly, fighters are coming to see the limitations placed on them by these restrictions.

Clearly, the ruling class sees the development of a new class in its early stage of formation. Its strategy is to prevent the developing new class from understanding the class nature of its conditions. The ruling class aims to divert the movement by keeping it focused

on the conditions of poverty, rather than the movement gaining an understanding of the *actual* cause of its poverty conditions.

New ideas have to be introduced – and be broadly accepted – to facilitate the objective changes taking place. The question is in whose interests will these changes take place.

The ruling class needs a political motion to clear away the obstacles to moving the new economy forward. They are laying the foundation for a new political movement that is based on the interests of corporate power that is completely merged with the State.

Various sectors of the ruling class continue to fight over the different tactical approaches they propose the State should take. However, the ruling class is strategically united to control the State, in order to protect its interests, namely private property. This requires it to implement a fascist program. The workers, on the other hand, have to control the State if they are going to turn private property into public property, the only way they can gain control of their lives. This is the entrenched objectivity of the struggle, which is the beginning of revolution.

Workers cut loose from their economic security can go either way politically. Just as some can be agitated into a mass base for a fascist program, others can be politicized to fight for their own class interests. It all depends on the new ideas. United across color lines, fighting for its economic and class interests, the new class can be the driving force in determining the political direction in which the entire class fights.

A NEW SOCIAL RESPONSE

The protests and marches of the past months are signs that a new social movement is being born. The natural impulse to unity drew people to the three millions strong Women's March, to town hall meetings to speak in the interests of those who would be thrown off of health insurance, to airports to speak out against the travel ban, to march against "The Wall" and the growing number of deportations around the country, to march for science and truth, and in defense of the environment. Amongst the many protest demands, including the fight for equality, immigrant rights, democracy, human rights, the environment and a peaceful society, were also the common demands for basic necessities: safe water, food, housing, healthcare, education and more.

Will this social motion be organized into disconnected, single-issue, non-profit based organizations that ultimately get corralled into the ranks of the Democratic Party? Or will this social motion develop a politically independent course, that puts forward a program based on a vision that captures the commonality and class nature of its multiple demands?

Revolutionaries welcome the opportunity to politicize the beginning steps and impulses along the path of a class fighting consciously for its actual interests. These are the first steps of the revolution. From inside the movement, revolutionaries have a responsibility and special role to play in pushing forward the common, class-based interests and ideas necessary for the development of an independent political course.

Is a Universal Basic Income the Solution?

Building Block

“... [A] so-called universal basic income (UBI) is currently one of the most hotly debated policy topics being floated as a means to address income inequality and the disruption that technology poses to the workforce,” wrote Lauren Thomas in a CNBC March 2017 report. As an example of this disruptive technology worldwide in February 2017 a Chinese factory reported that it replaced 90 percent of its 650 workers and increased its productivity at the same time. China has become the leading edge of the robotics revolution. These advances have catapulted China toward overtaking the U.S. as the largest economy in the world.

Extrapolate this trend to find that in the next 20 years as many as 47 percent of U.S. jobs and more than 2/3 of jobs world-wide will succumb to the electronic revolution. Unemployed workers have no way to buy the food, clothing, shelter and other basic needs for survival – those goods and services that the new productivity is making abundant. On the other hand the capitalist owners of the corporations watch the products pile up. They can’t realize their anticipated profits. It’s the same problem, but from two points of view.

THE DEBATE

That’s the problem, but what about the proposed solution? It would seem self-evident that “universal” means everyone, and that “basic” should provide enough to obtain the means of survival. But even the proponents of the UBI cannot agree on who is included in “universal” and a meager amount of \$10,000 annually is frequently thrown out as “basic.”

UBI is on the agenda because normal wage and wage-supplement solutions do not solve current problems. Proposals to raise wages for the employed, such as “Fight for Fifteen,” do not keep pace with the rising cost of living. More important, these proposals do not touch increased unemployment and underemployment – or the increase of those condemned to absolute destitution. The problem of supplying money to the unemployed has been a temporary phenomenon for what has been termed a “reserve army”: that is, for those temporarily laid off. Welfare programs, food stamps and unemployment benefits are examples of this kind of temporary assistance.

Proposals for a guaranteed income were proposed earlier in U.S. history, for example by Thomas Paine. In *Agrarian Justice*, Paine argued that land speculation led to extreme inequality, and that dispossession of many from land holdings created mass poverty. He proposed to alleviate the problem, conceived as the denial of the right to existence, by a guarantee of a basic income. In our own time, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote in his 1968 work *Where Do We Go From Here*: “In the treatment of poverty nationally, one fact stands out: there are twice as many white poor as Negro poor in the United States... I’m now convinced that... the solution to pover-

ty is to abolish it directly by... the guaranteed income.”

As J.E. King and John Marangos point out in their 2006 article, “Two Arguments for Basic Income,” classical liberals have defended the UBI, “primarily because it offers a clear alternative to socialism... There is even a neo-liberal strand in support for Basic Income, [it] could make it possible to eliminate much existing labor market regulation and drastically reduce social welfare expenditure.” Or, as Annie Lowery wrote in the *New York Times* in February of this year, “Silicon Valley has recently become obsessed with basic income for reasons simultaneously generous and self-interested, as a palliative for the societal turbulence its inventions might unleash.”

THE DIFFERENCE NOW

Something is different now. According to all sorts of economic analysts, jobs are not coming back. Even the wages in places like Bangladesh are driven down below the cost of a robot. To solve the otherwise intractable problem of emerging permanent unemployment, futurists like Tesla CEO Elon Musk, Facebook mogul Mark Zuckerberg, and writers from Martin Ford to Charles Murray have gotten behind UBI schemes. The ruling class is now faced with a problem of how to provide the means of exchange to people who will never have access to a job. This is the environment in which a section of the capitalist class is seriously floating UBI proposals. Segments of the working class are engaged in a fight to raise the minimum wage and sections of the workers are joining a battle for a UBI.

Granting reforms aided the expansion of capital in earlier eras. Now capitalism has reached its global limits. Electronic technology is destroying the value of labor power, making workers superfluous. The ruling class has less and less need for workers and therefore less need to maintain a surplus population. Capitalism cannot accede to the demands of people it has no need to support. Every fight for the basic needs of the people comes into conflict with the inability of the ruling class to meet those demands. This antagonism threatens to rip society apart.

Still, there is something encouraging about a debate that implies that money should be given to people, without the requirement that they work, simply because they need to survive. A basic income for everyone not connected to a job introduces the new idea that the sale of labor power is not necessary for survival. It poses a question about what will replace the labor market when labor is no longer a commodity to be bought and sold. At the same time that the labor market is ending, automation produces abundance coupled with the end of value, where this very abundance renders the old distributive market obsolete. The UBI challenges us to imagine a world where goods can be distributed not because we can pay, but *because we are human*.

BEYOND THE UBI

There is also a dead end to these questions. The UBI still presumes some kind of market, where money has value. While UBI

gives people money to purchase goods, the goods they are purchasing contain less and less value. Even more, by offering this solution, the ruling class maintains its power relation over the rest of society. This power relationship stems from the right of a small ruling class to own that which produces the means of survival for all. Even with a UBI, the eight wealthiest billionaires (as reported by Oxfam in January, 2017) would still own more than the poorest 50 percent of the world’s population.

Human labor alone creates new value. Robotics can’t do that. Robots only transfer whatever value is embodied in their dead arms bit by bit as they wear away. Labor increasingly evaporates from the production process – in the factory, in retail and transportation, or in education, and as a result value shrinks. Money, which acts as a way to measure value and serves as a grease to promote exchange, can no longer perform its function as a measure of value. Once again the ruling class finds itself at a dead end. Money becomes more and more worthless, yet the ruling class can only print more money to get temporary relief.

As further economic crises expel more and more workers into the limbo of permanent unemployment, more workers will begin to turn toward reorganizing society to meet

the needs of all. This idea challenges the private property rights of a tiny ruling class that owns everything produced. To protect its private property ownership, the ruling class is developing a full-fledged police state.

In this fashion the debate around UBI gives revolutionaries real opportunities to introduce new ideas about how a new society can be created and a strategy to get there. Why does control of private property give the ruling class, to which these eight billionaires belong, the right to control the rest of the world? Doesn’t UBI chip away at the argument that people should only be paid for their work? If the money paid through UBI no longer represents the labor embodied in commodities, what does it represent, if anything? These are all questions that could not be taken seriously until the present moment, when the robotic production of abundance shatters all preconceptions, and allows us to rely on the fight for basic needs as the actual fight against fascism and beyond UBI, for a new, cooperative world.

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

Join the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

The goal of all revolutionaries’ work today is to give the American people a vision of what is possible. It is a vision of a world where no one has to fight another for the daily bread of existence. It is a vision where cooperation and fulfilling the needs of humanity are the guiding principles. It is a vision that satisfies the deepest yearnings of the people for peace. Society can now create the abundance the new technology promises, and so a new world: a cooperative society, with this abundance distributed according to need.

In spite of worsening economic conditions, nothing can be accomplished until the American people hold a vision of where they want to go and what they want to be. Creating and imbuing them with such vision is the overriding task of revolutionaries and the foundation of our organization.

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From the Editors: Sanctuary – Forging Bonds of Class Kinship

“Her only wrongdoing is just being poor.”
— *Husband of Guadalupe Garcia de Royos, mother of two, arrested by ICE and deported to Mexico in February 2017*

“The truth is I was there [in the U.S.] for my children. For a better future. To work for them. And I don’t regret it, because I did it for love.”

— *Guadalupe Garcia de Royos, now in Nogales, Mexico*

Across the country men, women and children are being hunted down, rounded up and arrested. They are forced into detention centers, denied legal representation, stuck for months and even years, as their cases grind their way through the corridors of an inhumane and immoral immigration system. The most basic of human values are violated, as families are destroyed and mass deportations are becoming the norm.

created by electronic technology. Like every worker, they must work to live, but more and more there is no work for them to do. This new class can no longer live under the capitalist system. It can only survive by overturning it and creating a cooperative, communist society capable of providing not simply the basics of life, but a secure and cultured existence that is the right of all.

This is the reason for the relentless attack on the new class today. The undocumented and immigrant workers are now a focus of the attack by the ruling class to pit the growing new class against itself, and destroy the growing impulses toward unity that are emerging, as it becomes clear that the ruling class intends to do nothing for the workers, no matter their color, religion, sex or nationality.

Yet, as the ruling class carries out its attacks, it cannot help but get tangled up in the contradictions of its own situation. The more they crack down on the undocumented and

“ The importance of the sanctuary movement today is that it is forging alliances and unity by practical experience, all part of one class in opposition to the ruling class. ”

According to a recent Homeland Security report, overall 41,300 people were arrested for deportation between January 22 and April 29, 2017 -- a 38 percent increase from a comparable period last year. The roundups have expanded from those who have been involved in the criminal justice system, to those who have been here for decades and routinely checking in with ICE. Many have no connections or family in their country of origin and some don’t even speak the language of their country of origin.

A vast transformation is taking place. It is being driven by the revolution in technology, a revolution which is tearing apart society even as it offers the possibility of a world of abundance. We are seeing a break with all past history as human labor is being replaced with the labor of machines. As the old order breaks apart it strains all past relations, polarizes institutions, and gives rise to new, liberating ideas. This is the process of revolution, and the only question is in whose interests will this revolution be made.

Millions around the world are on the move, uprooted by poverty, war, and violence, seeking refuge wherever they can, searching for a new life. Yet they are denied this, no matter how hard they work. The undocumented and immigrant workers are an integral part of a new class of workers being

immigrants, the more they expose their disdain for basic human values to the American people. The more they try to pass laws against sanctuary cities, the more they heighten the tension and struggle between the cities and states, and the states and the federal government. The more oppressive laws they pass to deal with the resistance to their actions, such as SB4 in Texas, or identity cards, or the stepping up of ICE raids, the more they encourage the growing movement against them. The more they use the immigration question to attack the entire working class, the more the workers come to see their common interests and come to see that the attack against one is an attack against all.

The revulsion among the workers and response from churches, cities, individuals, and state governments is taking shape in the call for a new Sanctuary movement, and is in itself an act of unity. As the Northern cities did during slavery in the face of the 1850 Fugitive Slave law, the rising movement is refusing to allow constitutional rights to be trampled upon and unjust, immoral laws to be enforced. As they fight deportations, hide and shelter those who are being pursued, and fight to turn back unjust laws, the sanctuary movement is part of the broader movement standing up to the fascist State the ruling class is creating.

Closing the gap...

(Continued from page 1)

has been used to propagate an evolving understanding of the the world and our role in that world from the perspective of the interests of our class. Today’s electronics have turned anyone with access to a computer or cell phone into a potential propagandist.

To fight back against this threat, the corporate State and mass media sell fear like never before. Sixteen years of the War on Terror has left many resigned to a heavily militarized police State as our inevitable future. Nuclear annihilation is on people’s minds in a way it hasn’t been since the Cold War. Bomb shelters have once again become a growth industry. Meanwhile, just as we know advertisers use mass data to sell products through our smart phones and computers, the ruling class mines information to further its grip on our thinking.

THE DEMAND FOR A NEW SOCIETY

As revolutionaries, our task is clearly to close the gap between the illusion created by the ruling class and the reality that surrounds us. Built upon our ability to sell our labor in order to buy its products, the capitalist system can no longer function, and it is dying. The electronic revolution – that has emptied factories, automated fast food jobs and even developed the robot doctor – has rapidly driven the value of our labor power toward zero.

The communist movement used science to show that the abundance capital-

ism created was unevenly and inhumanely denied to wage laborers. The majority of the world lived in poverty, sometimes due to disability, sometimes due to racism, sometimes due to colonization and other factors, but always because of the fundamental inequality tied up with the accumulation of wealth in a class-based system. The communist movement always had to contend with how an expanding capitalist system made it possible to bribe certain sections of the working class against others.

But that era is behind us. The electronic revolution is destroying the underpinnings of the capitalist system, which no longer meets the needs of the people. All paid work is becoming insecure and those jobs that remain become increasingly miserable. Simple survival means a fight for basic human needs – clean air, clean water, healthy food, shelter, safety, security and hope – and that fight has become a fight against the wealth accumulated by a dying system.

At the same time, today’s science has made the world’s problems easier to solve. Our epoch demands that we get rid of the system in our way and build a cooperative communist system that puts first the needs of humanity and the planet that gives us life. As revolutionaries, our task is to sustain and extend that scientific call for the truth absolutely necessary for our survival. Unlike the ruling class, we have nothing to fear from the truth – it is, indeed, the only thing that can set us free.

Health Care is a Right!

The 21st century holds a vision for a health care delivery system where everyone has access to equal, quality, comprehensive health care services based on need, and not on ability to pay, citizenship status or other barriers that protect the interests of private health care corporations and insurance companies. From preventive care, healing and education to sophisticated surgery and beneficial medications, we have the capacity to provide for all.

Even as we fight to protect what’s left of our hard fought reforms, we must fight with this vision in mind.

Victory today means distribution of necessities like retirement security and health care, based on the needs of a new class of workers. Healthcare is part of the struggle for power for the class as a whole. “It’s all of us or none of us!”

As the battle for health care heats up, *Rally, Comrades!* articles provide analysis and perspective on the roots of the problem, a vision of what is possible, and a strategy to win.

Don’t miss our articles in upcoming issues on the fight for health care.

The importance of the sanctuary movement today is that it is forging alliances and unity by practical experience, all part of one class in opposition to the ruling class. Safety and security is as much a basic necessity of life as food, clothing, and shelter. It is a question for the entire working class. What is necessary today is to expand the notion of

sanctuary, from simple safe haven, to forging bonds of class kinship and camaraderie through mutually shared struggle for the necessities of life.

The whole edifice of capitalism is collapsing, with nowhere to expand. Revolutionaries show that the commonality of poverty can and must unite the “criminals of want.”