

Elections 2008: Fight for the Program of Our Class

POLITICAL REPORT OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE
LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES
FOR A NEW AMERICA,
FEBRUARY 2008

“No matter where people fall in their discontent with politics today, most are not exactly sure what to do about it. This presents revolutionaries with the opportunity to explain the growing polarization and its economic roots, and to present a resolution to the problems people face. As discontent begins to be expressed and people are pulled into political motion, the electoral process is creating the opportunity to break the ideological and political connections that tie the workers to the capitalists.” – “Unite the Revolutionaries, Win Them to Communism”, Rally, Comrades! January/February 2008

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As the recent LRNA Standing Committee report “Prepare Now for Battles Ahead” makes clear, “the outlines of political polarization are coming into focus. These beginning phases of political polarization frame our tasks, our work, and our policy.” (*Rally, Comrades!* January/February 2008). The candidates are talking about the issues that concern the American people – the war, the economy, healthcare, and immigration – but their solutions are those which advance the interests of the ruling class. At the same time, the growing economic and social polarization is creating opportunities for real change. The ruling class has its program and is using the elections to move it forward. Our class also has its program and revolutionaries must use the elections to put forward that program.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

The interests and goals of the ruling class are the same no matter who wins the Presidential election – the continued advance of globalization, the struggle of the U.S. to dominate that process, and the fight to assert its geopolitical interests in the world. Having accomplished much of what it set out to do with the so-called Wash-

ington Consensus, the ruling class is now faced with an unstable global economy, growing competition between the nations for markets and geopolitical power, the unraveling of the world's societies, and a kind of poverty unknown in human history. They face profound questions – how will they sustain a market economy without consumers who can buy? Having dismantled governmental mechanisms, what will they use to intervene to assist in sustaining this market? Neo-liberalism – once the watchword of an emerging global ruling class – is increasingly discredited and the search is on for an alternative to take the globalized world the next step forward.

The future President will have to take the U.S. through the next stage of development of this process. This will include a world that is far more economically integrated, in which China, Russia, and India are emerging as economic powerhouses, and an increasing number of nations are making alliances with one another to protect themselves from U.S. economic or military domination. At home, the new President will have to handle the political implications of an American people who inevitably will be thrown into poverty with little hope of recovery.

The world cannot go back to what it was, no matter how much the American people yearn for the “good old days.” The rapid pace of globalization, the intensifying impact of labor-replacing technology, and the real social and institutional destruction that has taken place in the last ten to 15 years has taken care of that.

The Presidential candidates are talking change, but these changes will only help the ruling class protect private property under these changing world conditions. Their positions represent different tactical proposals to allow the capitalists to more effectively deal with the stage of development of the global economy and to manage the inevitable social and political discontent. They also reflect differences about which part of the citizenry it will be necessary to have “on board” to rule. The solutions, ranging from foreign policy – protecting the permanent interests of the U.S. – to how to cut deeper into the social safety net without social and infrastructural consequences, seek to preserve the existing order regardless of the cost to humanity.

Even with all their machina-

tions and intrigues, however, the ruling class and its representatives cannot escape the hard realities of the qualitative changes in the economy. Broader sections of society are being entangled in its disastrous results, undercutting the Parties’ respective bases, and bringing to the surface the inevitable clash of the contradictions between a people that cannot live without money and a world that runs on nothing else. No candidate is speaking to this, and no candidate dares.

Consciousness of the need for an independent class program that rests on the demands of the most impoverished, and a strategy to achieve that program is the only path to solving the problems we face today. The ruling class is being forced on to the strategic defensive, and revolutionaries must take advantage of that opening to educate and win the emerging new class over to the cooperative communist solution of the problem.

“CHANGE” AND THE MOOD OF THE PEOPLE

The demand for change is present in every pendulum swing of the bourgeois electoral process. The objective conditions make the difference between being forced to remain in the same old mold and having the opportunity to break out and take a step toward something new. The increased turnout in many of the primaries reflected the feeling that change is not only necessary, but possible. All the candidates have dangerous populist elements, but all of them are bringing people into the electoral process, and this is also part of the objective revolutionary process.

There is little sense, however, of what

kind of change we need to have. Many believe that everything will get better if we can just get beyond the Bush era. Many just have a sense that any kind of change is positive. In their desire for change many hear what they want to hear from general populist statements. They don’t stop to analyze these demagogic appeals. They don’t analyze the situation in class terms. A recent poll, for example, found that a majority of Americans see the government as the problem, while less than a quarter of those surveyed lay the blame at the feet of the corporations. More than anything, activity and enthusiasm tend to be with the individual candidate, rather than with that person’s program, or a practical knowledge of the implications of that individual’s proposed solutions.

As in everything in American politics, race and gender cannot be ignored. Here too, program – the real solutions to the problems people face – has been overshadowed by a focus on the individual candidate, rather than what they propose to do. The ruling class is playing the race and gender card both ways. Obama and Clinton are both on the right wing of their party, each with a retinue of advisors and policy makers with proven records of defending U.S. hegemonic interests in the world, and protecting corporate interests over the interests of the American people.

Nevertheless, identity politics is being used to present them as the face of progressive change.

This has been effective both in quieting complaints from the left, and manipulating the decency and aspirations of

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Revolutionary Political Tactics

While industrial capitalism was expanding, the struggle for reforms in the industrial world met many demands of the working class and, at the same time, the needs of the growing system itself. The industrial era is ending and an economy based on technology and electronics rather than labor is eliminating jobs, reducing wages, and eroding the reforms and bribery that tied US workers to the capitalist class.

With labor no longer needed for production as it once was, the road to reforming the capitalist system is closing for those who must work in order to live. Increasing numbers of people are drawn into struggle, looking for answers, and a route to survival and the future. The road to the historic revolutionary cause of a cooperative society, where the well being of humanity is not sacrificed to the domination of private property, has become both necessary and possible.

Revolutionaries work within the movement of those who are increasingly superfluous to production in order to make this new class conscious of the need to attain the power to bring into being a cooperative society based on distribution according to need. Our strategy and our plan of action aims to move our class step-by-step, stage by stage, to that final goal. The tactics to achieve that strategy, to accomplish the next stage of revolutionary development, are political tactics – not "political" in the narrow electoral sense, but in that they deal with who holds power, how they get it, and for what ends they wield it. The tactics that will prepare our class to achieve the power necessary to build the society we need in order to survive must be worked out within the forms and escalating tempo of the movement to connect with people where they are fighting for what they need – and where their frustration raises the question of why they can't get what they need.

In the struggle over which class will control the future of society, effective leadership depends on revolutionary political strategy, and tactics that express what is needed at a particular stage of history. Developing effective political tactics involves understanding the strategy and tactics of the ruling class, which

change when the economic and political situation changes, and assessing the possibilities for preparing the movement to accomplish politically what can no longer be accomplished in defensive economic and social battles.

Those whose lives are being destroyed confront the brutal face of capitalist private property. But this reality isn't yet reflected in the way they see the world or in the way they conduct their political activity. Workers, even the destitute, still accept leaders who claim to represent their interests, but who, in reality, defend and expand capitalist corporate interests and power, the goal of which is to preserve capitalist corporate private property.

In this country, nothing can move forward for our class until a broad section of Americans see their interests as different from, and diametrically opposed to, those of their corporate capitalist rulers, and act on that basis. Revolutionaries within the struggles to solve immediate practical problems must sum up and help express concrete demands that begin to break the intellectual and political ties that bind the increasingly impoverished working class to their

class enemy, and develop their understanding of their position and role in society.

WHAT WORKED IN THE PAST

The century of capitalist expansion after the Civil War was a century of struggle for a share in the benefits produced by industrial development, and to improve an industrial social contract that was necessary for both capital and labor. One early trade union leader summed up what labor wanted as "More!" Because it was possible to get "more" without challenging basic relationships of class ownership and power, struggles of the past did not have to be guided by a class-conscious strategy. Tactics could be subordinated to the interests of the moment or guided by considerations of immediate effect.

Trade unions, organizations of minorities and women, etc., were built and functioned as conduits of the struggle. At the same time, they served as means of control, directly and through the two-party system. The capitalist class made

concessions and reforms in order to achieve stable relations with the industrial workers, whom they needed to exploit. These changes, rather than weakening the system, strengthened it so that it could continue to expand.

Identity politics, based on group rather than class awareness, won status and wealth for the elites of each group during the decades of expansion after World War II. Groups fought to get as much as they could for their members. Advancement for many came without their having to consider the needs of those left out of the expanding economic opportunities, without, for example, addressing the horrors of Jim Crow and lynch mob rule that kept African-American manual labor confined to the land.

Stability was assured by providing economic and social benefits to those deemed acceptable as "leaders" and their being able to "deliver" enough for the general population so that the large sections of the working class saw their fate tied to the interests of the capitalist owners and were blind to the interest they had in common with those who still went without.

NEW SITUATION, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

In the 1970's, developments in technology and electronics set off an economic revolution that changed the rules of the game. The ongoing replacement of human labor by technology, the destruction of the old social contract, and the end of the economic and social bribery have destroyed the foundation for the old politics of compromise.

As conditions worsen, the first and natural impulse in defensive struggles against attacks on rights and living standards is to turn to the understanding, the forms of struggle, and the tactics of the past period. The possibility of economic expansion (and rising post-World War II living standards) that provided maneuvering room for New Deal policies is over. Those past compromises with capital – which may have provided a modicum of stability for some, but even then meant misery for most of the world – are no longer relevant to today's conditions.

Political goals have always advanced economic needs. Today those who rule are attempting to stop any movement to challenge their control before it gets started, confusing and ideologically disarming it and even inciting it to violence and vigilantism against those at the bottom, all the while preparing to crush that movement if necessary. To maintain that control, the most diverse ruling class in global and U.S. history has to suppress and isolate those most excluded from the system. Doing this depends on so-

cial and economic problems being perceived as simply problems of the inner cities or the fault of the poor themselves – generally equated in the U.S. public mind with African-Americans, Latinos and immigrants, especially those without documents.

In a revolutionary period, when the old society polarizes and breaks down, times beg for a new vision of the future and require new ways of getting there. A movement of those increasingly superfluous to production who need food, housing, education, health care, and an opportunity to contribute to society, cannot achieve its goals without the power to shape society and the economy in its interests. The necessity – and the possibility – of challenging the power of the corporations and private property means that what was once the stuff of dreams has become the stuff of practical politics.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

C o m • r a d e
a person with whom one is allied
in a struggle
or cause

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

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

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THE 'ART' OF POLITICAL TACTICS

Old ideas and ways of thinking are what connect people to the capitalist system. At this point of development, revolutionaries' strategy and tactics aim at accomplishing changes in people's understanding. The vision of where the struggle is headed and the appreciation of the possibility of building a cooperative society has to be brought to the movement by those who understand history. Today's new situation makes it possible to bring that understanding to people where they are in battle – and for that understanding to begin to shape their struggle.

People are, and will be drawn, into activity to fight for what they need. Revolutionaries, are and will be, created by the increasing social turmoil. They may not yet recognize that the only way to achieve their concrete demands is the reorganization of society in the interests of humanity, but they are looking for a way forward. The question is: will they fight in their own class interest or be manipulated and betrayed? The answer depends on the leaders' understanding of what the struggle is ultimately about and their embrace of a strategy and tactics for revolutionary change. On that basis the specific next steps to achieve class interests on various fronts of struggle will be defined.

Political tactics is the work of forming up the struggle so it responds to and expresses objective reality (the class nature of the conflict with private property) and takes the next steps along the most direct path toward its ultimate goal. The art of this process is to make the connection within the movement between what people are thinking and the objectively developing revolution.

People encounter the world in different ways. Is homelessness, for example, a personal problem, the result of an individual's bad choices? Or are the homeless victims of the apathy or greed of others? As

the system of private economic interests that destroys homes and robs people of a roof over their heads is exposed, the struggle can confront and target the real cause of the lack of decent housing. As homelessness is understood as a result of the economic system itself, the problem can be dealt with as a political and class question.

BUILDING A POLITICAL MOVEMENT

Revolutionaries in the practical struggle will shape the ways and means – the forms and methods – of fighting that are most appropriate to the developing revolutionary situation. But they can only do this if they share the understanding that preparing our class to fight for and win the power to create a cooperative society is the task before us.

Putting forth political tactics is how class-conscious revolutionaries interact with the class' leading fighters, uniting propaganda and participation with the movement in all its different forms. The aim isn't to get agreement on an abstract understanding or list of demands or to be the most valiant fighter. The aim is, through the emerging revolutionary leaders themselves and through a revolutionary press, to connect consciousness of class interest with the movement itself, so that it can take the concrete steps that will advance the struggle toward its ultimate goal.

In this process, revolutionaries fighting around the practical demands of the class are going to find it necessary to come together in an organization that has a strategy to politicize the masses and can provide the political propaganda and education to round out their fight. The League has such a strategy and is building an organization to do just that. We invite revolutionaries to join us so that, guided by revolutionary political tactics and class-conscious leaders, the movement of the vast majority of the American people for survival and dignity can become a force to make history.

The League of Revolutionaries for a New America

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. 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.

Editorial: Break with the Past, Envision the Future

"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 a vision is the overriding task of revolutionaries and the foundation of our organization.

– Program, League of Revolutionaries for a New America

The economic and social ground is crumbling under the feet of the American people, and they want somebody to do something about it. A 2007 report issued by The Progressive Majority found that polls from around the country showed that from health care, to immigration, to jobs, to taxes, and the economy, Americans overwhelmingly supported changes that would address income inequality, take care of the poor, restore the social infrastructure, incorporate immigrants into American society and generally improve the quality of life for everyone. They believed that it was the government's responsibility to guarantee that these needs were met, even if the government had to curb the power of the corporations to do it.

None of the candidates have propos-

als that would solve any of these questions in the way the American people want them solved. But why do the American people go along with them? What is holding the American people back? At the core is the American people's belief in the capitalist system, and their loyalty to the class that rules over it. They believe that this class will come to its senses and get back to work taking care of the needs of the American people.

And why wouldn't they believe this? This compromise worked for a many years. Capitalists needed workers, workers needed to work to live. Relations between them broke down every so often, but they were adjusted, were "reformed," and American workers were provided with the highest standard of living of any workers in the world. It always involved intense struggle, but it always ultimately strengthened and benefited the capitalist system.

The spread, consolidation, and entrenchment of electronic production is putting an end to that compromise. Capitalism is dissolving under the weight of qualitative economic and social changes. Society's problems cannot be resolved within the context of a system

that, in this sense, no longer exists. The impact of this reality is expressed in the wide social ills, expressed most in the growing violence of society. The article "The Violence of Capitalism" explores this.

Revolutionaries' role – their historic responsibility – is to convey the real meaning of these momentous times. A new world is possible, and this country – this world – is embarked on a struggle to determine what that new world will be. Every indicator points to a cooperative, communist society as the only solution that will benefit all of humanity. To get there, takes understanding, strategy based on that understanding, and the development of tactics that take the movement, step by step, through the various stages to the ultimate goal.

Revolutionaries of all kinds are participating in the elections, but there is a broad debate about how to do so, what stands to take, and how to work within the narrow confines the ruling class allows while at the same time reaching out to and uniting with other revolutionaries put into motion by the electoral process. "Revolutionary Work in the Elections" explores and puts forward proposals on these questions, and serves

as a general guideline for work during this time of discussion and debate over the future of our country.

The first step is to break with the belief that the old can be restored and instead to approach the work within the context of the new situation. This means that there must be an intellectual and political break from the capitalist class. The article "Revolutionary Political Tactics" discusses this necessity and explores how the new conditions require revolutionaries to put forward political tactics that will advance the interests, program, and consciousness of the class that will step by step, serve to move the struggle toward the only resolution to the problem.

"Housing: Opportunity for New Thinking," submitted by the LRNA Committee on Housing and Homelessness, uses this understanding to frame its call to revolutionaries to join together to work out how "to unshackle minds from the boundaries set by the past" in order to deepen a vision in the movement of housing for all and move toward making that vision a reality.

Housing Struggles: Opportunity for New Thinking

BY LEAGUE MEMBERS ACTIVE IN
THE MOVEMENT FOR HOUSING

In America today, thousands of issue and site based struggles are growing in response to degrading and deteriorating conditions in communities around the country. Changes in the economy, an expansion of corporate power, and an increasingly punitive state are reshaping the parameters of these struggles. Despite all this social motion, these efforts are dispersed and lacking in any sort of political unity. These struggles are primarily about the preservation of specific communities or defending past reforms, and have met with little recent success.

Armed with a growing awareness of the roots of their problems, many leaders of these social movements are beginning to look for a winning strategy that is different from their current approach. In this time of massive wealth accumulation by the top two percent, growing impoverishment and destitution, a shrinking middle-income bracket, and wars of empire, these social movements are going to make little progress until their leaders have broken with the ideology of those who rule.

It is time for these emerging leaders to engage in a dialogue about strategy and visions for the future. Only those who see their interests as fundamentally different from those in power will be able to begin the long, complicated process of building a political movement for the transformation of society. This is going to involve challenging people's basic assumptions about how the "system" works and what is possible in the future, learning how to use the opportunities presented by our work to develop a deeper understanding of who our enemy is, and "who," in fact "we" are as a class. Only in this way will these emerging movements be able to take steps to move beyond defensive, reform-oriented activities and act to implement our class vision for the future.

THE HOUSING CRISIS

The issue of housing is an illustrative example. Americans are facing a myriad of housing challenges: the complete dismantling of public housing, the gutting of the voucher program, the rising cost of home ownership, rent as a percentage of household income, the swindling of millions by major financial institutions in the sub-prime adjustable mortgage crisis, and homelessness that grows daily. Many community members, organizers, and activists participate in housing related struggles, even if housing is not the central focus or purpose of their organization. Furthermore, these housing problems cut across issues such as immigration, union organ-

izing, welfare, health care, and gentrification and affect people in cities, suburbs, and rural areas.

There is organized resistance in all of these struggles, but few clear-cut victories. People are now forced to accept bad compromises, such as only losing half of a public housing development, at a time when it is clear that we need to increase the amount of low-income housing. Winning becomes defined as not completely losing. In the current economic and political climate, struggles are not winning reforms within capitalism, but instead defensively attempting to hold on to gains from the past. At the same time, reacting to the underlying changes in the economy, the ruling class has seized the initiative. The capitalist class is actively taking steps to ensure its continued dominance in the future, as the industrial economy and its accompanying welfare state and prosperity for the average American fade into memory.

As capitalist speculators, the "market," and the interests of private development tear through American cities and suburbs, leaving the lives of millions in their wake, popular response is going to increase. Opportunities are going to be presented to make clear to those affected by these changes that the ruling class cannot and will not solve the problem of housing and homelessness. Nor can they defend it morally.

Revolutionaries' aim in our work in the various housing rights movements is to accomplish the political and intellectual development that will equip emerging fighters to resolve the problems they face. The political tactics to do that will have to speak to the American people and leaders of the emerging struggles in ways that reflect the ways in which they are experiencing this crisis.

HOUSING, COLOR, AND CLASS

The politics of many cities and the battles over housing reflect a history of racial and national oppression that is integral to the class relationships of this country. Building toward a unifying class-conscious politics that moves the battles towards their solution has to take into account the intersection of multiple

oppressions. They are the foundation for the way that the ruling class maintains political control and they shape the worldview of those battling for what they need.

The history of *de facto* and *de jure* segregation provided the context for depressed land values in urban African-American and Latino communities, making these communities particularly vulnerable to the land speculation and gentrification that mark the current wave of "urban revitalization." In the rural areas and suburbs, several unfolding trends are defining new experiences.

The vast majority of Americans are facing the loss of good-paying jobs and incomes that are declining against the inflation rate. Housing costs are rising faster in the suburbs than in the urban core and affordable housing is no longer a given even for families with stable employment. The economic downturn and the speculative mortgage market have combined to put

millions of families in danger of losing their homes. Homelessness is growing in communities of all sizes and many middle-income families find themselves working multiple jobs to stay afloat.

As housing vulnerabilities spread to new sections of the population, possibilities to develop class understanding and a response united around those class interests grow. The 2005 census reveals 25 million whites live at the poverty level alongside 19 million people of color. New sections of the population are experiencing the poverty and desperation that, in past periods, was concentrated among African-Americans.

But that does not mean the legacy of slavery and discrimination has evaporated. The ruling class has always skillfully manipulated the color card to achieve its political goals. To be ready for the battles ahead, our class and its leaders will have to understand that history and how it shores up the strategy of the ruling class at each stage of the development of its system.

The ruling class tactic today is to rely on the unity of the elite across color lines in order to suppress and isolate those most excluded from the system. This tactic stands on a weak foundation. An African-American CEO of a Wall Street investment company has no interests in common with the mass of

African-American youth trapped in failing schools, McJobs (or no jobs), and substandard housing. We are presented with the opportunity – and the responsibility – to hit the enemy where it is weak. Housing is a decisive battlefield in this struggle to undermine the rulers' method of control.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The spread of housing poverty to new sections of the population opens the way for revolutionaries on this front to expose the ruling class and its economic, political, and moral corruption. The current housing crisis gives us a chance to work strategically to develop political consciousness that was not possible when the effects of economic changes were mostly limited to inner city communities of color and the impoverished areas of the Rustbelt and the South.

The increasing failure of compromise is challenging more and more people to confront their assumptions about where their interests lie and what is possible to win within the current system. To step up to the opportunities of today we will have to begin an interchange of ideas and methods among those who have knowledge and experience in this struggle on how we can unshackle minds from the boundaries set by the past.

All who hope to create a better world out of the ashes of the old must commit to deepening a post-capitalist vision in the movement of housing for all and find ways to move the struggle toward making that vision a reality. The work we have already done has laid the groundwork to begin the process of more formally sharing our experiences with each other and learning from each other about what has worked and what has failed. We need to teach each other how to deepen the consciousness of leaders and build class understanding in the daily housing struggles of people all over the United States.

To get in touch for further discussion contact: rally@lrna.org

The Violence of Capitalism

Why is violence increasing today across America and the world? The explosion of violence is a complex phenomenon, with many interacting forces at play. The capitalist ruling class blames individuals, but, in truth, violence in our communities reflects the social decay brought on by a society in transition. We are valued not as human beings, but only for our ability to produce profit for the capitalist class.

Violence is emanating from the dissolution of society built on industrial capitalism. The rise of digital-based electronic technology is transforming human society as robots and computer-driven production replace unskilled and semi-skilled labor, both in production and management. Many of these workers will never work again.

Electronic production erodes the very basis of capitalist exploitation. The way people work, the very nature of the job, the relation of boss to worker, and all the institutions built on this basis are changing.

Classes are drawn into struggle for control of this technology. The foundations of a new world are being laid down today. In this historic transition, the capitalist class uses the most extreme violence with callous indifference to human life, as it fights to maintain global control.

Under capitalism, the value of a human being is related to our value as a productive unit. The value of an individual's labor power is the value of the necessities of life to maintain and reproduce the worker, that is, the value of food, clothing, housing, education, health care, and other necessities for a worker to make a living and raise a family.

The very basis of value under capitalism is the amount of labor time a worker puts into a given product. To the extent that electronics replaces human labor, the value of the products necessary to keep a worker alive become cheaper every day. Thus, the value of that labor power and the value of human life tends towards zero. The worker, employed or unemployed, has decreasing value to capitalist class.

Increasing millions of people worldwide are being forced out of capitalist relations of production and are becoming external to the system. The capitalist class requires a dramatic increase in organized violence to police this new class of people, who are fighting against being driven into misery.

THE CHANGING SOCIAL CONTRACT

When capitalism was organized primarily around industrial production, society provided a basic level of maintenance for the labor force needed by the capitalists. Under the social contract of that era, workers could find housing and health care; water was provided to the public by the government; education was available and oriented to train workers; welfare and unemployment were provided to cover periods of no income.

Now these "rights" are being withdrawn. The safety net is being jerked out from under families. These are government policies, not acts of God, and they result in increasingly desperate people, some of whom turn to violence. In a thousand ways, the message is sent

Social transformation begins with the battle for hearts and minds. We can publicize a vision of a communal world. Revolutionaries must take the offensive with ideas to dismantle the moral justifications for an exploitive system that cannot exist without violence.

that human beings and life itself no longer have value, teaching the working class to attack itself.

In the polarizing new world order, the biggest threat to the capitalist class is that this new class of people will become conscious that they do not have to depend on the capitalist class. Thus, all the weapons of social violence are being directed toward preventing political polarization from following economic polarization.

One of the key tactics of warfare, including class war, is to divide and conquer, to get the enemy fighting against himself. Thus, the US has worked overtime in Iraq to define people as "Sunni" or "Shiite," but not Iraqi. The government, media, and educational institutions bombard US workers with propaganda that they are primarily African-American, white, or Latino, anything but workers. Workers are called middle class or poor, or identified as consumers, homemakers, and shoppers, anything but working class. Youth are divided into Bloods and Crips, Nortenos and Surenos, anything but young workers.

To counter this thinking, the great South African revolutionary, Steve Biko, wrote, "The greatest weapon in the hands of the enemy is your mind". This suggests that the way forward is to fight with ideas to wrench this weapon from capitalism.

TOXIC WASTE OF DECAYING SYSTEM

Capitalism uses organized violence to engineer its vision of post-industrial society. Since the future depends on which class controls the means of production, the capitalist class is preparing to implement open class warfare to guarantee its class goals.

Thus, capitalism is encouraging the development of violence in increasingly malignant directions. Violent pornography is legal and flourishes in the US. The media, in virtually every form, constantly features stories of violence. Movies glorify violence on a previously unimaginable scale. Now that torture is an official policy of our government, we actually hear an official morality of violence even as capitalism tries to turn legitimate disgust towards violence to a fascist solution. Violence – and the re-

again that the terrible degradation of civilians by US soldiers in this war leaves horrible scars on the human spirit as well as the body. Post Traumatic Stress syndrome is becoming part of daily life in America.

The only people that have the potential power to halt this massive war machine are Americans. The capitalist class clearly recognizes this historic role. Thus, the people of the US are the real targets and the ultimate victims of the so-called War Against Terror. Hence, the tremendous growth of the state with the Homeland Security Agency and new repressive legislation to limit civil rights.

OWNERS REAP THE BENEFITS

Electronic production makes true abundance possible for every person on the planet. If controlled by the public, new technology will guarantee the age-old dream of an end to want, and a sustainable planet.

The social energy to transform the situation is latent within the new class of people in the millions

who are expelled from capitalist relations of production. These people have no choice but to demand economic rights for all: access to housing, food, education, health care, culture and a decent and productive life.

Today the achievement of any one of these rights completely defies the right of private corporate property to determine how society works and what human social relationships should be. Sooner or later humanity will have to take the next step: it's either private control of the things we use and need in common, including technology, or it's public and communal ownership. There's no in between.

As always, social transformation begins with the battle for hearts and minds. The decisive step is to join the battle for ideas that is fermenting in America today. We can publicize a vision of a communal world and take the offensive with ideas to dismantle the moral justifications for an exploitive system that cannot exist without violence.

sultant fear of violence - is a weapon of social control.

Now that entire sections of the working class find themselves unemployable at anything but the most degrading and low-paying jobs, drugs are directly and openly flooded into their communities. Combined with easy access to guns, these social policies keep communities fighting themselves. The "War on Drugs" has resulted in the "Land of the Free" having the world's largest incarceration rate and the largest incarcerated population.

Corporate-run prisons jail children of undocumented workers for a profit. Prisoners are exploited more and more directly and earn pennies a day for their labor. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids are becoming routine and accustoming Americans to storm-trooper style violence as part of daily life. The police are always presented as the answer to every social problem, and there are open calls to use the army for domestic control.

The capitalist class has promised America that we will see war for our lifetimes. War for empire has always profited the ruling class, even as it demands that the working class supply the troops. War abroad always requires violence at home. As the war in Iraq enters its 6th year, the extreme violence directed against Iraqis and Americans can no longer be hidden. We are seeing once

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the American people. In Iowa, many people came out to the caucuses, not only out of opposition to Bush, but also because of the fact that Obama would be the first African-American Presidential candidate, and Clinton the first woman candidate. Some saw their vote for Clinton or Obama as a vote against the religious right or against racism.

We can also see how the candidates are being used to line up their different identity groups behind the interests of the ruling class. In Chicago, for example, the black media is overwhelmingly in support of Obama. Questions about his program can result in accusations of racism or some kind of race treachery. Yet, in the same city, as well as others around the nation, nothing is being said about the growing attack against the black masses or the lack of solutions from any of the candidates to address these problems. The unity being called for is unity around the interests of the ruling class, not the masses of blacks or around the class of which they are a part. As long as there is no general consciousness of class interests, the ruling class will continue to be able to use identity politics – organized around the historical centrality of the African American question – to consolidate their own class and lay the foundation for attacking the growing class of dispossessed, regardless of color.

OPPORTUNITIES AND PITFALLS

The American people are desperate for a resolution to their problems, but not one of the candidates is presenting a program to solve those problems in the interests of the majority of the country. The candidates do have solutions, but these solutions are intended to remedy the capitalists' problems. They are forced, for the time being, to appeal to the masses for votes, but their true intentions are veiled behind the populist,

sentimental and nostalgic rhetoric that promises a return to a golden past. This is not an absence of program. It is an opposite program, hostile to the interests of our class.

The election process provides an opportunity for the ruling class to propagandize the American people on their program, which is essentially, at root, a program for fascism. Some people are calling what's going on in our country fascism, and are speaking out against it. But there is no organized solution to it, no political representation of even the majority of people, let alone the interests of the class. At the same time, the ruling class is taking steps to protect its interests. Various forces are being used to create a broad support for those interests, and we have noted the role the anti-immigration movement is playing in that. The goal of the ruling class is to disorient and disorganize its opposition while fostering the social base for fascism. The process by which it achieves this, and with what forces, and at what moment, is rooted in history or a response to opportunity.

The worsening situation will be fertile ground for all kinds of appeals, from the left and the right, aimed at organizing that discontent into some kind of political expression. Impulses in this direction range from efforts to capture the discontented elements of the right and left, as well as forging new ground with political rule by transcending the old Parties. Multi-

millionaire New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and various other influential Republicans and Democrats, for example, have been discussing the possibility of forming a party of "national unity" which would bring the two parties together, and there is talk that Bloomberg will run as their candidate with former Georgia Senator Sam Nunn as the Vice-Presidential candidate. These and the other forces set into motion are unsettled by the turn of events, are arising within the flux of the electoral process, and are an expression of the polarization taking place in society.

We can expect various impulses in the wake of the election as well. We can't predict what form they will take, but if we hold to our understanding of

Consciousness of the need for an independent class program that rests on the demands of the most impoverished, and a strategy to achieve that program is the only path to solving the problems we face today.

the process, we can keep our orientation. Polarization is arising on the basis of the profound social destruction and is the motion in which the battle for a new society will take place. The League has to be in the position to understand the meaning of the events as they unfold and to participate in such a way that will pull the struggle forward in the interests of our class. The League has to speak out against the rising fascism and show that fascism will not be defeated by "fighting the right," but only through fighting for a class program within the developing social struggle. In this way, the League can engage with the revolutionaries and carry out its mission.

Philosophical understanding, coupled

with the reports from various fronts of struggle, shows that now is the time for presenting a resolution to the problem. This is not simply because someone says so, but because people are demanding it. There is no alternative out there, and that's what the League can provide. The League can show how the underlying economic causes, the changes in the state, and the growing unity between the corporations and the government are designed to benefit a class whose interests are hostile to ours. We can put forward a program for the resolution of the problem, a vision of different kind of society, and a strategy to get there. We can offer specific political tactics to take the movement each step toward what it is really fighting for. Everywhere people are discussing and debating the future of this country. Let us not miss this opportunity to take our country one step closer to the society we know is not only necessary, but possible.

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