

A Future Without Jobs: What is the Solution?

Automation and robotics are becoming hot topics. Some writers, like Martin Ford and Marshall Brain, recognize the impact these technologies have on jobs and employment, while others deny that these technologies lead to massive unemployment and insist that technology will in fact create jobs. Both camps in the argument have it wrong, but for different reasons.

SEEING THE PROBLEM BUT NOT THE SOLUTION

Ford and Brain are on to something, though they are missing something crucial—the true solution to the problem. They have begun to analyze what more and more people are experiencing. Both writers have a clear handle on some of the most important impacts of automation and robotics on the economy: they eliminate jobs. Martin Ford is a computer engineer and entrepreneur, who recently wrote, *Lights in the Tunnel: Automation, Accelerating Technology, and the Economy of the Future*. Marshall Brain is a computer scientist who founded howstuffworks.com and publishes an insightful blog called “Robotic Nation.” Though Ford and Brain recognize the problem, neither provides the necessary solution: public ownership of the machines for the benefit of the entire society.

In *Lights in the Tunnel* (Acculant Publishing, 2009), Martin Ford makes a compelling case for the ways in which large segments of the labor force will be permanently replaced. He argues, “...as technology accelerates, machine automation may ultimately penetrate the economy to the extent that wages no longer provide the bulk of consumers with adequate discretionary income and confidence in the future. If this issue is not addressed, the result will be a downward economic spiral.” Like Ford, Marshall Brain argues, “The problem is that these [automated and robotic] systems will also eliminate jobs in massive numbers. In fact, we are about to see a seismic shift in the American workforce. As a nation, we have no way to understand or handle the level of unemployment that we will see in our economy over the next several decades.”

Brain also extrapolates from current trends, arguing that the speed of the microchip will continue to improve and robotic technologies will continue to find new applications. Brain predicts the possibility of 50% unemployment in the next 40 years as robots take upwards of 50 million jobs. He recognizes that labor = money, so that those who don't work can't buy the commodities they need, no matter how cheap the new technology makes them.

Though Ford and Brain provide a detailed

description of the problem, their solutions do not address the question of ownership (private property) of the technology and its uses (profit, competition, and the accumulation of wealth). In fact, they go out of their way to ideologically and rhetorically protect and sanctify these pillars of capitalism. Ford sets out to consider how to maintain a free market economy, “one of mankind's greatest inventions,” and how to “outsmart Marx,” who also discussed such a potential capitalist economic collapse due to increases in production. Ford makes clear that widespread joblessness is caused by new technology, but he seeks to ignite the many entrepreneurial lights in the tunnel before it gets any darker. He proposes adapting and re-tuning free market capitalism to the new conditions with a brand of neo-Keynesianism in which the State collects “special taxes to recapture the income from lost jobs and then having the government redirect that income according to individual incentives—without the requirement for traditional work.”

Similarly, Brain argues that the solution for a strong capitalist economy in the age of automation is for a national income of \$25,000 for every citizen funded by taxes, selling off resources, lotteries, ads on dollar bills, fines, email taxes, new fees, etc. Like Ford, Brain seeks to strengthen and adapt capitalism.

This June even President Obama admitted that technology is connected to lack of jobs. He called it “a structural issue” and emphasized that these are simply changes to the economy that the government must monitor to see where future jobs will be (even if there will be fewer). This way the solution is about training people for the dawning new reality so workers can better compete in a downsized world. The interviewer of the President on the “Today Show” was correct in pointing out that businesses are not hiring much despite record profits, but instead are investing in the latest technologies, rendering workers even more obsolete.

DENYING THE PROBLEM

Economist Russell Roberts, in a *Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed piece entitled, “Obama vs. ATMs: Why Technology Doesn't Destroy Jobs,” took Obama and the interviewer to task, arguing that “doing more with less is what economic growth is all about.” For Roberts this is progress: we are now able to do things that before could never have been dreamed of. Yes, he admits this increases unemployment, but it should decrease prices and therefore raise the standard of living of all consumers. He reasons that this is caused by the fact that workers will have to work fewer hours to buy the goods they need. He goes on to say that jobs are created when

people and resources are freed up by technology to create new products and industries and thus create new jobs. He doesn't say what kind of jobs or what they pay. In the end he says technology has always displaced labor; the economy adjusts accordingly: “Somehow, new jobs get created to replace the old ones,” just because, he assumes, society continues to improve.

Similarly, the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) argues that technology in fact creates jobs. Their argument goes like this: automation increases profits and lowers prices which in turn gives consumers more money to spend, which people then use to “go out to dinner a few times, buy books, watch movies, or any number of other things. This economic activity stimulates demand that other companies (e.g., restaurants, book stores, movie theaters, airlines, and hotels) respond to by hiring more workers.” They then point readers to their April 2010 report, “Embracing the Self-Service Economy,” which details the benefits of food ordering kiosks, retail kiosks, airport and travel kiosks, etc. Their vision is that these would all be workerless service industries, which directly undermines their previous argument. But we might say that some workers would be needed to design, build and service these machines. (See also, their “Technology and Innovation Create, Not Destroy Jobs,” June 15, 2011.)

Their “estimate is that if the self-service technology was more widely deployed, the U.S. economy would be approximately \$130 billion larger annually, the equivalent of an additional \$1,100 in annual income for every household.” Unfortunately, the wealth that would be created would not be divided across the population as in this statistical sleight-of-hand, but would continue to go to the 1%. They admit short and medium term job loss, referring to it as “occupational shift” and “workforce shift.” Citing agriculture as an example, the ITIF points out that today far fewer farmers produce more food

than ever before. For them it's simply progress. But as Brain points out in “Robotic Nation,” new occupations and industries that emerge due to technology are not immune from automation. It is too pervasive and accelerates into countless industries.

Another argument used by both Roberts and ITIF is that technologies eliminating jobs is nothing new, implying that because it's been happening and the economy is still functioning, there's nothing to worry about Chicken Little—the “sky has not fallen yet.” For them things will become stabilized as in the past. Ford debunks this by arguing that the new technologies are revolutionizing our lives in all aspects, on a qualitatively different basis than in the past and thus of course will transform the economy in completely new ways on a totally different level and at a much faster speed.

THE PROBLEM EXISTS AND WHAT WE CAN DO TO SOLVE IT

A new book, *Race Against the Machine* (Digital Frontiers Press, 2011), by Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, two MIT economists, removes any doubt that automation and robotics eliminate jobs and cause growing unemployment and permanent joblessness. They argue against the ideas of many economists that the crisis is cyclical, or that it's simply American stagnation in innovation and productivity. They argue instead, “The root of our problem is not that we're in a Great Recession, or a Great Stagnation, but rather that we are in the throes of a Great Restructuring,” and that these advances in technology leave behind great numbers of people.

They show this by giving example after example of the ways in which computer and robotic technologies are taking on and overcoming the obstacles others say will limit the spread of labor-replacing technologies and they show how this is accelerating due to the

continued on pg 2

INSIDE

- Editorial: Woven with a Common Thread
- L.A. Rebellion: The Day that Makes Twenty Years
- New Form of Racism Emerging
- Causality and Human Will
- A World Beyond Private Property

Editorial: Woven with a Common Thread

Property, race, electronics, laborless production – and revolution. Everything is related, everything is connected. It is a complex, difficult path we tread, yet how we understand the world and what we do determines the outcome. “Causality and Human Will” illuminates for us that while the tangled web of cause and effect sets the parameters of human history, it is the human mind and will that resolves the riddle and guides us to a confident future.

The future we envision is “A World Beyond Private Property”. Human history since the overthrow of primitive communism has been shaped by one form or another of private property. All wealth, all property has been created by the exploitation of human labor — from slave to serf to wage-slave — and appropriated as the private property of the ruling class. Private property lords it over the very slave who created it. All of the in-

equalities that human beings have known and continue to suffer today are rooted in this fundamental relation between the owning class and the exploited class. Now, even as the introduction of electronic, laborless production destroys the very basis of capitalist private property, the concurrent leap in productive forces makes possible a future of such abundance that private property and its inequalities may be swept aside forever.

“A Future Without Jobs: What is the Solution?” explores the intellectual ferment that is percolating throughout society on an increasing level as more and more are becoming aware of and are attempting to come to grips with the impact of the revolutionary new technology. How can a technology that can create such abundance apparently be the primal cause of the current economic crisis? Joblessness, poverty, debt, alongside great wealth — is this simply another version of the cyclical crisis of capitalism? Or are we witnessing the

destruction of capitalist commodity production as we know it? Is the system broken, or can it be fixed, repaired, adjusted? Many commentators seek to preserve the system of private property despite the realities of the new technology. We offer a different view: the new technology makes possible, and necessary, a society in which all share in and contribute to the fruits of that society.

Race and racism are deeply imbedded in American history and are integrally connected to the development of the economy. Race is still with us, yet the concept of race and how it is employed must change with every change in the economy. The revolution in the economy brought on by the introduction of electronics gives rise to the vast social revolution we are now experiencing, and racism in America accompanies that process every step of the way. “A New Form of Racism Emerging” shows that a new form of racism is shifting the attack to economic status. Re-

gardless of color, it is this new class that are viewed as a threat to the very fabric of American society. Yet as the foundation of color-racism is being undermined, the common economic situation for this new class provides the basis for a unity across color lines.

Today we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the L.A. uprising: “The Day that Makes Twenty Years.” The revolution is already underway, and the L.A. uprising marked the opening round of a social revolution by the new class created by robotics. It launched the first wave of social response that has given rise to the growing waves of social response that we are experiencing today. Something new happened in L.A. twenty years ago, and something new is happening today. We are on the cusp of human beings taking charge of our own history, and creating a world that eliminates forever private property, racism and all forms of human exploitation and inequality.

A Future Without Jobs: What is the Solution?

continued from pg 1

growth in the performance of these technologies. They link these changes to the enormous growth in productivity and the simultaneous stagnation in wages and growth of unemployment. Unemployment is caused by layoffs, but they show that the bigger issue since 2000 is the lack of hiring due to new technologies. They clearly see the problem and its implications, but they, like Ford and Brain, offer policy reforms that

avoid the fundamental problem (and the potential promise) of these labor replacing technologies.

The problem is the private ownership of these massive means of production. Ford, Brain, Brynjolfsson, and McAfee do an excellent job describing the problem and refuting the argument of the deniers, but they fall into the trap of old thinking by trying to help capitalism survive this leap in production.

Unfortunately, these are not real solutions given the way society is objectively developing based on these technologies.

At the same time, the problem is not the technology itself. It's not about destroying the machines and turning to older ways of producing. New productive technologies offer the possibility of producing what every human being needs to not only survive, but thrive, allowing us to turn our attention away

from fighting each other based on the old notion of scarcity. Instead, the abundance these machines make possible can enable us to solve the issues we as a planet are facing: hunger, homelessness, sustainable energy, environmental degradation, disease, etc. These are achievable ends, but it will require harnessing these technologies to benefit all humanity, and this will only be possible if they are owned by all of humanity.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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

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

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

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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.

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.

THE DAY THAT MAKES TWENTY YEARS

When talking about the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion, probably 90% of the American people would immediately reply that it was caused by the not-guilty verdict rendered in favor of the Los Angeles police who were video-taped beating Rodney King. Such an answer would be like saying the forest fire was caused by a person throwing a lit cigarette into the underbrush. These acts were catalysts rather than causes.

The cause of the rebellion is to be found in the changing economic and social relations of Los Angeles and throughout the country. Automated production is replacing and pushing a section of the working class out of bourgeois relations of production. These new part-time, unemployed, minimum-wage and temporary workers form a new class at society's edges. Computerized control opened the door to shift production to the lowest-wage areas of the world. Opening the neo-colonies national boundaries to financial investment and industrial production destroyed the subsistence economies and unsettled literally millions of workers, who then migrated to foreign countries, including the United States. The social unrest was wide and deep in such cities as Los Angeles. The L.A cops feared and hated this unstable and unruly new section of the population. That fear and hatred was returned with interest. L.A. held a large number of this new class. They were black, white, Asian, Native American, Mexican and Central American. They were united by the fact that they were outside of and oppressed by bourgeois society and its property relations. In a word, by 1990 this new class was an uprising looking for a place to happen.

The Los Angeles rebellion will be remembered as the opening round of revolution by the new class created by robotics. The uprising, its multi-racial character, its stubborn resistance to the State forces meant that all the elements of social revolution were in place and functioning.

Social revolution has two phases. The first is the destruction of the existing society. The second is reconstruction of a new society. The destruction phase has two aspects, the objective and the subjective. The objective side is carried out by the introduction of electronics, undercutting wage-labor, which is the foundation of existing society. The age of electronics, eliminating the industrial working class, brings to birth a new class. The subjective side is the rejection of existing society by this new class. It is not possible to overthrow a society which you respect and whose laws you obey. The rebellion was contemptuous of anything smacking of bourgeois law, order or property relations. In this respect, the real world taught the combatants more than the revolutionaries did.

The uprising was not a second edition of the 1965 Watts uprising. The Watts uprising fully integrated the struggle of the African Americans into the world wide struggle of the colonial peoples against United States imperialism. By doing so, it completed and spelled the beginning of the end to the era of national liberation struggles. The rebellion of 1992 ushered in a new era, the era of class struggle and class revolution.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The mechanization of Southern agriculture during the early 1950s was an economic revolution that allowed for the completion of the social revolution of 1864. The hangovers of slavery that lived on because of the sharecropping system were finished off by the freedom struggles that followed this economic revolution.

Massive migrations from the rural South to the industrial

20th Anniversary of the L.A. Rebellion

Understanding the 1992 Los Angeles uprising helps explain today's America of the Great Recession and mounting poverty for people of all colors. "It was a race riot," insisted the government and mainstream media, "sparked by a few rogue cops abusing blacks in low-income areas," and Bill Clinton won the presidency that year promising more jobs, more cops, and more civil rights. But after four presidents from both major parties, the only promise kept was for more cops. As hi-tech global capitalism replaced America's industrial economy with robotics and lower living standards, instead of most poor African Americans starting to live like middle class whites, the opposite has come true.

People know there has been a "class war" of the rich over the last twenty years, and billionaire Warren Buffett even publicly jokes about it. Thus the 1992 LA Rebellion was not a "race riot," but is best understood as the first stage of an American social revolution in response to the electronic economic revolution. The Occupy Wall Street movement and its slogan that "We are the 99%" show that this process continues to develop as what started decades ago has spread and deepened. But so has the militarization of local police under the Dept. of Homeland Security. Some abusive cops have been prosecuted, but that is tactical and temporary, while attempts to repress the growing movement are inevitable as the struggle against capitalism continues to grow.

Let them do their worst. With the uprising, we left one era and entered another. The L.A. Rebellion was the day that makes twenty years.

areas began in 1939 with the shift to a war economy and the ending of the depression. These migrations accelerated during the 1950s. This was a period of "tractoring" the blacks off the land, but also a period of rapid industrial expansion. Poverty among blacks fell from 92 percent in 1939 to 30 percent in 1974. By 1980 over half the black population of the country lived in 29 metropolitan areas. These facts indicate the rapid proletarianization of the black masses.

By 1974 the electronic revolution began wiping out the unskilled and semi-skilled sector of industrial labor. This was the area where the recently arrived black workers were con-

centrated. At the same time the post-war economic expansion had begun to grind to a halt. It appeared that the wholesale lay-offs of black workers was solely from the standpoint of race. Actually, the workings of the seniority system along with the elimination of numerous unskilled and semi-skilled categories of jobs was sufficient cover for any racist selection of workers to be permanently laid off.

Whole sectors of industry were wiped out, and with them, their workers. Unemployment and poverty grew rapidly. Poverty among the black workers was the vanguard of a new and permanent poverty of the class. The national poverty rate of 11 percent during the 1970s jumped to 14.5 percent by 1990 despite the constant re-defining of poverty in order to lower the numbers. Using the 1972 criteria, some 70 million Americans were in poverty in 1992. Black poverty was (and is) concentrated and visible in the inner cities, but it was less than one third of national poverty. Only 36 percent of white poverty was urban. The rest was scattered and rural, but it will be heard from. The black workers, as workers, bore the brunt of the economic downturn. Racism made their new economic condition even more unacceptable.

STATING THE PROBLEM

A social system is the unity of the productive forces and the society built around them. It is not possible to change one without changing the other. The combination of the shift to production by electronics plus the shift of manufacturing to the world's lowest paying labor markets had created a world commodity market, including a world labor market. These changes pushed the international market price of unskilled labor in America far below the cost of production. It became impossible for a sector of workers to sell their labor-power at a living wage. No one could buy it at the

continued on pg 6

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New Form of Racism Emerging

We are entering a vast social revolution. Every aspect of American life is being torn apart and something new is being created. America is not going to be recognizable in another 20 years.

Change in social motion is difficult to grasp because the content begins to change before the form. What revolutionaries must grasp is that a new form of racism is developing, directed against an emerging new class that includes the “ghetto blacks,” the “illegal immigrant” and the white, so-called “trailer trash.” In other words, the class and cultural differences with the ruling class, not color, is emerging as the ideological basis for the savage economic assault against the poor.

EVERYTHING CHANGES AS ECONOMY CHANGES

An economy cannot stand alone. There must be a political structure that protects it, including laws, ideas and institutions. The struggles that are taking place today are over how to guarantee that the economy can continue to develop. All kinds of ideas are created, reshaped or thrown out according to whether they politically facilitate the development of the economy.

The concept of race, like any other political concept, has always served the needs of the economy. It changes with every change in the economy, because the economy demands that change if it is to move forward.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, two or three Blacks were lynched each week in the South. Lynching was seldom applied to Blacks until after the Civil War. Up to that time, almost all those who were lynched were white. There were changes in the economy and the Blacks had to be driven back into some kind of semi-slavery in order to maintain the profitability of the southern economy, which was absolutely indispensable to the northern textile industry and the U.S. economy overall.

Racism in America has been directed against the Irish, the Native Americans, the Latin Americans, and the Asians among others. Most of all it has centered on the African Americans because it is a political question. Politics is the art of the class struggle. Nothing could be more artful than to use a myth to convince literally millions of people to do harm to themselves in the interests of the people they are struggling against. Yet this is precisely what has happened in our history. It happened because the American people became convinced that they were dealing with a biological rather than a political question. We emphasize this point because the great economic and political changes taking place are having a profound effect on the politics of race and color.

There was a time when a person's race depended on where they were born, not the color of their skin. Race became a color question when the African slave trade enslaved all kinds of different nationalities

whose common characteristic was their color. This linking of color and race for capitalist exploitation was further consolidated and spread through the worldwide expansion of imperialism.

We also must never forget that the brutality of racism was not always directed solely by color differences. The racist nationalism of the fascist Japanese government against the peoples of Asia, or the slaughter and enslavement of the Slavic peoples by fascist Germany are only recent examples. In history we see racism in a religious garb as well. The thing that is clear is that racism, no matter its veneer, facilitates exploitation and is an integral part of capitalism. Therefore, as the needs of capitalism change, the forms of racism will change to accommodate it.

NOT AN UNDERCLASS BUT A NEW CLASS

A new social group is forming. They have been driven outside the capitalist economy, but as human beings they must eat — they must consume. This new class is growing daily through the process of technological innovation. Like anything else, today's new class developed over a period of time.

Robotics entered industry at the lowest and simplest level. Its first victims were the unskilled and semiskilled workers. Part of the legacy of slavery was that after emancipation a huge section of the African American work force remained tied to the land. Tractored off the land after the development of the cotton-picking machine, they were the last section of the rural population to join the industrial work force. They were concentrated in that sector — the unskilled and semiskilled sector — that was first attacked by the robot.

The Black poor were hit first and hardest. The Black bourgeoisie fled their traditional sections of the city as soon as the ink was dry on the laws allowing them to do so. Holding stable jobs, a section of the African American workers also moved from the inner city into much more stable neighborhoods.

With the factories shutting down, the land around these factories quickly lost their value. Taxes fell, maintenance dwindled and the combination of the American form of apartheid, plus the liquidation of jobs, created a new type of slum: the black, permanently destitute, rotting inner core of the formerly central working-class area of the city.

The economists, their social vision distorted by racist ideology, were unable to understand the difference between the reserve army of unemployed created by industrial capitalism and the structural, permanent joblessness created by robotics. They only saw a growing mass of African Americans outside the labor market. They eagerly embraced the term “underclass.”

Those who coined the term “underclass” perhaps thought here again was a group unable to keep up, and once falling behind and supported by welfare, consciously accepted

an existence outside the capitalist relations of worker and employer. They were presented as a subclass of Blacks, reliant on welfare, who had lost the work ethic. Worse, they were creating a subculture of immorality and criminality in the midst of a great national expansion of wealth and productivity.

A more concrete look showed something different. The new productive equipment has polarized wealth and poverty as never before. Absolute wealth in the form of 145 billionaires and absolute poverty in the form of some eight million homeless and absolutely destitute were new to our country. The increase in production was accompanied by an increase in unemployment and joblessness.

Since that phrase “underclass” was coined, the process of social destruction has continued. We can see now that this new group of permanently unemployed is not the result of the welfare system or of some “racial inferiority”, but of the new means of production and the destruction of jobs.

The effects of robotics on the white unskilled and semiskilled workers were not so easily seen scattered as they were, and still are, throughout the general white population, especially in the rural areas and in the suburbs. The African Americans were highly visible, being concentrated in a relatively small urban area. Also, the percentage of Black laborers among the African American population was higher than white laborers among the white population.

Racism against Blacks provided the form, but the content was the beginnings of a social revolution. The first expression of that revolution was the wrecking of the economy of working-class Black America. That revolution is now wreaking its havoc against the formerly secure sections of the blue-collar, white-collar and lower management levels of the white workers.

Today, almost nine in ten Black youth ages 16 to 19 are unemployed. There is a steady increase in Black teens murdered. Black families on average hold one-tenth the wealth of white families. HIV, a disease of poverty, disproportionately affects Blacks. There is a disproportionate number of Blacks in prisons.

This dangerous situation facing the African American poor is not happening in a vacuum. It is part of a process that is pulling millions of all colors and nationalities into poverty. Today, the economy is losing millions of jobs. Nearly 50.7 million Americans, or one in six, are without healthcare. An estimated 50 million people struggled to put food on the table last year. The demand at food banks is up. One in four children is hungry. Growing numbers of Americans are going without other necessities such as water and heat in their homes.

But it is not simply the growth of poverty that is significant today. And the results of the process are broader than the social problems caused by racism. It is acknowledged now that, in fact, the so-called white underclass is larger and growing faster than the

Black. What we are dealing with is not an “underclass,” but a new class. Today, this new class has already formed a new economic section of the working class and it is in the process of creating a new social and political entity.

CLASS-CULTURAL DIVISION

The concept of race based on color has to go out the window, just like the concept of race based on geographic locale had to go out the window. It is not possible to have a Black president and sustain the idea of color-based racism.

But we *do* have racism. But it's more and more being shifted into economic status. More and more if you are part of the America where your parents didn't have a job, you don't have a job, you went to a school where you can barely read and write — you might have the same skin color, but you are not the same as others who are not in that situation.

The cultural divisions within Black society have been developing for some time and are almost complete. There has been a selective “cultural integration” taking place. If an African American will think, talk, act and have the same motivations as the members of the ruling class, the doors are open to them. The scores of Black generals, admirals and CEOs of big corporations, the Black politicians and government bureaucrats all testify to this. Today, there are literally hundreds of Black millionaires. Below them is a growing layer of Black professionals who have practically no connection to the strivings and aspirations of the mass of African Americans.

The tendencies of cultural division within white society, although always underground, are now becoming visible. Increasingly, lower-class whites have more in common with the lower-class Black cultural forms than they do with the white upper-class. Today, this history is being grafted on to the new class and the cultural divisions that are arising from the vast polarization of wealth and poverty.

RACE, RACISM AND THE NEW CLASS

The ruling class uses the particular weapons of history against the different sections of the new class, but the ruling class is aiming its fire at anyone — regardless of color — who presents a threat to the existing order. They are attempting to stigmatize and isolate the new class as a class.

We can see the outlines of this attack in Charles Murray's new book *Coming Apart*. He warns that the all-class white unity that once characterized America is “coming apart at the seams, not along seams of race or ethnicity, but of class.” The divergence of cultural behaviors and values between the classes he describes is so great, he writes, that they have so little in common that one can “barely recognize their underlying American kinship.”

Murray considers the “new lower-class”

continued on pg 5

MARCH/APRIL 2012

Causality and Human Will

Preparing for what lies ahead is one of the most important things that revolutionaries face today. There have been many organizations in the history of America that were overtaken by events and simply fell apart because they were not prepared for what came their way. Revolutionaries cannot make the proper assessments if they do not deeply understand causality, that is, cause and effect. This question and its examination are of extreme importance.

What do we mean by causality? The dictionary states that it is the principle that everything that happens must have a cause. If everything that happens has a cause then everything that happens is an effect of something else, and in turn lays the foundation for something else to happen.

All of the philosophies in the world are connected to this question of explaining the relationship between cause and effect. Winston Churchill summed up a prevalent philosophy of causality in his famous statement about history. "History?" he said. "Just one damned thing after another." According to this view, there are no connections, no cause, no effect, no relation between things; just a jumble of things that happen.

Dialectical and historical materialism unites cause and effect, which is totally separated in most other philosophies. Dialectical and historical materialism gives revolutionaries a tremendous advantage in that it unifies the process. By unifying cause and effect, it unifies and integrates the whole development of the world.

The world is an integrated whole. It is all the result of billions of causes and effects. Everything that happens is related to the rest of everything that happens. It is a complex, difficult thing but we can understand what is happening to us and what happens around us if we proceed from this conception.

CAUSE AND EFFECT AND THE INDIVIDUAL

We must avoid any mechanical considerations that cause and effect can be reduced down to such as "I kicked the dog and the dog bit me." That is not causality. There is nothing mechanical in the scientific concept of cause and effect, of causality.

Causality teaches us that certain developments make things possible and make other things impossible. But that does not guarantee that anything in particular is going to happen.

Conditions set the stage for various things to happen, but it is the intervention of human beings that make things happen in a particular way. It is the ability of human beings to grapple with the world as it is presented to them and to have a goal within all this possibility that makes things happen.

In this question of causality and everything in human activity, it is the human mind, the human will that is the determining factor. That does not mean that human beings can do anything they want under any circumstances. The parameters are laid out by cause and effect. Within those parameters, what happens depends on what human beings think and what they are prepared to sacrifice and struggle for.

LESSON FROM HISTORY

We can use an example from our own history, the U.S. Civil War, to illustrate our point. The mechanical view of causality would simply state that slavery was the cause of the Civil War and the Civil War was the effect. The real world is not quite that simple. If we look at the history, we can see that there were years of personalities and events that shaped the hows and wherefores and the results of the Civil War. It wasn't just a civil war; it was a war that had a result. That result was shaped by what people did before the firing even began. The role of the

individual, the thinking of the combatants (that is, the subjective side) the role of the national culture, the role of a nation's history — the whole complexity of social relations played a role.

For the first three years, the war was fought with the aim of keeping the Union together. But the Union couldn't galvanize the moral support to win the war. Wars are won on the basis of moral support. They appear to be won on the basis of technical or material superiority, but in the final analysis wars are won on the basis of moral support for those wars.

If this doesn't seem possible, just look at Afghanistan today. The people there are fighting against the most technologically advanced society in the world and the U.S. still can't beat them. Thousands of civilians are being killed. This slaughter of human beings is galvanizing the entire region against the United States.

If we revolutionaries are going to be successful in our efforts, we have to understand the relationship between the inevitability of the destruction of capitalism and the path of accomplishing that destruction. We can say that communism is inevitable just like it could be said that, because of the conditions, the destruction of slavery was inevitable. But the destruction of slavery dragged on for three brutal years until the American people got the idea of what they had to do in order to end that war.

People blame Lincoln for dragging the war on and not declaring emancipation earlier. They don't give Lincoln the credit that he deserves for how he maneuvered the State of the United States through all the various channels and blocks to finally arrive at the situation where he could declare such an emancipation. Here we can see the role of the individual. At the end of the war Lincoln certainly wanted to begin the process of integrating the blacks into American society — starting off by giving the vote to the black

veterans and blacks who were literate and making them full citizens. At that point, and because of that, he was murdered. Johnson, who was pro-Southern and pro-slavery, took over and stopped that entire process. It took a hundred years for the blacks to achieve what Lincoln had intended them to achieve in five.

Revolutionaries have to keep their eye on where the process needs to go, and grasp completely the significance of the role of individuals, including each of us, to negatively and positively affect this process. Each one of us has that burden of history on our backs — what we all do affects the future of our country and the world.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

So our task is to see the dialectic between cause and effect, and secondly, to see the individual (or that is to say, the subjective side) in this process of development. The situation today is at the stage where revolutionaries have to be absolutely conscious of what their responsibilities are within the context of cause and effect. Not within just any context, but within the context of cause and effect.

History today demands something that has never been demanded of human beings. We're talking about the struggle against the most brutal, powerful, imperial State that the world has ever known. We're talking about the struggle against a State that has sanctioned secret murder.

We face a difficult situation ahead that is very different from the situation of the past. But because we revolutionaries understand the process of cause and effect and the indispensable role of the individual and the human mind in that process, we can face the future confident that we will play our role in guiding the ship through the storm and bringing it safely to port.

New Form of Racism Emerging

continued from pg 4

of "poor whites" he describes as depraved and ignorant as the poor Blacks he described in his infamous book *The Bell Curve*. For Murray, poor whites are lazy, prone to crime, addicted to government programs, irreligious, full of excuses, and morally bankrupt. They are inferior to, beneath, not anything like, the whites (and the wealthy of all colors) in the new upper class he lauds so highly.

This kind of racism against the white poor is nothing new, of course. Poor whites have always been considered naturally inferior, their poverty attributed to some deficiency in intellectual or physical capacity. Especially after the Civil War and all the way up to WWII the southern white was looked down upon by the northern white as being not really American. In the 1950s, a series of *Chicago Tribune* editorials, for ex-

ample, viciously attacked Appalachian "migrants" for turning the streets of Chicago into "a lawless free-for-all with their primitive jungle tactics ... [with] the lowest standard of living and moral code [if any] of all... No other group is so completely devoid of self-pride and responsibility... even worse than Negroes." The 1972 movie *Deliverance* made this point clearly to the American public — that these people were animals, that these were the kind of people that lived in Appalachia.

While Murray focuses on poor whites, he includes poverty stricken Latinos and Blacks in this new lower class. Regardless of color, the new class poses a threat to the very fabric of American society. "Individually, they are not much of a problem," he writes. "Collectively, they can destroy the kind of civil society that America requires."

LOOKING AHEAD

Two contradictory processes are developing simultaneously in America today. Under the pressure of economic privation there always will be a tendency for any oppressed or defenseless person to shift the blame to someone else, rather than attack the overwhelming power that is hurting him or her. We are going to see different sections of this new class fighting each other.

At the same time, the commonality of their economic situation is going to compel them to unite, if only at first on specific issues. As the foundation for color-racism is being destroyed there is a growing economic attack against the new class — on their education, their housing standards, their job benefits, an attack on the very infrastructure of their lives. There is no way for them to resist

this kind of pressure unless they seek out and find a political expression for the objective reality of their changing lives.

We are dealing with a political question. The new class is already forming along the line of a unity based on what is practical and real and possible. But ultimately, it cannot carry out its historic mission unless it becomes conscious of that mission, unless it understands itself as a class, unless it sees its common interests as a class. This is the revolutionaries' role, to illuminate the meaning of the current struggles in order to develop the consciousness, the thinking, the sense of self the class must have to carry out its mission. Strategy, direction, vision and the diverse ways in which the revolutionaries disseminate and share this message all turn on an accurate assessment of the race question as it is today in America.

A World Beyond Private Property

What do we mean when we use the term “private property” in our current capitalist system? We aren't referring to people's personal possessions — homes, clothes, cars, etc — especially the necessities of life. We mean that the institutions and corporations that control the goods and services that people need are held and owned privately by a few people, or the owning class, for their private gain.

In the hunter-gatherer stage of human existence (“primitive communism”), all was owned in common by the entire band or tribe, the food that was hunted and gathered was distributed to all — or nobody would have survived. With the development of agriculture, the ability to store surplus food set the conditions for one class dominating another. This surplus and the labor of the workers who toiled to produce it was controlled by an “owning” class. The first private property was slaves, one class of human beings owned by another who profited from this brutal form of enforced labor. The exploitation of slave labor was the base on which class society developed, and throughout history has been at its root. Only the elimination of private property can end the class system and its various forms of exploitation.

Private property means the control of an exploiting class over the means of production, the tools used for production, and the exploitation of another class's labor. This is enforced by both violence and coercion, and all the many methods of social control and conditioning. Whether produced by slave or wage-slave, the fruits of this labor are taken

by the exploiting class and become their personal property, which then belongs to them. The workers must then buy back what they themselves produced.

The people's struggle to liberate themselves from class exploitation has continued through the ages. At the end of the Civil War in the U.S., the emancipation of the slaves — who were the property of the slave owners — was up to that time the largest confiscation of private property in history, breaking in the process the political domination of slavers over all branches of the government. We are facing a similar moment in history, but this time the fight is to liberate the whole of humanity from the fetters of economic exploitation and tyranny. We can now create the abundance the new technology promises, and so a new world: a cooperative society, with this abundance distributed according to need.

Each time the tools of production are revolutionized, society must change its social relations to fit the new conditions. The system of private property is absolutely incompatible with the new labor-replacing technologies that could, in the hands of our class, liberate humanity once and for all. The majority of humanity — our class — will either seize political power to use this technology for the good of all, or we will be further pushed into hunger, insecurity, homelessness, imprisonment, war and despair.

With automation and computerization of the productive forces, labor is being eliminated from production. Potentially liberating, it is the basis at last for the elimination of wage-slavery, class domination and private ownership of publicly necessary goods.

But this abundance can't be realized until society is reorganized to distribute the abundance according to need.

The ruling class is moving to make sure private property isn't turned into public property. The people are stirring because private property relations under collapsing capitalism are becoming more and more destructive to more and more people. Capitalism is being destroyed by the revolutionizing of its productive forces. The contradiction is between the ability to create abundance and the holding in private hands of what is produced, allowing it to be had only by those who can pay for what they need, while the jobs they rely on to make money are destroyed.

People see the results of this contradiction in their daily lives, as it gets harder and harder to simply survive, and the owning, capitalist class is bloated with its obscene plundered wealth. The global movement for economic justice is at heart a demand that what is produced by these new technologies be publicly owned, for the use and good of all.

The vision of an era of abundance and cooperation, born from the ruins of this collapsing system — which can only deprive, imprison, starve and make war on the striving people of the world — is arising everywhere. In the Arab world, Europe, and in the “Occupy” movements here and around the globe, this is expressed in the demand for the end to economic inequality, against the bailouts of corrupt financial institutions and the corporate takeover of the government (fascism), the growing inequality in society, and the destruction of lives and the planet .

The question of scarcity vs. abundance is behind these global uprisings and occupations. It is becoming starkly obvious, as lives are being destroyed, with homelessness and hunger spreading everywhere, and with generations of youth facing no future, that the change needed is profound and fundamental. The movement understands that the system is unjust at its core, not organized to benefit more than a handful of people, and that it needs to be changed.

It is the job of the revolutionaries to teach the specifics of this vision — the realization of a society that has evolved beyond private property relations. Only then can true justice, equality and the elimination of domination of one class over another be realized. This vision contains everything that humanity has dreamed of for millennia. This vision can't be realized without the destruction of the private property system, which must be replaced with a cooperative, communist economic system compatible with the new productive forces.

For the first time in history we have the material conditions to create the abundance on which this can materially rest. We must organize as a class to seize the political power we need to break the fetters of a dying system of private property we have no stake in, instituting an era of cooperation, peace and harmony, with all we need to realize our full human promise.

This Building Block article is written to help explain a basic concept of the revolutionary process, challenging readers to explore its meaning for political work in today's environment.

The Day That Makes Twenty Years

continued from pg 3

cost of production and stay in business.

Young workers were especially hit hard. Those working at jobs that paid below the poverty level rose 22.9 percent in 1979 to 43.4 percent in 1990. Taking the working class as a whole, one in five workers worked full-time at jobs that paid below the poverty level. Add those at the poverty line and those slightly above the line, and also add the millions who barely existed on part time employment, and the outlines of economic, social and political crisis were clear. The economically lowest, most unstable sector of the class faced starvation without a social welfare system that provided at least the minimum of cultural and physical needs.

The administrations of Reagan and Bush transferred billions of dollars from social services to industry under the guise of bringing American industrial output to a competitive level with Germany and Japan. Most of that money went into speculation and gambling on the stock market. By 1990, the top 1 percent of the population was worth more than the bottom 90% combined. Under such conditions, to characterize the uprisings as a

“race riot” not only reveals the ideology of racism, but plays into the hands of the enemy.

The uprising was the first social response, the first indication of social revolution resulting from the historic changes that were taking place in the productive forces. In 1992, this process was just beginning, but it has continued, giving rise to waves of social response as the impact of these changes have spread and deepened. Far from a race riot, the chain of State control broke at its weakest link.

The uprising was joined by Latino and white workers who were in the same economic category as the Black fighters. At the beginning of the uprising, at least half of the demonstrators were white and Hispanic. During the first week after the verdict, 835 whites were arrested along with 3517 Hispanics and 2564 Blacks. The death toll also reflects this fact. This time the African Americans did not feel alone in their fight against the State. The participation of Hispanics and whites provided a foundation for ideological projections of unity and class.

The American people expressed a new hatred for the exploiters who had forced them into poverty over the previous decade. Bribery and racism had distorted the process. With the rebellion, it came out into the open. The crisis was not simply the catastrophic drop in the standard of living. It included the ideological development arising from much publicized looting of the public treasury through the Savings and Loans scandals and the defense contracts, real estate and financial scams of the 1980s. The ideology of the people slowly began responding to the social reality.

The political think-tanks of the ruling class were very much aware of the seriousness of the crisis. Although they could not foresee the exact form the beginnings of the social revolution would take, the ruling class was well prepared for the attempt to contain it. Throughout the 1990s, constitutional protections were gutted, the police militarized, and after 9/11 the police were increasingly integrated with Homeland Security, and an array of laws further gutted U.S. constitutional protections. Obama's National De-

fense Act has taken this to yet another level, allowing the government to detain anyone indefinitely whom they accuse of being a “terrorist.”

THE NEXT STEP

Violence in the streets always ushers in a new era. Intense political activity flows from one stage of fighting and prepares the way for the next. Once the stage of fighting subsides, the next step has to be clarified and proceed from the class content of the fight.

The uprising was the day that makes twenty years. The dialectical processes of economic revolution and social revolution have been joined. With the uprising, we left one era and entered another. Revolutionaries must seize upon what is new and arising. Revolutionaries must strive to bring all the most oppressed and exploited together on the basis of activity regardless of color or nationality. The slow, objective motion toward class identification must be taken up and developed at all cost.