

RALLY COMRADES!

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DONATION

The Immigration Movement Today

By Maria Martinez, Laura Garcia, and Sal Sandoval

American exceptionalism frames today's immigration debate. Americans believe that immigration to the U.S. proves the universality of the nation's liberal democratic principles and we resist examining the role American imperialism has played in the global structures of migration. Instead, we think of immigration as a unidirectional phenomenon in which the hapless poor of the world clamor at the gates of wealthier nations (Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*). If American exceptionalism frames the ideological debate on immigration, global capitalism frames the current economic reality.

Global capitalism has generated a crisis of social reproduction (survival) for millions of people around the globe. Increasing poverty, inequality, marginality, and deprivation are the

dark underside of the global capitalist system. Mexico, at the center of the immigration debate, prominently illustrates the global crisis of survival. The technological revolution that followed advancements in manufacturing after World War II offered new opportunities in Mexico for American investors seeking to introduce high technology and use local labor. From the 1920s through the early 1970s, the Mexican government spurred economic growth by a model of import-substitution industrialization (ISI) which protected and promoted the development of national industries by Mexican producers making products for sale in Mexico.

Under pressure from an accumulating foreign debt, however, Mexican economic policy began to change. Government businesses were sold to private investors. U.S. companies were allowed to own land and factories anywhere in Mexico. Mexico became a laboratory for the economic reforms that have transformed the economies of developing countries, moving those countries away from policies that encourage national development toward ones that open up the economy for transnational investors. To that end, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was created to facilitate the formation of a single continental

market in which goods, services, and money could freely cross the borders between the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

As predicted by NAFTA's opponents, the agreement devastated both U.S. and Mexican workers. According to the 2001 report "NAFTA at Seven" published by the Economic Policy Institute, "NAFTA eliminated 766,030 actual and potential U.S. jobs between 1994 and 2000 because of the rapid growth in the net U.S. export deficit with Mexico and Canada". In "Rethinking the NAFTA Record" the Institute of Policy Studies reported that between the time NAFTA took effect in 1994 and May 2002, the U.S. Department of Labor certified 403,000 U.S. workers for NAFTA-TAA benefits because the treaty cost them their jobs. Studies also found that exports don't always produce jobs. In his book, *Children of the NAFTA Wars*,

Those whose struggle is for survival - the immigrants themselves - cannot accept compromise and reform and survive. They do not need more organizations or speakers. They need an outlet for their voices.

David Bacon reported that in the five industries that account for most exports to Mexico - electrical equipment, machinery, transportation equipment, chemicals, and primary metals - more than 1.5 million jobs disappeared from 1980 to 1995, while exports by these industries increased. U.S. corn exports to Mexico in June 1994 increased 525 percent over the previous year, further undermining Mexican small farmers who grow corn for domestic consumption. According to Mexican government reports that track population movements within its national borders, some three million small farmers and their families have been displaced from the land, unable to compete with U.S. corporate agribusiness.

Mexican President Vicente Fox (2000 to 2006) left the economy of his country stalled with a notable increase in unemployment, extreme income polarity, and few remaining opportunities. A recent World Bank report compared Mexico to Botswana, Africa in terms of economic inequality. According to this study, the Mexican

economy demonstrated its capacity to generate wealth, but in the past few years however, it regressed in the form of its distribution, and it experienced a decline in the real purchasing power of its inhabitants. Fifty million Mexicans live on the equivalent of \$1.00 a day, and in 2006 alone the interest payment on the debt of \$26 billion was the highest in history. The Fox government consolidated Mexico as the tenth largest economy of the world, but it fell to 70th place in terms of per capita income (\$6,790.00), and to 80th place if the income is measured by the real purchasing capacity - a level comparable to Botswana. (Nativo Lopez, "A Question of Strategy and Tactics - What's Next for the Immigrant Rights Movement?", 2006)

More Mexicans have been systematically expelled from their national territory to the U.S. during the Fox

ing anything to protect the Mexican small farmer.

Despite the fact that immigration is driven by economic and political violence at the hands of transnational corporations and the governments that enthrone them, in the U.S., the Department of Homeland Security, the news media, and the politicians redefine the immigration issue to turn immigrant workers from victims into criminals. These forces have attempted to rally the American people to support the criminalization of immigrant workers as a solution to the growing anger of all workers in this country over the corporate attack on their living standards, the basic necessities of life, and the corporate looting of the country's finances.

**WHERE IS THE
IMMIGRATION MOVEMENT
TODAY?**

Discussion of the question begins by assuming that this motion - which can be characterized as spontaneous, political, social, economic, historic and revolutionary - is all at the same time a "movement". Assuming it is a movement, or probably more accurately a movement in formation, it can be said to be generally confused, disorganized and isolated, with some sections extremely vulnerable. It is equally true however, that this "movement" is of national significance not only because it is big and growing, but more importantly, because it is a worldwide testament to the effects of the global transformation underway.

In assessing the immigration movement, we need to first understand that there are several sections of the movement that, at different times, begrud-

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Empire and the Military-Industrial Complex

[Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles on American empire and its impact on the conditions in which revolutionaries work.]

“Of all the enemies of true liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded...No nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of perpetual warfare.”

— James Madison,
“Political Observations”, 1795

Since World War II the United States has been engaged in or mobilized for war. There have been over 200 military operations in which the U.S. struck the first blow, and none has resulted in the institution of democracy. Rather, American

military operations gave the world the Shah of Iran, Suharto in Indonesia, Batista in Cuba, Somoza in Nicaragua, Pinochet in Chile, and Mobutu in Zaire.

The U.S. ruling class has always followed the motto “No permanent friends, only permanent interests,” and they have always skillfully adjusted to new conditions and new tasks. The post-Cold War expansion of the American military empire has been a crucial aspect of their adjustment to new conditions. Then Undersecretary of Defense in the Bush I Administration, Paul Wolfowitz, stated in 1992 that the U.S. must “prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power.” These regions include Western Europe, East Asia, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. In 2001, as Deputy Secretary of Defense, Wolfowitz asserted that this notion of a “Pax Americana” had now become mainstream strategic thought.

In this same vein and within days following September 11, 2001, then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice addressed the National Security Council: “How do you capitalize on these opportunities to fundamentally change American doctrine and the shape of the world in the wake of September 11?” Seen as a second Pearl Harbor, 9/11 became the catalyst to reshape the American state as a military behemoth bestriding the earth. “The 9/11 Commission Report” chillingly made this point. “9/11 has taught us that terrorism against American interests ‘over there’ should be regarded just as we regard terrorism against America ‘over here.’ In this same sense, the American homeland is the planet.” The militarization of the U.S. state and its consequence, the militarization of the globe, is the concrete manifestation of American empire.

WHY NOW?

These developments are not simply the actions of zealots with no consideration for the consequences – although many who advocate this course fit the description. These developments are rather driven by the real and profound changes wrought by globalization – capitalism in the age of electronics – and the ensuing dramatic changes in the world conditions faced by the ruling class as well as the peoples of the world.

As capital travels freely across borders to exploit the resources and the peoples of the earth, workers migrate across the planet in a desperate search for jobs. On the one hand, the billionaires and millionaires of this world control over 56 trillion dollars in financial wealth. On the other hand, three billion people across the globe live on less than two dollars a day. In the U.S., as elec-

tronic technology permanently eliminates jobs, a million cast-off wage-less workers are made homeless. As all workers are forced into competition with the robot, and the value of labor-power is driven toward zero, the numbers of severely poor accelerates. One million four hundred thousand of America’s poor are now incarcerated in our jails and prisons, with another three million on parole. This rising new global class, who cannot live if they cannot work, is on a collision course with the capitalist system and the state that protects it.

The corporations, banks and financial speculators are moving to transform the state to guarantee their political power over society at home and to maintain both economic and political supremacy over the global class of dispossessed. The U.S. state is being reorganized as empire to protect the sanctity of private

Unilateral, perpetual war abroad, and a loss of democracy and constitutional rights at home. These are aspects of the reshaping of the American state as it moves to guarantee the interests of global capital and the domination over a rising new class of poor both at home and abroad.

property globally, to guarantee U.S. control of geopolitically strategic resources, and to facilitate domination by globally integrated capital. At home the state proceeds to demolish the social contract, to attack constitutional rights, and with laws, force, intimidation and violence to assault society. A reorganization necessitated by the instability engendered by the introduction of electronic production, every step the ruling class takes – war, human displacement and destruction – only exacerbates the ensuing political and economic instability both at home and abroad.

U.S. GLOBAL MILITARY OCCUPATION

The actual extent and depth of the U.S. military presence in the world is staggering. “The Base Structure Report” published in 2005 by the Department of Defense indicates that there are 737 U.S. military bases located on every continent on the globe. But the report fails to mention bases in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar and Uzbekistan. The actual size of the American empire exceeds 1000 bases, not including the 969 located on U.S. soil.

The total number of military personnel reported world wide is 1,840,000, but that does not include the 600,000 Defense Department employees, and it does not include the 871,000 in the National Guard and the Reserves, or the commander-in-chief’s own private army, the CIA, or the Special Forces, or the growing numbers of private military companies that hire themselves out to the government.

Special Forces soldiers are deployed in 150 countries to train local militias in “foreign internal defense,” a euphemism for state terrorism, and are also deployed clandestinely as a “Proactive Preemptive Operations Group.” IMET – the International Military Education Training Program – is engaged in 133 countries around the world in training 100,000 soldiers a year. The mission of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (School of the Americas) is to “create military-to-military relations” by sending U.S. Special Forces to train and arm Latin American armies.

In addition, there are other top secret military operations that comprise the “Black Budget.” The Government Accounting Office estimates that 30 to 35 billion dollars per year are allocated to 185 covert programs to fund secret military and intelligence operations.

Foreign Military Financing (FMF) provides money to foreign countries to buy American weapons and then supplies the training for the weapons. By far the largest exporter of arms and munitions on the planet, the U.S. exceeded \$44 billion in weapons sales from 1997-2001. Private military companies, such as Vinnell, a subsidiary of Northrop Grumman, also supply arms and training to other countries. Vinnell is licensed to train the Saudi National Guard, and is one of 35 private rent-a-mercenary companies that hire themselves out to the U. S. government and its allies. It is estimated that the revenues of the private military companies will exceed \$200 billion by 2010.

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

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 to the conscious revolutionaries, 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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The military-industrial complex is today an integral part of the U.S. economy. Corporations, financial speculators and energy conglomerates, as well as arms and defense manufacturers profit from war and a militarized economy. Today 51 per cent of all discretionary funds in the current budget are allocated to the military, over one trillion dollars annually. Included is the \$16.4 billion annual bill to maintain the 9960 nuclear weapons that remain in the U.S. arsenal, and a current \$41 billion for Homeland Security. That is expected to increase with the militarization of the U.S. Mexican border. Plans are still in the works to “militarize the heavens” at an estimated cost of \$1.2 trillion. “Whoever has the ability to control space will likewise possess the capability to exert control of the surface of the Earth,” says Air Force Chief of Staff General Thomas D. White. As of 2006, the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan stood at about \$450 billion, but it is calculated that the real costs will amount to \$2 trillion.

Our communities have become entangled with the military-industrial complex. Many of our youth who have

no where else to turn, choose the military as an option for education and jobs. Entire cities located near military bases throughout the country, but especially in the South, would collapse without the jobs and income provided by military installations.

The militarization of the economy is largely funded by debt – the U.S. deficit. In 2006, for example, the Congress raised the debt limit to \$8.96 trillion to allow the continuation of a growing deficit spending to finance the maintenance and expansion of the empire. While the capitalists make trillions, the militarization of the economy propped up by debt only adds to the growing worldwide economic instability, and exacerbates the ensuing political instability throughout the world.

THE END OF DEMOCRACY

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt points out that “although tyranny, because it needs no consent, may successfully rule over foreign peoples, it can stay in power only if it destroys first of all the national institutions of its own people.” Using a rather obscure legal doctrine termed the

“unitary executive theory of the Presidency,” the Bush administration has taken steps to legally allow the President to override U.S. law and to render inapplicable any ratified treaties, congressionally enacted statutes, or military orders that, for example, prohibit torture, pursuant to the authority of the commander-in-chief. By-passing the veto, the executive has employed instead “signing statements” whereby the president reserves the right not to implement certain provisions contained in legislation if he disagrees with them. There have already been over 500 extra-constitutional challenges to various provisions enacted by Congress. Former Attorney-General Alberto Gonzales declared “a new paradigm” that renders obsolete the Geneva Convention, and General Tommy Franks has surmised that in the event of another 9/11 “the Constitution could be scrapped in favor of a military form of government.”

An aspect of the militarization of America, and to justify and garner support for empire abroad is the romanticizing of soldiers, a tendency to see military power as the truest measure of national greatness, to define the nation’s strength and well-being in terms of mil-

itary preparedness, military action, and the fostering of military ideals. It is part of the process that in practice elevates the military to a position that is above the law.

Unilateral, perpetual war abroad, and a loss of democracy and constitutional rights at home, these are the “sorrows” of empire (Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 2004), and these are aspects of the re-shaping of the American state as it moves to guarantee the interests of global capital and the domination of a rising new class of poor both at home and abroad. That these actions are contested, here at home and throughout the world, fuels the growing economic and political instability and the danger of worldwide war.

The power of the U.S. empire is awesome, but it cannot stand in the wake of the mightiest power on earth, a class whose destiny is to reorganize society and to build a truly human world, a world without poverty, and at peace.

Future articles in this series:

- *Empire Abroad, War on the New Class at Home*
- *Political Economy of Empire and Global Instability*

Editorial: Dangers of a changing world demand consciousness and vision

As we go to press, the housing crisis is spreading. Millions of homeowners face loss of their homes and their savings, and the sub-prime mortgage meltdown is threatening to become an all-out crisis of the global financial system.

The article “Housing Crisis Undermines American Dream” shows how this is a reflection of the profound crisis within capitalism itself. As the capitalists have been unable to maximize profit in the old ways due to qualitatively new technologies, speculative capital has emerged as the dominant form of capital. Dependent upon more and more money to satisfy its demands, it is highly volatile and inherently unstable. Given the reach and influence of speculative capital in the world economy, it is little wonder that what the *Financial Times* recently called “an arcane part of the U.S. mortgage market” could threaten the increasingly interdependent

and interconnected global economy.

Political instability cannot help but result from these profound changes. Widespread home ownership has always marked American society, and this ownership, as well as the dream of it, has tied millions of Americans to the capitalist system. The housing crisis has cut another swathe into those connections, separating broader and broader sections from their stake in the system. It is only adding to Americans’ growing disillusionment with the refusal of the major political parties to address the multiplying problems of American society. Revolutionaries must assess the ways to reach those who are looking for answers.

The national interests of the U.S. are intertwined with the interests of global capital, which explains why the politicians will not come to the aid of homeowners in distress or any other problem Americans face. The article “Empire

and the Military-Industrial Complex” describes how the U.S. state is being transformed to facilitate the development of global capital – with its cutting edge, speculative capital – and to try to insulate capital from the instability that results from the irresolvable contradictions of capitalism in the age of electronics. It also shows that the growing repression at home is not simply the preference of a few zealots, but is a necessary corollary to militarization and empire abroad.

The rise of a response to these worsening conditions is inevitable and in fact is underway. How will this be focused? What force within this response carries the social energy to overturn society and reorganize it on a new basis? Revolutionaries must carefully assess the possibilities, determine the steps required to equip these forces with an understanding of what they face, and thereby equip them to carry out their historic mission.

The article “The Immigration Movement Today” is an excellent example of this kind of assessment. It examines the roots of the immigration question, and dissects the movement and the different tendencies within it. It shows among these different forces that there is one that is capable of overturning the system and reorganizing society – the new class that cannot accept compromise and reform – and survive. The undocumented immigrants today, driven from their homes by the destruction wrought by globalization, are the cutting edge of this developing new global class of dispossessed.

Such times of great transformation bring forth a struggle for clarity, direction, and resolution. The article “Propaganda” shows that this battle is one between classes over the ultimate outcome of the revolutionary process set in motion by the qualitatively new means of production, the destruction of society, and the rise of new classes. Our class cannot realize its historic mission without consciousness – consciousness of, not only its own class interests, but also its historic mission to usher in a world free from want and violence. This is the meaning and purpose of communist propaganda.

Housing Crisis Undermines the American Dream

As more and more people fall behind on their rising mortgage payments, for-sale signs are proliferating in working-class neighborhoods of American cities. Home prices are falling, foreclosures rising. The housing bubble has reached its peak and is coming down.

The elderly go without food or essential medicine in order to meet their mortgage payments. Families with young children are forced into the street or crowd into small apartments with relatives or friends. Houses go empty, while the number of homeless people grows.

Speculative capital is taking another, deeper cut into society, cutting loose a broader section of our people from the American dream, and ushering them into the new proletariat.

This latest crisis of the new economy created by robotics and globalization is shaking the world financial system, presenting revolutionaries with the opportunity – indeed, the obligation – to give clarity to what’s happening and provide a vision of a society where everyone has a home by right.

THE HOUSING BUBBLE

When something appears too good to be true, it usually is. As housing prices started their steady rise, houses became more than a home. They became a means to finance consumer spending through maximizing home equity loans. Homes became a debt trap tying up families’ life savings.

The mortgage companies fueled the demand and contributed to rising home prices by offering increasingly risky loans, creating the predatory “sub-prime” mortgage market. Knowing full well that most buyers would be unable to repay the loans, they offered mortgages with no down payment, 100 percent financing and often required no proof of income to people least able to afford them. With low introductory interest payments, large balloon payments, and adjustable rates, most buyers were in danger of losing their homes and their life’s savings if interest rates rose or home prices fell.

This house of cards is crashing down. As adjustable-rate mortgages ratchet up, monthly payments are rising for millions of homeowners, balloon payments are coming due, and home prices are falling. A growing number are defaulting and losing their homes. By April 2007, nearly one-fifth of homeowners with sub-prime mortgages made in 2005 and 2006 were two months or more behind in their payments.

But sub-prime foreclosures are only the most obvious aspect of the deflating housing bubble. Experts estimate that as many as 2.2 million families will face

foreclosure within the next two years.

Declining home prices leave many holding mortgages greater than the value of the house they own. As homeowners attempt to cut their losses and sell, flooding the market, prices will drop even further. A spiral of increasing foreclosures and declining prices will surely result.

With the nation’s highest foreclosure rate, Ohio provides a good example of what to expect. Cleveland and its suburbs are spending millions of dollars to maintain empty houses abandoned by the lenders. Despite the thousands of homeless people in the region, Cleveland is floating a bond to tear down these empty houses.

AN END TO THE AMERICAN DREAM

For many workers who had become part of “middle-class” America – or who aspired to – this marks an effective end to the American Dream.

Following WWII, the American Dream was built on imperialist bribery. Profits made possible as the world’s dominant capitalist power were used to pay the high wages and benefits needed to keep the working class loyal and supportive of capital’s anti-communist foreign policy. That ended when computer technology began replacing workers with robots, and a globalized economy began pitting worker against worker worldwide. Together those forces have created a downward spiral that is driving millions into the new proletariat.

With the good jobs and the benefits

To resolve the housing crisis means to challenge private property globally. And the challenge is not just over who owns the house, but who owns the capital, and indeed, who controls the state that protects it.

already gone, losing the house withdraws the last of the bribes. And it is not the “communist threat” that is taking away America’s prized possession; it is capitalism itself. Thus, for all its tragedy, the end of the American Dream frees the new proletariat to see its interests as a class more clearly.

Part of seeing clearly means they must stop relying on the Democratic Party. While Bush, not surprisingly, says that helping homeowners stave off foreclosure is “not an appropriate role for the federal government,” organizations tied to the Democratic Party are trying to focus the sub-prime struggle on demanding reforms from Congress. But Congress cannot resolve the housing

crisis, and leading Democrats have made that clear.

That’s because resolving the housing crisis would require challenging private property globally – major investment banks, hedge funds, private-equity funds, even central banks. And the challenge would not simply be over who owns the house but over who owns the capital and, indeed, over who owns the state.

SPECULATIVE CAPITAL

Providing clarity and vision demands that revolutionaries understand the rise of speculative capital and the new proletariat.

Speculative capital uses financial instruments to accumulate money. In their pure form, these financial instruments are “derivatives” created pretty much out of thin air – billion-dollar bets on the yields of central-bank bonds or the spread between currencies. This is not industrial capital – it is not employed in production (to profit from the surplus value created). Instead, speculation dominates capitalism at the beginning of the age of robotics, when computerization replaces labor and when accumulating money by speculation supersedes accumulating it by exploiting labor.

The importance of this development is being discussed at the top levels of capital. “Capitalism is mutating once again,” writes Martin Wolf, chief economic commentator for the Financial Times, capital’s international daily. Industrial capitalism “is disappearing into economic history,” he says. In its place,

we have the triumph of the global speculator and the rise of “a host of complex new financial products [which] have been derived from traditional bonds, equities, commodities, and foreign exchange.”

By the end of 2006, Wolf reports, the best known of these derivatives were valued at \$286 trillion, six times the global gross product. The rise of “the new capitalism,” as Wolf calls it, “is among the most significant events in our time,” he says. Made possible by the revolution in computing and communications, it represents “the triumph of the trader in assets over the long-term producer.” Under its sway, Wolf reports, there has already been “a sizable shift in

income from labor to capital.”

That shift from labor to capital is not difficult to understand. Industrial or finance capital hires workers to produce commodities, which are then sold for a profit, with capital pocketing the surplus value created by labor. Out of this relationship, workers are allowed a living. But speculative capital is predatory, giving nothing in return for the wealth it accumulates and needing no workers to accumulate it. Accumulation under speculation occurs through what are effectively a variety of pyramid schemes – or bubbles – which must eventually deflate, leaving the folks at the bottom holding the bag.

In the financial pages, speculative capitalists are routinely referred to as making “bets.” Indeed, in July, hedge funds were reported as having made one-month returns of 40 percent from bets on how bad the sub-prime mortgage defaults would get. They warned banks not to make things easier on overextended homeowners, as that would skew the betting. They preferred foreclosures.

HOUSING BUBBLE AND SPECULATIVE CAPITAL

The dynamic of speculative capital is that it requires more and more money to satisfy its demands. It thrives on the increasing gap between the real values of assets and their inflated prices. After the dot.com bubble burst in 2000-01, speculative capital needed another inflated asset to siphon money from the working class to the wealthy. The rising prices of housing became the latest Ponzi scheme to benefit the rich at the expense of working class America.

By lowering interest rates to 1%, the U. S. Federal Reserve stimulated the money creation that was key to fueling the housing bubble that has kept speculative capital expanding.

Why would mortgage lenders and banks offer “sub-prime” loans they knew could not be repaid? Because each loan becomes an asset that the mortgage company or bank can then lend to another borrower. Each round of borrowing and lending increases the global money supply.

Such a system is not stable. Since it requires ever-increasing opportunities for investing ever-expanding amounts of liquidity, speculative capital is highly volatile – a pyramid scheme just waiting for its crash. The deflating of the housing bubble is spreading throughout the financial world, just as the sub-prime mortgages spread throughout the global economy.

The fear of a financial meltdown is heralded on the front page of the national and international press. Two major



hedge funds tottered then failed entirely, distressed by losses in the sub-prime mortgage market. Rating agencies devalued billions of dollars in sub-prime bonds and began working on the next tier up, chancing a cascading selloff and collapse. The fallout is felt in Europe and Asia. Investment bank JPMorgan envisioned “scenarios in which the core of the global liquidity system suffers a serious assault.”

In early August, U.S. Federal Reserve

Chairman Ben Bernanke issued an optimistic statement that the sub-prime crisis posed no global financial danger. Interpreting this to mean that no central bank assistance was forthcoming, stock markets went into a tailspin. The Fed and the world’s other major central banks reversed themselves and within a few days poured more than \$325 billion of extra liquidity into the system; the Fed’s contribution to that total is said to be about \$100 billion. The Fed followed this by lowering the discount rate, the interest rate for banks borrowing from the government.

The federal government refuses to give any assistance to homeowners who have lost everything. It won’t give a dime or a cent to people who are most in need, not one penny, but overnight this very same government through the U.S. Federal Reserve can print billions of dollars to pour into the banks to protect the interests of speculative capital. The financial system they are attempting to save is only for them, for the very wealthy. Every advance of speculative capital is at the expense of the working class, indeed, at the expense of all humanity.

‘NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE’

Through the housing bubble (and other debt such as credit cards), speculative capital is picking whatever the working class still has in its pockets. With mortgages, it is taking the down payment (if there was one), the points paid at settlement, and the savings used to make frantic mortgage payments.

After losing their house and savings, while already living from paycheck to paycheck, millions of Americans who once thought of themselves as middle-class (or aspired to that status) will find themselves expelled into the new proletariat. Those burdened with lifelong house payments eating up their available capital will be in pretty much the same condition.

But if “freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose,” the deflating housing bubble leaves the new proletariat free to divest itself of its myths, see the world as it is, and envision how it can be.

The alternative is fascism, a taste of which is being delivered in the anti-immigrant state laws and local ordinances being passed around the country, creating a reign of terror reinforced by the federal government’s sporadic U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

(ICE) raids. In the process, those who are threatened with (among other things) the loss of house and savings are being urged to attack immigrant workers as the source of all their problems—jobs, taxes, housing, health care, and education for their children.

So that’s the choice – not revolution or reform, but revolution or fascism, a united class or a divided one. With clarity and vision – but not without it – our class will see its way through to a new America. Revolutionaries are the midwives to that process.

The Immigration Movement Today

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ingly, unite for a march or a conference, but whose interests can be different. One section of the movement is organized around getting legislation passed. It is all about compromise, not about a solution. Here the leadership of the churches, unions, and many organizations are vying to impose their compromised views on the rest of the movement.

Another section is that of immigrant rights groups, coalitions, immigrant membership organizations, and hometown associations. They are starting to split because their leadership is telling them they must compromise. Within this section are immigrants themselves. Their movement, or struggle, is for survival, which means resisting attacks on many fronts such as access to education, healthcare, job security, working conditions, deportation procedures, and the most basic rights, like housing. A compromise for them is not so easy.

A domestic worker expresses her frustration within her own coalition, and the movement in general, when she states that these organizations want to speak for her and control her political activities to fit within their framework. She says that immigrants are being robbed and terrorized by the state,

“Every time they pull us over and take our cars – “es un robo!” These voices are being stifled by those fighting and speaking for them. Another woman said, “las uniones ni hacen ni dejan hacer”.

This section cannot accept a compromise and survive. They are more isolated than any other sector. They do not need more organizations or speakers. They need an outlet for their voices.

REVOLUTIONARIES EMERGING

There is no single mass organization to unite the scattered and varied struggles around immigrant issues. The absence of a cohesive national organization has made it difficult for anyone to claim leadership of this diverse movement, although organizations have tried, including the Democratic Party.

The immigrant rights movement relies instead on coalitions and networks or loosely connected autonomous groups deeply rooted in their respective areas, and in working class communities. This of, course, means that in the mainstream they are often invisible.

They rely on small newspapers, internet listservs, blogs, and informal networks. Yet among these hundreds of organizations are thousands of dedicated and politically conscious revolutionaries who prefer this organizational form as a way to ensure political independence.

The confusion and disunity within the movement is reflective of the contradiction between resistance consciousness and the bourgeois aim of compromise, on the one hand; and the demands of the most vulnerable whose needs cannot be met by compromise or reform, on the other. This confusion and disunity, not only reveals a vacuum of ideas, but also the strivings for political independence and a real solution. So the most advanced sections of the movement are calling for full legalization.

QUESTIONS BEFORE THE MOVEMENT

The next question for revolutionaries is: What is our next step? What should we advocate? What is one step forward from full legalization? Does legalization address the causes of immigration? Does it create jobs on either side of the border? Will it increase or slow down the declining living standards on either

side of the border? Will it curb corporate exploitation, or limit NAFTA in any way? Is it a call the class can rally around? We know that the abolition of private property is the ultimate conclusion, but how do we articulate this within this motion? What is the practical solution? No borders? A transnational wage?

We have to recognize that NAFTA did more to tear down borders and jeopardize American sovereignty than any immigrant. NAFTA did not create globalization, but it showed the governing classes of both developed and developing countries how globalization could be used to disconnect themselves from the constraints and obligations, imposed democratically or otherwise, by their national communities. The only way to end the immigration debate is to complete the integration process begun by NAFTA – no borders.

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Propaganda

In the hands of the ruling class, propaganda has always been based on distortion and lies. The capitalist class has from its beginning waged an enormous and long-standing war against ideas other than those it propagates in its own interest. These have been designed to confuse and control so the class in power can dominate and exploit the rest of us.

Used in the interest of humanity for the transformation of society, propaganda spreads and teaches truth. As with any other tool, the difference is in who is using it and for what purpose and in whose interest.

In reality, propaganda is a neutral tool. The root and origin of the word go back to the idea of tying something down in the sense of defining it, and to graft something onto something else so it can grow and flourish. The root word is also related to the word "peace."

In the political realm, especially in the communist tradition, it means to promote and spread the vision of the possibility and necessity of the transformation of society. It articulates what this means and what is needed to achieve it.

This vision is a shared one, and based on real conditions. These conditions, termed 'objective' because they are real, are ones that affect us all. To understand why these conditions arise we use science, the science of society. Communist propaganda

is not only the tool that reveals these objective conditions, and explains why they arise, but it shows the way forward. It lays the foundation for the kind of understanding needed for our class to understand itself as a class, to know its class interests, and to move politically. Its vision is of the kind of world and society we are fighting for – the only one compatible with the new way things are produced – communism, distribution "according to need."

Right now our class is being thrown into the fight for the necessities of life – for housing, for education, health care, for food, for the wherewithal to live a life of material, spiritual and cultural fulfillment. People have no choice but to fight for these things for themselves and their families. These are the objective revolutionaries.

All of society is being pulled into struggle. Very few understand that the only resolution to their struggles is the transformation of society to one in which the abundance created by the new means of production is distributed according to need. This vision is of the liberation of humanity, and the end to the murdering and plundering of everything

that exists for the benefit of the powerful and greedy few. These ideas are introduced through propaganda by conscious revolutionaries engaged in the scattered struggles. Revolutionaries use every available means to link up their struggles and to communicate and strategize with each other. They teach class consciousness, the understanding that we are a class with separate and opposite interests from our class enemy, the exploiting capitalist class. They teach about the need for politics, and a vision of the resolution to our problems.

Capitalist propaganda, based not on science but on lies, is designed to confuse, control and divide. A current and dangerous example is the attack against the immigrant worker. This is used to divide the working class along color and nationality lines, setting one exploited worker against the other. It blames the poorest among us for the failures of the economic system. It is very important that our propaganda counters this on the basis of not just morality (the ideal of equality), but on shared objective interests as a global working class.

Capitalist propaganda uses every resource in its enormous war chest to con-

vince our class that we have common interests with our exploiters, and that the capitalist system is the best we can hope for. Not based on a shared and objective reality, it wants us to believe that all ideas are of equal value, and that none are better than others. This disallows any basis for shared understanding

or action, and keeps people divided in their struggles. Its biggest lie is that we live in a classless society, and that all our interests are the same. Communist propaganda starts from the situation as it is, the things people are struggling around, and draws conclusions about the remedy, and how it can be achieved. For instance, the immorality of a political order that allows people to die in the street is answered by its remedy – an economic system that operates "according to need." Communist propaganda understands that this is also a deeply moral issue, and counters the capitalist propaganda of "blame the victim." Morality is about how we take care of each other, not about what goes on behind closed doors in love relationships. These ideas are being fought out on all sides. Both religious and secular communities are asking whether their spiritual and ethical teachings and beliefs are compatible with hunger and homelessness, war, exploitation, and greed.

Capitalist propaganda uses every resource in its enormous war chest to convince our class that we have common interests with our exploiters, and that the capitalist system is the best we can hope for. Not based on a shared and objective reality, it wants us to believe that all ideas are of equal value, and that none are better than others. This disallows any basis for shared understanding

Communist propaganda lays the foundation for the kind of understanding needed for our class to understand itself as a class. Its vision is of world and society we are fighting for - the only one compatible with the new way things are produced - communism, distribution "according to need."

scattered battles, and the only way these battles can be won. Propaganda introduces the new ideas that are needed to push this process forward. It introduces the vision of what a cooperative society is, and explains why it is the only workable outcome for the majority of humanity, as well as for the planet and its

other life forms.

There is an old saying, "there is no power on earth greater than that of an idea whose time has come." Conscious revolutionaries spread this idea and vision of our class as a class, with common interests, fighting for a common outcome – the transformation of society to one in which the abundance the new technologies create is distributed according to need. They propagate the understanding, based on the evolution of the real world, that this is the only sane and workable future. They explain why the fight against fascism, and the fight for the necessities of life, and for a sustainable, civilized order is in fact a fight for a communist future.

This is the element that must be introduced into the social revolution at this stage of its development. This is the vision and role of the League as an organization of propagandists.

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