

RALLY COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

Unity is Only Path Forward as Immigrant and U.S. Born Workers Face Common Enemy

As the capitalists' historical means of controlling the native born U.S. working class unravels, they must destroy the nascent working class movement before it becomes conscious of itself and unites to fight for its own interests. To do this, the capitalist class utilizes historically evolved forms to divide and conquer the emerging movement and to mold it toward their own interests.

The immigration question has historically been a powerful weapon in the capitalists' arsenal of this country. In today's arena, their stated aim is to stem the tide of illegal immigration and prevent terrorist attacks on the U.S. mainland. The actual goal, however, is to control the overall U.S. working class for the capitalists' own purposes. The challenge for immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented, and the larger U.S. working class, of which they are a part, is to recognize that the basis of their unity is in their mutual struggle for daily bread.

STRATEGY FOR CONTROL UNRAVELING

Today the capitalists are in a life and death struggle for their survival and their historical means of control is threatened.

The stably employed workers in heavy industry concentrated in the Rust Belt – Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and Great Lakes region – have historically been the pillars of strength of capitalism. Workers and their unions from this area have exerted tremendous social and political influence on workers in the rest of the country. U.S. capitalists' control over this strategic sector was crucial to profits and expansion nationally and internationally. Social bribery and a higher standard of living secured their loyalty to the capitalist class. Now, the capitalist class is discarding these workers.

The implementation of privately owned labor-replacing technology in all industry is creating untold poverty and misery throughout the country, including the Rust Belt. From this destruction is emerging a new class whose common economic plight cuts across all previous lines of division, including color and national origin, and is the basis for their unity as a class.

With the rise of this class – although still scattered and unaware of its common interests – has come a weakening of the capitalists' control, particularly within their former

political stronghold among the industrial working class of the Rust Belt.

The capitalists must find the means to discipline and control the U.S. workers in a world where labor is no longer needed and privation is the norm. The capitalists must find the means to make the workers accept their role in a new world order that preserves private property for the capitalists, and supports the U.S. state as it vies for supremacy as sole superpower in an increasingly dangerous and unstable geopolitical world.

SHARING A COMMON ECONOMIC PLIGHT

Whether they are aware of it or not, immigrants – both documented and undocumented – and native U.S. workers are united as victims of the capitalist system. They suffer from the effects of labor-replacing technology as it is implemented worldwide, and from the same international trade policies and agreements of an increasingly integrated world economy.

The capitalists promote free trade. Protective trade tariffs and farm subsidies of countries such as Mexico are removed, fostering the free flow of capital investment and cheap labor, while bankrupting small producers and landowners who cannot compete with cheap U.S. corn from Midwest megafarms. Trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are destroying economies, and millions are losing their means of making a living. Workers are forced to migrate for their own survival and that of the family members they leave behind. These displaced workers are vilified when they come to the U.S., while their illegal status allows for their exploitation as a cheap and readily deportable source of labor.

These policies have served to weaken and demonize the social welfare state in the U.S. and the sending countries, while uprooting workers and intensifying the competition for survival among them.

Even native born U.S. workers, displaced by layoffs and plant closings, are forced to wander the country as internal migrants, reminiscent of the hobos of the Great Depression and of the displaced Southern

sharecroppers who, forced off the land due to the mechanization of agriculture following World War II, moved North.

Native born U.S. workers are now facing the kind of governmental indifference and harsh treatment more often reserved for immigrant workers. California Republican State Assembly member Chuck DeVore brought this out in the open in a statement to the *Orange County Progressive* in May of this year. "When you have an unemployment rate as high as it is in this state, it should be a signal to people to look for jobs in other states with more jobs and a lower cost of living.... We have had policies subsidizing poverty in this state for years, and we can't keep doing that."

Whether they are aware of it or not, the reality is that all workers – regardless of color, gender or national origin – are increasingly being thrown down to the same economic level and, as such, share common class interests. The capitalists are already proving they will spare no measures to prevent this developing class from recognizing those common interests.

ANTI-IMMIGRANT WEAPON

The capitalists have always been quick to seize on the weapon of anti-immigrant hysteria during times of economic crisis. Immigrants, particularly the undocumented, are once again being made convenient scapegoats to divide the class.

The undocumented immigrant has been labeled terrorist, drug pusher, freeloader on social services, and now swine flu disease bearer, in rapid succession, as if probing to see which label works best to demonize the immigrant. Deportations, humiliations, and

deaths in the desert and on the border are now common place. The undocumented are denied health care in California as counties, citing huge state budget deficits, drop coverage one by one.

In a carefully orchestrated maneuver, the nation's outrage and despair over the September 11, 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center was converted into perpetual war abroad and increased domestic surveillance and suppression under such measures as the Patriot Act. Part of this was the intentional association in the American psyche of undocumented persons with terrorism, although all of the 9/11 bombers had valid visas to be in the U.S. and no one accused of terrorism to date has crossed the border illegally from Mexico.

This helped create a climate where the militarization of immigration policy is being accepted. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) – previously under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice – was abolished and immigration matters were tied more closely to anti-terrorism and transferred to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The primary arm of this policy is the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It is the largest investigative arm of DHS, with sweeping powers to investigate, arrest and deport or prosecute anyone considered even a potential threat, with little or no restrictions on ICE's activities or conduct.

This is no accident. What is being instituted is the basis for controlling all Americans when the times call for it. The privately run prisons that now hold the undocumented

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Rally, Comrades! The Voice of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Harpers Ferry: Courage and clarity changed history once – and will do so again

October 16, 2009 will mark exactly 150 years since 21 brave revolutionaries launched an attempt to seize the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, and spark a slave uprising in the United States.

After 36 hours of hard fighting, most of the raiders were killed or captured. The raid failed – in the military and tactical sense. In the moral and strategic sense, it was ultimately a resounding success.

The raid and the subsequent execution of John Brown and six of his comrades deepened the split between the North and the South, a situation which led directly to the Civil War. Given this, it is important that we ponder the lessons of Harpers Ferry for today.

Harpers Ferry was a signal of the impending collision of two very different economic systems, chattel slavery in the South and the industrial system in the North.

This split had been growing since the introduction of steam power into small New England textile mills in the very first days of the 19th century.

When the United States was created, the representatives of the slave power com-

pletely dominated the Union. The federal Constitution agreed to in 1787 was a compromise between the North and the South. When that Constitution went into effect, the representatives of the slave power con-

duced into production, a qualitatively new economy began to develop in the North. This economy ceased to be simply an extension of the slave system.

As the population of the North grew, the

Just as John Brown and his compatriots took an uncompromising stand that a system which sold children on auction blocks had to be overthrown, revolutionaries today need to take an uncompromising stand that a system which makes millions of children hungry and homeless needs to be overthrown.

trolled the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, the presidency, and the Supreme Court. This domination of national politics continued for decades. It led to a stunning arrogance on the part of the political representatives of slavery.

But once the steam engine was intro-

North gained control of the U.S. House of Representatives. Desperate for new territory to bring more slave states into the Union, the South's political representatives helped provoke a war which ended with the United States seizing half of Mexico's territory in 1848. Then the South insisted on a Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 which forced the entire population of the North to become what amounted to slave-catchers. In 1854, slavery's defenders in Congress rammed through the Kansas-Nebraska Act, a measure which undid the previous agreement to ban slavery in the territories north of Missouri's southern border. And, finally, in 1857, a Supreme Court dominated by Southerners ruled that slavery was legal throughout the entire United States (the infamous Dred Scott decision.)

Faced with these attacks, the North struggled to assert itself, weighed down by the terrible dead weight of the compromises made to form the Union and by the presence within the North of economic forces allied with the South – such as the merchants who traded extensively with the slaveowners.

THE ROLE OF NEW IDEAS

At moments of crisis like this, an important role can be played by even a small number of people, provided that they have the moral courage to fight for what is right and the clarity to know what is needed to push history forward. That is why, in the history of the struggle against slavery, a special place of honor will always be reserved for the 21 men who attacked Harpers Ferry and especially for their leader, John Brown.

In a time of confusion and cowardice, John Brown's stance was unwavering: Slavery was wrong. It would have to be abolished by force, and God had chosen him to lead that fight.

John Brown understood that the key to ending slavery was to "take the war to Africa," – that is, to arm the slaves.

ACTIVITY AND PROPAGANDA

The Harpers Ferry raid vividly illustrates the dialectical relationship between activity and propaganda.

Initially, most of the North opposed the raid. But during the 60 days from the time that the shooting stopped until the execution of John Brown, the attitude of people in the North changed markedly.

When he was captured, Brown's rifle was taken from him. The New England essayist Henry David Thoreau remarked that Brown "could afford to lose his Sharpe's rifles, while he retained his faculty of speech, a Sharpe's rifle of infinitely surer and longer range."

After the shooting stopped, the country was transfixed by the spectacle of the state of Virginia rushing with obscene haste through the trial of a wounded old man (who lay on a cot, barely able to stand, during most of the proceedings.)

The Virginia authorities made two serious blunders during this period. First, they allowed reporters to interview Brown. Second, prison officials allowed Brown to write and answer letters.

Here is how in his book, *To Purge This Land With Blood: A Biography of John Brown*, historian Stephen B. Oates described the consequences of that second decision:

"[T]he old man, taking advantage of this God-sent opportunity, sent out from that Charlestown jail some of the most eloquent statements ever to come from the pen of a condemned man. Even the sheriff, who examined Brown's letters as a matter of duty, frequently had to wipe tears from his eyes."

On Nov. 2, 1859, the judge asked Brown if he had anything to say before sentence was pronounced. Caught off guard because he had not expected to be sentenced before the other prisoners, Brown still responded with a defense of his actions so eloquent that Ralph Waldo Emerson later compared it to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Pointing out a Bible being used in the courtroom, Brown declared that everything that he had done had been in accord with that book, and had been in defense of God's "despised poor."

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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

Rally, Comrades! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally, Comrades!* provides a strategic outlook for the revolutionaries by indicating and illuminating the line of march of the revolutionary process. It presents a pole of scientific clarity 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.

Editor: Brooke Heagerty

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

Reach us at:

Rally, Comrades!
P.O. Box 477113
Chicago, IL 60647

rally@lrna.org
www.rallycomrades.net
773-486-0028

DEDICATED PROPAGANDISTS SPEAK OUT

In addition to Brown himself, a core of dedicated propagandists also spoke up immediately in defense of the Harpers Ferry raid, often at great personal risk.

On the Sunday following the raid, Boston abolitionist Wendell Phillips – the most dynamic public speaker of the time – stood before an initially unsympathetic audience in Reverend Henry Ward Beecher’s church in Brooklyn and delivered one of the many speeches he would give defending the raid on Harpers Ferry.

In those speeches, Phillips mocked the idea that a state government which permitted children to be sold on auction blocks could presume to judge anyone. He referred to Virginia contemptuously as “a pirate ship on the ocean of the nineteenth century” and described John Brown as “a Lord High Admiral of the Almighty, with his commission to sink every pirate he meets on God’s ocean.” Phillips also declared that John Brown “has twice as much right to hang

Governor Wise, as Governor Wise has to hang him.”

On October 30, 1859, Thoreau gave a lecture in Concord in support of John Brown. When town officials refused to ring the bell summoning the townspeople to the lecture, Thoreau rang it himself.

Thoreau’s address – “A Plea for Captain John Brown” – was widely reprinted in the newspapers. Thoreau’s boldness encouraged his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson -- the most prominent literary figure in the country – to speak out.

On Nov. 8, 1859, Emerson gave his lecture “Courage” before a large crowd at the Music Hall in Boston. Emerson called Brown “that new saint” whose hanging “will make the gallows glorious like the cross.”

On Dec. 2, 1859, as John Brown was being executed, church bells were ringing and protest meetings being held from New England to Kansas.

So, it was only after the bold attempt to seize the arsenal that there could be a nationwide debate over whether that action

was right. But it was that weeks-long war of words – including the interviews, letters, speeches, sermons, newspaper articles, and public meetings – which turned opinion in the North to the raiders’ side, hardened Southern support for slavery, and paved the way for the Civil War. The battle of Harpers Ferry continued after the shooting stopped, and it was won not with the firearms of slavery’s opponents, but with their propaganda weapons.

LESSONS FOR TODAY

The “crisis of the Union” before the Civil War demonstrates that nothing can change in a crisis until there is a pole of clarity. This pole has to be formed around an idea, a cause.

The Harpers Ferry raid also shows that a cause has to be taken to the section of society whose interests the cause represents in order for it to be effective.

One hundred and fifty years after the attack on Harpers Ferry, we too need to establish a pole of clarity. Just as John Brown and his compatriots took an uncompromising

stand that a system which sold children on auction blocks had to be overthrown, revolutionaries today need to take an uncompromising stand that a system which makes millions of children hungry and homeless needs to be overthrown.

John Brown’s last act of propaganda was to march up the steps of a scaffold on a spring-like December morning, his brisk footsteps and unflinching firmness announcing to the world that he was ready to die, undaunted and unafraid. Today, we toll the bell in his honor best by continuing to bring the weapon of clarity to the “despised poor” that he and the other heroes of 1859 fought so valiantly to mobilize.

Editorial: The first step

Necessity unites. – German proverb.

Sometimes the old sayings are the truest. Unity is a conscious act, an act of understanding and will. But it derives its strength – indeed, becomes truly possible – in the presence of necessity.

Recognizing the connection between practical necessity and understanding makes the difference between defeat or victory. This has been the key to success of revolution throughout history.

Today, millions have lost their jobs and will never see them again. Teachers are laid off as schools close, bank tellers, real estate agents, middle managers downsized and thrown out as the economy tanks, and auto workers whose unions have forced them to make a devil’s deal with the company and the government. They all join earlier victims of the past “jobless recoveries” and those who were thrown into poverty years ago. They are everywhere, thrown into the maelstrom, as new technologies create the chaos of destruction and transformation.

All of them, everywhere, are joined by a common interest. But they don’t know it, can’t see it. They cling to the old hopes. They don’t realize the field of battle has shifted.

What is our first step? Our forces are scattered with little if any organizational wherewithal to put forward their demands. They must be pulled together. But, around what? and for what? They must be pulled

together in their own interests. Fighting for the concrete demands of this growing mass of dispossessed is the field on which unity can be forged.

Yet to be mobilized along the path to victory requires more than fighting. It demands ideas. It demands strategy and tactics. It demands a vision.

The article, *New conditions demand new ways of thinking*, examines the importance of reexamining our perspectives in light of

Key to this is establishing a pole of clarity around which revolutionaries can congregate. This pole of clarity is not an individual, or an organization, but an idea, a breadth of understanding, a vision of what can be and what to do to accomplish it.

Our article commemorating the 150th anniversary of Harper’s Ferry, *Courage and clarity changed history once — it will do so again*, shows how John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry in October 1859 galvanized

the entire system of private property and all it entails.

The ruling class understands the necessity of maintaining disunity among those who hold the power to bring them down. In every and, all instances, their clarity of intention guides their strategic considerations and determines their tactics in their war with the growing mass of discontented. Every issue is fought to protect their immediate interests, but in such a way as to shape the ground for future necessities. They seek, above all, to preserve their political power as a class.

Our cover article, *Unity is the only path forward*, shows how the capitalists are using the immigration question – particularly the undocumented worker – to control the entire U.S. native born working class. Only through coming together around the common class interests that unite them, regardless of color or nationality, will they be able to create the world that reflects those class interests.

The struggle for unity and the fight for clarity; this is what the League of Revolutionaries is about. The League’s press Rally, *Comrades!* gives voice to this. The article, *Rally, Comrades!* The voice of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, addresses the relation between the League and *Rally, Comrades!*, underscoring the indispensable role of a publication that speaks to those who are emerging as leaders grappling with the broader questions of change, why, and which way forward.

Our forces must be pulled together. Fighting for the concrete demands of the growing mass of dispossessed is the field on which unity can be forged.

these new conditions. Identity politics arose in response to particular conditions, and the coming together of coalitions of organizations with different agendas passed as the “unity” of that time. Today, the objective conditions are emerging for the opposing classes in society to confront one another in political struggle over control of the state. This article analyzes what this means for our situation today, providing important insights for revolutionaries to bring to their work.

a nation. It did so, not simply because of the audacious attack on a federal armory, but because this one act crystallized decades of struggle and torment over slavery, spilling out to find voice throughout the nation, first through Brown himself, and then through dedicated propagandists throughout the country, clarifying and summing up the meaning of Brown’s actions and his death at the hand of Virginia authorities. At that time, the demand was for the overthrow of slavery, today the demand is for the end of

New conditions demand new ways of thinking

At moments of rapid and fundamental change, it is critical to assess what is new and emerging, and to discard old ways of thinking. Only then can revolutionaries think and act strategically.

Politics today is becoming real politics – the struggle of classes for the political power to reorganize society. The first step on that path is to demand that the government act in the interests of the public, not the corporations.

Because revolutionaries understand the present and can envision the future, we can also clear out ideological frameworks that lag behind profound and rapid changes in the real world. Categories of thinking and activity – such as identity politics of the 1960's – that seemed to solve old problems will not solve the new ones.

EXPANDING CAPITALISM OFFERED OPPORTUNITIES

Movement or identity politics arose in the 1960's when capitalism was in midst of an extended upswing with increasing production and employment opportunities bringing optimism that the growth would continue indefinitely. People who had long suffered discrimination and oppression on the basis

of color, ethnicity, or gender identified with others like themselves and organized in their own "movement" and organizations to demand a piece of the expanding pie.

The principle polarity that shaped world politics then was between the imperialist countries and the colonies and neo-colonies. The Civil Rights Movement was the main domestic expression of that polarity. Our country was battling its way out of a century of Jim Crow laws, segregation, and lynch mobs, which enforced the inequality that followed the Civil War and the defeat of Reconstruction. The Civil Rights Movement was the critical battle on history's agenda and the central cause in the movement.

The Civil Rights Movement set the tone and pace for all struggles. Color has always been at the cutting edge of American history, not just for African-Americans, but also for other minorities, for women, and other disadvantaged social groups.

Trade union politics also expressed the identity politics of the past period. "Class identity" was too often approached or interpreted as "trade union identity." As long as the capitalist system was expanding, the trade union movement and its wheel-and-deal politics could deliver the social bribe separate from – and sometimes even at the expense of – domestic social struggles for

equality and international struggles for national liberation.

Under those conditions, it's no wonder that, when approached as trade union identity, class identity drew contempt from the broader social movement still struggling for basic equality.

Equating "class identity" with "trade union identity" was wrong, but understandable at that time. In reality the working class is much broader than the trade union movement, and the social movements for equality were integral to the working class struggle. Class and color in this country are as intertwined as slavery and capitalism.

OLD ROUTES CLOSED

The manipulation of divisions, particularly along color or racial lines, within the class has kept the world's potentially most powerful working class impotent and subservient. Class and color are two different, but interconnected motions. The complex interrelation of these contradictory motions demands that revolutionaries pay strict attention to both aspects, understanding that the ways of thinking that resolved old problems will not solve the problems of today.

Thus, the identity politics that led to the legal and social reforms of the 1960's and 1970's has emerged as the leading edge of ruling class ideological and political strategy. It provides a means to corral the social movement, to pit worker against worker, and to block the emergence of the kind of politics necessary to achieve the historically evolved demands of all of society.

The reality is that the broad masses of people did not significantly benefit from the social and legal reforms. However, the elite within each disadvantaged social group benefited and became decisively integrated into the ruling class. This freshly integrated ruling class politically exploits identity politics along color or ethnic or gender lines, turning differences within the working class into divisions.

The ruling class is integrated, but inequality persists. The current economic climate intensifies inequality while dragging down the whole population. The unemployment rate is 50% for African-American males between the ages of 24 and 65 compared to 30% for all males.

But the old routes of struggle for equality and opportunity are closed off. In 1960 a poor Black man was denied the use of a restroom because he was Black. Today, the same Black man is denied the use of a restroom because he is poor and homeless. In the 1960s, unemployed Black women could fight for jobs by demanding that General Motors end its discriminatory hiring practices. Today, it is the federal government that mandated GM's extensive job cuts.

NEW POLARITY EMERGES

The Government's bankruptcy restructuring of two corporations at the heart of the American auto industry leaves no doubt about the conclusion of a long chapter in the development of the U.S. working class and the ability of the system to concede benefits to the broad masses of the population. Facing government-brokered lay-offs, no-strike clauses, pay cuts, and elimination of health benefits, autoworkers face not simply their employers but the government itself as the block to getting what they need.

As the government takes huge steps into managing the economy, a new polarity is shifting into predominance. On the one side, the state enforces the regime of the corporations over society. On the other, broader sections of people have to fight for the necessities of life.

This polarity is beginning to shape the politics of the country. It is awakening people to the need to fight politically. The problems facing the American people are, without a doubt, rooted in capitalism. But what blocks the solution is not the capitalist system in general. Ever more specifically and directly, the block is the political action of the government to protect and serve the laws of private property.

Objective conditions are emerging for the opposing classes in society to confront one another in the political struggle over control of the state. Not since the defeat of Reconstruction after the Civil War has there been the objective basis for class struggle in the U.S.

Today, as then, reality asserts itself. The way forward is not reform of the system or for equal access to non-existent opportunities in a system that is destroying itself. What's needed is to politicize and prepare the growing class of unemployed, underemployed, and under-paid to fight for the political power to meet their demands and liberate all of society from the regime of the corporations and the laws that protect their private property.

Understanding fundamental change is not an abstract or academic exercise. It is a matter of politics and the political direction our country will take. The ruling class is preparing for its political tasks and the struggle to impose its will on society. To do so, they will have to agitate and prepare a mass base to support the political program of the ruling class.

However such fascist agitation ultimately coalesces, it is bound to appeal to a sense of loss and corral a sense of identity. Fascist agitation can exploit the differences – at one time so celebrated by identity politics – and foment them into divisions, turning worker

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You Need *Rally, Comrades!* *Rally, Comrades!* Needs You

The world is in the midst of rapid change. You or those close to you might have been threatened with or suffered loss of job and home. You are deeply concerned about what's happening to our world.

You read, listen to the radio, and watch TV to understand what's happening, but the answers aren't there. There's plenty of news and analysis, but all of it comes to describing problems and proposals for fixing capitalism. None of it points the way to a new society.

Rally, Comrades! stands out, offering a sound and clear analysis of the way forward. *Rally, Comrades!* shows how capitalism is coming to an end. It clearly describes the emerging struggle over what will replace capitalism: a new form of private property enforced through fascism, or a new communal society for the well being of all peoples.

Human society is at a critical juncture in history where what people understand and what people choose to do will determine the fate of future generations.

Rally, Comrades! and the League receive no donations from corporations, foundations or government. We rely completely on volunteers and donations from readers like you to carry out this urgent work.

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can quickly become prisons for U.S. citizens as the scattered opposition to the capitalists' plans develops into domestic unrest. Americans are being taught to surrender their rights in the interests of national security.

The drug war in Mexico heightens this dynamic. On the one hand, the drug war demonizes undocumented immigrants as drug pushers or dealers, alienating them even further. On the other, it allows the Mexican government to squelch domestic unrest within its own borders, either directly through its own military as it is now doing, or with the aid of U.S. troops. Unlike the 1930s, deported immigrants do not have a farm plot to fall back on. The pressure cooker of social unrest will be dealt with harshly.

The U.S. state has a long history of intervention in Mexico and Latin America – the Mexican American War of the 1840s, the intervention in the Mexican Revolution of 1910, the support of the Mexican government repression of the 1994 Chiapas Rebellion, the intervention against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and the U.S. role in the Salvadoran and Guatemalan civil wars to name a few. The U.S. will not hesitate to do so again if revolution threatens to spill across its borders from Mexico.

UNITY OF ALL WORKERS IS ONLY PATH

It is unlikely that the demands of the immigration movement will be dealt with fairly in the current environment. Immigration advocates were hopeful that the new admin-

confronted with difficult decisions. Will they turn their back on those with whom they share common interests? Or will they look to the class interests that unite them – the demand that they share in the basic necessities of life and a dignified future for their children, which at one time was the

The challenge for immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented, and the larger U.S. working class, of which they are a part, is to recognize that the basis of their unity is in their mutual struggle for daily bread.

istration would stop the raids and prepare the path towards legalization for those that are currently in the U.S. The President's appointment of Janet Napolitano as director of the Department of Homeland Security, however, leaves no doubt that the raids will continue.

In the dark and tumultuous times to come, native born and immigrant workers regardless of their residency status will be

American Dream.

This demand – this necessity – knows no color and no national boundary. The modern means of producing have now made a world of abundance possible. Only maintaining this abundance as private property keeps it from benefiting society at large. In fact, the modern means of producing have eliminated all past barriers, except for the artificial ones of private property.

The course the capitalists propose is unnatural. Immigrants have long been an integral part of the U.S. working class. Wave upon wave of immigrants from every country in the world built this country, and continue to contribute to it, laboring in the mines, mills and factories of America. Irish and German immigrants fought and died in the Civil War. Immigrants were in the leadership of the fight for the eight hour day in the Chicago labor struggle of 1886. Today, immigrants are an integral part of U.S. society and family structure, as well as some of the most determined fighters in the labor movement.

In order to ensure their own survival, the capitalist class is prepared to destroy all that has made this country a beacon of light to the world.

The times demand a choice. Either we allow the capitalists and their corporations to achieve a police state that keeps them in the money and in control, and us at each other's throats – or we find the ways to unite as a class across borders and appropriate what is produced for the good of all.

Rally, Comrades! The Voice of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Editor's Note: This is an excerpt of a report to the Rally, Comrades! Annual retreat, July 2009.

As the press of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, the mission of *Rally, Comrades!* is an expression of the League's mission. Its primary purpose is to coalesce and consolidate a core of communists politically prepared to take the next step in the line of march of the revolutionary process. It expresses the continuity of the League's understanding that this stage of the revolutionary process requires us to focus, not on the masses, but on those capable of influencing and leading others.

In the world-historical revolutionary process, understanding the proper relation between a revolutionary organization and the mass movement is of the utmost importance. Revolutionary organizations have fallen into one of two errors – either demanding the abolition of private property without any consideration for the stages of development of the proletariat and the ob-

jective conditions they face, or simply taking up whatever the class thinks at any given time and elevating that to the revolution and class struggle.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Karl Marx summarized the proper dialectic: "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."

His colleague, Frederick Engels, applied this dialectic to organization: the organization of revolutionaries must be the subjective (theoretical, tactical and strategic) expression of the objective (historical, mass, objective) movement.

The League rests on this dialectical relation: "We face the task of building a revolutionary organization while participating in the mass movement at the highest level. These two are not the same thing, but neither can be done without the other. Accomplishing these two pulls us in different directions; navigating the relation between

the two directions is the way that we will build the League." (Katrina, the Rulers' Strategy and the Tasks of the League, December 2005)

The actual field of work of the communist lies in the relation of the two, what we term the "art of politics."

MASS MOVEMENT AND REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION

A movement is in the category of history, not politics, Being objective or unconscious, it is not the result of someone's ideas, but spontaneously arises on the basis of the contradictions within society and expresses itself as the summation of the scattered and often seemingly unrelated activity of hundreds of millions of people.

These millions are striving to move in a certain direction, that is, in the direction of revolution and communism, but they are not conscious of this inevitability, which results from historically motivated and seemingly scattered and individual activity.

The communist movement is this histori-

cally evolved struggle of the proletariat for the seizure of political power. It is not the sectarian activity of a group of people ideologically committed to communism.

Clearly the communists must do two things. They must adopt the program of the class. This does not mean that they adopt what the class says and thinks; it means that they adopt the actual goals and demands of the class. Those goals can be understood only by a deep understanding of the quantitative stage of the class struggle and by learning to sum up the scattered objective demands of the workers.

And the communists must struggle for the broadest possible unity of the working class on the basis of the objective demands of the class. This broad political unity cannot be achieved without compromise. If all people were able to see the same thing in the same way, compromise would not be a problem. Since they do not, and cannot, because of differing experience and ideology, the art of compromise becomes the form of

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the struggle for political unity.

LEAGUE PROGRAM AND MISSION

The League program expresses these dual responsibilities. Within the overall context of the program of the class – communism as the only practical solution to the problems of today – the program addresses the immediate needs of the workers. “Society must take over the corporations or the corporations will take over society” provides the general political guideline for the work.

On the other hand, the program “represents and takes care of the future of that movement” by outlining the League’s mission within that process to prepare the revolutionary forces for the next stage toward political revolution. The League program states: “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.”

Therefore, within the overall context of

epochal transformation, the program provides the general political guideline for the League’s work and outlines the one main thing that the League is trying to accomplish at this stage of development.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS MISSION

Many things must be done to accomplish this mission. All of the League’s political assessments and strategic and tactical projections are the hows of carrying out this mission. This includes the identification of nationalization in the interests of the workers as the next step in the line of march of the revolution and identification of the dispossessed of the Rust Belt as the decisive section of the class, as well as the broad dissemination of propaganda that seeks to show the roots of the problem, instill an understanding of class interests, and to break the intellectual and political bonds that tie the workers to the capitalist class.

In all of this, the League’s goal is to influence the emerging revolutionaries in order to create a conscious communist core that can provide the stability and clarity to the revolutionary movement in its next stages of development.

We can only move the masses to the next stage of development by influencing their leaders. The League’s strategy is the devel-

opment of the leaders of the movement. This means we work within the existing movement rather than attempting to create something that we can control. If we intend to link up with the leaders of the existing movement, we have to present them with the resolution of the problems they are grappling with.

THE ROLE OF RALLY, COMRADES!

Thus, *Rally, Comrades!* seeks to reach and influence those who are already to a certain degree conscious of the root of society’s problems, however this is expressed (as anti-capitalist, anti-corporate, revolutionary, or another form), and who are seeking strategic direction and perspective to win.

Rally’s mission stated as editorial policy in each issue speaks to this when it states: “In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally, Comrades!* provides a strategic outlook for 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 pre-

pare for future stages.”

Revolutionaries are drawn to what we have to say in different ways, but the common thread is that they are looking for something more than just fighting back. They are looking for a greater understanding of the problem, and a direction and strategy to solve the problems they and their constituents face.

Rally speaks to these leaders – these revolutionaries – who are emerging from every front of struggle as conditions worsen.

To reach and influence these revolutionaries, *Rally* must first of all speak to their interests and concerns. It must not only expose the roots of their problems and convince them that capitalism is finished, it must put forward a direction in which to go, a strategy to pursue, the next steps and why. It must analyze political motion and events, outline strategy and direction, and broaden the outlook of the revolutionaries beyond their narrow fronts. It must focus its work on creating conscious communists, who are prepared politically to move the gathering forces along the next step. Ultimately, *Rally, Comrades!* is a political paper, facing outward, and striving to reach and influence the emerging leaders as they begin to grapple with the broader questions of why, and which way.

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against worker. Whether it agitates “white identity” against Blacks, or “American identity” against immigrants, or takes some other track, it will appeal to the sense of identity of those who now feel dispossessed of what they once had and channel it to serve the ruling class interests.

Workers cut loose from their economic security can go either way politically. Just as some can be agitated into a mass base for a fascist program, others can be politicized to fight for their own class interests. United across color lines in its economic and class interests, this sector can be the driving force in determining the political direction in which the class fights.

The now unemployed, semi-employed, and underpaid workers – of all nationalities – once personified the American Dream of home ownership, medical and pension benefits, wages that support a family and its vacations and college educations. Almost overnight, these workers now find themselves dispossessed of their financial and social security – at the behest of the government, no less. With the skills, connections, elementary awareness of class interests, and the sense that they are entitled to a decent life, these workers are in the position to pull the whole process forward.

This presents a very real challenge to revolutionaries today. The struggle over how to stabilize the economy opens up the battlefield where class interests can be realized

and fought out. Revolutionaries can rely on the actual objective needs of the class and society. We will have to focus on talking with people about their actual interests and how to fight for them politically.

TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES

Old ideas linger on past their time. History eventually evens up the consciousness and ideas with the new reality. This process is not even, direct, or automatic. The ruling class perpetuates the old ideas. Revolutionaries have the responsibility to introduce new ideas to reflect the new reality.

Our starting point is not one ideology or another but the demands and actual interests of the class thrown out of work and into battle. Our aim is to coalesce the movement intellectually to prepare it to fight politically for those needs and unleash the struggle to go to its actual conclusion.

Revolutionaries are those who see further and feel deeper. We dread the prospect of our country being terrorized by fascist thugs and our people being subjected to the naked rule of private corporations and private property. We welcome the opportunity to politicize the beginning steps and impulses along the path of a class fighting consciously for its actual interests. These are the first steps of the revolution.

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