

## Grasp the Key Link, Pull the Whole Chain Forward

We are entering into an epoch of social revolution, a time of crisis. The very foundations of society are being shaken. The entire superstructure that encompasses American society is being thrown into the air. We cannot stand still; we cannot go back.

We not only have to have a sense of which way forward, but of who we are as an American people – the mass who are being pulled into the vortex of social destruction and who find ourselves on the down side of the growing polarity of wealth and poverty. In whose interests do we fight as we fight for ourselves? What defines us? What provides the basis for our unity and common purpose?

### THE PAST PERIOD

It has been said that we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, and surely, the contours of today's growing revolutionary movement arise out of and conform to the specifics of American history. From its very beginning, the basis of American society was capitalist, that is, a mode of production in which capitalists, as owners and rulers of society, exploited wage-laborers as the means to accumulate wealth for private profit. The rising American capitalist class never had to overthrow the feudal relations of production that prevailed in Europe. Its expansion depended first upon the conquest and removal of the native peoples, and then the forced bondage of millions of slave-laborers imported from Africa.

The United States was essentially a Southern country for almost the first 100 years of its existence; with slavery fueling the development of the capitalist economy, slavery became a fetter, not only, to the slave, but also, to "free" wage-labor. The slave power had to be overthrown; it was overthrown. The slave was emancipated, but only made free to become a wage-slave. Well, not right away. The brief effort to reconstruct a new society in the South was met with defeat, and the South was returned to a condition of penury, a semi-colonial agricultural backwater which kept both poor blacks and whites impoverished and tied to the land.

With the introduction of the steam engine and the consequent industrialization of the economy, the industrial worker, concentrated in the "Iron Triangle," which was the industrial heartland of America, arose to lead and shape the American social struggle. With the rise of the industrial union movement in the early twentieth century, the fight was to redefine the social contract between

Industrialization also saw women enter the workforce in large numbers, until today their numbers are equal to men. Yet inequality persists, and so the struggle for women's equality continues. Inequality for African-Americans persists, so their struggle for equality continues. Immigrant people enter American society upon an unequal playing field, and continue their struggle for equali-

on track to lose everything.

Capital in a global economy moves production to wherever it can maximize profits. In an accelerating process that began some thirty years ago, the Iron Triangle became the Rust Belt as whole towns were devastated by the shuttering of factories. The shift to a service economy has meant lower paying jobs with fewer or no benefits. The standard of living of the American working class is plummeting. The homeless are filling the streets of America.

Poverty has been around for a long time. Capital needed the poor as a kind of reserve, but today's poverty is a new kind of poverty defined by the introduction of electronics. An entire new class is being created as labor-power is devalued in production. In the past the capitalist guaranteed that ways were found in society to feed, house, and clothe the workers. Now that human labor is no longer needed, we see the complete fracturing of the social contract. Society no longer needs an educated working class, and so education declines. The schools become a pipeline to prison, as the new outsiders are criminalized as a class. The growing antagonism between the ruling class and the working class is paralleled by the growing polarization of wealth and absolute poverty.

According to the Department of Labor, nearly 16 million people are now unemployed and more than seven million jobs have been lost since late 2007. Others say it will get much worse. In his widely read essay "Robotic Nation", Marshall Brian estimates that by mid-century unemployment could reach 50 percent. The "recovery" is jobless. Even as the gross domestic product expands, joblessness is increasing. Poverty rates are reaching all-time highs, and poverty rates in some areas of the Rust Belt match and exceed those of the historically poor South and Southwest. As the crisis accelerates, it reverberates throughout all strata of society. The objective struggles for the basic necessities of life become the guiding force for a growing mass movement.

### THE DRIVING FORCE

The movement begins with every scattered spontaneous response to the social destruction that is taking place all around. Yet the solutions no longer lie at the point of

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owner and worker, to limit the working day, to create safer work conditions, to provide social security, a decent education, and a living wage. Yet, economic depression dominated the same period, to be rescued only by world war.

With the ending of World War II, American capitalism, which already had begun to expand beyond its own borders to colonize and export capital to all corners of the globe, found colonialism itself now to be a fetter on the further expansion of capital. Parallel to that was the recognition by the capitalist class that the South had to be industrialized. Southern agriculture was mechanized and the sharecropper tracted off the land.

The civil rights explosion to emancipate the oppressed African-American masses in the South arose simultaneously with the mass migrations to the industrial heartland in the North and the emergence of industrial centers in the South. The southern masses entered and became an integral part of the American industrial proletariat. This was followed by the subsequent migration of workers of Latin, Asian and other nationalities from all over the globe coming in search of work. They, too, entered into and became a part of the American working class, itself part of a process being shaped by the developing forces of globalization.

ty. Yet it is an economic equality they seek, and not an equality of poverty.

### EVERYTHING CHANGING

And now, the catch. All of that history is being negated. Just about the time that all of these forces were being integrated into the modern American working class, the capitalists, in their insatiable drive to maximize profits, introduced a new instrument of production into the process that is like no other that has ever occurred in human history. All other advances, whether the iron plow or the steam engine, have enhanced or enabled human labor-power. The computer and the robot replaces human labor.

That is earth-shattering. That changes everything. Capitalism is a wage-labor system in which all value is created by human labor. The end of human labor in production spells the end of value, and therefore the end of capitalism as a system.

Everyone in society is defined, in one way or another, by his or her relation to production. In a mature capitalist society, you are either a worker or an owner, a capitalist. Now, the workers are defined by their relation to the robot. When the worker can no longer buy the products produced for the market, the market collapses. Workers are

production, nor in the scattered struggles alone. A growing mass movement must coalesce to confront the state. Because there is no longer a basis for reform in the dying capitalist system, no possibility of restoring the social contract, the demands of the movement for food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care are the revolutionary demands of a revolutionary class. Their demands cannot be met without a reconstruction of the state and of society.

What is the force that we can rely on in order to win this fight? The political center of gravity is shifting. Those who only yesterday were in a position of having something are now seeing themselves thrown out. They never thought they would see poverty, but they are now in the process of losing everything.

Just as the industrial proletariat of a previous era was the rising sector of the work-

ing class that possessed the capability of leading the fight for a revolutionary reconstruction of society, these "dispossessed" today are the decisive section of the class capable of leading the whole class in the revolutionary process for fundamental change.

In America their natural tendency is to move to the political right. Yet, the dispossessed are the only ones who can lead this battle because they know what organization is, they have been part of society. They have the capacity to put up a fight. Their actions will determine the political direction of society.

The question of which section of the class is the decisive core and where do revolutionaries concentrate is a matter of political tactics for today. Right here, right now, the dispossessed, concentrated in the Rust Belt, but reaching throughout all of Ameri-

can society, constitute the key link in the chain which, when grasped, can pull the whole chain forward.

The movement today is still in the stage of development of a mass social struggle to address these demands. Yet, people are beginning to see that they cannot continue to stay on the defensive. They are beginning to realize the need for national solutions and for forcing the government to act in the interests of the people.

### THE TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES

As we grapple with the questions that confront us the most pressing question that emerges for us right now is – what is the basis of our unity? We are impoverished, certainly, but that is not what defines us. Surely, we are a working class, but a working class whose very foundations are under

attack. Our basis of unity is the very thing that characterizes both the aims of the movement and that shapes the contours of a revolutionary class: the interests of the dispossessed.

The fight for the concrete demands of the mass of dispossessed is the basis for the unity of the movement that is building today. They are objectively being placed in the position of fight or starve. Revolutionaries must influence their consciousness to insure that the process unfolds in the interests of humanity.

As revolutionaries are produced by this moment throughout society, our task is also clear: to fight for the growing consciousness of our class as a class for itself, whose historic task is to reconstruct a new cooperative society on behalf of all of humanity.

# The League of Revolutionaries for a New America: What We Stand For

The United States of America — indeed the entire world — is in the throes of epochal economic revolution. Transformation from electro-mechanical industry requiring human labor to operate gigantic means of industrial production to digitally controlled production requiring little or no human labor is the de-

termining content of our time.

The qualitatively more efficient means of electronic production greatly lowers the cost of production of the basic necessities of life. This makes possible an economic paradise of abundance for all. Under capitalism, however, it leads to the falling price of labor power and fastens the chain of poverty, ex-

ploitation, and stultifying toil ever more tightly upon the worker.

Just as the steam engine created an industrial working class that replaced the existing manufacturing class, electronic production is creating a new class of workers. This new class consists of employed and unemployed sectors. The employed sector — the part-time, contingency, below minimum wage workers — is already over a third of the work force. This employed sector of the class is constantly drawn into the growing unemployed sector that ranges from the structurally unemployed to the absolutely destitute, homeless workers.

The new class cannot solve its economic problems without the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need. For the first time an objective communist economic class is forming to become the foundation for a communist political movement.

Globalization creates this new class everywhere. Global unity is the condition of its national emancipation. The League extends its hand of comradeship around the globe.

Wageless electronic production is antagonistic to capitalism, which is based on the buying and selling of labor power. This antagonism is economically, socially and politically polarizing society, making social and political revolution inevitable. A new fascist state form, the naked rule of corporate power, is arising to oppose this motion. Society must take over these corporations or these corporations will take over society.

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.

The new class must have political power to achieve these goals. In the effort to achieve this political power the League supports all political organizations and sections of society that fight against the growing poverty, social and ecological destruction, fascism and war.

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.

Destruction of the ecology, the growing threat of nuclear war and looming pandemics are calling the very existence of the human race into question. The battle is class struggle. The war is for the existence of humanity. We in the League face the future with confidence. We call upon all revolutionaries to abandon sectarian differences, to unite around the practical demands of the new class and to secure that imperiled future. — *LRNA Program*

## 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 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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