

Bipartisanship: Democracy Debased, Corporations Enthroned

The political battle emerging today in the U.S. is over control of the State, its organs, laws and institutions. The ruling class faces a need to realign the State to protect private property as it faces capitalism's inability to guarantee economic and social stability. Specifically, it needs to use the U.S. State to support the market and its banking system in the context of the worldwide crisis of capitalism. The means to do this, if even for the short term, are emerging around attempts to treat government debt as the main culprit while supporting industry and banking bailouts, as well as war.

As more of the U.S. working class faces dispossession, however, the rulers face the prospect of an increasingly awakened and angry populace. There is a sense of urgency. Can the rulers reorganize the governmental bodies and other structures of public accountability erected in the past period of the social contract before a social response demanding the government meet the needs of society is consolidated? And particularly, can they do so before they are forced to face a fight for political independence by the new class being created by the revolution in production?

Both classes are fighting on the battlefield of nationalization. This is only beginning to be reflected in the social awareness of our class. The role of the revolutionaries is to politicize this emerging awareness into class consciousness.

Even for the ruling class, there is disagreement over whether to take steps to rise above competition for market share and political position to deal with the interests of the ruling class as a whole. The need is there, the striving is growing and the motion towards a new political movement as a means of addressing these problems is beginning to emerge. The "bipartisanship" that marks this Administration is an express reflection of this emergence and is beginning to take specific forms.

Organizational and programmatic changes being considered or instituted by the current Congress and Administration reflect attempts to reorganize and/or expand the State apparatus in order to attempt to maintain private property relations in the context of the economic crisis. All or most of the major areas of policy change at the Federal level at this time are intended to deal directly with basic economic restructuring.

This requires new forms of political organization, including forms that legalize greater independence of the Executive from

Congress. The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform and other outcomes of the bipartisan health care and financial re-structuring agreements will be particularly important in the coming period.

Secondly, while bipartisanship in the passage of federal bills is an important indicator, it will no doubt be in the process of implementation of these proposals, particularly in the playing out of new political impulses or structures on the state and even local levels, that the full playing out of ruling class agreement will emerge. Lastly, there are indications of some of the forms this new political movement is taking.

It is important for the revolutionaries to summarize these forms alongside responses of our class as we fight to build an organization of revolutionaries out of the growing objective communist movement in this country. Attention to the debates and those proposing them will be one way to get at "insider" forms of the growth of fascism, including any motion towards a third (bourgeois) party. Impulses toward some form of worker's party may also be illuminated as the workers begin to recognize that the rulers' proposals are inadequate to the needs of society as a whole, let alone the working class.

HEALTH CARE: NATIONALIZATION AS ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

While health care "reform" was treated as a proposal about providing greater access to quality healthcare, there was, throughout the process of debating the bill that eventually passed, a clear focus on significant restructuring of the economy. This reorganization is an integral part of the multi-layered forms of nationalization in the interests of private property in the current period. Examination of the outcomes of national health reform illuminates the direction in finance "reform" as much as the ill-fated jobs bill or the various "bailout" agreements.

Both major parties recognized the need to rationalize and restructure the delivery of healthcare. They had differences about how to do it, but they agreed it had to be done. As healthcare reform progressed, a marked bipartisan convergence began to dominate the debate. Healthcare costs were increasingly seen as a major element of the federal deficit, and that the main focus of reform was in fact control of the deficit.

In April of 2009, Senator Jay Rockefeller was honored by West Virginia Health Care for America Now with the Champion of Health Care Reform Award. He noted at the

time that "health care costs (are) consuming nearly 1/6 of our economic output, and... healthcare (is) 'the fulcrum' of our economy." In May the Senator sponsored the Med PAC Reform Act of 2009 for Medicare reform, which proposed a body of independent experts as an "executive agency modeled after the Federal Reserve," responsible to the executive branch and not subject to the "whims of Congress."

In previous periods, the ruling class organized healthcare so as to guarantee the greatest advances for private property, but the primary concern was to guarantee a stable industrial working class and to provide some support to the unemployed, who were a "reserve army" of workers. We are at the end of an era based on a wages system. Today, the primary concern is to provide a stable area of investment for financial interests, with a secondary concern about maintaining class peace.

There is substantial evidence that economic restructuring in health care – one of the largest relatively stable areas for investments in the U.S. – was important to the ruling class, and the driving force behind the bipartisan support for the reform.

The 2007 study, "Market Based Health Care: Big Money, Politics and the Unraveling of U.S. Civil Democracy" conducted by the Institute for Health and Socio-Economic Policy gives a sense of what is at stake. "Health-related investments have become a major new component in financial markets," the study found and "just 495 health care corporations have an aggregated market capitalization of more than \$2.4 trillion and the top 25 alone about \$1.7 trillion" with "large banks looking to reap upwards of \$75 billion in new funds to manage through Heath Savings Accounts offerings."

By way of a single example, the giant investment bank Goldman Sachs acquired the medical instruments manufacturer, Biomet, Inc for \$10.9 billion. Goldman Sachs is one of the leading campaign contributors to pres-

idential candidates Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Barack Obama, and Mitt Romney.

There is much more at stake than political maneuvering here. There is an inter-connectness of the supposedly different areas of "reform" by which the administration is attempting to reorganize the economy. To get the whole picture of what is being attempted on the "battlefield of nationalization" in terms of corporate hegemony, these reforms need to be considered together – banking bailouts, financial "reform", struggles over a "jobs bill" of state aid, infrastructure investments, stabilization of Medicare reimbursements and health benefits for the long term jobless.

NEW FORMS OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Basic economic restructuring requires new forms of political organization, including forms that increasingly legalize the independence of the Executive from Congress. The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and other outcomes of the bipartisan health care and financial re-structuring agreements will be particularly important in the coming period. Central to this analysis is explaining the relationship of privatization to the consolidation of a U.S. "Corporatist State," or nationalization in the interests of corporations.

As stated on its website, the Fiscal Commission's mission is to propose, by December 2010, "recommendations designed to balance the budget, excluding interest payments on the debt, by 2015," and to "meaningfully improve the long-run fiscal outlook, including changes to address the growth of entitlement spending and the gap between the projected revenues and expenditures of the Federal Government." The Commission had come under fire due to concerns over its mission and secrecy around its formation,

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Line of March: Map to a New Society

Since capitalism is incapable of providing for our most basic needs, we need something new and better. We envision a world where all life is cared for and nurtured without struggle and hardship. Is this utopian? No, not when revolutionary conditions make transformation of society inevitable.

When one form of human society reaches the end of its development, objective conditions are set for a leap to another. We are undergoing such a leap. Capitalism has reached its limit of development and is in the process of destruction. Conditions exist for restructuring society on a new basis with the means of production owned in common and everyone's needs provided for.

This transformation is by no means automatic but requires conscious class activity. The historical role of an organization of revolutionaries is to understand the inevitable stages of revolution – the line of march – and to map out the path to achieve the goals of the revolution at each stage of development. This is the path to power for the class that is capable of restructuring society for the benefit of all humanity.

INEVITABLE STAGES OF REVOLUTION

The line of march is not a straight linear process in which one thing automatically follows another. Its motion is dialectical; its stages are interconnected. Changes in the economy bring about a response; a movement for change develops. Conversely this social response interacts with the objective conditions. How well people understand the

process and what they choose to do can either free up the objective conditions for further motion forward or retard their development.

The line of march of today's revolutionary process began with the introduction of qualitatively new electronic robotic means of production in industry and manufacturing, replacing human labor in production. This causes a break in capitalism's essential relationship between labor and capital, signaling the end of capitalism, and sets in motion the forces that can transform society.

The social force capable of transforming society must be outside of the relations of capitalism. Capitalism is creating this force by replacing human labor with computerized production and robotics. Displaced workers are forced into lower paying jobs and many end up permanently unemployed. They are unable to struggle against employers for the means of survival. Their survival depends upon demanding that the state provide essential human needs.

Thus, our class begins to engage in a political struggle and in this political struggle, the class becomes conscious of itself as a class with interests independent of the ruling class. The conditions are set for the economic polarization to become political polarization. This class is revolutionary because the only way to satisfy its basic human needs and to prevent capitalism from destroying us all is to fight to make the means of production public property.

Understanding this general revolutionary process is the first step in mapping out the line of march, but the future depends not upon a handful of revolutionaries having

this knowledge, but on the masses of people understanding the course of history and acting on it. Thus, revolutionaries must put their general knowledge into practice. This is the art of politics.

Revolutionaries must be among the people who are in motion in the scattered day to day struggles that are the school of class consciousness. This class consciousness does not come automatically. Revolutionaries carry out an essential role in helping front line leaders understand how to carry out the strategy and tactics that ensure the struggle is moving along the line of march.

Victory in any battle or war depends upon knowing the enemy, understanding the battlefield on which we must fight, and knowing our own forces.

We are facing a powerful enemy. As capitalism comes to an end, the ruling class and the state it controls seek to hold on to the power they have, while preparing for a new form of society in which they hold exclusive domination and enrich themselves at our expense. With the centralization of the leading capitalist corporations and their integration with the state, they are attempting to wholly reshape the state and society through a fascist solution to the crisis.

Not every struggle is along the line of march. We have to choose our battles and focus on the battlefield where the class can learn the lessons that move it step by step from scattered struggles to class consciousness and political struggle. The struggle over nationalization is that battlefield. Nationalization is inevitable.

This battle has begun with the ruling class's bailout of the financial institutions,

raising the questions: Who does the government serve? Who does the state serve?

Either society takes over the corporations or the corporations take over society. If we choose to fight in a planned way in the battle over nationalization, our class will become clear about its own class interests independent of the ruling class and will learn step by step what it must do along the line of march.

CONCENTRATE OUR FORCE

Our forces are scattered and sorely divided. Thus, we need to concentrate upon what is key to moving the whole class forward.

The driving force within this new class that can lead the transformation are the dispossessed, who once had jobs, and were even considered "middle class," but have been thrown out of work and have lost everything. They have the organizational experience and the ability to unite the class and pull all social motion forward by raising slogans that are achievable along the line of march.

They demand real solutions to real problems. The historic task before revolutionaries is to guide the class through the stages that will bring them to understand that the only solution to their problems is to restructure society in their own interest, and thus, in the interest of all humanity. The line of march maps out the stages the class must take to achieve the power to transform society.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Rally: to bring back together and put in a state of order, as retreating troops [to return to attack]

Comrade: a person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause

Rally, Comrades! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally, Comrades!* provides a strategic outlook for the revolutionaries by indicating and illuminating the line of march of the revolutionary process. It presents a pole of scientific clarity, examines and analyzes the real problems of the revolutionary movement, and draws political conclusions for the tasks of revolutionaries at each stage of development in order to prepare for future stages.

It is a vehicle to reach out and communicate with revolutionaries both within the League and outside of the League to engage them in debate and discussion and to provide a forum for these discussions. Articles represent the position and policies of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

Editor: Brooke Heagerty

Editorial Board: Cynthia Cuza, Nicholas M^cQuerrey, Nelson Peery

Reach us at:

Rally, Comrades!, P.O. Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647
rally@lrna.org • www.rallycomrades.net • 773-486-0028

LRNA: WHAT WE STAND FOR

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 co-operative, 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 co-operative society. For the first time an objective communist economic class is forming to become the foundation for a communist political movement. 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. 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.

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 threat of nuclear war and the 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.

Oil and Water: Public Resources Should Be Owned by Public

The Gulf Oil disaster stands as proof that the corporate control of oil and energy is fundamental to the ongoing destruction of society, the environment, and life on earth. Oil is highly toxic and water is essential for life. The corporate control of each inevitably leads to disaster.

Oil is the principle fossil fuel that releases the carbon dioxide that causes global warming. The Niger Delta – like Louisiana, a vast maze of waterways at the mouth of a great river – has been horribly polluted by petroleum corporations, destroying one of the great fisheries of the world.

Oil production requires giant chimneys to burn the natural gas found intermixed with oil. These plumes burn 24 hours a day in Cancer Alley, which runs from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, and in the Niger Delta where oil flaring forces 20.4 billion cubic meters of carbon dioxide a year into the atmosphere! (www.newsdesk.org/2002/11/natural_gas_bur/)

Oil companies today have a growing thirst for water. “Fracking” uses high pressure to inject millions of gallons of water, sand, and toxic chemicals into the ground to fracture the shale, releasing more natural gas into the well. Each “frack” makes unimaginable amounts of water permanently toxic. Private control of oil means that control of clean water is also lost to public control, something underscored by the British Petroleum (BP) disaster.

In the Gulf of Mexico, health agencies report increasing numbers of people are getting sick from polluted water and air. Human health should be the primary concern, but the whole disaster is being handled to guarantee the bottom line.

LACK OF REGULATION

Oil companies refuse to spend money to guarantee safe production because it cuts into profits. Oil and its technology are virtually unregulated. Historically, governments have made some feeble attempts to figure out how to “regulate the petroleum industry.” But oil corporations today are more powerful than most nations, and they operate in dozens of countries.

For years, oil companies have been lusting after more off-shore drilling. Responding to intense industry lobbying, the Obama administration put up 53 million acres for lease in the Gulf alone in its first year and, according to Tim Dickinson in the June 2010 *Rolling Stone* article, “The Spill, the Scandal and the President”, allowed BP to shave \$500,000 off its overhead by deploying a blowout preventer without a remote-control trigger – a fail-safe measure required in many countries but not mandated in the U.S.

Unregulated petroleum production and usage can be toxic. Automobiles contribute mightily to the destruction of the atmosphere that we call global warming. Oil also produces the principle chemicals for all varieties of plastics. These leach into our foods from

plastic packaging, playing a role in numerous horrific health issues. Pesticides, another oil product, are flagrantly used by corporate-controlled agribusiness.

PRIVATE PROPERTY IS THE PROBLEM

Corporations control virtually all the natural resources and the tools and technologies humans have developed. These include oil, food production, forms of communications, medicines, the factories that produce the necessities of life, and all the electronic technology that could be transforming the world into a paradise. All this today is private property.

The word “private” comes from the Latin root “privare” which means to “deprive.” It is also the root of the word “privilege.” The capitalist class has seized the tools of society. Therefore, they claim the right to the bounty of nature and the very wealth of society. This is diverted into “private profit,” which means that the wealth is removed from society’s control.

Corporations are becoming toxic to the very planet and everything on it. The capitalist class abuses its control of all the wonderful technologies that people have developed. Antibiotics were a wonder of nature that humans harnessed to control disease. Corporate control has led to such uncontrolled usage that most no longer work at all.

Control of oil and water are global issues. Water is central to every issue of healing the environment. Free access to water is key to dealing with global warming. Water is also 70 percent of the human body. Corporate control of water is beginning to damage nature’s water cycle, just as corporate control of technology has damaged the climate.

WATER: THE MOTOR CITY STORY

The New York Times reported in August, 2008 that banks and financial institutions, such as Goldman Sachs, the Carlyle Group and Morgan Stanley, have amassed a \$250 million war chest to buy up “infrastructure” around the world, particularly water. If water is no longer a public service, then who will decide who gets access? The reality is if you can’t pay, corporations determine when you drink, bathe your kids, or if your house burns down. The public is bankrolling these corporations so that they can privatize and seize our public resources!

Having lost their tax base, cities like Detroit and Highland Park, Michigan, are faced with crumbling pipes in a decaying water infrastructure. The cities have responded by reneging on their responsibility to provide water. Multinational water companies have stepped in to take over the responsibility to provide water -- for a profit – demanding first that cities make iron-clad financial guarantees.

In 2001, management of the Detroit Water and Sewage Department was put in the

hands of Thames Water Corporation. The new management demanded double-digit rate increases and launched a policy of debt collection and cut-offs.

The loss of water resulted in the loss of homes. The water managers added delinquent water bills to property taxes, driving them sky high. Then the government began to foreclose on people's homes when these were unpaid.

PAPER WATER, PAPER AIR

The bulk of the vast wealth that human society produces every year is diverted to corporations and ultimately to the tiny class that controls them. Instead of using this wealth for the benefit of humanity, they demand markets to speculate in.

California is chronically in drought. In 1994 government representatives and the corporate water oligarchy created a legal framework for “paper water.” These water futures are traded, transferred, bought and sold, and used as collateral on loans without any connection to actual water delivery. Today, California can deliver only half of the water it promises. The rest is used by real-estate speculators to “prove” that they have enough water to continue development.

This securitizing of water only furthers the parasitic casino economy driven by speculation. Speculative capital “securitizes” personal and public property in order to turn it into something that the casino economy can gamble on.

Across the globe, people are demanding that governments do something about global warming. This sentiment has been channeled into a scheme to “save the planet” by allowing corporations to trade “carbon futures.” This means that a corporation can pollute without regulation, as long as it buys up the government-issued “right” to pollute so much carbon dioxide. This creates a market

for speculation and actually allows corporations to privatize the atmosphere!

Government diverts vast amounts of public wealth into private hands yearly. This shows the tremendous importance of the fight to nationalize the energy industries, water, and all natural resources in the interests of the public.

POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Water and oil are either owned publicly or privately.

Instead of denying its responsibility, government must provide open access to water and other necessities regardless of the ability to pay. What is the job of government, if not to guarantee the rights and well-being of the public?

Across the United States, government is converting public property into private, corporate property. As we organize to protect and expand the public domain, we are fighting for the future of humanity.

We will have to fight differently than we did in the 20th century, and take up the politics of class and power. The battles are no longer just against an employer, or even a social struggle against corporations in general. They are a battle against a State and government that is in the hands of the capitalist class.

For both oil and water, government and the State that serve the interests of the corporations and private property rather than the common people is the cause of the problem. This cannot be an economic battle against a single corporation. The battle is political – to demand and struggle for a State that guarantees the interests of the public over the interests of the corporations.

New Pamphlet:

Water Wars

Coming Soon to Your Town!

The private seizure of water is spreading across America, dramatically affecting localities as different as Detroit and California. It’s part of systematic efforts by the State to reorganize all of society to accommodate private property under totally new economic conditions.

The League of Revolutionaries for a New America has produced a timely new pamphlet, *Water Wars — Coming Soon to Your Town!* by Steven Miller and Danny Alexander. This pamphlet shows how the fight for public access to water is political – part of the overall fight to compel the State to guarantee the interests of the public over the interests of the corporations.

To order *Water Wars* send a check or money order payable to “LRNA” to LRNA, P.O. Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647. Please mark “water pamphlet” in the memo line, and make sure to let us know how many pamphlets you are ordering.

1 – 9 copies	\$3 each
10-50 copies	\$2.50 each
50 copies or more	\$2.00 each

Steven Miller and Danny Alexander are available to speak through the Speakers for a New America. Call 1-800-691-6888 or email info@speakersforanewamerica.com.

Young and Revolutionary: You Are The Future

Daily headlines and news feeds continue to pour out new details on the economic crisis, but they rarely discuss the roots of the crisis – the economic revolution brought about through labor-replacing technology. This economic revolution has led to a new class of workers who are no longer necessary for production and are thus being thrown out of the system.

Young people coming of age today are a large and growing part of that new class, and they have a large and increasingly important role to play. These workers coming of age have only known the crisis caused by the economic revolution and its many symptoms of social destruction: deteriorating infrastructure, nothing but temporary work or no work at all, the stingiest of social services, a deteriorating education system, the growth in prisons and policing, and military recruiters hawking bloody lies in high schools and colleges.

All generations must join together and help build a new world in which the abundance made available by new technology is distributed to the many and not just the few.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT RECENT GENERATIONS

Many within the new class of workers once had a connection to steady work, but have been thrown out by an economic system that does not need them any more. But many younger workers who are just entering, or who have been struggling to get a foot in the workforce were born thrown out of the system. Many under 35 have never been part of it, and have not known any prosperity under capitalism, nor any job security, and in growing numbers, not even a stable home.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment among workers between the ages of 16-19 is approaching 30%, nearly triple the overall unemployment rate of 10%. 20% of workers between 16 and 24 are

unemployed, and 11% of those between 25-35 are unemployed. Over 50% of all black youth between the ages of 16-24 are unemployed, and it is estimated that only 14 out of every 100 young black men have jobs. These are important years for younger workers to gain experience and build their employment skills, but younger workers are being displaced from even entry level jobs. There also has been a drop in the hiring of college graduates, as even a college education serves less and less to fend off a bleak future.

WHAT RECENT GENERATIONS FACE

What has the last 20 or so years meant to those growing up in this social and economic chaos? Low paying temp jobs or no jobs, the end of welfare, police brutality, drugs, military recruiters, years of war, the border

Young people have a large and increasingly important role to play in the revolutionary struggle.

fence, free trade, chronic unemployment, underemployment, and an educational system under attack in the form of cuts to school budgets, larger class sizes, more testing, tuition increases, less financial aid, to name a few.

While there has been mobility for some, the conditions for the mass of working class blacks, Latinos and whites continued to worsen, especially for young adults. Two examples of this are the employment outlook for young people and the impact of the growth in prisons and policing.

As jobs have been automated or hustled around the world, the last few decades have seen a U.S. labor market being restructured from industrial to service sector jobs – and this trend continues to intensify. The November 2009 Monthly Labor Review report predicts that job creation over the next ten years

will be in the employment areas that pay less, are typically non-union and less secure, such as customer service reps, personal and home care aides, retail sales people, security guards, and teacher assistants. But automation does not stop with industry. In fact the leading robotics yearly publication *World Robotics* has moved from several dozen pages on service robots to an entirely separate volume. The technology exists today to fill even these jobs (or reduce the number of workers necessary) with robots and automated machines.

While there are fewer jobs, the prison population continues to grow. In 1970 the prison population was 200,000. Today it is over 2.3 million with 7 million in jail or prison or on probation or parole. Over half of those behind bars are under 35 and incarceration rates for those between 20 and 35 are

much higher than for other age groups.

Author Christian Parenti argues in his book, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis*, that massive growth in the numbers incarcerated is a ruling class solution to lessen the chances of “social dynamite,” first as a response to the uprisings of the 1960s and early 70s and second, as a response to the economic transformation that began in the early 1980s. Likewise, in her book *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* scholar Ruth Wilson Gilmore argues that the growth of prisons is a way of dealing with surplus populations rendered unnecessary by changes in productivity. The growth of prisons, policing and surveillance are having devastating affects on communities as potential young leaders are being shipped out to spend years and decades in prison.

YOUNG REVOLUTIONARIES

Those of us born between 1975 and 1995 are called Generation X and Generation Y (or next), or the hip-hop generation and post-hip-hop generation. Workers in recent generations were born into a world of social and economic disruption and have grown up as dispossession was becoming normalized as part of the very fabric of U.S. society. Many don't trust or like capitalism, and might be called disaffected, that is, alienated, discontented, or disloyal toward authority, as many have never been allowed to enter the system in any meaningful way in the first place. Youth are an important segment of today's emerging revolutionaries.

Some consider themselves part of the hip-hop generation, including urban minority youth, but also white urban youth, suburban youth, and rural youth. Others have found other subcultures to belong to, including the hard-core music scene and various forms of

gangs, among others. Though there is a diversity of thought within the younger generations, more tolerance for differences and suspicion of sectarianism, there is also some lack of historical knowledge of struggle, as well as a lack of a class analysis.

At the same time, these generations on the whole have a much better sense of politics and economics than given credit. A lingering depoliticized and distracted sensibility was shaken off as people, especially new generations, began to ask deeper questions in the wake of 9/11. This had begun in the 1990s with gang truces, cop watching, and the anti-corporate and anti-sweatshop movements built on the fights against NAFTA and the anti-globalization struggles.

Many are especially eager to look to other struggles to see what is possible, such as the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, the work of the Zapatistas, the anti-neoliberal movement in Bolivia, and the factory takeovers in Argentina, to name a few.

Many in the younger generations generally mistrust corporations and government, but also have a tendency toward cynicism and irony, which can lead us to apathy or worse. Questioning authority comes almost instinctually, but with this there is a reticence to join organizations.

There is a fire in the bellies of younger folk today and young revolutionaries are burning up with energy, but for many there is a feeling that the only revolutionary leadership that can be looked to are those forms of the past period. (Such as the Black Panthers, the Brown Berets and SDS, among others).

The League of Revolutionaries for a New America has many generations of revolutionary leadership, and decades of experience that can join with the new and emerging leaders from younger generations.

FUTURE OF REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE AND ROLE YOUTH CAN PLAY

The new generations, like those that have preceded it, contain revolutionaries who are responding to transformations in society, but like every generation they have a particular relationship to these transformations based on their own experience and changing conditions. It is clear that a significant segment of the younger generations want to act, want to do things and need to be directly involved. Those with long experience in the revolutionary movement must join with the new generations through education, action and involvement and learn of the ideas and experiences of younger generations. To those among the newest generation of revolutionaries, deep knowledge lies with elders.

All generations must unite and take seriously our responsibility and authority as the future of revolutionary struggle is in our hands.

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Small Government, Big State: Southern Program Points the Way

Every day the people most affected by the economic crisis are caught up in the struggle for their basic needs, for education for their children, for health care when they get sick, for housing when they are evicted, for food when they are hungry. And where do they turn? To government. The role of government and the allocation of public resources is the central and critical battleground for how we go forward as a country and as a people. How that battle is being played out in the South is indicative of what lies ahead for our future.

W.E.B. Dubois best expressed the thread that runs through all of American history and politics; "As the South goes, so goes the nation." From the concrete specifics of American history, the ruling class today strives to maintain its rule in an epoch in which the supremacy of private property without capital must seek a fascist solution. Their solution – which can be summed up as small government, big State – necessarily means the shrinking and elimination of all public resources for the growing mass of dispossessed while expanding the apparatus of control. The Southern program historically provides the basis for the solution the ruling class requires.

In the face of this, it is the task of revolutionaries to discern both the substance and the features of this developing motion. That is why it is critical again to look at the role of the U.S. South in the political economy and politics, and indeed, the revolutionary process in this country.

SOUTH IN U.S. DEVELOPMENT

The South has long been a bellwether of American political, economic, and social development throughout the history of the nation. Just as slavery was an integral part of the economic development of the nation from its earliest beginnings, just so was the slaveholding ruling class in the South able to protect their form of private property in the very fabric of the Constitution itself. For most of the first fifty years of the young country, the Southern slaveholders controlled the Congress, the presidency and the Supreme Court. It was only when a rising new industrial capitalism in the North began to gain ascendancy and to challenge the political hegemony of the South that – in the name of defending the Constitution, states rights, and the idea of Jeffersonian democracy – the Southern rulers seceded from the Union and attacked the North.

That cause was lost (but not forgotten) as slavery was abolished and the process of reconstruction in the South began. The new governments for the first time allowed the participation of both the freedmen and poor whites, and for a while they were allowed to move forward with a new experiment in democracy. Northern capital, however, saw the dismantling and break-up of the slave-

holding power as an attack on private property that could not be allowed. The 1876 Hayes-Tilden agreement sealed the defeat of Reconstruction.

The "Redeemer" governments were given a free hand to dismantle the gains made during Reconstruction, cutting taxes and slashing spending for schools, public health and other social programs. The reins of power were returned to the firm grasp of the Southern ruling class, themselves now obedient to the interests of industrial capital.

The role of government and the allocation of public resources is the central and critical battleground for how we go forward as a country and as a people. How that battle is being played out in the South is indicative of what lies ahead for our future.

White supremacy reigned, but the "free" Southern worker, both black and white, had no rights but the right to labor, tied to the land through the sharecropping system. Of course, the principal aim was to control the black worker at the heart of America's first colony, the Black Belt South, as a means to control all labor. The extension of the Black Codes signaled a fascist form of rule, and was later studied and incorporated by the German fascist movement of the 1920s and 1930s.

In the New Deal era, Southern politicians blocked any real progress in the interests of the working class nationally. They opposed the public works and other programs that sought to put people back to work, and later in 1947, for example, passed anti-union legislation such as the Taft-Hartley "right to work" act which ensured the South would remain a largely non-unionized area.

As World War II came to an end, agriculture began to be mechanized, and the industrialization of the South began in earnest. Jim Crow, with the aid of the Civil Rights movement, was forced off the stage at last. But even this second Reconstruction did not challenge private property relations, and the best the Southern worker could hope for was a new kind of wage-slavery in industry. Almost before the process of industrialization was complete, a new revolution in the economy began to take place: the introduction of labor-replacing electronics spread and was generalized by economic globalization.

THE SOUTH AND THE NEW ECONOMY

Corporations across the globe were look-

ing for places to develop the new global market-place, to transform themselves into the "lean and mean" enterprises best equipped to prosper in a climate of ever advancing technology within the developing global economy. The modern South was just such a place.

As the textile mills and garment factories were downsized and outsourced, the Southern business and political leadership envisioned a prosperous future paved with microchips and lighted by fiber optics, but

one in which the interests of capital trumped all others. Low taxes, minimal government and regulations on business, anti-unionism, and an ideology of rugged individualism – all provided a fertile environment for a society in which the tyranny of the marketplace prevailed.

From 1984-2004 over 30 million jobs across America were permanently eliminated. The elimination of the old industrial technologies meant the elimination of jobs; for the workers it meant being subjected to the discipline of downsizing and outsourcing. The Southern value of working hard was reengineered to mean subjecting the workers to the requirements of lean production.

Contingent and "flexible" labor, contract labor, tenuous work for less pay and fewer benefits became the norm in the South while at the same time the Southern ruling class fed Southern workers a steady diet of the ideology of personal responsibility and anti-government individualism. "Right-to-work" was enshrined as a corollary of the right of free speech. The unfettered marketplace was hailed as a model of rugged individualism; ideas of Jeffersonian freedom as a corrective to the excesses of the welfare state. And Southern evangelicals provided the religious sanctions for economic individualism. At the same time, average real wages declined and income disparities widened.

While the worker as an individual was increasingly subjected to the whims of the marketplace, and government social resources were slashed in the name of minimal government, the Southern political structure had no qualms about intervening on behalf of the corporations. What appeared as the usual healthy dose of corporate welfare was

really an expression of the merger of government and the corporations operating in their own interests. Tax concessions for business, reduced regulations, financial incentives and privatization of public resources were all features of a bipartisan program for developing the New Economy in the Southern states.

In the current crisis, "Robin Hood for the wealthy" and the corporations accelerates at the same time that the systematic dispossession of the "public sector" advances. In June a new bipartisan Council on Tax Reform and Fairness was created in Georgia, composed of current governor Sonny Perdue, former governor Zell Miller, the head of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia state director of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, among others. Their job is to propose tax reforms that will continue to shift the tax burden to the poor and working people of the state, while advancing tax cuts and breaks for the wealthy and the corporations. This is in addition to half a billion dollars in tax breaks passed by the legislature in its last session. Such drastic shifts will only bring further cuts to health care, transportation and education – already suffering from rising tuition costs, increased classroom size, and massive teacher layoffs.

SMALL GOVERNMENT, BIG STATE

The program of the Southern ruling class and their political counterparts is to "get the government down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub," while at the same time strengthening the State apparatus of control. In other words, small government, big State. This is nothing less than a prescription for fascism.

The program of the Southern worker, and of all the dispossessed, is to expand the resources necessary to life itself – food, shelter, health care, education, jobs. In order to obtain these, the dispossessed must necessarily fight the State, and in that sense the battle for the necessities of life is at the same time a battle for democracy.

It is conceivable that fascism could proceed as a movement to defend democracy and a return to the principles of the Constitution, a refrain that is being heard more and more stridently from the South, particularly in the calls for secession and states' rights, and from the organizers of the Tea Party movement. The calls for small government, less taxation, deregulation, and an anti-union environment characterize the form of rule of the Southern states even as it is paired with accelerating the process of privatization and outright corporate welfare.

Like any movement, the Tea Party movement is a mixture of various forces still in motion, with myriad groupings and individuals contending for leadership. There are the entrenched establishment who fund and play a role in organizing, such as, Dick Arme-

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Bipartisanship: Democracy Debased, Corporations Enthroned

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and there has been much "to do" over establishing a web-site and inviting public "input" to the monthly public meetings.

Bi-partisanship is a clear and open mandate of the commission. The Commission is co-chaired by a Republican and a Democrat. A press release on the founding of the body states that "The Commission will build bipartisan consensus to put America on the path toward fiscal reform and responsibility." A letter to the Commission members published on the Commission website states "The Commission's goals are ones on which we can all agree. They are not Republican or Democratic objectives. The solvency of our federal government is a matter of such importance that it transcends political parties."

It is important to note that the current Commission is a step down in function from the original proposal to Congress. Nevertheless, the intent is clear – to place power in the Executive as also proposed by Rockefeller's original Medicare Commission. While it is formally an advisory body, the Commission reports directly to the President.

The President has his people lined up carefully. The Executive Director Bruce Reed is currently the CEO of the Democratic Leadership Council and served as chief

domestic policy advisor and director of the White House Domestic Policy Council during the Clinton Administration. He helped write the 1996 welfare reform law. Obama appointees Alice Rivlin, Clinton's budget director from 1994 to 1996, and former Clinton Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles and co-chair former Senator Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) all worked on deficit reduction in the 1990s. According to the journalist William Greider, Bowles and Reed secretly negotiated a partial privatization of Social Security with Newt Gingrich in the Clinton years before the deal blew up with Clinton's sex scandal. Andy Stern, the former president of SEIU, had once joined liberal groups in opposing a Senate version of the Fiscal Commission, and is now certainly being looked to for populist purposes.

It is important to understand that the Commission is working within an already established set of assumptions. At its May 27th meeting, for example, researchers presented a study of the relationship of debt to GDP in 44 countries over a period of two hundred years, showing that capital's growth rates "deteriorate markedly" with debt/GDP ratios over 90%, which the U.S. is supposedly reaching. The idea is that the entire economy will fall without cuts to government "entitlements." This provides a bipartisan

answer to the debate that has been raging about "deficit-mongering," that is, cutting deficits while supporting industry, banks and the rest of the financial sector.

At a speech in April at the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke made this clear: "To avoid large and unsustainable budget deficits, the nation will ultimately have to choose among higher taxes, modifications to entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare, less spending on everything else from education to defense, or some combination of the above." Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid should be cut, "because that's where the money is."

DISMANTLING DEMOCRACY

The Commission is clearly a form of political organization to more directly merge the corporations and government through a qualitative development of bi-partisanship that extends domestic power to the Executive to match that power recently exercised in international politics. The Commission represents a qualitative change in the way the Federal budget is determined. It is, in effect, a committee of 18, working outside the Constitutionally established mechanisms of government, that will deliver the over-all

budget for the country and lay the foundation for more extensive economic restructuring in the corporate interests.

It is another step in the dismantling of bourgeois democracy. It is on a continuum of new forms of State power such as the Department of Homeland Security, an unprecedented reorganization and concentration of government control, which in the process, a 2008 Heritage Foundation Report "Health Care and Homeland Security: Crossroads of Emergency Response" observed with satisfaction, stripped "180,000 government employees of their union rights."

This Administration has been able to establish a new "set-point" within which financial capital can operate; a stage of the process of ending the social contract with the least amount of political fall-out possible. Certainly, we are in the earliest stage of a process. The forms that will develop are still congealing and are still more potential than actual. While bipartisanship in the passage of federal bills is an important indicator, for example, it will no doubt be in the process of implementation of the proposals, particularly in the playing out of the new political impulses/structures, including on the state and even local levels, that the full playing out of ruling class agreement will emerge.

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Small Government, Big State: Southern Program Points the Way

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(Freedom Works), Ralph Reed (formerly of the Christian Coalition), Ron Paul and his son Rand (libertarians), Newt Gingrich, and Phil Gingrey, both from Georgia. There are the Glenn Becks and Rush Limbaughs, all of whom compose the ideological shock troops to advance their objectives. And there are a myriad of other organizations, such as, the The Oath Keepers with their roots in the military and prepared to take up arms, the Fair Tax Nation that calls for replacing all taxes with a national sales tax, and anti-immigration nativists who demand that the undocumented be hunted down and deported in the name of national security.

They elevate the Constitution to the level of a sacred religious text, with particular emphasis upon the 10th amendment, which supposedly provides for the supremacy of states rights. This was also the basis of the Southern defense of slavery and the framework for the secession and formation of the Confederacy. Today it is utilized to resist federal government stimulus funds, as well as to oppose the establishment of national health insurance.

The State is being reshaped to serve the interests of the ruling class in the defense of private property. This is not simply a set of policy choices. In a time in which the mode of production itself is shifting to accommodate the decline of value brought on by laborless production, the State is moving to direct control by the corporations, and privatization and the shrinking of the public sector is a necessary consequence of this process. It is experienced by the masses as the destruction of society itself as we know it.

The focus of the American revolution now underway is centered squarely upon the question of the role of government. Will the resources of society be protected by the State in defense of private property or will those resources produced by all of society be utilized to provide health care, education, housing, food and jobs for all? The first solution leads toward fascism, the other toward a communal society in which the prosperity produced by a new economy establishes life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as the final accomplishment of the American dream.