

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

Chicago Teachers Union Strike – The Politics of Power

The battle for public education broke out in Chicago, the epicenter of corporate-led education reform. It broke out in the Rust Belt, in the city historically a center of the labor movement, completely dominated by the Democratic Party. A manifestation of the crisis in public education, it broke out as a battle against the austerity demanded of public workers and their unions, that is now sweeping every state.

For more than a decade, Chicago Public Schools has been implementing a series of policies to starve public schools of resources while increasing the corporate control of public education in the city. The Commercial Club of Chicago, the power base of the corporations and billionaires that control the city, uses educational reform to advance a real estate agenda. Closing public schools is an essential part of this.

In Chicago, as well as across the country, people have long been forced to make concessions and accept the loss of government programs that support people. But the September 2012 Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) strike made it clear that the closing and destruction of the schools is the result of billionaires working openly against the people. People believe that education is the only real hope of the working class for the future. So they drew the line when it came to the destruction of their children's education.

Like the Wisconsin uprising and the Occupy movement, the CTU strike was a break in continuity with the politics of control in this country. The CTU understood and organized around the fact that their trade union issues as teachers merged with the anger of the community around the closure of public schools. Neither teachers nor parents could win without the other. Teacher's working conditions are children's learning conditions.

The CTU found itself politically encircled by a cabal of billionaires who only permitted discussion or resolution within the limits that they themselves set. As the city's political structure diverted more and more public money into the hands of its billionaires and their corporations, it became obvious that this class is the problem, not a lack of resources for education.

These two factors — the merger of teacher and community interests and the necessity to break out of the political encirclement — meant that the battle objectively overflowed the confines placed on it by the political system. The CTU carried the struggle beyond the traditional contract struggle into a social consciousness of a class in battle against another class. Thirty thousand people marched in support of the teachers on the first day of the strike.

People are becoming clear that the problems with public education are not a lack of money — supposedly a budget shortfall

of \$1 billion in the case of CPS. There are buildings, books, computers, teachers, paper, etc. in abundance. Quality public education for all is completely possible. So why then are schools being closed? Why is the United States, the country that first guaranteed public education, moving so fast to become the first country to end it?

WHY PUBLIC EDUCATION?

The CTU strike takes place at a point when computer technology and robotics is transforming every institution in society. Education has historically been a public subsidy to fulfill corporate needs for training and adapting individuals to fill the factories of America. Hence public education under capitalism has always been configured to serve the job market.

By the early 20th century, Chicago was the manufacturing center of the country. Factories powered by steam and electricity made large-scale machine production possible. Industrialists insisted that high schools be established so that apprentices could be trained with no cost to them.

The development of assembly-line production in the 1920s led to the "industrial model" for education. Like automobiles, students move from class to class each hour to be labored on by teachers. Teachers developed student skills, thus their ability to work: their labor power. Factories in that era were filled with armies of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, with a tiny number of highly skilled workers at the top.

By the 1950s corporations and industrial production became so vast that an army of managers and control-workers was needed. The GI Bill was passed to finance the college education that these workers needed. These workers as well as skilled workers were allowed mortgages and pensions and the chance to send their children to college. The ideological pretense of "the middle class" bought their loyalty as long as the economy could expand.

By the 1980s, the great factories and mills of Chicago were closing, the inevitable result of labor replaced by computer technology and robotics. Once again, the role of education changed in preparing the workforce for the job market.

In 2010, the New York Times reported, "Automation has helped manufacturing cut 5.6 million jobs since 2000 — the sort of jobs that once provided lower-skilled workers with middle-class paychecks."

In the same article, Allen Sinai, chief global economist at the research firm Decision Economics stated, "You basically don't want workers. You have less, and you try to find capital equipment to replace them. ("Despite Signs of Recovery Chronic Joblessness Rises", NYT, February 20, 2010)

The introduction of electronics is destroying the unskilled and semiskilled jobs that marked the industrial era. Their skills are redundant and therefore useless. Computers are transforming these jobs into temp jobs and precarious labor that works little, but is always on call. Since education under capitalism reproduces labor power, it loses value when labor power loses value. When labor becomes redundant, schools become redundant and communities become redundant, too.

But the capitalists find themselves on the horns of a dilemma. While they reserve education for the narrow stratum they still need, they must hold out hope that education will provide the means to a secure future, which they describe as "middle class jobs." In this context they blame the cutbacks in education on budget deficits and austerity, and they steal as much as possible from the public sector to fuel privatized schools.

It is not so strange, then, that the capitalists are proclaiming the need for austerity, cutting state budgets for K12 and higher education and driving students into life-long indebtedness to pay for college. "Why," they ask, "should tax money be used to educate workers we do not need? Why not divert state revenues directly to corporations?" At the same time, they employ drill-and-kill methods of high stakes testing and digital learning, which serve to try to ideologically drain revolutionary vitality from students who no longer have a future.

TEMP JOBS BEGIN TO DRIVE PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that by 2020 the US will have 163.5 million jobs. Of these, 138.4 million — 84.6% — will require an Associates (community college) degree, or less. Of the top 30 largest occupations, only 6 will require a college education. The top 3 largest employments are projected to be in health care services, business services, including retail sales, and construction. (BLS News Release, February 1, 2012).

These are essentially unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, many of which are already being devoured by computers or transformed into contingent jobs. Permatemps, "flex-jobs"

and unstable, precarious labor are becoming the new norm for work. Writers and warehouse workers, janitors and business consultants, truck drivers, graphic designers and, increasingly, factory workers: none have a social safety net.

"They don't get paid extra for working overtime," Steve Wishnia wrote in his August 2012 *Alternet* article "Temp Worker Nation: If You Do Get Hired It Might Not Be for Long." "They are usually not eligible for unemployment benefits. They generally have to pay both the worker's and the employer's share of Social Security taxes. They have to pay for their own health insurance, and Obamacare won't change that. They have few options if an employer cheats them out of their pay. If they are independent contractors, they do not have the right to form a labor union."

As jobs disappear or become "permatemped", it is becoming clear that jobs that can sustain a family are only for an ever-narrowing stratum of workers. Politicians still claim that they will "produce jobs," that we should provide tax breaks to corporations — the so-called "job creators." Capitalism still pretends that education is the ticket to a good job and a good future, although now you pay for this on your own.

Without a vote or social debate, the United States has given corporations alone the power to determine what is a job. Yet any community in any city can come up with hundreds of jobs that need to be done. These jobs are not permitted because they are jobs that help people but do not make maximum profits for corporations.

The capitalist class is re-configuring the huge U.S. population into an army of low-paid, flex-workers who will soon be ready to work for pennies. Then suddenly the jobs that have been outsourced to other low-wage countries will be insourced into this low-wage country. Public education is being configured to support this direction.

NEXT STEPS

Capitalism is using its political power to restructure public education to its benefit. George Bush's "No Child Left Behind", Obama's "Race to The Top", and the push for a "Common Core Curriculum" represent

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Inside: The Ice is Beginning to Break

Over the past several years, particularly since the beginning of the 2008 global financial crisis, the protests and struggles of the peoples of the world have set the world on fire as they fight back against the misery and suffering imposed on them by a handful of ultra-wealthy capitalists.

They face the consolidation of a world fascist order, led by the U.S. In the U.S., the political and economic elements of fascism are already in place. The social features of fascism are starting to emerge. The horrendous Newtown, Connecticut killings are the latest example, but these kinds of violent acts are becoming more frequent. Before Newtown there were the killings at the movie theatre in Aurora, Colorado and before that the killing of Trayvon Martin in Florida.

Added to these well-publicized killings are the daily hardly publicized killings taking place around the country. In 2012, there were over 500 homicides in Chicago. The U.S. police kill a Black person every 36 hours. A woman is murdered in the U.S. every three hours. U.S. bombs and drones kill men, women and children internationally. The militarization of the economy and the drive toward war are real.

The reality is that capitalism at its foundation — wage labor — is being destroyed. Human life has been cheapened to the lowest level because of the elimination of human labor. We see it everywhere — in the joblessness, the growing hunger, the lack of medical care, and the escalating violence. We see it in the relentless campaign by the capitalist class to convince the American people that

this reality is in their interests. We see it in the steady shift in the thinking of the American people as they struggle to understand their plight and grasp for resolutions to their problems.

The article “Elections 2012: Austerity, Third Parties and the Global Economy” discusses the relationship between the growing economic competition for markets among the capitalists of the world, why this competition inevitably will lead to war, and how

the 2012 elections were crucial to preparing the American people to accept the fascist resolution of war, austerity and violence.

It also shows that the underlying social antagonism and bipartisan austerity of today makes it impossible for the two-party system to contain the class struggle. This is giving rise to a growing impulse from various forces to come together in a third party that can take political steps to redress the rising tide of grievances experienced by the American people.

The various strands that make up the outlook of the American people, including the prevalent ideology of “as long as it’s not me, I don’t care,” and the unraveling of a sense of community and social responsibility, are all part of the terrain of values, thinking and views that revolutionaries must take into account. The culture of violence is particularly extreme in the U.S. and is helping to prepare the way for the consolidation and enforcement of a fascist society.

The polarization that is taking place in society is giving rise to a section of people who care about what is happening in the world and are beginning to fight for the basic demands of life for themselves and others. The cover article “Chicago Teachers Union Strike — The Politics of Power” shows that the peoples’ anger against attacks on public education, and their growing awareness of the inequalities of wealth and poverty, provided the environment that carried the strike beyond the traditional contract struggle into a social consciousness of class against class.

No ideological current in American history has been more devastating to the fight for class understanding than racial ideology. The article “Race and the New Class” discusses how ideologies arise in history, the material foundation for racial ideology in the capitalist era, and how, with new technologies, the material foundation for all past ideologies, including racism is crumbling.

For the first time in human history, the material foundation exists to make possible a society that can provide for all. It means that for the first time we can not only envision — but can win — a world where people can finally be free to become fully human, free of fear, of poverty, violence and desperation. To win this world, workers must align their thinking with the promise of what the new technologies make possible and unite on that basis. Revolutionaries must take up the challenge to reach out to our people and give voice to the vision of this future that is now possible.

The polarization taking place in America is giving rise to a section of people who care about what is happening in the world and are beginning to fight for the basic demands of life for themselves and others.

The article “Paradoxes in American Thinking” examines the contradictions in the thinking of the American people revealed by the 2012 elections. On the one hand, they maintain their allegiance to the capitalist class and its institutions, still hoping that their problems will be solved as they always have been. On the other hand, they are increasingly dissatisfied, open to new ideas, and for many, increasingly willing to act to resolve the social ills of the country.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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

Rally, Comrades! is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. In this period of growing motion and developing polarization, *Rally, Comrades!* provides a strategic outlook for the revolutionaries by indicating and illuminating the line of march of the revolutionary process. It presents a pole of scientific clarity, examines and analyzes the real problems of the revolutionary movement, and draws political conclusions for the tasks of revolutionaries at each stage of development in order to prepare for future stages. It is a vehicle to reach out and communicate with revolutionaries both within the League and outside of the League to engage them in debate and discussion and to provide a forum for these discussions. Articles represent the position and policies of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

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League of Revolutionaries for a New America WHAT WE STAND FOR

Tens of thousands of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions. The League’s mission is to unite these scattered revolutionaries on the basis of the demands of the new class, to educate and win them over to the 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 co-operative society. For the first time an objective communist economic class is forming to become the foundation for a communist political movement. A new fascist state form, the naked rule of corporate power, is arising to oppose this motion.

Society must take over these corporations or these corporations will take over society. The new class must have political power to achieve these goals. In the effort

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

Nothing can be accomplished until the American people hold a vision of where they want to go and what they want to be. Creating and imbuing them with such vision is the overriding task of revolutionaries and the foundation of our organization.

Destruction of the ecology, the threat of nuclear war and the 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.

Elections 2012: Austerity, Third Parties, and the Global Economy

It is almost impossible to make an overarching assessment of the international and domestic situation in one article. Instead, we must try to grasp the central objective link that is pulling all the events in a certain direction at this particular moment. That link, generally speaking, is also connected to the central link of strategy. Political strategy isn't something you invent and then struggle to impose on others. Political strategy must utilize the lumber, the historical relations and ideologies at hand, in order to achieve one's goals under new conditions.

What is, and has been, America's basic strategy to achieve and maintain hegemony in a world rapidly changing because of electronics and the resultant globalization? How does the capitalist class continually accommodate and struggle both at home and in the world to adapt to new conditions in order to maintain its control of power and wealth as a class.

WORLD INSTABILITY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR MARKETS

At the end of WWII a wave of national liberation and communist revolutions threatened to change all the world's relationships. To confront this motion, the United States had to unite old enemies under the slogan of stopping communism. This meant to unite Europe on the basis of its being white, western and imperialist — for they could not maintain their profits without clinging to the colonies — even if that required a change in form.

Out of this mutual dependency a series of military, economic and political alliances such as NATO and the European Union emerged. Despite the importance of the emerging countries such as China or Brazil, the U.S. is financially, militarily, culturally and politically entangled with Europe. If the U. S. is pulled into economic depression, it will be because of Europe. In a contradictory way, all nations are scrambling for an economic foothold in Asia to avoid that depression. For the capitalist class, the elections were the means by which to persuade the American people to accept more war and greater sacrifices so the capitalists can gain that foothold.

We are seeing a general decline in the West. On the surface, the reasons for this are quite obvious. The capitalist system is absolutely dependent upon expansion — you can't have a capitalism that stands still. There has to be expansion. There has to be a market. That is how the capitalists came out of the crisis in the late 1800s. It was the expansion represented by imperialism that allowed them to stabilize and to gain control of the world.

Today, the world has been completely converted to capitalist relations and there is nowhere for it to expand. Europe, which has run its course, got there first and developed the most rapidly on the basis of having a relatively small population, creating a huge percentage of the world's wealth. Today, that is shifting. Southeast Asia contains something like 60% of the world's population. China for example, has a growth rate of 7.5% a year (compared to 2% in the U.S.). The only place that it is possible to talk in terms of expansion is where there is still underdevelopment.

That is Africa and South and East Asia.

The struggle is now about how the capitalists are going to get into those areas, how they are going to exploit the situation in such a way that it stabilizes the capitalist system. It is not possible to go into these countries in the old imperial way and simply steal their resources. A market has to be created. If there are no markets, there are no jobs. But jobs can't be created politically. The job comes from the development of a market. Expansion is the only way a market is developed. But the development of qualitatively new technologies makes capitalist expansion impossible.

Today, the capitalists have nothing else left to them but war. The prosperity of the past period was based on rebuilding the world out of the destruction of World War II. The U.S. destroyed Japan. China was leveled. All of the productive capacity in Europe was destroyed. 60 million people were killed in WWII. In the entire world, the U.S. was the only country with productive capacity. Today, they cannot create a market except through the result of the destruction of war. And of course war is a market in itself. War is the most profitable industry there is — the slaughter of human beings is much more profitable than the slaughter of cattle.

The capitalists labeling of their economic competitors such as China, Russia and others as enemies of the U.S. is ominous and is leading to a dangerous situation. The capitalists are determined to win the American people to their vision of the world and its future. They seek to convince us that their economic competitors are *our* enemies. They are doing this in order to unite the American and the European people to prepare them to take greater cuts in their standard of living and to maintain order to face this enemy.

AUTOMATION AND U.S. AUSTERITY

Austerity both globally and domestically is not a policy choice but an economic and political necessity. The transition from industrial production to digital production is dominating the entire world process; the bourgeoisie is compelled to seek maximum profit at the same time that the source of their profit (labor power) is becoming superfluous. They must pursue austerity measures. The only debates are over how fast, how deep, and how to maintain political control of the process. This is not the 1930s where the New Deal was possible — it raised tax rates on the rich in order to preserve the system and access the huge profits made possible by the war and postwar expansion. Now there is no significant expansion on the horizon and no reason to (substantially) raise taxes on the rich.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the technological revolution is not sitting still but is accelerating. Every revolutionary advance in the productive forces dramatically exacerbates the antagonism between them and the system of distribution based on private property.

One example is the "additive manufacturing" recently described in *Forbes Magazine*: "In additive manufacturing, parts are

produced by melting successive layers of materials based on 3D models — adding materials rather than subtracting them. The '3D printers' that produce these use [powdered] metal, droplets of plastic, and other materials — much like the toner cartridges that go into laser printers. This allows the creation of objects without any sort of tools or fixtures. The process doesn't produce any waste material, and there is no additional cost for complexity. Just as, in using laser printers, a page filled with graphics doesn't cost much more than one with text, in using a 3D printer, we can print sophisticated 3D structures for about the cost of a brick..."

"In the next decade, we will see further advances. Engineers and scientists are today developing new types of materials, such as carbon nanotubes, ceramic-matrix nanocomposites, and new carbon fibers. These new materials make it possible to create products that are stronger, lighter, more energy-efficient, and more durable than existing manufactured goods. A new field — molecular manufacturing — will take this one step further and make it possible to program molecules inexpensively, with atomic precision. The materials we use for manufacturing and techniques for production will be nothing like the assembly-based processes that exist in China — and the U.S. — today."

Based on the revolution in productivity, US domestic manufacturing continues to yield record output today, even after industrial employment has steadily nosedived since 2000. The result is ongoing, increasing unemployment and destitution, intractable economic stagnation, and relentless impoverishment and expansion of the new class.

TREND TOWARD NATIONALIZATION

The productivity explosion combined with the anemia of the market is forcing the government to intervene. The election was in many respects a referendum on the nationalizations of the last four years and the Obama victory marked a definite consolidation of the trend.

The battle for the hearts and minds of the dispossessed, especially in the Rust Belt, is the center of gravity of the class struggle today. Sure enough, that is exactly where the bitterest battles of the campaign were fought, and it was over the issue of nationalization — the auto "bailout" of 2008.

Obama won the critical swing states of Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin on the strength of popular support for the bailout. Romney wrote a 2008 *New York Times* Op-Ed called "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt" and paid the price for it. 60% of Ohio voters supported the auto bailout, and 75% of bailout supporters voted for Obama.

Auto nationalization was in no way a victory for the working class, accompanied as it was by draconian wage and benefit reductions. But it marked a shift in the form of the class struggle that facilitates the move from economic to political struggle.

The election result was also a major referendum on and victory for so-called "Obamacare". The PPACA (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) is not a "government takeover of health care" as its opponents claim, but it does represent a whole new level of unity between (especially) financial corporations and the State. It is more

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

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Elections Show Paradoxes of American Thinking

Elections shape and determine the mood of the people and indicate what approaches are necessary to maintain social control. The U.S. electoral process has developed with and rested upon the economic basis of American industrial progress and rising standards of living. The thinking of the people is still tied to the interests of the capitalist class, but as globalization and robotic production undermine the old economic reality, class contradictions once held in check begin to assert themselves.

Millions whose lives are precarious voted their hopes for a tolerant, fair, peaceful, and healthy world in November. They voted their fears of financial crisis, environmental degradation, and war. With no alternative and vaguely understanding that they acted, not in their own interests with those who share their economic position, but instead with a false belief in the success of the “free enterprise system,” they voted overwhelmingly for Republicans and Democrats.

Paradoxes are uncomfortable, because something contradictory nevertheless asserts itself as true. But it is exactly *contradictions* that move processes forward: the “old” splits, the “new” arises. What lessons can revolutionaries draw from the paradoxes of the recent American elections to guide our work and prepare participants’ thinking for the tasks ahead?

PARADOXES OF THE RECENT ELECTIONS

The Democratic Party maintains the allegiance of large sectors of the American working class. Voters — many fervently against the corporatization of government and daily life; against war, drone strikes, and secret assassinations; against the anti-poor, anti-immigrant, anti-union actions and rhetoric — supported a party that had carried out exactly those measures for the past four years. History has tied large sectors of workers to the Democratic Party. But lack of jobs, privatized education, corporate health care, foreclosed homes, and a warming earth are straining those ties.

Although not yet widespread, the efforts of a number of third parties in the last election express a growing break with the Democratic Party. Anchored in the struggles of the class, such efforts can become more than an ideological grouping of the left or a pressure group for reform. If kept on an anti-corporate, anti-fascist track, and as new ideas are introduced, they can advance working class understanding of its *class* interests and the need for a party that expresses them.

The Republican Party worked to capture the allegiance of a section of traditionally conservative white workers as an ideological base for a fascist movement. But fascism doesn’t arise from how people think. Supported by a political movement, it is a system of government and social organization that consolidates power in the hands of the owners of production.

Both major parties are dedicated to

preserving capitalism. Both have advanced the unity of corporations and government that is the hallmark of fascism. Both promote the fascist ideology that every aspect of society should be run on the business model and for the benefit of commerce. Both aim to keep the working class divided, supporting attacks on one section to keep others in tow.

The recent elections reflected increased efforts to get voters, large numbers of whom are poor and dispossessed themselves, to identify with the “top” and to reinforce xenophobia, racial intolerance, and the criminalization of the poor. Not recognizing how different their interests are from corporate interests, even people with the best of intentions have supported the sale or corporate takeovers of schools and other public enterprises out of a desperate hope for solutions. A fierce struggle for the hearts and minds — and the demands — of the class has to confront this trend.

Democracy is a hallowed concept for Americans. The paradox is that America is the first country to establish a republican government on democratic principles yet accepted brutal slavery, genocide, discrimination and the denial of democratic rights. Workers of all backgrounds are confronting increasing attacks on democracy as they fight against a system that cannot provide for their needs.

Michigan voters’ rejection in referendum of Public Act 4 reflects this fight. The Michigan legislature had replaced elected officials in financially troubled cities and school systems with Emergency Managers, trained by the State in corporate business practice. These individuals were given power to cut services, break unions and protect holders of city debt in the bond market. (Such investments tank under bankruptcy, but remain profitable under the one-man-rule.)

Many affected cities were predominantly African-American. Backers of the law tried to use race to say that incompetent minority elected officials were the problem. But voters could see that this law amounted to dictatorship and affected them all. Michigan said “no” to having their democracy taken away because of a financial crisis. The effort had active support, not only from communities under direct attack, but in predominantly white and Republican communities as well. The fight to preserve democracy became inseparably connected with the fight for desperately needed programs and services.

Anti-democratic measures are escalating to enforce austerity in Michigan and elsewhere. “Right to Work” is one of many efforts to keep the class divided and unorganized. Millionaires fund efforts like the Tea Party. Gurus of identity politics fight for one group and blame another. Politicians isolate and criminalize those who have no hope of ever joining the mythical “middle class.” Revolutionaries must plant our feet firmly in the best of American history to prepare the class to defend democracy and fight for a government that serves the interest of society, not the corporations.

While social media makes information more available, technology has consolidated corporate control in the electoral process. Sophisticated database technology and data-driven niche marketing turned out the groups that make up the traditional Democratic coalition. Targeted personal contact and social media assured that what is now being referred to as the “Rising American Electorate” voted to protect important but relatively insignificant advances for each group, even as they recognized that neither party was discussing dilemmas they and all workers face.

But politics is more than elections. Politics takes place in the streets, meeting rooms, job sites, schools, and churches all over America. That is where the connections need to be made between the fight for what people need to survive and the political reality they face. It is where we need presses and other forms of media that reflect the realities of American economic and political life, not just about identity or pressure politics but, about what our class needs to know and understand.

Revolutionaries have begun to build presses and other forms of media that connect with communities in struggle, grappling with the real reason for problems, summing up their demands and pointing to solutions. The adversary may seem all-powerful, but what is arising and developing will win the day.

The 2012 elections showed that the thinking of the people is still tied to the interests of the capitalist class, but as globalization and robotic production undermine the old economic reality, class contradictions once held in check are beginning to assert themselves.

MEANING FOR THE WORK OF REVOLUTIONARIES?

Revolutionaries fight for the program of the new class. Revolutionaries don’t just fight for a list of certain demands, for their own agenda, or to get people to accept certain ideology or theory. As working people question the legitimacy of the political system, revolutionaries help expose its corrupt domination by a class of rich oligarchs. We fight for the demands of the class of people that capitalism has no more use for, knowing they can’t finally be won without getting rid of private ownership of production. The program that sums up those demands is the only way out and must anchor every struggle.

In the fight for working class demands, revolutionaries work to politicize each struggle. To orient their struggles and be successful, fighters must learn to understand

the power relations in the country so they can move forward. Revolutionaries link propaganda, education and study of the broader historical, political and economic issues with agitation that concretely expresses the political questions facing our class. We participate in efforts to foster independent political expressions as steps on the way to the formation of a political party independent of the two corporate parties and eventually a workers’ party based on our class interests.

Revolutionaries introduce a different vision of the future. Efforts to panic the American people are going to increase so that more austerity and deprivation can be crammed down their throats. If they see no other way out, if they believe that the only way to organize an economy and a society is to have a small percentage of people own all production and keep the wealth created for themselves, what alternative is there but austerity? A vision of society as a community that takes care of its members and the earth points to the answer to the problems we face. Revolutionaries help people to understand that production has developed to sustain such a world. Those advances, because they replace human labor, the only source of profit, undermine the current system and make this vision, not only possible, but, necessary.

Revolutionaries connect with leaders and experts in their struggles through political discussion and strategy. As revo-

lutionaries do their work in the demonstrations, strikes, conferences, networks and organizations of the mass movement, those who understand the need for fundamental change must have a way of working together to educate the American people in the midst of their struggles. The movement is heating up and looking for cohesion. Revolutionary leaders need a place where they can share ideas, study, learn and plan strategically. Thus connected, they can reach out into the crucial struggles and key sectors of the American working class to develop political understanding and politicize the movement.

The League of Revolutionaries for a New America invites you to work with with the League and to join with the League to help accomplish that task.

For more information, contact us at info@lrna.org or rally@lrna.org

Race and the New Class

Ideological currents do not emerge from the ether, supernatural forces, or the inequities of the human heart. They are born out of and develop along the lines of the productive relations of any given society. In order to gain widespread traction as a major ideological current, whatever their factual integrity may or may not be, any and all ideas must respond to objective relations that can be quantitatively measured and felt. Even if it is a lie, that lie must be born of material realities. The subjective, no matter how misguided, manipulated or absurd, arises out of the objective. That is to say, the “why” and “how,” which can be complete fabrications, must rest upon an “is” and “are,” which are rooted in definite and objective day to day realities.

No one can shape history with bare hands. We must step into the process and fight for what is possible within it. It is a new day and we must see it with new eyes.

Under the rule of private property the objective stationing of men and women independent of their wills into specific social relations gives rise to subjective explanations of the purpose of society and the purpose and origin of its given divisions. This is to say that a given explanation that is subjective arises out of the objective and never the reverse. For instance, the idea of Divine Right did not create feudal relations but rather Divine Right emerged from Feudalism. Even the resistance to ruling class ideology is based on the material realities of the day. You cannot demand worker-run factories if the factories do not exist. Again, the subjective arises from the objective and never the reverse, and the particular development of racism in America is no exception to this basic truth.

No ideological current in American history has been as devastating to the fight for class awareness as that of racism. The historical basis for racist ideology has been wage bribery. The owning class simply paid white workers better wages, which led to them having better, more stable communities with better schools and an easier path to participate in the general economy. The question should never be confused — whites as a whole do not, nor have they ever, owned the economy. The bourgeoisie who are mostly white, but who grow more multi-ethnic by the day, own the economy. Their rule historically has not been based on skin color but rather control of the institutions put in place to provide them the ability to absorb surplus labor value.

Where there is wealth extraction there is a contradiction of interests. The working class’ best interest as a whole, to unify workers of all colors and creeds in the struggle for reform, is not based in demands against fellow workers but rather demands against

the owners. In order to avoid the unified efforts of the workers, the owners had to create material inequalities amongst them along other lines by which they might identify. In doing so they assured that those getting paid a dime would find it difficult to organize with those earning a nickel, for fear they too would receive the lower wage.

This also created in the mind of the nickel earner that the dime earner and the ruling class itself were, if not one and the same, closely related. Given the economic position of the nickel earner, often part of an army of surplus labor, the dime earner often viewed himself as beset by a conspiracy hatched by the implausible unity of the nickel earner and the ruling class. This is the historical basis for populism. All of this subjective thought

sat upon and made possible unequal wages, color discrimination in certain fields, as well as the imposition of a different relation to the political formations of government, and the terror of the State between whites and non-whites, particularly African Americans.

RACIAL IDEOLOGY UNDERMINED BY NEW TECHNOLOGY

Racism as an ideological force in society is incompatible with the new technological base that is revolutionizing the mode of production. These new technologies being introduced are having devastating effects on people’s ability to enter into the job market. Many very routine jobs that were the staple of yesterday’s economy are being either a) automated or b) sent overseas (many of those jobs are being automated as the technology moves forward and expands into new markets. Even sweatshop wages more and more are having trouble competing with labor replacing devices that are becoming more and more affordable).

This process undercuts the entire economic system of an industrial workforce and national market. Many of the major pillars of society are having to change in order to be compatible with the new technological base, which is pushing more and more towards the end of labor. This means laws, political structures, forms and application of State terror. And yes, the ideology the ruling class attempts to inject into society at large has to change in order to remain compatible with the new mode of production.

Under such a system, which is destroying the productive relations of the American industrial workforce and labor in general, racism, which is a subjective ideological expression of given divisions and inequalities within the development of American

industry, has no objective material base to stand on. New ideas to protect private property must emerge. More and more this ideology is reflecting the direct demonization of the non-owning class. “You don’t own a factory or a hedge fund? How terribly irresponsible of you! You deserve whatever happens.”

YOUTH AND AN EMERGING NEW CLASS

We see this new ideology emerging today in its first stages with the demonization of the youth, which in many cases is expressed jointly with the old racial expressions. This was certainly embodied in the person of Mitt Romney, who explained that his loss to Barack Obama was the result of the bribery of Blacks, Latinos and the youth. What is striking here is that he does not identify the color or ethnicity of the youth. This is expressed all throughout society today, in as much as the youth are a cutting edge of an emerging class for whom general employment has never been a material reality.

The process to frame youth as the source for social inequity largely began on racial lines. It began with the demonization of inner city youth, again mostly black and brown. These youth were the cutting edge of a working class who suddenly could not find work. But as unemployability spreads past the inner city into the broader white world so too must this ideology spread. The entire label of Generation X forwarded the idea that this oncoming generation were a bunch of “slackers” for whom “work was a four letter word.” More and more these new ideas that cross color lines are being put forward in media and throughout culture. The bourgeoisie intend to make us fear and hate our own kids.

Racism in American history means one thing: the myth of white supremacy. The history of the struggle against racism in America has not been a straight line of progress and advancement towards equality for the African American and other ethnic minorities as is often taught; nor has it ever been by any means a universally accepted answer to the question of the very real material inequalities that have existed within society. Thomas Jefferson, who defended slavery, in that he thought whites were genetically superior to Blacks by virtue of blushing more

fully, and Thomas Paine, who referred to slave owners as desperate wretches, were both men of their times. The same is true of Jefferson Davis and John Brown, Martin Luther King and George Wallace.

Each of these men were beset by the material realities of their time and they fought for a set of interests based on what was possible at their given time. Today we see the emergence of new ideas and ways in which people relate to one another that had not existed in previous times. In the thirties communists and labor activists took to the streets with signs that read “black and white unite and fight.”

Today that message would be absurd as no one is attempting to block black and white workers from uniting in protest. What is happening today is to make any form of protest illegal. In the sixties various organizations rose claiming to “confront the system” or “fight the power”; groups such as the Black Panthers, the Brown Berets, the Young Lords, and the nearly entirely white Students for a Democratic Society. Here were movements for social justice that reflected the basic segregation of society at large. This isn’t really anyone’s fault, but it was a reflection of the objective realities of the world.

Today we see particularly in youth a greater ethnic unity than has ever existed in America. This is based in the material unemployability of so much of the population regardless of color. Even in the bitter poverty of the robber baron era employment still created a system by which to segregate people either by law or by wage. That system is doomed. Under complete unemployability old forms of segregation will have no material basis. Men and women base their vision on the material world laid out before them. A feudal peasant might dream of an agricultural collective free of the yoke of the lords. A factory worker might dream of a worker owned and run factory with profit sharing, or more visionary still, a workers state.

With the new technologies whose application one way or another will lead to the end of labor, we can envision a world free of control, free of slavery, in a word one that is free. No one can shape history with their bare hands. We must step into the objective process and fight for what is possible within it. It is a new day and we must see it with new eyes.

The League of Revolutionaries for a New America unites with the moral outrage of the American people and inspires them with a vision of a society that nourishes the material, intellectual, spiritual and cultural needs of all of its people. Join us!

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Chicago Teachers Union Strike – The Politics of Power (Continued from page 1)

the federal restructuring of education, a form of “nationalization,” but in the interests of the corporations. These programs redistribute resources, often local resources, into the hands of corporations.

Meanwhile teachers and parents and students in Chicago find themselves in a unique position: needing to fight together for what is prohibited by the legal apparatus. This awareness is why the strike was so strongly supported by the people of Chicago. In this process, the combatants began to recognize that the inequality of education is a practical plan of the capitalists — as represented by the Commercial Club of Chicago — that has

nothing to do with availability of resources. The robots that decrease the value of labor also supply vast amounts of products essential for public education. There is enough wealth for everyone.

Most of the students in Chicago public schools are minorities. Black and Latino working class areas of town have been targeted for the destruction of their schools. The only way to fix this long-standing problem is to distribute the abundant educational resources according to need. The cabal of billionaires running our education must not be allowed to decide who gets educated.

Public education is a resource just like

food. We do not accept a society that allows people to starve to death. The next phase of this battle in Chicago has begun. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel has threatened to close more than 100 schools “to pay for” the teachers’ contract. Claiming yet again that there is no money, the Mayor chooses to starve the schools, destabilize communities and throw them into the lap of violence rather than tax the capitalists that put him in power.

Once again the CTU is going to the people of Chicago to break through the web of capitalist legalisms to carry on the fight for what CTU President Karen Lewis called “the soul of public education.” The CTU received

limited union support because labor laws and contracts drastically curtail forms of political support. Now the union is using the strength developed in the crucible of the strike — the expanded unity they achieved — to reach out to every public school in every neighborhood to become a center of organization.

The CTU strike signaled that political solutions do not begin with what is “deliverable”, but instead must prepare for the future. As with every battle of class against class, the direction of victory begins with the expanding unity in action of the working class.

Austerity, Third Parties, and the Global Economy (Continued from page 3)

accurately described as a “health industry takeover of government.”

Not only does it include massive government subsidies for insurance and pharmaceuticals, but it also imposes the “individual mandate” to guarantee the market at a time when more and more Americans can no longer afford premiums. The July Supreme Court approval of PPACA set off an immediate spate of mergers among managed health care companies racing to position themselves to corner as much of the new market as possible.

Finally, the Obama victory means that the fictitious “fiscal cliff” will be resolved along lines laid out by the Obama-appointed Bipartisan Deficit Commission. Its recommendations were so politically toxic that even its own commissioners refused to formally approve it. The result of Obama’s attempt to force it through the lame duck Congress remains to be seen.

PPACA and the Deficit Commission, like the auto bailout, are new forms of the class struggle. Each represents a consolidation of bourgeois economic and political control. Because neither of them can solve the underlying antagonism between revolutionary means of production and static property relations, they each contain the seeds of their own destruction. They cannot meet the needs of the people for jobs, housing, health care, and education. But they do offer new and important political battlefields where these issues can and will be fought out.

It is worthwhile to look at the November 18 *New York Times* article by Thomas Edsall, “Is Rush Limbaugh’s Country Gone?” which describes some of the post-election polls. It is clear that the Democratic Party and Republican Party represent the same interests — they are both parties of the ruling class. One conclusion that can be arrived at from the article is that there is a real difference between the Democratic and Republican parties about how to defend these interests.

It also provides some understanding of what the mood and level of development of the people are. There is a section of the American people who have “a very different approach to the role for government, very different views on race and tolerance, different views on gender roles, and very different views on economic opportunity and security. These are some of the biggest divides in our

culture.”

For revolutionaries, these poll results demonstrate increasing support for government responsibility for meeting the basic needs of the people. At the very time the ruling class is forced to turn increasingly to nationalization, the people are spontaneously gravitating toward the idea that the government should serve them, not the corporations. It is the role of revolutionaries to attach ourselves to those impulses and develop and consolidate them through the introduction of new ideas.

WAY OPENING FOR THIRD PARTY IN THE U.S.

- Over \$6 billion were spent on federal elections, topping the record set in 2008 by \$700 million, making this campaign the most expensive in U.S. history.

- Major parties listed (that have “an independent state organization... in a majority of the states”) are the Republican, Democratic, Libertarian, Green and Constitution parties. This does not include Independent Democrats or Independent Republicans.

- 50+ regional parties and 35 minor national parties are listed (of those 35, 15 were founded since 2002) in Wikipedia.

- The four-year trend shows third parties increasing their numbers by 400 percent over the next 4 years.

- In total, 205,739 votes were cast for Green Party U.S. Senate candidates.

- In total, 381,225 votes were cast across the U.S. for Green Party candidates running for the US House of Representatives.

The environment for development of a third party today is based on the objective situation. In the 20th century, third parties were vehicles for sections of the bourgeoisie to pressure for their interests when some were left out or crushed by the consolidation of monopolies during the quantitative stages of capitalist development. As such they were temporary diversions that actually facilitated the ongoing political domination of the two-party system.

The underlying social antagonism and bipartisan austerity of today makes the situation completely different. It is no longer possible for the two-party system to contain the class struggle. A third party doesn’t just emerge because a political grouping decides

to build it. It emerges because the economic and political polarization demands it, i.e. the two old parties cannot control the situation and/or they split.

There is going to be a tremendous impulse toward a third party. It will likely be something similar to the 1948 People’s Progressive Party in the effort to save the Democratic Party. There is no way for the progressive wing of the Democratic Party to save the Democratic Party except by destroying it - by taking up the questions of the day in a way that corrals the impulses of the people within a system of private property. That is another part that is going to emerge out of this dynamic process.

Party fault lines are opening up right now. Republicans are polarizing over whether to continue to pursue the overtly racist Romney agenda. The Democrats are polarizing over whether to save the safety net or submit to Obama’s “Great Betrayal”. These are not minor policy disputes either. They are life-and-death battles involving key party constituencies that can determine the future makeup and/or survival of the parties themselves.

Economist Richard Wolff described how this happened in Greece: “Greece’s two main parties of the middle alternated power for decades, but they suddenly dropped to a combined 35 percent of the vote in the 2012 elections. Left and right parties surged into political prominence.”

The situation is dangerous because election results indicate that people’s consciousness is all over the map. Romney - Ryan lost but not by much, running on a more or less overtly pro-fascist agenda. Obama voters thought they were resisting fascism but aside from that had very different, scattered agendas.

Bourgeois strategy is above all to prevent any kind of class unity. The propaganda appeals to the middle class are designed to divide the dispossessed and attack immigrants, poor whites, and African Americans. “I’ve got one mandate. I’ve got a mandate to help middle class families, and those who want to be part of the middle class,” Obama said in a wide-ranging news conference after the election.

Basic issues of access to food, water, shelter, utilities, etc. are becoming hard to ignore. Under the surface there is the

compulsion to take what is needed. The appeal to the middle class will certainly be used to combat people who are being forced into being “criminals of want.”

An anti-corporate third party will simultaneously serve as a vehicle for the workers and for the ruling class. The bourgeoisie will try to retain control of the system after the two party system splinters and restructure the political system to maintain private property. Within the working class, the new class represents the force capable of abolishing private property, but only if they are united with the idea of transformation of the productive relations to conform to the new economic base of society.

Revolutionaries who participate in the development of an anti-corporate, anti-fascist third party will influence it by pulling together a working class trend within it. The stronger the working class trend, the stronger the third party. It is crucial to influence the consciousness of the revolutionaries involved in the process. Political polarization will develop from this engagement over ideas, strategy and direction: polarization that will lead to a true workers party and a separation of class interests.

Attitude toward government is critical to the development of consciousness. Up to 60% of Americans say they prefer “smaller government” with less regulation and services. Yet 70-80% still support Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and almost 60% say the government should support people who can’t take care of themselves. The battle around these programs — especially where they intersect with the various battles around nationalization — will clarify the concept of what it means to fight for a government for the people, not for corporations. Consciousness will begin to develop out of the struggles for a government that serves the people.

The actual victory can only happen when the class becomes conscious of itself as a class. That is why we say that revolutionaries have no option but to create and disseminate propaganda that shows the roots of the problem, the vision of a new society and the strategy to get there. There is no other road to get to victory.

Political Report of the LRNA Standing Committee, December 2012.