

RALLY COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

Revolutionaries Face Greater Responsibilities as Crisis Reaches Critical New Point

The government is taking steps to stabilize the system of exchange and the economy as a whole. These steps protect the property of the owners of capital at the expense of those without, and define the next phase of political polarization and the battlefield for the next round of politics. The 2008 general election marks the end of one phase of the political life of this country and opens another.

Something new is emerging out of crisis and destruction. This is not a new process, but rather a critical new point in the progression of the objective process. The stages and phases of the process shape the tasks of revolutionaries.

The financial crisis that came to a head in the fall of 2008 expresses the destruction of value that is undermining the system of exchange. The continuing financial instability threatens the collapse of the entire world economy.

In response to the declining rate of profit and the contracting market for real goods, trillions of dollars had flooded into financial instruments, speculation, and other investments that rest only remotely and minutely on the real production of value.

These trillions of dollars dwarf the value of the real economy. More than \$1,000 trillion is invested in these financial instruments on the world financial market – the equivalent of 20 years' real, value-producing, labor-employing global production.

In what some call the "mathematization of the market," electronic technology makes it possible to bundle, re-bundle, track, and pay dividends on investments in financial derivatives, credit default swaps, currency and price speculation, and various other financial investments. The investors are accumulating huge hoards of wealth and inflicting catastrophe on the world's poorest workers. But this wealth does not reflect value.

The sudden loss of wealth in the current crisis expresses the prolonged decline in the amount of labor (value) in the mountains of commodities generated by the world economy. No form or amount of re-regulation, nationalization of risk, or other government intervention can accomplish a return to a sound economy on the old foundation.

REORGANIZATION OF THE STATE

The government "bailout" redistributes wealth from public to private. It shifts trillions of dollars, in the US alone, to those institutions that have been accumulating wealth off of our debt, and off of speculation on commodity prices, currency valuations, and interest rates.

But this is also more than a bailout. It is the reorganization of the state to protect private property under new conditions. Although it may seem like the bailouts are throwing good money after bad, there is some method to the madness. The emerging motion is toward the government and the financial sector together controlling and directing the whole economy, buying up the once powerful industrial corporations, and putting an end to the good standard of living that was once possible for, at least, a small section of the working class.

Despite the massive destruction of wealth, the remaining financial and banking institutions are sitting on mountains of cash and buying other bank and non-financial corporations. Some banks are restricting loans, calling in lines of credit and forcing even profitable companies into bankruptcy. Others are cutting back on production, closing stores and factories, and curtailing previous expansion plans.

The trillions of dollars invested into this financial sector are enough to buy up decisive sectors of the infrastructure and the rest of the economy. For years, the world's investment banks, hedge funds, and other financial powerhouses have been buying up the world's water resources and infrastructures. The water industry is the world's fourth largest industry; privatization of the treatment and delivery of water and other essential resources offers some investment stability.

Through the Treasury and the Federal Reserve, the capitalist class is now wielding trillions of dollars in public money to protect its own interests. On the capitalists' behalf, the government is accomplishing what individual capitalists or even conglomerates of capitalists cannot achieve on their own.

Today, the government is not only privatizing what was public and cutting social spending, but, through the "bailout" and oth-

er steps to stabilize the economy, they are institutionalizing and codifying the concentration and intertwining of government and private capital – both their resources and their authority. Which banks and other corporations get the money and how much more they get will change, but the proposal from Treasury Secretary Paulson to the Congress designates, "financial institutions as financial agents of the Government, and they shall perform all such reasonable duties related to this Act as financial agents of the Government as may be required of them."

Regardless of its pace and ultimate specific forms, we see a plan unfolding to accomplish a definite purpose: to concentrate wealth and power of the economy in fewer hands, to take another step to restructure the state in order to transform the world economy, to protect private property in the age of electronics, to enforce the transfer of wealth, and to suppress and/or contain the popular anger. The direction is toward concentration and consolidation in finance, the struggle to keep the U.S. dominant in the evolving financial system, and, at same time, to maintain dollar hegemony. This is the objective situation the new Administration will face; Obama must oversee this process.

None of the political solutions can solve the fundamental economic problem that less labor is needed to produce greater mountains of commodities. Wages fall and unemployment rises. People have less money to pay for the necessities of life. Debt swells. Exchange breaks down. But, we are crossing a political line.

FASCISM

On the one hand, by its history and purpose, the state will attempt to protect the wealth of the capitalists -- no matter how remotely rooted it may be in real production and value – and to guarantee the sanctity of private property.

On the other hand, labor and production form the basis of value, but technology is replacing labor. The ruling class can get past one crisis only by setting the conditions for another even more catastrophic one.

Fascism arises out of such a crisis. Far from a subjective policy or decision, fascism arises to ensure the continuity of pri-

vate property as the forces of production evolve. The laws of private property are not the same as the productive relations of capitalism. Production without value is antagonistic to capitalist production relations, but there are no new production relations yet in place.

Yet, even as the production relations are broken down, the state has to guard and promote the sanctity of private property. Such a contradictory situation cannot be managed except by the subjective, that is, by the force of the state. Fascism is emerging out of the attempts to solve problems posed by economic and social revolution.

Along with the danger of fascism comes the terrifying danger of war as a way to invest productive capital, shore up markets, and find ways to circulate goods. The subsidizing and concentration of the financial and banking system is laying the foundation for the next round of this process. In the economic, social, and political instability encircling the globe, the danger of war looms large and ominously.

This is a moment of great flux and instability, and much is still unsettled and unclear. But out of the crisis, destruction, and turmoil are bound to emerge not only new forms of private property, but also the gravediggers for all systems of exploitation and private property.

SOCIAL STRUGGLE VS. PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE STATE

The deliberate and publicized actions of the government open a new phase in the re-

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lation of the social struggle against the state, and open the way for the political formation of a new class of dispossessed.

The social struggle is the spontaneous struggle for the necessities of life, that is, food, homes, medical care, etc. This is not a struggle for the political power to seize private property; at best, it is a struggle to redistribute the wealth. As long as capitalism – and its connection between opposing classes in production – was expanding, certain demands of the social struggle could be met within the confines of the social relations of capitalism and the laws of private property.

But things are changing. Whatever exact forms evolve, the next steps in the reorganization of the state express the new economic and political reality, that is, that the movement of people for what they need, now confronts a political obstacle. Before, the main polarity was between capital and labor. Today, the polarity between the government and corporations, on the one hand, and the widening movement of people for the necessities of life, on the other, is shifting to predominance.

A PHASE OF POLITICAL POLARIZATION

Like all processes, revolutions go through definite stages. Revolution begins with changes in the economy so fundamental that they disrupt society. Out of the contending attempts and impulses to solve the

resulting problems, there emerges a class that has the capacity to take society to its next stage of development. The decisive stage of the revolutionary process is when that class forms itself politically and takes on that responsibility.

Over the last few decades, the loss of income, jobs, homes, and healthcare has hit wider and wider sections of the population. This destruction of the material connection

The situation in the auto industry sets the pace for the working class as a whole. The autoworkers' fate, and that of those in all related industries, is now in the hands of the government. Most workers know that they are going to get cut out and lose the benefits they once enjoyed. In wave after wave, more workers are finding themselves directly under the wheels not only of the economy, but also of the government.

This is more than a bailout. The government is institutionalizing and codifying the concentration and intertwining of government and private capital – both their resources and their authority. It is the reorganization of the state to protect private property under new conditions.

between opposing classes sets the basis for the next stage of the revolutionary process. But the economy alone cannot shape this class politically.

Today it is not only the spontaneous movement of the economy, but also, the deliberate actions of the government, and, especially, its restructuring under fire, that are destroying the material bonds between opposing classes and setting the stage for the broader process of political polarization.

That sector of the class that used to enjoy the social contract is now getting cut out. These workers have the skills, connections, and experience to pull ahead the whole movement. There are still plenty of well-off secure workers, but the next rounds of economic crisis and government attempts to stabilize the economy will awaken wider circles of these workers.

Every step of the U.S. government, and likewise, every global meeting convened to try to save the world economy, strengthens the power of private property over society. Every step drives the living standards of the U.S. workers down toward the level of their global sister and brother workers, and sets the stage for the education and political formation of the new class.

Whatever further concentration or stabilization is accomplished will be at the expense of the have-not masses of the world. The polarity between wealth and poverty in the world is already intolerable. The International Labor Organization (ILO) predicts another 20 million people unemployed worldwide by the end of 2009, over and above, the global unemployed figure of 2007. This cannot help but intensify the already simmering geopolitical tensions.

In every corner of the globe, including countries of the former Soviet bloc, "post-colonial" and "emerging economy" countries like India and South Africa, and "left-leaning" South American countries like Venezuela and Brazil, the crisis will intensify economic and social polarization and challenge the restraints on class politics. There is no telling which country will erupt in destabilizing social explosions.

Elsewhere the social and political explosions and other ramifications may hit faster than they do here in the U.S. But, our history has unfolded in prolonged periods of apparent calm, followed by quick explo-

sions and change. Revolutionaries need to prepare.

The reorganization of the state to protect the interests of private property against the interests of the growing class of dispossessed is not a smooth, clear, or pre-ordained process. But, the action of the government to address the financial crisis shapes the battlefield on which the new class can form itself politically with the sense of class interests and the need for the political power to enforce those interests. In this sense, it opens a new phase in the process of political polarization.

The subjective conscious understanding of any new situation lags behind its objective reality. But, it can catch up in waves, eruptions, and leaps. Today, the scattered outrage cries out for an organizational vehicle to coalesce it. The new class of dispossessed can develop its political identity, voice, and consciousness in the battles to solve the problems it faces.

Nothing is guaranteed. Outcome and direction will be determined in battle.

HISTORY PRESENTS A BATTLEFIELD

Inseparably intermingled with the corporations, and, now, most visibly with the corporations of finance, the state is inserting itself into the management of the economy and society. In doing so, it creates a battlefield on which the class of dispossessed can form itself politically within the struggle for the interests of society.

This process is not at the will of the revolutionaries. Nor, can it happen all at once. But, this moment does represent a line being crossed. Every step to reorganize the state to protect private property under new conditions gives to the scattered struggles a common political edge.

The battle over what the government will do and whose interests it will serve is emerging on all fronts. The scattered struggles begin to share a common, immediate, and political focus and cause – that the government act on behalf of the working class and society as a whole – not for the interests of capital. None of the scattered struggles can go forward on a scattered non-political basis. To go forward, the movement needs to coalesce in a common political direction.

At other points in modern history, the state, the official representative of capitalist society, has taken on the direction of production. In the late 1800s, government intervention was an objective necessity in order to deal with the economic crises born of the clash between the social character of large-scale industry and the private appropriation of its product by the capitalists. The nationalizations and trusts of that epoch addressed the needs of an expanding capitalist system.

We are today in a social revolution of a different quality, and the state again must begin to take command of the economy.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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

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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This time, it is to maintain, protect, and promote the laws and sanctity of private property under the conditions of antagonism to and destruction of the capitalist system.

As fascism emerges out of the steps to solve the fundamental problems facing capitalism, the ruling class will have to develop a mass base for fascism. Their target will be the white worker. Their route will be the consolidation of the fascist elements and the coalescing of a program that proposes to solve the immediate problems people face. Their purpose is to contain class struggle.

Up to now, the only period of class struggle

in the history of our country took place during the defeat of Reconstruction. And its character as such was obscured primarily by the color question, but also, because that struggle was fought out mainly in the South. Since that time, the objective basis for the opposing classes in society to confront one another politically has not existed. Those conditions are today emerging.

This struggle will be fought out on the battlefield mandated by the economy and shaped by our country's history. The general objective process that has been evolving is finding political expression.

TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES

This moment escalates the responsibilities of revolutionaries. Our assessment of the objective process and of the levels and forms of awakening guides and shapes our work. General propaganda that describes the problem in society and its ultimate solution does not meet the demands of the time. Nor can revolutionaries simply agitate along defensive lines. The struggle cannot advance except along political lines.

Out of stagnation, crisis, and destruction

comes growth on a new foundation. This is as true for revolutionaries today, as it is for the ruling class and society as a whole. Now is a time for revolutionaries to stay on their toes, that is, to understand the profound changes at the foundation of society and to recognize and seize the political opportunities.

Political Report of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, Standing Committee, December 2008.

The battle over whose interests the government will serve is emerging on all fronts. The scattered struggles begin to share a common, immediate focus and cause – that the government act on behalf of the working class and society as a whole – not for the interests of capital. But to go forward, the movement needs to coalesce in a common political direction.

Program of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

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

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

Just as the steam engine created an industrial working class that replaced the existing manufacturing class, electronic production is creating a new class of workers. This new class consists of employed and unemployed sectors. The employed sec-

tor – the part-time, contingency, below minimum wage workers – is already over a third of the work force. This employed sector of the class is constantly drawn into the growing unemployed sector that ranges from the structurally unemployed to the absolutely destitute, homeless workers.

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

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

Wage-less electronic production is antagonistic to capitalism, which is based on the buying and selling of labor power. This antagonism is economically, socially and

politically polarizing society, making social and political revolution inevitable. A new fascist state form, the naked rule of corporate power, is arising to oppose this motion. Society must take over these corporations or these corporations will take over society.

Tens of thousands of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions. The League's mission is to unite these scattered revolutionaries on the basis of the demands of the new class, to educate and win them over to the cooperative, communist resolution of the problem. The demands of this new impoverished class for food, housing, education, health care and an opportunity to contribute to society are summed up as the demand for a cooperative society. Such a society must be based on the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need.

The new class must have political power

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

In spite of worsening economic conditions, nothing can be accomplished until the American people hold a vision of where they want to go and what they want to be. Creating and imbuing them with such vision is the overriding task of revolutionaries and the foundation of our organization.

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

Abraham Lincoln: Revolutionary Leader and Visionary

On February 12, we celebrate the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. The number of recent books about Lincoln indicates a growing interest in who he was and how, constrained by the Constitution and political realities, he faced the moral crisis of slavery within the military-political crisis of civil war.

George Santayana, the great philosopher and poet wrote, "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Reactionaries and counter revolutionaries have long understood that the falsification of or simply the ignoring of history is the most potent weapon in their propaganda arsenal. This is especially true when linked to economic and social bribery. This cultivated disregard and falsification led the recorder of popular history, Studs Terkel, to refer to America as "the Alzheimer nation." Nowhere is this truer and more dangerous than when dealing with Lincoln and the Civil War.

Under Lincoln's leadership we moved from being these United States to becoming a nation, The United States of America. His unwavering leadership steered the country through the destruction of slavery and safeguarded that "last best hope of earth," that the common people are capable of governing themselves. As our country lurches toward another critical crisis those who would again attempt to stop the fulfillment of that vision must first attack the visionaries.

LINCOLN IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS TIMES

A hundred years ago, few would have thought that some serious political radicals and struggle-hardened African Americans would become the flip side of the reactionary and often violent latter day pro-Confederates in their condemnation of Lincoln's role in history. After a century of unlearning the Civil War, Reconstruction and the counter-revolution, articles began appearing in the late 1960's, such as, the claim in 1968 by *Ebony* magazine editor Lerone Bennett Jr. that Lincoln was a "honky" and a racist, and the respected historian Donald Fehrenbacher's claim that Lincoln accommodated racism. These kinds of claims continue today, and by giving ammunition to those who seek to undermine the lessons and meaning of Lincoln's life, keep alive the dangerous legacy of the Confederacy and the system of slavery.

Taken out of the context of time, war and politics, these condemnations of Lincoln raise him to the level of the omnipotent god

"who can make a rock so big he can't lift it." Upon taking office, a President is immediately hemmed in by a number of forces. Among them is the oath to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the land. Should that President consider the Constitution "a covenant with hell" it must still be upheld. The President inherits a military and administrative bureaucracy, which, indispensable to governing, may not agree with him and

significant section of the North opposed the extension of slavery and, for those same reasons, opposed emancipation. They hated the "Slave Power" but were not prepared to move against slavery, as it was a legal institution and the underpinning of their economic well being. The Northern working class was united in their opposition to throwing millions of emancipated slaves onto the labor market. There was a huge

the South. All new armories were built in the South leaving only the small armory in Springfield, Massachusetts in the North. Troops suspected of being loyal to the Union were shipped to Texas, California, and other remote areas. The officer corps, trained at West Point, was mainly Southern and mostly from Virginia. Washington, D.C., a Southern city, teemed with spies from the Confederacy. At least one Senator was a spy prior to and during the war as were several members of the House of Representatives and several high-ranking military officers.

As the Confederates rose up in rebellion, the Union was practically defenseless. Northern troops, rushing to the defense of Washington were attacked by mobs as they entered Maryland. As a new army formed, the Commanding Officer General McClellan, issued a proclamation to the Southerners that the Union Army would join with the Confederates to crush any uprising by the slaves. The Union soldiers joined the army to preserve the Union as it had been. It was well known that if the stated aim of the war was to free the slaves, the Army would throw down its guns and go home. The slightest move against slavery would throw Maryland and Kentucky – with its huge militia – into the ranks of the Confederacy and the war would be lost before it began.

With the country at the verge of disintegration, the situation was indescribably dangerous. Lincoln had to fight for time – time to create an army that would fight the Confederacy, time to suppress the traitors in the North, time to win the people from anti-slave power to anti-institution of slavery, and time to create the legal conditions to carry out emancipation. Under attack from all sides, Lincoln alone never wavered.

TO FREE THE SLAVES

Lincoln's latter day detractors criticize him for not immediately enforcing emancipation, and when he acted, doing so only partially and as a military rather than a moral statement. He is also accused of advocating purchasing slaves and returning them to Africa, and advocating white supremacy. We cannot deal with these questions in depth, but we call the readers attention to these facts.

Sworn to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the United States, Lincoln the President could not free the slaves. In the Dred Scott decision, the Taney court had ruled slaves to be chattel – property – no matter where they were. It was illegal to confiscate property without due process, and that due

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dangerously hinder his capability. Most importantly, no one can govern a people who disagree with him.

There is no question that Lincoln wished "that all men everywhere could be free." He never retreated from his statement, made when he was nineteen years old, that "If I ever get a chance to hit this thing, I'll hit it hard." In judging leaders it is necessary to evaluate them, on the one hand, as private individuals with their visions and social morality. On the other hand, we judge leaders by what they attempted to accomplish under specific circumstances. We must know what their options were and, with all things considered, did they choose the right path? Finally, we judge them by how they combined their personal goals with their legal responsibilities.

Hundreds of books have been written attempting to untangle this complex man and his turbulent times. One article can only briefly answer a few of the detractors that we believe deserve consideration on this anniversary.

WHAT LINCOLN FACED

Lincoln was elected in 1860 by a minority vote of about four out of every ten ballots cast. John Breckenridge's split of the Democratic Party between war and peace Democrats allowed for his election. The slave owners held a livid hatred of Lincoln and there is no record of him receiving a single vote in the South. For economic reasons, a

movement of the traitorous "Copperheads", especially in New York. That state and city was indispensable to winning the election and financing the government.

When the war broke out, some Northerners were pro-Union and anti-South, some were pro-Union and pro-South, and some wanted the North to go its way free from the South and its slavery. As the war began, there was a general uprising in the North to save the Union. They deeply believed that the Union, with all its corruption and genocide, its inhumane slavery, and annexationist wars was still the best hope of a downtrodden humanity, just awakening to the drumbeat of an idea whose time had come.

1860 was a time when the Western world was debating the "Rights of Man." There was a growing revulsion against slavery. Even in Russia – the land of the whip, the prison, and the gallows – Czar Alexander freed the serfs and Russia was the only country to stand firmly beside Lincoln during the war. The Church of Ireland and England, and especially the Calvinists added a moral condemnation to the institution, but the political base in the North supporting emancipation was narrow.

For at least ten years the slave power prepared for the rebellion. Since the preceding Federal governments were dominated by Southerners and in the hands of men, such as then Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, it was a simple matter to transfer practically all the arms, gold and, other means of war to

Around the world, Lincoln's legacy is recognized in virtually every nation whether in the memoirs of its leaders or in its public culture. Here are only a few examples collected by the Abraham Lincoln International Association and available on their web site.

In Central America...

- Lincoln Streets in Juarez, Monterrey, and other Mexican cities, as well as in the Dominican Republic. Also statues in Mexico City and Juarez, Mexico.
- Nicaragua and Honduras have issued more Lincoln stamps than any other Spanish-speaking country.
- José Martí (1853-1895), the great Cuban poet and hero of its independence movement, was among Lincoln's great admirers.
- Schools named for Lincoln are located in Havana, Cuba, as well as a hotel and numerous statues.

In Western Europe...

- A Lincoln statue in Westminster Square in London, England.
- Lincoln streets in Paris, France; Brussels, Belgium; Florence, Milan and Rome, Italy; Germany, Barcelona, Spain.

In Asia...

- Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the founding president and father of modern China, adapted Lincoln's "Gettysburg" definition of democratic government to Chinese culture.
- Lincoln's image is the only non-Chinese to be featured on a Chinese postage stamp from Taiwan.

In Africa...

- Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana, the first president of an independent nation in sub-Saharan Africa, was educated at Lincoln University. Ghana commemorated Lincoln on many of its early postage stamps.
- Nelson Mandela knew of Lincoln's legacy before serving a 27-year imprisonment and read a biography of Lincoln for the first time while incarcerated.
- A host of postage stamps honoring the Great Emancipator have been issued.

In the Middle East...

- Persian poet Basij Khalkhali wrote the poem "The Epic of the Woodcutter" in honor of Lincoln.
- Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin visited Gettysburg during the Carter Administration.
- Streets in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are named for Lincoln, as well as a statue in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat-Gan.
- Both the socialist and traditionalist factions in Yemen's civil war featured Lincoln on their postage stamps.

process was not available. This became especially clear when the Cabinet and the leading Northern politicians prevented Lincoln from throwing the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court into jail when he had clearly committed treason. Lincoln knew the Supreme Court would not uphold political emancipation.

To free the slaves required the defeat of the Confederacy and the support of the Northern working class. The border slave states held the balance of power. The North was close to losing the war in the beginning and any precipitous move toward emancipation would throw the Border States into the Confederacy. By advocating gradual emancipation and colonization, Lincoln gradually won the North and some in the Border States over to the general concept of emancipation. Although some abolitionists pursued the idea of colonization, there is no evidence that Lincoln ever took any concrete steps in that direction.

Unless elected President, Lincoln could not effect emancipation. To publicly call for integration and equality would do away with any hope of election. Frederick Douglass captured the beliefs of Lincoln the person, when he was invited to the Inauguration Ball. Douglass wrote:

"I was invited into the East Room of the White House. A perfect sea of beauty and elegance, too, it was. The ladies were in very fine attire, and Mrs. Lincoln was standing there. I could not have been more than ten feet from him when Mr. Lincoln saw me; his countenance lighted up, and he said in a voice which was heard all around; 'Here comes my friend Douglass.'"

The greeting was followed by a warm handshake and introductions. Such civility toward a person of color was unheard of at that time.

What Lincoln had to do as a politician and what he believed in were often at odds. This marks the relationship between the President and the people. When President Theodore Roosevelt had a private dinner with the African American leader Booker T. Washington, the press raised such an outcry that Roo-

sevelt publicly turned against the African Americans. It was accepted that Eleanor Roosevelt said what Franklin Roosevelt thought, regarding the struggle of the African Americans. He needed the votes of the South in order to push through his social program and could not speak his mind. Dwight Eisenhower was a die-hard segregationist, but when ordered by the Supreme Court he called out troops to integrate Central High

As we celebrate the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth, our country is again at the verge of a great economic, moral, and political crisis. We need to study our history. We need to create a political memory in order to understand and emulate the characteristics of this great man. After all these years he remains unchallenged as the greatest American leader and perhaps the only one beloved by the people of the world.

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School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The list is endless.

After two years of bloody war, political conditions and sentiments of the North had begun to change. The Union victory at Antietam in September 1862 enthused a war-weary North, guaranteeing the continuation of the war and Lincoln's election in 1864. In the wake of Antietam, Lincoln felt strong enough to take the dangerous gamble and issue the Emancipation Proclamation as a military move, since it could not be taken as a political move. This was dangerous because the right to seize Confederate property had been upheld by a thin margin of 4 to 5 in the "Prize cases." This was the same court that issued the Dred Scott decision and had it voted against the Proclamation, Lincoln would certainly have been impeached and the cause lost for decades.

We should keep in mind that after the longest, most expensive and bloodiest war in history and after the murder of a then beloved President, the Senate would not convict the impeached President Johnson because they knew that would place the Presidency in the hands of the radical Republicans who would finish Lincoln's work. That was the depth of racism and an indication of what Lincoln dealt with as he reshaped our country.

Destruction of Value Marks Capitalism's End

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

Capitalism is the economic system of buying and selling based on the exploitation of human labor, which is the sole source of value. The elimination of labor power from production is destroying the source of all value, and thus, destroying surplus value, which is the source of all profits stolen from the worker by the capitalist. Without value, surplus value, and profits, capitalism cannot survive as a system. This article will discuss how the destruction of value marks the end of capitalism and of the value system itself, opening the way for a new society based on a new economic system.

The term "value" in political economy really means exchange value; exchange value expresses the ratio at which two different products of human labor exchange for each other. Value (or exchange value) exists in human society where people are organized with a division of labor for the production and distribution of goods and services. Value in this sense does not exist when humans live in isolation, or when a person produces only for his or own personal use.

Thus, value is a social relation that only exists in the process of buying and selling. It serves to allocate labor power and other scarce resources for both production and

distribution under conditions where there is insufficient labor power to satisfy the needs of all. As society is able to produce abundance to meet all its needs, value disappears as a means of determining what is produced and who will consume and benefit from the wealth.

In the complex system of capitalism, value allocates scarce human labor to meet the immediate needs of society. It also unleash-

es the awesome power of human ingenuity to increase labor productivity through technology in production. As a result, society now has immense material wealth sufficient to satisfy human needs. Under capitalism, the capitalists own and control all the fruits

of this increased labor productivity. Today, 567 million people live in countries whose gross domestic product is less than the wealth of the world's seven richest people combined. The polarity between wealth and poverty has never been greater. Yet, labor is the one and only source of all value. The value of every commodity is determined by the amount of socially necessary labor time utilized in production. Socially necessary labor time is the quantity of labor necessary for production under aver-

competitive edge to the capitalist who first introduces the technology. But as the new technology is adopted by competitors, and the increased productivity and lower labor costs spread across the whole product line, the price falls in accord with the lower value and less surplus value is expropriated in the process of production. Thus, the rate of profit falls for all.

Capital's drive for maximum profits has led to the introduction of a revolutionary new means of production, thus opening up an era of social revolution. Previous technological advances were labor-saving. Electronic technology in production replaces labor. It lowers labor costs by replacing human labor with robots and with computer technology that controls and operates machinery.

Without any labor costs to the capitalists, robots on the assembly line work more efficiently than workers, and computer-operated tool and die makers are faster and more accurate than skilled mechanists. Labor is being eliminated from production, and thus the source of value and surplus value is being eliminated. The value of the labor power of workers whose job is performed by a robot or computer-operated machine is nothing to the capitalist class.

Further, these revolutionary new means of production cause a breakdown in the process of buying and selling that is essential to capitalism. Robots and computer-operated machinery aren't paid wages and don't buy anything; they produce but they don't consume. And, workers replaced by these means of production don't have paychecks. When workers are unable to buy, the capitalist is unable to realize a profit. The overall impact of the new technology is to drive the rate of profit down to zero.

As electronics eliminates human labor, it destroys the source of all value, and thus ends a system of production and distribution based on the exploitation of human labor power. Zero rate of profit and zero value of human labor power mark the end of the capitalist system of production and distribution, and thus the end of value as the means for determining what is produced and consumed.

Capitalism has come to its end. Something new is struggling to be born. For the first time in human history, abundance, not scarcity, can define human society. Only people can determine whether that abundance will be owned by a handful of capitalists, or by, and for, the good of the community as a whole.

age social conditions. The amount of value in a commodity over and above the wages paid to the worker is surplus value, all of which is created by labor, but stolen by the owner of the means of production, the capitalist, as the source of profit.

With capital striving for higher profits from the stolen surplus value, labor is in constant battle against capital's unrelenting drive to lower wages below a living wage. These wages are a monetary expression of the cost of labor power. Labor power is the worker; the worker is the source of potential or actual labor power; like the horse is the source of horsepower. Thus, the cost of labor power is the cost of maintaining a worker and his or her family, and capitalism as a system locks the worker onto a treadmill of poverty or the threat of poverty.

From capitalism's earliest beginnings in the textile factories of England to its domination of the global society, capitalists have been, and are, driven by competition to maximize their rate of profit in competition with other capitalists at the expense of the working class, and without concern for the consequence for human society. The highest rate of profit is the bottom line for all activities for an individual member of the capitalist class. As a consequence of this competition, each capitalist drives down the cost of production to increase profits through greater exploitation of labor and introduces new technology to cut labor costs and increase productivity.

The introduction of technology gives a

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