

RALLY COMRADES!

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As The South Goes . . . So Goes the Nation

“What is Freedom?” asked General William T. Sherman at a gathering with 20 freedmen in Savannah on January 12, 1865. “Placing us where we could reap the benefits of our labor” replied Garrison Frazier. “And Slavery?” Sherman asked. “It is receiving by irresistible power the work of another man, and not by his consent,” Frazier answered.

Throughout the history of America, the laboring masses have dreamed of freedom from the domination of property over slave labor and free labor, and of the reconstruction of society to enjoy the full fruit of their labor. Abolition, Reconstruction, Freedom. On these hinge both the history and the future of our country, and the South has been and will be the linchpin that determines the outcome.

ABOLITION AND RECONSTRUCTION

Slavery was at the the bosom of American capitalism from its earliest beginnings. The interests of the Southern slave-owning class were protected in the very fabric of the Constitution itself. Southern slaveholders controlled the Presidency of the United States for 41 of the first 50 years. Eighteen of 31 Supreme Court justices were slaveholders in these years.

The slave-holding class dominated both Black slaves and landless white laborers. Desperately poor, white laborers numbered as high as half of the white population in the South, and in a society that came to equate white skin with independence and freedom, the presence of poor whites belied the notion that all whites were superior to all people of color.

Even with Jacksonian democracy, which was supposed to extend the franchise to all adult white males, the slave-owning class managed to lock out poor whites by virtue of property qualifications. The doctrine of race and racism, originated in the 17th century, was needed by the slave power to control Black and white labor. This ideology of white supremacy only guaranteed the supremacy of the slave-owning class.

Resistance to the Confederacy and to secession basically split along class lines. Poor white laborers had no objective interest in defending slavery and the very class that oppressed them.

Shortly after Sherman’s meeting with the freedmen in Savannah, he issued Field Order 15, which effectively redistributed abandoned and confiscated plantation lands to the former slaves. “Forty acres and a mule” became the particular expression both of the abolition of the property of the slave-owning class and the self-determination of the newly freed slaves, who were now free to reap the benefits of their labor.

President Andrew Johnson, a Southerner from Tennessee, had a different view of Reconstruction.

Within six months of becoming President, after Lincoln’s assassination in 1865, he had rescinded the redistribution of plantation lands to their former owners. Even after the Radical Republicans in the Congress gained the upper hand for a time, the program for the breakup of the plantations and the elimination of the slave-holders as a class could not go forward. Such a program, the New York Times editorialized at the time, “strikes at the root of all property rights.” A “war on property to succeed the war on slavery” could not be allowed to go forward. The former slave power must become subordinate to Northern capital, but property relations must not be altered.

For Northern financial and industrial interests, the South, and particularly the Black Belt region of the South, offered a reserve of cheap materials, almost limitless opportunity for high return investment and an abundance of cheap labor. To achieve their goals, they had to break the power of the Southern planters and replace it with their own.

They used the impulses of the freed slaves to batter away at the power of the planters on the political front. The 13th, 14th and 15th amendments were passed, Black males got the vote throughout the South, and for a time the new Reconstruction governments were about the business of building a new society, opening new schools and hospitals, electing representative

governments, and overturning the most oppressive laws of the previous period. Meanwhile, Northern financial and industrial interests consolidated their economic control over the South.

Once the old planter class had been rendered totally subservient to the aims of Northern industrialists and financiers, the war on property relations was stopped in its tracks. The Hayes-Tilden Agreement of 1877 ratified the alliance between the now dominant Northern and financial interests and a subordinate Southern ruling class. Reconstruction was abandoned, and with the help of KKK terror, the Southern planters were returned to power to rule the South as they saw fit. In return, Northern interests were guaranteed the huge profits from the region, and were able to use the expansion of capital these profits represented to lay the foundation for imperial expansion into the Caribbean, Latin America and parts of the Pacific.

THE SOUTH CONTROLS THE NATION AND WALL STREET CONTROLS THE SOUTH

“We have no chance to rise from beggars,” Black leader Harrison Bouey declared from South Carolina in 1877. “Men own the capital we work.” The Southern workers, Black and white, were free, but free only to labor. “Compulsory free labor” best described the condition of the Southern worker. Sharecropping replaced 40 acres and a mule. The sharecropper had no property rights at all, only as a wage laborer forced to work the land. Vagrancy and

lien laws were passed and the convict lease system was developed.

The Southern so-called Redeemer state governments replaced and dismantled Reconstruction. Both Blacks and poor whites were effectively disfranchised with poll taxes, literacy tests and outright voter fraud. In the struggle over which whites would rule, the Blacks was disfranchised, but in the process a great many poor whites were disfranchised as well. The Southern rulers consolidated their power by directing sustained campaigns of violence at any common ground between Blacks and whites. These campaigns, fueled by white supremacy and economic instability, aimed to control all the laboring people of the South.

Dominated by the planter and Northern financial industrial elite, the new governments embarked upon a reactionary program designed to secure maximum profits for private capital. Taxes were cut to a bare minimum, as they proceeded to slash state budgets, closing public hospitals and cutting education and other public services. Regulations on business and on environmental standards were virtually nonexistent.

With a class-skewed virtually white-only electorate, the one-party Solid South emerged as the balance of power in national politics. Even as a minority wing within the New Deal coalition, the role of the South served as a reactionary pole, pursuing policies of protecting white supremacy in the South, while minimizing the influence of organized labor and keeping taxes as low

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as possible. The anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act was passed in 1947 with an alliance of conservative northern Republicans and southern Democrats. They were also able to block the passage of national health insurance. The ruling class was able to use the South to block any effort of the workers to better their situation that did not first benefit the interests of capital. W.E.B DuBois brilliantly summed this up when he stated, "The South controls the nation and Wall Street controls the South."

THE "SOUTHERNIZATION" OF AMERICA

We see the consequences of this history today. Neoliberalism is little more than the old Southern low-wage, low benefit, low tax program. In 1985, in the wake of the development of so-called 2-party politics in the South, the Democratic Leadership Council was formed, with a neoliberal program at its heart. DLC candidate Bill Clinton was elected on a program of smaller government, states rights and welfare reform. By the 1990s Southerners from both parties had come to dominate both the executive and legislative branches of government, and with the blunting of party lines, the political system today has come again to exhibit

the core characteristics that shaped the Solid South.

The "Southernization of America" has come to be expressed politically in the neoliberal mantra: slash social programs, privatize public services, deregulate the economy and the environment, cut taxes for the rich, increase military spending to fund the drive for empire, while at the same time chipping away at democratic processes and institutions. The national program of the ruling class, the Southernization of America, is the program of global capital in the epoch of globalization.

GLOBALIZATION AND NEW FORMS OF POVERTY

George W. Bush, after witnessing the deep poverty revealed by the devastation of Katrina, said last September, "We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action." His bold action has been to cut the very programs that could benefit the poor. But he was right about the extent of the poverty that still prevails in the South. The South continues to be the region with the highest poverty rates in the country. In Mississippi it is almost 18 percent, in Georgia almost 15 percent. Atlanta's official poverty rate matches that of New Orleans, almost 28 percent.

While it is true that there has always been poverty in the South, the poverty the South is confronting today has a different character. When the South was transformed by the mechanization of agriculture in the 1940s and the laborers fled to the factories of both North and South, the fare of the workers in the South was largely relegated to the low-wage, non-union jobs provided by runaway factories from the North. As the South has become industrialized and urbanized, now the people who must work for a living are confronted with the decline of industry and the rise of an economy based in electronics. In a word, globalization.

The paradigm of globalization is the robot. Robotic or automated production personifies wage-less production. As jobs are being permanently eliminated, the value of the labor of all workers is measured in terms of the robot. This new reality is creating a new kind of poverty, and a new class of poor. They are the homeless, the absolutely destitute, and they are also the temporary worker, the day laborer, the part time, and no benefits worker, the throwaway worker on the way to becoming permanently unemployed. They are the locked out, the dispossessed.

The state, acting in the interests of the capitalist class, has moved openly to direct rule, expressed in the form of the merger of the corporations and government. From tort reform to billion dollar tax cuts to secret deals, the government/corporate merger is moving aggressively to consolidate its rule.

GEORGIA: WHAT GLOBALIZATION MEANS

Today the numbers of manufacturing workers are fast declining to those of the agricultural worker. Where once agriculture predominated as an employer, today the agricultural workforce is less than 3 percent. Where for a time the South led the nation in percentage of manufacturing jobs, it is now down to 11 percent in Georgia, and in Atlanta it is only 7.4 percent. Union membership in Georgia has declined to 5 percent. In South Carolina it is only 3 percent. Wal-Mart has become the single largest employer in Georgia. And of course, it is non-union, setting the example for low-wage, low benefits employment.

The pace continues to accelerate. In Atlanta, both Ford and GM are closing the last two remaining auto plants in the South that are operated by union workers. Textiles have taken the hardest hit, with 90,000 jobs lost in Georgia in the past five years. And while many of the plant closings represent shops running away to cheaper labor across the globe, much of it is also a

phenomenon of permanent job losses due to advances in technology. Foreign auto plants dominate the Southern landscape, all of them non-union.

In the recent session of the Georgia legislature, a 4 percent tax on energy was eliminated, but only for the corporations. Developers may build roads and other infrastructure and then tax homeowners to pay for it. Developers are now being allowed to build in what were once protected stream buffers.

Yet, while permanent job loss and poverty grows, the welfare rolls in Georgia have been cut by more than a third in the last two years. Attempts to pass living wage provisions have been outlawed by the state. The state now also boasts that it has the toughest anti-immigration legislation in the country, promoting it as a model for the nation. Undocumented workers will be denied access to state services. The old convict lease system has surged back in a new form. The Georgia state legislature passed a 2005 law (HB 58: Working Against Recidivism Act) allowing corporations to build factories on prison land, employing prisoners and obligating those prisoners to pay a portion of their "wages" for their prison upkeep.

NEW PROLETARIAT CHALLENGES OLD FORMS OF CONTROL

The permanent elimination of jobs means growing homelessness. The homeless are at the core of the new proletariat, and are at the cutting edge of the movement of the poor for their own emancipation. They are the laborer, cast aside from production, reduced to begging for day laborer jobs, temporary work or for crumbs. They cannot confront the corporations at the work place. Cast outside the system, their very fight for survival is a political fight, a fight against the state.

Capital faces the problem of controlling the growing mass of dispossessed and impoverished Americans. In Atlanta alone, there are over 7,000 homeless, and estimates vary from 38,000 to 70,000 for the greater metro area. It is also said that as many as 1,000 of the homeless each month wind up in jail. The dream of the corporations, represented by Central Atlanta Progress, in league with the government, is to have a downtown free of the poor. Hence the passage of several "Quality of Life" ordinances, which make it a crime to "remain in a parking lot," "lay or slouch on a park bench," "urinate in public," and now the creation of a "Tourist Triangle" in which panhandling is banned and the poor are to be excluded.

These measures were met in Atlanta, and in other cities where they have been instituted, with a tremendous outpouring of resistance from a broad spectrum. Demonstrations and camp-ins at City Hall last year in Atlanta led to organizing in the poor neighborhoods throughout the city with calls to expand the fight to include demands by the poor for housing for all, health care for all, living wages for all. Such demands lay the foundation to organize around the common interests of a class, regardless of color, and as such challenges the means by which the South has historically been controlled.

ABOLITION. RECONSTRUCTION. FREEDOM.

The South is not only key to the rule of capital, it is a linchpin for the emancipation of all peoples from the domination of capital. The battle lines are being drawn and our class is beginning to move. The merger of the corporations and government positions the propertied class for direct and open rule. Consequently the demands of the workers for housing, health care, living wages, are revolutionary demands, achievable only by the abolition of private property itself. Only then may the new class "reap the benefits of our labor" by the reconstruction of society on a cooperative basis.

EDITORIAL POLICY

R a l l y

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

C o m r a d e

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

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

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

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Race in America: A Changing, but Central Question



We stand at the edge of the most revolutionary of times. Profound social changes, driven forward by changes in the economy, are opening a window of opportunity that allows us to make up for the past half century of stagnation. As in previous moments of great change, some revolutionaries become stuck in the mud of yesteryear and are unable to move forward with changing times. That mud is theoretical confusion. This confusion arises when revolutionaries hold to unchanging doctrine or theory while disregarding constantly changing facts. The unending fight for clarity is precisely the effort to keep theory and doctrine united with and reflecting the facts of a constantly changing world.

Today it is broadly accepted that humanity has entered a period of epochal change. The fundamental changes in the production and distribution of the means of life compel all social relations and formations to change accordingly. Such change isn't simply the destruction of the old and introduction of the new. It is a complex process involving changing relationships of form and content and of quantity and quality. Such a period demands a leadership capable of understanding and working with social motion in transition. In America today, the rapidly growing mass movement is dangerously compromised by a lack of such clarity.

Quantitative changes in the economy are incremental, but as they accumulate, they force social changes that appear suddenly and as crisis. Social ideas do not evolve as a reflection of the evolution of the economy. The ruling class will not allow them to do so. The old ideas serve a very important role as a reactionary counter balance to the emer-

gence of revolutionary new ideas. Such old ideas, the hangovers from previous periods, have played a very special role in disorienting radical movements in our country. There is much we must learn from history in this regard.

At the center of these old ideas is the political concept of race and how to deal with it. The question of race was the central issue in preventing the American people from achieving their goals in the Revolutionary War. Those goals, enshrined in our documents of the Revolution, were unattainable for the mass of white toilers while a quarter of the working class was in chains. The question of race was central to frustrating the popular aims of the Civil War. Before abandoning the goal of breaking the political back of the planters, the American people first had to abandon the vision, "And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea." Playing the race card did this.

The question of race was also the central issue that prevented the breakout

of 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, it has been written, 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.

First, let us look at the African-American community. One of the ideological hangovers from the period of segregation is the tendency to see the African Americans as a category rather than a scattered grouping of some 40 million individuals who have different histories, ideals, and goals and who belong to various economic classes. Today there is no such thing as the African-American

The political struggle is an art. It requires more than an adherence to theory or doctrine. It requires the ability to sum up, to make decisions on the basis of the temporary relationship of subjective and objective forces. This is nowhere more true than in the effort to unite the historically disparate sectors of the new, revolutionary class.

of the union movement in the 1930's and 40's. There was no way to advance and secure the unions without organizing the South. The unions could not or would not take this step. The alternative was to create the conditions for the trade unions to become something akin to a labor front and an appendage of the State Department. Revolutionaries and people of good will fought every step of the way, but the lack of understanding of the *political* rather than biological nature of the race question led to their defeat.

As we enter this new epoch of transformation, the race question again presents itself as a changing but central question. This time we dare not fail.

Racism in America has been directed against the Irish, the Native Americans,

"people." This characterization was correct years ago when the pressure of segregation isolated the African Americans from the rest of society. This isolation allowed for the creation of a common culture, internal class stratification, and a common political agenda.

As the economic basis of segregation weakened, so did the social and political cohesiveness of the African-American community. To the degree that segregation weakened, the African-American community, as such, disintegrated. As possibilities developed, the better situated Black upper class moved away from the ghetto and became a part of the Anglo-American bourgeoisie. In the main, they continue to pander to the Black masses, since they still need a social base for their economic and social

advancement. Actually, the two classes have little in common, and both sides are accelerating the drift toward class orientation.

A broad strata of civil, military, and police officers and corporate, educational, and government officials are Black, giving the impression that there is an end to segregation, and the struggle around class has taken the place of the struggle around race. Some revolutionaries hold to the idea that race is still the predominant factor. Others are dropping the question of race and declaring that today there is only the question of class. Race and racism are political weapons to facilitate class exploitation and should never be placed in opposition to class. It is not a question of either/or. Both factors are at play, and the question is which factor predominates under what circumstance and in which direction the general motion is going.

There is no question that the old-style segregation and lynch-mob form of racism has declined. Race is a political factor and must change its form to function in changing circumstance. Today, the salient aspect of the social struggle is the intensifying war against the new proletarian class created by electronics. For historical reasons, the most vulnerable sector is Black. The Draconian slashing of the so-called safety net has been accomplished by presenting it as a Black thing. The attacks against education and health care are always carefully couched in terms of race.

This political maneuvering is taking place within the reality of a growing social consciousness within this new proletarian class. The ruling class cannot abandon the weapon of race, since it is historically evolved and an integral part of American politics.

While remaining fully conscious of the viability of the race question, we revolutionaries concentrate on the question of class, which is the arising and progressive aspect. There has never been a complete separation of the workers according to color. The decline of the racial designation of work and the commonality of unemployment is creating opportunities for class solidarity on an entirely new level. Previously, what unity there was, was built around common problems in the shop. Today we can speak of building *class* unity – something far beyond workplace problems and in the arena of political struggle.

In summary, the political struggle is an art. It requires more than an adherence to theory or doctrine. It requires the ability to sum up, to make decisions on the basis of the temporary relationship of subjective and objective forces. This is nowhere more true than in the effort to unite the historically disparate sectors of the new, revolutionary class.

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The League of Revolutionaries for a New America is made up of people from all walks of life who are tied together by a common aim – the end of exploitation, the social ownership of the means of production, and the distribution of the products of society according to need.

This program for the reorganization of society is the only way to end the ecological, cultural, and spiritual devastation in our country and the world.

Society must be reorganized so that the abundance made possible by science and technology benefits all — a society that puts humanity above profits.

May 1st: A new class being formed from the ruins of the old

STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

On May Day 2006, the working class of the United States marked a new round in its awakening. Years of despair and swelling anger over the devastation sweeping the industrial Rust Belt in mid-America. Months of worried pleas and urgent demands over the government's criminal betrayal before and after Hurricane Katrina. Then a Bill in Congress that would criminalize undocumented immigrants and anyone who extends to them even some common human kindness.

All this built up to May day – a celebration of our class but, at the same time, a serious response to the social destruction resulting from the profound economic changes circling the globe and ripping through this country.

An estimated four million people took to the streets. Not only the Latino immigrants, but also immigrants from Nigeria, Korea, Poland, and every

country whose economy cannot give them the work they need to sustain their families. Not only the immigrants and their families, but also thousands of workers who have a heart for their fellow human beings and who recognize that an injury to one is an injury to all.

The global economy is undermining the ability of people to survive in their own countries. Driven by starvation wages and World Bank-mandated "austerity" measures, people from all over the world come here to find a better life. Once in the U.S. they find themselves again among the new class of the dispossessed, fighting for basic rights, water, health care and a living wage. This is the class that marched on May 1st.

The impulse of the movement is to go beyond the leaders and organizations that seemed to deliver the good life when the economy was expanding and times were good for so many in this country. The old answers don't work, and people are looking elsewhere for new ones. Why follow the Democratic Party when these so-called friends in Congress voted for the immigration bill, the Patriot Act, the Iraq war? Why

trust the Democratic Party when it was a Democratic President who took the harshest steps in recent history to criminalize the undocumented worker and instituted "welfare reform" that cut millions of children and unemployed out of needed benefits?

This May Day, millions have begun to cut their own path. They are saying "no" to those who do not promote their interests. Even the fears of some of the most vulnerable workers that "immigrants take the jobs" have proven to be only superficial. Yes, our class is in motion, and it's time to celebrate.

But it's also time to beware. Won't various actors in Congress use the demonstrations to foment support for the measures that serve business interests? Won't the Democratic Party try to scare people into dropping their principles and their class interests in order to fight some more dramatic danger? Won't opportunists of all sorts try to build their own organizations and careers?

Of course. This is nothing new. There are always forces that assess a social motion and calculate how to move politically to accomplish their

own personal agenda or class program.

But when there is motion, consciousness of class interests is possible. People are learning that this system won't take care of them. The impulse is to unite and fight for what they know they are entitled to. It is possible to break people free – ideologically and organizationally free – from their class enemies.

Ensuring that our class has the consciousness to fight in its own interests won't happen automatically. We face a powerful ruling class that lets no person, country, laws, or morality get in its way. A whole system of organizations and so-called leaders colludes to hold people hostage to old ideas.

This moment calls for an organization of revolutionaries. Such an organization will be forged in the process of accomplishing this step in the revolutionary movement. We invite you to get in touch with us so that together we can figure out how to arm our class with the understanding it needs to fight in its own interests. We invite you to join the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

The Battle over Immigrant Rights and the Tasks of Revolutionaries

The spontaneous movement is making a historic turn — going from the defensive to the offensive. At this moment, the turn is taking place around the immigrant issue. At the core of the immigrant movement is the fight for survival of a section of the class. The new immigrants' struggle for survival ties them objectively to the rest of the working class in the same position.

The motion we are currently seeing is the social response forced forward by the economic and now social destruction that is sweeping the globe. The immigration issue is further evidence of the progressive failure of capitalism as a system.

The immigration protests are a part of the continuum of what the workers learned through hurricane Katrina — that their government doesn't care about the poor. Another part of that continuum is that, for the millions of workers who lost their manufacturing jobs in the Rust Belt states, the government is doing nothing to lessen their burden.

THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE— A COMPONENT OF U.S. GLOBAL STRATEGY

It is important to see the immigration issue as not pertaining only to Latinos, immigrants, or even just the undocumented. Rather, we need to see it within the context of U.S. strategy to insure the economic interests of global capital. Globalization has internationalized the commodity market. But the labor market is still objectively and subjectively constrained by national boundaries.

This is a contradiction that cries out for resolution, the beginning of which is now occurring through the motion around immigration. Millions and millions of workers are being displaced by the economic and political policies of the U.S. in cahoots with the bourgeoisies of the globe. As a consequence, the United States has become the home of millions of immigrant workers who have been forced by the poverty in their countries to immigrate or starve. They are rooting themselves in every community in the United States. They labor from coast to coast, south to north. Their children are born here and have rights as citizens.

The U.S. capitalists could easily resolve the issue of immigration by opening the borders. But they won't do that, because the "illegal status" of the immigrant workers puts those workers at a disadvantage in competing with the rest of the workers in the United States. This

enables the capitalists to lower the wages of all workers in the U.S.

In addition, the U.S. cannot completely seal the border, as this would inevitably lead to a revolution in Mexico. The immigration of Mexican workers is a safety valve for the Mexican bourgeoisie as well as for the globalist bourgeoisie that invests in Mexico. While the U.S. maintains hegemony in the hemisphere and the world, its empire is already being undermined. A revolutionary Mexico would affect other Latin American countries, further threatening U.S. hegemony. For this reason, sectors of the U.S. ruling class are supporting some kind of "amnesty" for undocumented immigrants, as well as a "guest-worker" program to ensure their source of cheap labor.

This position is further splitting the Republican Party, a process that began with the Iraq war and continues with

tion of every child, to demand universal health care for all, and to end the militarization of our borders and the hunt for human beings. The class needs to be rallied under the banner of "An injury to one is an injury to all." To uphold this banner and to rally the workers regardless of nationality, we need to fuse with this spontaneous movement in whatever form that it takes. The slogan "An injury to one is an injury to all" puts forth what is in the interest of the working class as a whole. It is a fighting slogan for our class.

The new immigrants' struggle for survival ties them objectively to the rest of the working class in the same position.

Katrina. As a result, the Republican Party is not as united as it was five years ago. As for the Democratic Party, the workers are becoming more and more disillusioned with its lack of a program, and they are looking for solutions and allies.

There is also an important historical aspect of the struggle of Mexican and Chicano workers today that favors the side of the revolutionaries. After the Mexican-American War of 1848, the United States annexed almost half of Mexico's territory and a huge section of its population. This is a historic wound that has not healed.

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

Immigration is an issue of the working class, and needs to be addressed and resolved by the class. Revolutionaries need to enter the debate to refute and oppose the arguments for the deportation of 12 million undocumented immigrants and for making a fortress out of America by militarizing the border. It's our task to change the debate by calling on everyone to oppose the deportation of human beings, to uphold the educa-

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The Changing Form Of The State: The Merger of Government and the Corporations

Editor's Note: Excerpted from the report of the LRNA Steering Committee, December 2004. The entire report is available at <http://www.lrna.org>

We have said many times that the introduction of electronics and robotics into production represents the introduction of qualitatively new means of production. This changes everything, including the form of the state.

Globalization - capitalism in the age of electronics - has as its imperative the removal of all barriers to the mobility of capital in all its forms, including those barriers imposed by the state.

This does not mean that the nature of the state changes. A state is an instrument of the ruling class to maintain its position as the dominant class. Any change in the form or function of the state machine undertaken by the ruling class is made in accordance with its changing needs and always with reference to strengthening and extending its position as the ruling class. Today, the principal needs of the ruling class involve adjusting to the changes in private property.

NEW STATE FORM EMERGING

Global capital is chafing under the historically derived encumbrances imposed by the nation-state. (Here we mean the responsibility of the national state to its "population," to the nation as a whole). These encumbrances must be and are being removed, and in the process the institutional structure of the bourgeois democratic republic is being destroyed. In its place is being erected the initial pieces of a new state form compatible with the present day needs of capital.

This transformation is expressed as a merger of the government and the major corporations and is being accomplished through the implementation of neoliberal economic, fiscal, and social policies. The key mechanisms employed in this transformation are deregulation of economic activity, including the gutting and non-enforcement of protective legislation and rules; privatization of public goods and services; and fiscal policies that distribute tax benefits upward and tax burdens downward, deferring to future generations payment on a historic debt and imposing budget cuts that result in the dismantling of the public health and social welfare system. It is important to emphasize that this "merger" of the government and the corporations is in fact corporations assuming direct control over government-

tal functions as dictated by the needs of capital.

The social and political consequences of this "marketizing" of the economy and society will set the long-range context on the eve of an historic social movement. We are witnessing the sharpest polarization of wealth and poverty ever in the world and in our country. In 1960, the gap in wealth between the top 20% of U.S. households and the bottom 20% was 30-fold; four decades later, the gap was 75-fold. This intensifying polarization is caused not only by the automatic operation of the market, but also is a direct consequence of the operation of neoliberal policies.

Along with the destruction of the welfare state and the resulting reliance of social services on philanthropy, is the erosion of due process and avenues for redress of grievances. This process occurs through the enactment of draconian laws such as the Patriot Act.

As a result of these developments, we can discern the outlines of political confrontation on a class basis. With the "destruction of the middle" in society, there is a growing erosion of the political buffers that formerly absorbed the people's energy in reformist struggle. In the absence of the political buffers provided by the welfare state, the stage is being set for the inevitable confrontation with the coercive power of the state.

PROTECTING PRIVATE PROPERTY

The ruling class's aim in transforming the state is not limited to expanding opportunities for accumulation. U.S. capitalism must also restructure the state in order to maintain its hegemonic position in the world and to deal forcefully with the social eruption certain to occur as the impoverishment of the people becomes intolerable. Again, the state form is determined by the needs of the ruling class and its ability to reorganize society in accordance with its needs.

In an earlier period, U.S. capital needed a nation-state in the form of a bourgeois democratic republic. Key features of such a republic included free public education, the franchise and popularly elected legislative bodies, the separation of church and state, and the capacity to mobilize a standing citizen army. Such innovations were necessary for the development and defense of the national market and to ensure for capital the existence of an indoctrinated working class capable of functioning in an increasingly complex industrial factory system.

Today, under conditions of global electronics based production and dominance of speculative capital, it would appear that the days of the bourgeois democratic republican form of government are numbered.

It is easy to pander to the shallow vanities or prejudices of people or frighten them. It is much more difficult and dangerous to disengage them from their cherished beliefs. The American people are profoundly committed to their beliefs in democracy, economic justice and civil liberties; beliefs that were essential to the effective functioning of the bourgeois democratic republican form of government. They will not easily part with these beliefs.

As the ideological aspects of the social struggle unfold, we have to keep our "strategic eyes" on the historical importance of the developing polarity as the basis for an emerging social movement. The polarization of wealth and poverty expresses the developing class polarization in society and the destruction of the social "middle." Movements develop on the basis of such extreme shifts in wealth and class formation; ideologies that appeal to actual social interests coalesce with these movements. But an ideology that galvanizes a movement is not necessarily the one that expresses its real interests and takes it towards its actual aims. The big question today is which ideology—capitalist or communist—will express and guide this movement?

GROWING POLITICAL INSTABILITY

What are the consequences of an ideology that does not express the real interests and aims of the working class? Of significance is the existence of a strain of anti-government fervor that expresses the discontent, cynicism, fears, and swelling anger of people who are feeling but not understanding their economic insecurity and the general destruction of society. It is this face of the anti-government sentiment that is the most dangerous. It captures the valid anger of a social group whose needs are not being met by capitalism and deflects it away from political activity that holds the government responsible for the well being of society.

As the new state form emerges, it provokes a response among the military, political, bureaucratic and professional sectors. It should be obvious that these reactions don't flow from any principled position on the side of the poor or even the well being of the American people as a whole; they are reactions to the undermining of the bureaucratic and "institutional" aspects of government.

Nonetheless, these reactions represent a potential avenue of political instability that we should keep an eye on, but while we resist the pull to tail this sort of opposition.

NEW CONDITIONS, AND NEW TACTICS

The political change our country is undergoing is greater than the summation of its alarming manifestations. These political changes express the new epoch, and they will be monumental. People are fearful, and they have good reason. As the political organ of the ruling class, the state undergoes changes in form to protect private property under changing conditions. The political changes today express the beginning of the end of an industrial-based society and the corresponding break in unity between the workers and capitalists in production. History helps put this into perspective.

Along with the rise of industry and the need to develop and protect a national market came capitalism and the nation state. Through the stages of capitalism's rise and expansion, the state form strengthened the unity of the workers and the capitalists. This unity was never a commonality of interests. But at different stages, the state ensured the creation of a class of propertyless workers dependent upon the capitalists. But with the breaking of the connection between workers and capitalists in production and with the frontier opened up by global production and financial speculation, we are seeing the beginning of the end of a state form that expresses and promotes the unity of the nation.

We are witnessing the transition from a republic that promised to serve the common good of society to a government that enthrones the corporations, renounces any responsibility to society, and puts the "common good" on the market. In order to control the inevitable social response and instability and to protect private property, the ruling class is preparing an American form of fascism that fits this new epoch. In the face of these political changes of epochal and historical significance, we align our political tasks and tactics.