

Only with the Women

Women's social and economic position makes them a powerful social force in any period of change. In struggle, they have been among the most dedicated, the most militant, the most willing to sacrifice. No revolution has, or ever could, take place without the contribution of women.

To wield the power of women for the cause of revolution today, we cannot simply apply the formulas of the past. The growing polarization of wealth and poverty is throwing millions into poverty regardless of gender, color or nationality. Under such conditions, unity along class lines is the only means of organizing our forces for the struggles ahead.

Understanding women's status and condition today is crucial to understanding why this is so. The following article seeks to continue the discussion on how we, as revolutionaries, must play our role in finally liberating women from their ancient oppression, and transforming society into what it can now be – where all will share in the fruits of society, where inequality and oppression will have no part.

WOMEN'S CHANGING POSITION IN SOCIETY

Women's oppression arose with private property and has changed according to the historical and economic conditions that dictated their place in production. Prior to the rise of private property, women's labor played a central role in social production and reproduction. There was a division of labor between men and women, but not an inequality because there was no possibility of the accumulation of property. The domestication of animals and the development of agriculture led to the accumulation of property that was passed from one generation to the next. Women were pushed out of social production, and confined to private production within the family, thus, becoming dependent upon men. These epochal changes, centuries in the making, accompanied the reorganization of society to safeguard private property relations.

In the past 50 years, we have seen great changes in the position of women. Technological developments in the home have freed women to enter the work force, the expansion of the post-war economy made jobs available,

and, more recently, downsizing and declining wages brought about by the introduction of electronics have made those jobs necessary to maintain the family. Increasingly, these same technological developments are erasing the physical differences between men's and women's work. Women now constitute almost 50 per cent of the U.S. workforce. They are better educated, and have access to occupations that were once the exclusive domain of men.

Like other historically oppressed groups in America, women have been increasingly integrated into the different classes in American society.

Women are increasingly represented within the most elite circles of the corporate and political world. Seven of the world's 50 richest people are women. Women corporate CEOs make decisions involving billions of dollars and the lives and livelihood of thousands of people. A black woman, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who is responsible for developing and overseeing U.S. foreign policy, is one of the most powerful people in the world. This November, the U.S. may elect its first woman President. These elite women, like the men of their class, defend private property and advance the interests of the capitalist class.

The majority of American women, however, are struggling even harder than ever to juggle a life of work and family, discrimination in the workplace, and the general financial and emotional stresses of life lived in a world where the "race to the bottom" is ever-present. "We are an accident away from homelessness," a Florida woman told interviewers for the AFL-CIO's 2006 Ask a Working Woman Survey. "I own a home, I make decent pay, but, if I am out of work for more than 3 months, my son and I are on the street." Another, responding to the same survey wrote, "Everything that benefits working women is under siege – jobs, education, health coverage, retirement, child care. Everything that helps billionaires is being strengthened. Corporations and government have become interchangeable."

From among these growing numbers of discontented women is emerging a section of women who do have common economic interests. These are the women of the emerging new class of dispossessed. They make up over 60 per cent of minimum wage workers, 70 percent of part-time workers, 55 percent of temporary workers,

and 47 percent of multiple job holders. Immigrant women are almost wholly concentrated in the lowest paying jobs, such as domestic work and the service sector. Over one-third of all the families maintained by women live below the poverty level. Almost half of single, black mothers live below the poverty line.

As women's situation deteriorates, the wholesale destruction of the social safety net makes their abandonment by society all too real. Welfare is so restricted as to be useless. Public housing is being torn down and rebuilt to house the better off. Public health clinics and hospitals have been shuttered, never to open again. It is not surprising then, that women and children of all colors constitute the fastest-rising number of the homeless and destitute.

It is upon women's backs that the crumbling capitalist order is reorganizing itself in a desperate attempt to maximize profits and defend private property relations at all costs. Which way society will go is no longer an abstract question. As society disintegrates, and women's situation deteriorates, a backlash is developing that clamors for further restriction of women's rights, trivializes the growing violence against them, and turns a blind eye to their downward spiral into destitution.

The women of the new class share common economic interests, not only with each other, but, increasingly, with men in their similar economic position.

Electronics – labor-replacing technology – has devastated a growing section of male workers. Unskilled, entry level, skilled manufacturing and, increasingly, white-collar workers are

finding themselves marginalized, unable to find or to keep work. A growing section of men is finding that their prospects are little different from women's as men join the women as contingent workers – part-timers, temps, and working multiple jobs.

Electronic technology has the potential to provide everyone in society with the fruits of a stable, cultured, and decent life. Under capitalism, this same technology has rendered the value of human labor "worthless," throwing increasing millions of men and women into the ranks of the new class. Reforming the current economic system will not meet the needs of this class. That can only be accomplished by reorganizing society around the possibilities of the new technology.

OLD MEANS OF CONTROL UNDERMINED

Under capitalism, male supremacy justifies women's economic dependence on men not simply for its own sake, but as a crucial part of the interlocking web of ideas that facilitates the functioning of the capitalist system.

Men have benefited from women's economic dependence, but ultimately these advantages have only been bestowed to further the exploitation and control of men by the capitalist class. For example, their position as primary breadwinner and person responsible for the family has tied them more tightly to the capitalist system (a situation electronics is changing). Male supremacy has justified women as a cheap work

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The Earth, the Corporations and the Fate of Humanity

"The great party of the twentieth century is coming to an end, and unless we now start preparing our survival kit we will soon be just another species eking out an existence in the few remaining habitable regions."

— James Lovelock, *The Revenge of Gaia*

The New Year brought spring-like days to regions of Illinois and Wisconsin. It also brought a rarity for January: an eight-funnel-cloud storm system with dangerously high winds and lightning, a storm so severe it derailed a freight train, uprooted trees, and flattened homes, leaving 11,000 families without power. The storm killed one person and injured twenty-one. "I have never, ever seen damage like this", a Wisconsin sheriff told the Chicago Tribune. "To have this happen in January is just mind-boggling."

Climate specialists say global warming is the cause of the rash of environmental catastrophes sweeping the earth. Impacts from global warming include a rise in sea levels, more extreme weather, loss of entire forests, and outbreaks of pests, marine life destruction, glacial retreat and the extinction of species.

Global warming is caused by a concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, emitted primarily by the burning of fossil fuels and the clearing of forests. When the sunlight strikes the earth's surface, a part of it is reflected back towards space as infrared radiation or heat. Over the earth's history, the amount of energy sent from the sun to the earth was about the same as the amount of energy radiated back into space, and the temperature of the earth's surface remained essentially constant.

What has changed is that greenhouse gases absorb this infrared radiation and trap the heat in the atmosphere. The earth gets warmer, which melts the polar ice. Since there is less ice, the earth becomes even warmer. The hotter the earth, the more the ice melts. The more the ice melts, the more the sea level rises. Now there are predictions of deadly

heat waves and floods that threaten the world's coastal cities. So it is a constantly escalating, increasingly dangerous process. Scientists say the earth could soon pass into a morbid fever. Once it starts, it will be irreversible. As the earth warms many living things will die.

Conditions may call the very existence of civilization into question. Our response must match the urgency of the question. We must examine the root cause of the environmental crisis to find the solution. Today, a tiny but powerful global class of capitalists is destroying the earth, drowning its people in poverty, and entangling the world in war and violence. The environmental crisis is inextricably entangled with the capitalist crisis. It is an inevitable result of industrialization under capitalism, an economic system where private interests supersede social interests. It cannot be resolved apart from who rules society.

This mammoth crisis cannot be resolved by individual solutions such as reducing one's own carbon emissions, by buying sustainable products, or by recycling. Nor can it be resolved by pressuring politicians or by trying to force the corporations to "do right." The globalization of the economy and the new market-state makes it nearly impossible to force the giant international corporations to protect the environment. Yet it is vital that we achieve a rapid move away from fossil-fuel-powered society if we are to save the earth and civilization. Achieving this will require a fundamental reorganization of the world economic, social and political structures into a system based on production for use instead of for profit.

The fundamental problem is that socially necessary production, such as energy, is privately owned and distributed only for profit. The huge energy consortiums don't give a hoot about our welfare. They don't care about it because they can't. They have trillions of dollars invested in a global fossil fuel energy financial infrastructure and they are not about to change that unless it becomes

profitable to do so.

Compounding the struggle for the earth and humanity is that the U.S. state has been reconstructed to serve the needs of capital. The purpose of the new market-state is to clear the way for corporate global profits rather than to provide for the peoples' welfare. Corporations put politicians into office to insure laws are passed to guarantee corporate interests. The state and the corporations have merged to the point that their roles and functions are indistinguishable from one another.

It is therefore no surprise that the U.S. government refused to ratify the Kyoto Treaty. Or that it attempted to steer the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change away from support for a new worldwide climate treaty based on binding targets to reduce emissions. The point is that the actions of the state reflect the policies of the ruling class and not the whims of some bad individual. What makes the situation so politically dangerous is that the capitalists are meticulously discussing how they are going to maintain their power in a changing world. Their vision is a fascist America to protect their interests. Only the masses of people can bring about change according to the interests of the people.

ROOTS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

The environmental crisis did not just happen. It is interconnected with the growth of industry, society and the global market in the post-World War II period. Armed with billions of dollars from war profiteering, the American ruling class set out to make the world totally dependent on the corporations and the organization of the economy and society around fossil fuel.

Scientists have for years warned of the dangers of the destruction of the environment. It wasn't that nobody listened. The leaders of industry said — and continue to say — that we can't afford to put the environment ahead of profits. As the transnational corporation and globalization consolidated, environmental destruction became an integral part of the capitalist method of production.

Today, no country is immune. The U.S., however, is by far the biggest polluter in the world. Their chemical, oil and coal industries are relentlessly spewing poisons into the environment. In addition to global warming, industrial poisons are polluting rivers, lakes, oceans and fresh water sources throughout the globe. The world has lost 80 percent of the original forests which cov-

ered the earth. Economic giants like China, with a population of over a billion people, also face grave environmental problems. If any corporation or nation spends money on environmental concerns, it will lose out in the global market.

ONLY PUBLIC OWNERSHIP CAN SAVE CIVILIZATION

The corporations may sound like they are talking about "solutions," but they are simply commodifying the problem. In the name of the "green" revolution, they seek to enrich their already enormous profits, wreaking havoc on the environment and on societies globally. The watchdog group, CorpWatch, points out that the new boom in "biofuels" has accelerated the demand for [oil palm] plantations, which in turn has led to widespread forest and peat land clearing." In addition, devoting large portions of the corn crop to ethanol fuel when prices are at historic highs is creating huge profits alongside global food riots. The stage is being set for mass starvation in the world's vast slums. Lastly, it is worth noting that Exxon Mobil Corporation posted \$40.6 billion, the biggest annual profit by any company last year. Their net income rose three percent. Why would they give that up? Also, the money Big Oil puts into "alternative fuels" pales in comparison with their financial transactions. In 2005, they spent 38 percent of their cash flow on stock buybacks.

The head of General Electric summed up the capitalists approach to global warming when he told NBC television that he could make money "doing something good [i.e. going Green]." The reality is that there are no half-measures. The capitalists cannot change fundamentally, because if they did, the whole capitalist house of cards would come apart. The rules of the market economy are that if you take measures to protect the environment at the expense of profit, you will be taken over by corporations who have no such concerns.

On the side of humanity, there are many visions for a sustainable planet and for "eco-smart" cities waiting to be implemented. *Scientific American* magazine proposes solar power, since "the energy in sunlight striking the earth for 40 minutes is equivalent to global energy consumption for a year." There are even ideas for using playgrounds and sidewalks to generate energy from footsteps! New cars are being invented that will be powered by compressed air. Energy can be tapped from anything. The problem is that the giant corporations will not and are not moving toward pro-

posals on a grand scale that aim to move the globe away from fossil fuels, nor are they planning how to save humanity from what's coming. They aren't because they can't.

A planned global economy where the interests of humanity, not profits, drive the world economy and society is the next step forward. For the first time in human history, the technology exists to make such a world possible. The question is whether revolutionaries will disseminate a vision of a new cooperative world and forge a new global movement into a force that can gain the political power to create fundamental change. Under communism — an economic system where the means of production are

publicly owned — we can reclaim the earth and create a humane economic system worthy of the people who inhabit it. With a different kind of government that represents the interests of humanity, we would have the resources to develop and implement the visionary environmental proposals being proposed.

In summation, as revolutionaries, we have to see that the environmental movement is stuck until it breaks out of the confines of capitalism and fights for the earth and humanity based on a vision of a new world. As the crisis deepens, the capitalists will take measures to provide for the top one percent of the population, leaving the rest of humanity

to fend for themselves. As revolutionaries, we also have to see that the environmental movement has become a strategic front of struggle against corporate power. Today, revolutionaries who avoid the issue of the environment do so at their peril. The struggle around the environment is inextricably connected to the political crisis of capitalism and central to humanity's future. If the environmental movement connects with and bases itself on the struggle of the billions of dispossessed humans throughout the world — it can save humanity and the earth.

Given the historical new reality, huge responsibilities are being placed on the shoulders of American revolutionaries.

The U.S. is the most militarily powerful country, and it is attempting to impose its will on countries throughout the globe. World war — nuclear war — is on the horizon. Revolutionaries must unite around the understanding that saving the earth and humanity will take a massive, global class-conscious movement fighting for the political power to end private property. Our choice is the consolidation of the power of the corporations over society — and the possible end of civilization — or the power of society over the exploiters.

Editorial: Sweep away all that stands in our way

*As we come marching, marching, we
bring the greater days.*

*The rising of the women means the rising
of the race.*

*No more the drudge and idler—ten that
toil where one reposes,*

*But a sharing of life's glories: Bread
and roses! Bread and roses!*

*From "Bread and Roses", James
Oppenheim, 1911*

The moving words of James Oppenheim's poem have been closely associated with working class women's struggles since the great Lawrence, Massachusetts' textile strike of 1912. There, the call for "Bread and Roses too" expressed the aspirations of not only the striking women textile workers, but those of workers everywhere. It posed the question: Was a person put on this earth to waste away in endless toil simply to allow a privileged few to prosper at the expense of the many? Or was the beauty of the world meant for all equally? Today, we ask ourselves the same question, understanding that the fight to take up the cause of the most downtrodden and the dispossessed is the fight to raise up the whole of society.

Today, we face a very different situation than the industrial workers of the past. Where once the economy was expanding, and workers fought to get into the system, today labor-replacing technology is replacing human labor, shuttering the "thousand mill lofts gray" that Oppenheim described in his poem, and changing forever the relations between the worker and the capitalists.

The article "Revolution in the Means of Production" shows us the revolutionary potential of these changes and the choices that face us. In the hands of the capitalists, the wonders of this technology are used only to maximize profit, regardless of the destruction it wreaks on the peoples of the world, or on the earth, their common home. In the hands of humanity, this technology can lay the foundation for a stable and cultured existence for all. Society cannot long accommodate such opposing interests, and a clash of wills is inevitable.

The article "The Earth, the Corporations, and the Fate of Humanity" shows us both the magnitude of what is at stake, and the urgency of the class organizing itself to intervene on the side of humanity. The drive for maximum profit that lies at the center of capitalism is the root of the environmental crisis today. It is then, a strategic front of struggle against corporate power. Here, as

with every front of struggle, the resolution is the same — a class-conscious movement on the basis of the demands of the new class that fights for the political power to end private property.

The ruling class understands the coming battle far better than its adversaries, and is moving to protect its position and power. The article "The War on the Poor and the Reorganization of the American State" discusses the extent to which the ruling class has transformed the means of coercion to strengthen its ability to suppress the inevitable discontent that will emerge as conditions deteriorate. The fundamental rights denied to the most vulnerable and dispossessed are now being used as the foundation upon which to attack the rights of all of society.

What can be done? Under the new conditions, the capitalists are no longer as vulnerable to the old tactics of the past. The workers are faced with the necessity to create new organizational forms that are based on new conceptions and new goals, and that proceed from an independent class position, rather than from the ideas and solutions of the capitalists.

The article "Only with the Women" addresses the indispensable role that women play in the revolutionary process. As the material foundation for

the old ideas and prejudices is disrupted, the way is being opened for our class to form itself on the objective realities of history, forcing it to sweep away all that stands in its path. Washing away the muck of the ages is no simple thing — whether that is male supremacy, or any other form of useless ideology — but it must be done if the class is to forge itself into a force capable of meeting the demands of history.

The creation of a class that is conscious of itself as a class and unified on the basis of its class interests does not come about simply because someone wants it. It must be fought for. Revolutionaries play an indispensable role in helping to form the class intellectually and politically. This involves not only an accurate understanding of the problem and a vision of a real and practical solution as the final goal, but the presentation of the political tactics that will move the class intellectually and politically along the path to the resolution of the problem.

Revolution in the Means of Production

In the context of the industrial revolution Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels discovered that social revolution is defined by a series of stages whose fundamental origins are technological revolution in the means of production. As the technological revolution unfolds, the qualitatively new forces of production come into conflict with existing productive relations, and thus begins an epoch of social revolution that ends with new productive relations corresponding to the new technology. This discovery marks the beginning of genuine social science, and is the theoretical foundation for comprehending and facilitating the revolutionary process. The current revolution in the means of production that we are witnessing in the world today is the begin-

ning of just such a process, the beginning stages of a revolution that fully confirms Marx and Engels' scientific discovery.

In vol. 1 of *Capital*, Marx identifies the technological catalyst for the industrial revolution as the steam engine that revolutionized labor productivity in the existing European handicraft industries, concentrated the working class in urban settlements, and created an integrated world market. Improvements in steam technology by inventors such as James Watt are related to advances in the science of mechanics by thinkers such as Isaac Newton. These improvements transformed a local weaving industry into a global system of textile production and distribution, which led to the reconfiguration of the world economy and to political revolutions that swept feudalism off the map of Europe.

Marx and Engels directly witnessed how the industrial revolution created a new class of proletarians that possessed no property other than their labor power. In the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, Marx and Engels projected that this class would overthrow capitalism and create a communist society. We now know that this projection was premature: without the introduction of a new quality into the means of production which could facilitate the overthrow of capitalist relations, the industrial proletariat in Europe, North America and Japan fought fiercely with its capitalist employers for a share in the benefits of industrialization (e.g., higher wages, better working conditions, political rights, and so on).

The advent in the 20th century of a more profound technological revolution — what has been identified as the "electronic revolution" — has initiated a global epoch of social revolution. This revolution is based in technologies fully capable of replacing labor's physical and mental operations, and exercising intelligent control over the means of production. For example, the development of the integrated microprocessor during the 1960s revolutionized computer technology, opening the way for

its deployment across a diversity of economic applications. The deployment of these technologies in production does not merely increase the productivity of labor, it drives labor out of production altogether.

The electronic revolution in the means of production is unlike the industrial revolution in that it is less related to the science of mechanics than to modern physics. Modern physics was developed by scientists such as Erwin Schrodinger investigating the fundamental nature of matter. In the book *Visions: How Science Will Transform the 21st Century*, Michio Kaku says that these investigations yielded concepts such as the quantum theory of matter that served as the theoretical framework for subsequent revolutions in computer technology and bio-molecular technology.

In the hands of the capitalist class these new technologies are irresistible tools for cutting labor costs to maximize profits. This results in net labor displacement that pushes society further down the road toward revolution. This can be observed in Census Bureau statistics for the manufacturing sector in the United States that employed 12.4 million production workers in 1982, but had decreased by 20 percent to 10.3 million in 2002. This reduction of 2.1 million workers translates into 3.1 billion fewer hours of work. Despite this reduction in labor between 1982 and 2002, the total value of manufacturing output increased over this period by 5 percent to \$4.4 trillion, according to Census Bureau figures. Thus production expanded as the market for goods represented by wages contracted due to workers not being paid.

Technological elimination of labor in the context of expanding production reduces the rate of profit and accelerates corporate consolidation and financial centralization. It further fuels a scramble for new sources of profitability including financial speculation (stock markets, "hedge funds," currencies, and real estate), military production and war profiteering, and attempts to monopolize strategic commodity groups such as

energy. Attempts by capital to maintain profitability in the framework of electronic capitalism intensifies environmental, human, and social destruction.

The new proletariat's class position within electronic capitalism is different from the industrial proletariat's position within industrial capitalism: rather than being positioned in contradiction to the capitalist class, the proletariat is progressively positioned outside of capitalist property relations, and becomes antagonistic to capitalism. Capitalist property relations under electronic capitalism displaces labor, and limits the social distribution of production to the capitalist class and to a diminishing quantity of workers. Thus the workers must choose between seizing political power versus their own physical, moral, and social destruction. We are living in a time when the words of the *Communist Manifesto* are finally coming to life.

EDITORIAL POLICY

R a l l y
to bring back together and put in
a state of order, as retreating
troops [to return to attack]

C o m r a d e
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 War on the New Class of Poor And The Reorganization of the American State

In the wake of the 1965 Watts uprising, Daryl Gates, who would later become Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, called for a great leap forward in policing, for a new “military-corporate” model with the technological edge of the Defense Department and the managerial expertise of the large corporation.

Just as the Watts uprising was an early harbinger of the emerging social revolution of this era, the paramilitary style of policing introduced by Gates’ mentor, William Parker, Chief of the LAPD during the rebellion, was a harbinger of the wide spread military style of policing increasingly applied today as American society is undergoing profound change.

Beginning in the 1970’s, revolutionary changes in technology produced revolutionary changes in the workplace. Computer-driven, digital, robotic, automated production, designed to increase productivity and maximize profits, resulted in the expulsion of human labor from the productive process. As jobs are eliminated, workers find themselves homeless by the millions because they cannot afford housing. More millions are denied access to health care because they cannot afford private insurance. Their children are crammed into the bottom of a two-tiered education system that denies them access to an equal, quality education. From the workers replaced by robotic production, who are cast aside and made valueless to the capitalist class, a new class of dispossessed is emerging.

The state is responding by reorganizing itself as an unrestrained apparatus of force to contain and control the social revolution set in motion by these revolutionary changes in society. The military style of policing imposed on Black and Latino communities is used more and more against other sectors of American society. While most sharply and unjustly targeting Black and Latino communities, police state tactics are becoming common wherever the new class of dispossessed is found, particularly against homeless populations of all colors and nationalities.

The capitalist ruling class has come to view this growing class of dispossessed with open antagonism. The interests of the corporations take precedence over the interests of society as a whole. Anything that interferes with the making of maximum profit is eliminated. The state is being reorganized to annul the social contract, sacrifice democracy,

and move toward a fascist solution. Fundamental human rights, denied first to those on the bottom, are being sacrificed for the whole of society in order to secure the economic and political interests of the capitalist class.

REPRESSIVE LAWS

Managing and controlling the new class of dispossessed is the new paradigm of policing and incarceration. The impoverished low-wage and no-wage class is seen as potentially explosive and must be held in check. As the crisis in society has developed, and poverty has spread to broader and broader sections of society, there has been a steady and consistent process to put in place a system of laws to effect that containment.

Fundamental human rights, denied first to those on the bottom, are being sacrificed for the whole of society in order to secure the interests of the capitalists class.

The 1984 Comprehensive Crime Control Act created federal preventive detention to deny bail to defendants, eliminated federal parole, and established asset forfeiture procedures to allow for the seizure of property of accused defendants. The 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act declared open season on petty dealers and addicts, and disproportionately targeted the youth and African Americans, who in 1990 were only 12 percent of the U.S. population, but comprised 60 percent of all narcotics convictions. In 1985, about 500,000 people were in state and federal prisons; by 1998 that number had swelled to 1.7 million.

President Bill Clinton’s 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act put 100,000 more police on the streets, increased penalties for a variety of crimes, and accelerated the war on immigrant workers by doubling the size of the Border Patrol.

As the new system of laws has been put in place, the militarization of the police and the rise of more aggressive policing tactics have proceeded in lock-step. The 1970s marked the first systematic transfers of military technology and materiel to domestic policing; Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Teams became the vanguard of police militarization. Soldier cops, armed and trained as a paramilitary counter-insurgency force, have become standard practice for everyday policing in America.

Now, even the routine serving of warrants is conducted by these paramilitary units designed to “shock and awe.” Police violence and the use of deadly force is on the increase. Dressed in camouflage, helmets, and bulletproof vests,

with attack dogs, grenades, and automatic weapons, and backed up by tanks, armored personnel carriers and helicopters, and often armed with dubious “no-knock” warrants, the police raid homes in the dead of night. A 92-year old woman was shot to death in such a raid of a home in Vine City, the poorest neighborhood in Atlanta, when it was suspected that drugs were in the house. In addition to the so-called “war on drugs,” the “war on gangs” especially targets African-American and Latino youth.

PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

One, two and three-strike laws with long mandatory sentences, laws to try children as adults, the advent of zero-tolerance laws, the rise of “quality-of-life” policing, and the aggressive enforcement of even the most petty of municipal codes, have served to both terrorize the poor and to make Americans the most incarcerated population on the globe.

California alone holds more inmates than France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Singapore and the Netherlands combined. The Bureau of Justice reported that in December 2006 over 2.25 million people were incarcerated in America’s jails and prisons. Most of them are poor and disproportionate numbers are African-American and growing numbers of Latin-American immigrants. Another three million people are on parole. The poor are arrested for asking for food, for sitting on a park bench, for jaywalking, or sleeping on the sidewalk. Parole requirements are so repressive that joblessness itself can be grounds to be returned to prison.

As factories close their doors forever, prisons have become a crucial source of jobs. Over 700,000 people are currently employed by U.S. jails and prisons. Prisons and jails have become indispensable to many small towns and rural areas as the sole source of employment and the mainstay of local businesses.

PROFIT MAKING FROM PRISONS

The commodification, militarization and privatization of prisons and policing have opened up a vital market for capitalist exploitation. The number of private prisons around the country has mushroomed from five to 150 in the last two decades. Texas, the world capital of the private prison industry, now contains 42 private prisons. Specific laws have been passed to create a ready supply of prisoners for private prisons. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act

(AEDPA), both passed in 1996, created a special population of immigrant prisoners who were effectively segregated from the rest of the prison population because they were turned over by the federal government primarily to the private prisons. By 2002 over 36,000 undocumented workers were so imprisoned, and that process has accelerated since September 11, 2001. Homeland Security swells the ranks of the prison industrial complex, as its budget now exceeds \$41 billion, much of which is parceled out in private contracts, often exempted from the bidding process.

Exploiting prison labor by private firms is another aspect of the prison industrial complex. The Federal Prison Industries Enhancement Act of 1979 provided for “joint ventures” with state prisons. UNICOR, for example, employs 18,000 prisoners making over 150 products. Over 72,000 now work in prison industries; in Texas, all prisoners must work, and none are paid. Prisoners derive no benefits from this work experience once released. Unemployment rates for those who have records exceed 50 percent.

UNDERMINING DEMOCRACY

As the conditions in the jails and prisons become harsher hellholes of terror, and indigent prisoners are routinely denied due process, conditions are in place for the sacrifice of democracy itself. The Patriot Act has expanded the attack on the poor to all of society, eliminating fundamental rights such as habeas corpus, establishing the legal basis for secret searches and surveillance, and establishing massive databases based upon that surveillance of the whole of society. Torture is now routinely conducted against those accused of terrorism, and secret rendition prisons located throughout the world shield the torturers from view. The military itself increasingly intervenes domestically. The National Guard appeared in New Orleans in the aftermath of Katrina and has never left. The border with Mexico is being militarized as all undocumented workers are criminalized, and draconian laws on the local level are used to literally hunt down immigrant workers.

American society, founded upon the battle cry for freedom, has now gone full circle. For untold millions, poverty is itself a prison whose inmates are unjustly incarcerated. A society that cannot house, clothe, feed, educate or otherwise provide for the basic needs of its people can no longer call itself free. And when the response of government is to lock up those whom it has already locked out, the battle cry of freedom today can only be for a new society.

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force and in so doing has, at different times in history, pitted men against women both politically and economically.

The ideological power of male supremacy does not simply rely upon the ability of the ruling class to enforce women's economic and social subordination, but also upon their ability to provide men with the means to secure social and, particularly, economic superiority over women. This process has taken different forms according to class position and periods of history and, in our country, according to color.

Today, we see that it is not only "the job" and its role in stabilizing the ideology of male supremacy that is being destroyed, but the whole web of relationships that

make up society. The family, the raising of children, the specific roles of men and women – these no longer serve the same purpose in a world where labor is no longer needed. This process is affecting millions of men and women, disrupting their sense of themselves, their relation to others and to society as a whole. This is not to say that the ideology of male supremacy no longer exists or that it will somehow magically disappear. It does mean that the material basis for all existing ideologies is being destroyed, opening up the possibilities for class unity in a way we have not known before in history.

The emerging new class faces real and practical problems of survival – housing, health care, water, and food. In the fight for these demands the class will be forced to

confront the backward ideologies, battle to discard all that stand in their way, and take up new ideologies that further their goal of a better society. Washing away the muck of ages will be no simple or easy thing, but it will be essential if the class is to forge itself into a force capable of meeting the demands of history.

TAKE UP THE VISION OF A NEW WORLD

We are in the midst of profound change. All aspects of society are struggling to resolve the oppression they have experienced for historical as well as economic reasons. The inequality of women and racial oppression still exist today. But it is also clear that the historical construction of race and gender is inherently connected to class relations cultivated by the existing system. Neither society as a whole nor these historical struggles can take any steps forward apart from the resolution of the problems of the new class. Only a solution that addresses the "least of us" will resolve the problems for all of us. To take up the cause of the new class is to take up the cause of the majority of the world's women – including those in this country – in a real and practical way.

It is time to rip the root of the

women's struggle out of the capitalist soil, for both women and men to come together and unite around a program that goes beyond women's legal and political emancipation. The struggle of women today is for all that the material changes in society have made possible. This struggle cannot be resolved short of the reorganization of society into a system in which the fruits of human civilization are made available to all.

Only then can we create a world in which there will be, as Frederick Engels once wrote: "A generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a woman's surrender with money or any other social instrument of power; a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to a man from any other considerations than real love, or to refuse to give themselves from fear of economic consequences. When these people are in the world, they will care precious little what anybody thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and their own corresponding public opinion about the practice of each individual — and that will be the end of it."

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