

## Living on the Edge in Silicon Valley

In 2005 San Jose, California replaced Detroit, Michigan as the 10th largest city in the United States. This shift was symbolic of the passing of the old industrial manufacturing center of the Rust Belt by the ascendancy of the high-technology sector centered in the San Francisco Bay Area. With apocalyptic speed this process continues to transform all other sectors.

The Santa Clara Valley, once called the Valley of Heart's Delight because of the blossoming orchards, was a center for surrounding rural areas until the early 1970s. The rise of military research and development brought in companies such as Lockheed Martin and the chemical company, FMC. That laid the basis for the "Silicon Valley" of IBM, Hewlett Packard, and National Semiconductor, where many were employed in manufacturing.

Since that time the population has skyrocketed. Even as electronics manufacturing and assembly were scattered to all parts of the globe and robotized, computer systems design and related services have exploded throughout the entire San Francisco Bay Area. This "Silicon Bay" is dominated by the likes of Google, Apple, Facebook, Twitter, Oracle, Yahoo, and Cisco.

Silicon Valley corporations celebrate their "disruption" of society, touting their innovations as the way to a new, better and brighter world. Their technological advancements reach far beyond technology consumer gadgets to a whole retooling of production with industrial robots, as well as replacement of service and knowledge workers on a global scale. But this "disruption," instead of leading to a better world for all, is further polarizing society between rich and poor and driving down the level of workers worldwide to that of the robots that can replace them, including in tech's own back yard. Until it was recently destroyed by city officials, the largest homeless camp in the United States was located in the heart of San Jose, the self-proclaimed "Capital of Silicon Valley".

### A POLARIZED ECONOMY

The area known as Silicon Valley has a relatively low unemployment rate due to the economic engine of the tech industry. Yet a study by Working Partnerships USA has highlighted the polarized employment situation. While technical professional employees average \$62 an hour, support workers such as the contract employees who clean, guard, maintain, and cook on tech campuses have an average wage of \$13 an hour. An extraordinarily high cost of living generated by the tech industry has created a situation where 30% of Santa Clara County households live below the Basic Self-Sufficiency Standard of what it takes to make ends meet in the Valley — \$19.36 per hour for a family of four with two

full-time workers.

With the influx of highly paid tech workers driving housing prices through the roof, low-wage workers of all nationalities are living on the edge, and the most vulnerable are forced into homelessness. Whole families are crowded into rooms, and individuals rent closets, sofas, floors and even half of a bed. In San Francisco, one-bedroom apartment rents rose by 13.4% in 2014 alone, for a median price of \$3410 per month. Between 2010 and 2013, Ellis Act evictions in San Francisco increased 170% to over 100 per year. (The Ellis Act evades rent control by allowing a landlord to evict tenants to sell the property, most likely to developers who will then charge exorbitant rents.) Oakland and other parts of the East Bay are finding the same gentrification process at work: an influx of tech workers or others seeking refuge from San Francisco, with long-time low-income residents being pushed out of the city. Workers make impossible commutes from more affordable housing in the agricultural Central Valley to the San Francisco Bay Area.

All these features of the crisis we are experiencing in Silicon Valley — the suffering of hundreds of thousands who are living on the edge — are caused by the fundamental antagonism between the revolutionary, electronic means of production that are designed (in large part) right here, and the capitalist relations of production that organize the way we distribute the social product. In fact, the antagonism is becoming so pronounced, with huge sections of Rust Belt cities like Detroit and Cleveland reduced to wastelands, that it is beginning to become clear that capitalism as an economic system cannot continue to function much longer under these conditions. The electronic means of production are creating a whole new section of the working class that is actually being discarded and separated from the production process.

### TAXES AND PUBLIC FUNDS

As more and more workers are plunged into poverty, commodities cannot circulate — and the crisis deepens. Corporations refuse to pay taxes to support jobs, housing, healthcare, and education for workers that they no longer need — and the crisis deepens further. Without jobs, property or a safety net, more and more workers become destitute and are forced to fight the system just to survive.

Silicon Valley corporations have some \$500 billion in cash reserves and have been relentless in fighting for tax breaks to drive their profits even higher, including a "tax holiday" for repatriating their profits held overseas. Supported by both Democrats and Republicans, these reduced taxes keep public coffers low and have led to barbaric austerity policies.

In California, MediCal reimbursement rates are so low that, even as MediCal eligibility has been expanded, waiting time for treatment is very long, because very few providers accept MediCal. Hours have been cut for both recipients and workers of In-Home Support Services for seniors and the disabled. The mentally ill are warehoused in prisons. Child care funding has been severely cut, and cash assistance is just \$700 a month for a family of three. Funds for affordable housing have been slashed at the federal, state, and local levels. Although it would take only one-tenth of one percent of the Valley's corporate cash reserves to end homelessness here, the economic and political status quo refuses even to consider it.

Included in these austerity measures are attacks on public employees. In 2011 the City of San Jose imposed 10-12% across-the-board cuts to city worker wages, the state of California mandated furloughs on essential state employees, and in 2014 BART workers faced stonewalled negotiations and were forced to strike. The most virulent onslaught is against public workers' pensions on all fronts.

The tech industry hides its ruthless austerity agenda behind a liberal façade of "progressive positions" on social issues. Eighty percent of the valley's political contributions go to Democratic candidates, and Silicon Valley led all other regions in 2012 presidential fundraising. This creates an objective split with the Democratic Party's traditional working-class base. High tech's support of education is generally limited to charter schools, that are a step toward privatizing education, and its support for immigration reform is driven by its demand for H-1 visas, to allow employment of highly educated immigrant technology workers.

### RESPONSE OF OUR CLASS AND TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES

Throughout the San Francisco Bay Area workers have pushed back with their own disruption. In 2013 in San Francisco and Oakland, resentment against the gentrification of neighborhoods and the loss of homes led communi-

ty leaders and residents to blockade "Google buses" carrying tech employees to work. In San Francisco there have been many demonstrations and direct action related to Ellis Act evictions. In January people protesting gentrification and displacement in Oakland disrupted a home auction scheduled to happen at the Alameda County Courthouse.

In San Jose housing and homeless leaders fought against the eviction of 300 from the homeless encampment referred to by all as "The Jungle"; they also won a limited Housing Impact fee to get funds for more low-income housing under the slogan, "people who work here should be able to live here."

The City of Palo Alto was forced to strike down its car-camping ban after much protest. Several cities have recently joined San Jose and San Francisco in raising the minimum wage to \$10-\$15 an hour, and Santa Clara County has passed a Living Wage Ordinance to pay their workers and contractors \$17-\$19 an hour. There are also current union campaigns to organize security guards at Apple and Google, and to get a contract for the drivers organized at Facebook.

Despite its limited gains, the battle for the immediate demands of Silicon Valley Bay's workers is being organized primarily around slogans like, "rebuild the Democratic Party," and, "rebuild the middle class." These concepts not only continue to tie the workers to the Democratic Party, they foster the dangerous illusion that the capitalist economy can somehow bring back prosperity to a section of the workers. As a strategy, this can only lead to further subordination to the dead-end politics of corporate capitalism: more austerity, more division in the working class, and a perpetual defensive stance.

The only effective approach is not unity with Democrats, but unity of the workers fighting for jobs, housing, healthcare and education. As we participate in the day-to-day struggles of this class to secure the necessities of life, revolutionaries point out that there is no solution to poverty within the private property system. We have to build a cooperative economy based on public ownership of all the essential means of production, and distribute wealth based on need. The only way

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# Inside: Abolish Private Property – Build a New Society

Homelessness — being without a home, without shelter — is not simply a temporary hard time, or a symptom of individual failing. It is indisputable proof that the capitalist economic system cannot provide for the needs of the people, and that the ruling class, in its defense of this system of private property, is unfit to determine our future.

3.5 million people in America are homeless in any given year. Almost a million people are homeless in any given week. Almost 40% of the homeless are children under 18. The majority have acute and chronic health problems and no provision of healthcare to help them. Sky high rents, rising prices, and low wages have driven even those who are working into homelessness. Experts admit that the reality is much worse, with probably millions more living under the statistical radar: in cars, on couches, and if still holding on to their homes, only a paycheck away from the street.

As jobs are eliminated through robotics and automation, it is becoming impossible to find work, or even a job that pays a living wage. There is nothing else to do but distribute these basic necessities according to need rather than ability to pay. History has charged revolutionaries with the task of teaching the people this truth.

The article, “Living on the Edge in Silicon Valley,” shows the polarization of wealth and poverty that homelessness represents. In this center of advanced technological development and research, thousands cannot afford a place to live, or to put food on the table. At the same time, the government guarantees that corporations enjoy tax

breaks and public subsidies, further eroding the tax base. Draconian austerity measures gave rise to the largest homeless encampment in America, covering 68 acres and providing shelter for hundreds of people, until the police bulldozed it down.

The same processes throwing millions out on to the streets are discussed in the article “Healthcare: All of Us of None of Us.” The article shows how the government has used the Affordable Health Care Act to pave the way for the massive restructuring of healthcare in the interests of corporate control and profits, while millions in America cannot even afford to see a doctor. It shows that the struggle for healthcare is merging with other struggles for basic necessities such as homes, water, and higher minimum wages, into a struggle for power for the class as a whole to gain their survival.

“The Meaning of the Ukraine Crisis” shows that the same process that is driving

the American working class into homelessness, is the same process that is driving the U.S. toward war. As much as homelessness is inevitable in a capitalist system where there is no work, war is inevitable in a system where no one can buy. Robotics may eliminate labor, but it is highly productive. In their scramble for markets to sell these products, the world capitalist powers are increasingly coming into conflict. The U.S. must isolate Russia to control and contain China. War is objective. It is entangled as instrument of policy so much so, if that policy is going to be put forward, war becomes the inevitable means of developing and implementing that policy.

To win, our class must know the solution and have a strategy to get there. “Strategy, Tactics and Private Property” shows how the radical nature of the new technologies is putting an end to the capitalist system. The rulers have put a fascist system in place to protect

their power and property. Revolutionaries must teach the people that their future lies not in defending what they once had, which was limited at best. It lies in fighting for the society that is possible — where everyone has a home, the wherewithal for a decent life, and where the future of humanity is assured.

We can take heart from the struggles of those who went before us. “From the Editors: May Day — Rallying Cry for a New World” marks the continuity with our American and international revolutionary history. It is up to us to take humanity that last step. As the article says “What we do matters. We can win. We must win. We shall win.”

## *Silicon Valley*

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to get to this cooperative society is to educate and organize the new class of workers being pushed out of production. We have to communicate a vision of what is possible, and the political line of march needed to get there. Part of this means building an organization of revolutionaries dedicated to understanding this situation and teaching what is to be done.

We hold fast to the vision of a world where technological advances are no longer used to tighten the tyranny of private property, but instead to meet peoples’ needs, preserve the planet, and build a better world for our children and grandchildren.

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**The Rally, Comrades! bilingual website provides on line access to all issues of Rally, Comrades! It is a political resource for our readers, and provides up-to-date articles, statements and analysis of key questions of importance to revolutionaries.**

## **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, healthcare 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, has arisen to oppose this motion.

Society must take over these corporations or these corporations will continue to 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 humanity’s imperiled future.

# Healthcare: It's All of Us or None of Us

Medicare and Medicaid were passed 50 years ago this summer. Today, there is massive restructuring of healthcare going on in America. It is aimed at maintaining existing property and power relationships but is taking place at a very different time in history.

Enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has supposedly taken the fight for access to healthcare off the legislative agenda, but not out of the emerging struggles of the working class, especially among the dispossessed and displaced, for access to healthcare as a human need.

## **MEDICARE AND MEDICAID: "NOT YOUR FATHER'S INSURANCE"**

The passage of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965 was a part of the last structural reforms from a still expanding capitalism. They were also a consequence of the Civil Rights Movement, a powerful social movement that temporarily coincided with the interests of capital for maintaining a stable workforce. That era is over. The growth of technologies in production that eliminate human labor have thrown capitalism into irreversible crisis.

Healthcare resources historically purposed with maintaining and reproducing a healthy productive workforce are now being used to build a healthcare system that preserves corporate profit and denies healthcare to those who are no longer needed by the economic system. Giant corporate health systems, private health insurance policies with unaffordable deductibles, premiums and co-insurances, and privatizations of Medicare and Medicaid, reflect a society increasingly alienated from its government. The narrative of the 1960s has shifted from expansion of coverage as a public good to increased corporate profit at the public's expense, and for many, the cost of their very lives.

Medicare and Medicaid policy reflected the inequality central to the social reforms in the 1960s. Medicare, tied to Social Security and financed by working labor, held the mantle of "dignity" and "deserving" because the worker contributed to it throughout his or her working years. Medicaid was intended to cover some sectors of the poor. Medicaid "recipients" were stigmatized as "undeserving," "public charges" and worse. While Medicare had uniform national standards, Medicaid left it to the states to determine means-tested eligibility and scope of coverage. From the outset Medicaid was unequal and restrictive, especially in Southern states, where poverty was most concentrated.

Even so, these reforms didn't come without a fight. The Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964 was already waging a war on poverty. The Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) was embedded in the social struggle for equality and entered the fight for healthcare in Mississippi. Freedom Schools ran classes on public health. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party program called for Medicare for All, rather than grossly unequal state-based Medicaid programs. The Black Panther Party incorporated health education into their schools and called for Free Healthcare for all oppressed peoples. Equity

and universality in the fight for healthcare has always been a ground-up struggle, not a benevolent act of Congress or presidents.

What has been won over the past 45 years is being further eroded, while the need for healthcare continues to grow. The Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973 offered businesses cheaper health insurance options. HMOs became so restrictive that they provoked spontaneous consumer revolts. The Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsible Act of 1982 (TEFRA) set the basis for a huge privatization of Medicare with the creation of Medicare Part C Advantage Plans. These private commercial insurance plans paid directly out of Medicare's Trust funds are notorious for overcharging it. In the 1990s, Blue Cross Blue Shield sponsored state legislation all over the country enabling their conversion to for-profit status. The Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 that created Medicare Part D subsidizes the pharmaceutical industry while explicitly prohibiting any price control of medicines.

The government is restructuring healthcare in ways that reflect changes in the economic base. Spun as a response to skyrocketing health costs allegedly caused by a chaotic fee-for-service system, the effects of these massive privatizations have done nothing to reduce costs. Fee-for-service is declining, but in its place is a consolidation and concentration of corporate healthcare. Exploding costs of over \$2.3 trillion are being borne by an increasingly impoverished working class — employed and unemployed alike.

As labor-replacing technology and outsourcing shrank the unions of the industrial working class, comprehensive and affordable health insurance declined. Medicaid enrollment has grown in many states because of increasing impoverishment. By 1971, when most Southern states had accepted Medicaid, there were roughly 14 million people enrolled. Those numbers doubled between 1990 and 2010. Today there are over 72 million people on Medicaid. Most glaring is the growing number of uninsured, from around 20 million in the 1970s to over 45 million today, even with so-called Obamacare. The narrative became more transparent during sequestration in the Budget Control Act of 2011. The call was outright "austerity" and, once again, it was austerity for the working class and a bonanza for corporate healthcare.

## **HEALTHCARE AND POWER RELATIONS TODAY**

These changes affect the way power is wielded today. Every stage of development in the crisis of access to healthcare has been met with resistance. The struggle for a national health service (nationalization) in 1977, led to vitriolic red baiting and character assassination of the legislation's sponsors. A compromise position for a national federally funded public health insurance system (single payer) was advanced and looked to Canada rather than Cuba for its model. The strength of these fights has been the challenge to the power of the private insurance industry. The weakness has been the focus on policy chang-

es without disrupting capitalist private property relations.

But capitalism *is* being disrupted. Healthcare is a basic human necessity and is central to the economics and politics of any society. For many, particularly those holding generational traumas from slavery, genocide and white supremacy, medical institutions have never been benign. Struggles for the right to healthcare have always forced a fight for power. The current construct of a healthcare system is being fostered by the State to protect corporate ownership. It makes healthcare a struggle for power for the class as a whole. "It's all of us or none of us!"

Our corporate care system is now 17% of the GNP. The fight to protect health reforms born of the social and trade union movements of industrial capitalism in the 20th century are proving to be a mismatch with the 21st century State and its health empires. Both the delivery system and financing of health are on trial. The fight to protect the reforms of 50 years ago has to be positioned in the economic and social realities of today.

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The initial aftermath of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) altered the framework of the struggle for healthcare for all. Passed in 2010, the Act has resulted in strengthening corporate control of healthcare. A public subsidy to support purchase of private insurance hardly guarantees access to healthcare. The Act offers regulatory improvements for some while explicitly excluding many immigrants and all undocumented workers from coverage. Upcoming cases before the Supreme Court on the ACA challenge not only the subsidies, but also the weak employer mandate. Employers use the Act as ammunition for workplace changes to cut hours, workforce numbers, and or family coverage in order to avoid mandates and penalties. The Supreme Court upheld the ACA in 2012, but removed mandatory Medicaid expansion, calling it "coercive," and thus left millions of those most in need uninsured, 75% of whom are in Southern states.

In response, a new stage of struggle for healthcare is emerging. Moral Monday demonstrations in North Carolina and Georgia target the failure to expand Medicaid. In the face of the breakdown of all public infrastructures, the fight for healthcare equity, wellness and healthcare as a human right intersect with more and more fronts of social struggle. Michigan nurses joined with Detroit's struggle to turn on the water, calling the shut-offs a public health disaster and demanding that water be available to all. The needs and leadership of poor women, increasingly led

by women of color, were on the move fighting against last year's "Hobby Lobby" decision, that handed over women's reproductive health rights to certain employers' control. Skilled trades and other unions are battling the ACA's threat to multi-employer insurance coverage. State governments have targeted both the healthcare and retirement of public employees. Nurses launched a campaign in response to the Ebola outbreak, exposing decimated national and international public health services after decades of cutbacks and out-sourcing. Health consequences of fracking, environmental degradations and climate change are mobilizing thousands.

More challenges lie ahead. Applications for Medicaid waivers, especially from Southern states, propose adding premiums, penalties, and "personal responsibility" requirements for recipients if "outcomes" are not met. In other words, the patient has all the responsibility, but no rights. Congressional proposals call for catastrophic cuts in Medicare and Medicaid and removal of any semblance of governmental responsibility. Electronic

medical records and Medicare regulations that ignite the creation of Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) are increasingly driving regressive reimbursement practices. Contradictions between healthcare delivery and health insurance payment are taking no prisoners, causing public safety net hospitals, rural hospitals, independent physician practices, and smaller community based care to wither away. There were \$143.3 billion in healthcare institutional mergers and acquisitions in 2012. Corporate healthcare is being fostered by a corporate State.

This stage of corporate healthcare cannot be separated from the decay of capitalism in irrevocable crisis. An increasingly impoverished and economically insecure working class is faced with the same enemy, a State with no obligation to the people. Few young people taking to the streets today expect Medicare to be there for them tomorrow. The technological power that can enable thousands to quickly mobilize is the same force that necessitates and makes possible distribution of healthcare freely for all, based on need not income. As the public insurances of the past are destroyed, revolutionaries face a choice: rely on and politicize in the interests of a new class forced to fight for healthcare as central to the fight for power over our society, or leave the field to the corporate restructuring of healthcare. Let's make this a 50th anniversary of Medicare to reclaim the fight for a society that can truly make healthcare a right for all.

# The Meaning of the Crisis in Ukraine

We should first set the parameters of how to properly discuss this kind of a question. It isn't as if Ukraine exists independently of the rest of the world, or the situation in Ukraine exists independently.

The first thing we have to do is understand the context for what is happening in the world today. Basically speaking, that context begins from the reality that war is a political inevitability under capitalism. The goal of the U.S. is to weaken and isolate Russia, in order to attack China. It isn't as if the U.S. has to plan to go to war. They have a plan that *includes* war. They can't avoid it.

## ISOLATE RUSSIA, ATTACK CHINA

China is at the center of this international motion going on today. As long as China was either producing for the United States market, or consuming the production of the U.S., it was looked upon as a friend and ally by the U.S. But China broke free from imperialist restrictions on their production and distribution, and now it is the second largest economy in the world. They are becoming a real competitor to the U.S., instead of simply a supplement to U.S. production. The U.S. capitalists are faced with the choice of either chopping China back down to its previous position as that supplement to American production, or having the U.S. lose its dominant position in the world.

The development of the so-called "emerg-

ing markets" is forcing the U.S. to organize the leading Western nations into the creation of economic blocs. The U.S. never wanted to be part of such blocs, but rather has always wanted to be the leading economic force in the world, dependent on no one.

The creation of these blocs is laying the foundation for international polarization. This process of polarization happens in political life all the time. Alliances are created, and these alliances force everyone into making alliances where there weren't any before. This is what is happening economically and politically in the world today.

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As these emerging nations developed, they stopped simply being suppliers of raw materials to the U.S. As they began to try to stand on their own feet, they came into competition with the U.S. They had to form economic blocs in order to be strong enough to resist the power of the U.S. Otherwise they would be crushed.

There are a number of other smaller blocs being formed around the world, such as Mercosur (comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN.)

But it is the potentially tremendous productive and financial grouping called the BRICS (comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.) that is the most dangerous bloc to the U.S. The BRICS has created a development bank, for example, that has \$60 billion available for investment in infrastructure and other projects. This available capital is allowing for the development of infrastructure in the BRICS own member countries, which in turn allows them to accelerate their productive capacities and to distribute that production. It also makes capital available to invest in other countries.

This is a tremendous step. China and India are one half the world's population. China is growing at almost 8% a year and India at about 11%. The U.S. economy is growing at a rate of .7% a year. If the U.S. does not stop these countries, the world center of economic gravity is going to shift into the world's heartland. Whoever controls that heartland controls the world.

These countries are finding the ways and means of settling old differences. While there are forces in India who are being brought over to the Americans, it is also true that India had long-standing ties to the Soviet Union, and still now relies on Russia.

China and Russia have more or less settled their differences. The fear of American

domination is greater than any contradiction between Russia and China. China understands they cannot achieve their economic and geopolitical goals without Russia. If they are going to build their "Silk Road," it is has to go through Russia. So, China has to make peace.

We can see that the context for the conflict around Ukraine isn't Ukraine. It's this vast huge process that is taking place, and at the core of it is the alliance of Russia and China. The U.S. has to break that alliance some way or another. Even though their real goal is crush China, they can't do that without isolating Russia. If the U.S. attacks China,

Russia will take the side of China. The U.S. believes that it can chop back Russia little by little, and China will go along with it. China has already signaled otherwise.

The U.S. is faced with the same question they have faced over the last fifty years, which is the necessity to separate Russia from China, to separate Russia from India to the extent they can, and to use NATO as their instrument, rather than the U.S. itself being out in front. But here the U.S. is also having problems. Some countries in NATO, such as Germany, don't want war.

So the meaning of Ukraine is the isolation and weakening of Russia, so the U.S. can attack China. The specific incidents we read about are important, but they are not the main thing. The important thing is to look at what is driving this process.

## WHY NOW?

There are many factors operating. It's hard to describe all of them, because they are so interconnected and embedded in other, related processes. But first of all, the world is on the verge of financial collapse. The U.S. economy especially is in serious danger.

The most important development in the last fifty years is the shifting of the world economy from productive capital to an economy based in trading money. All that money is going in one direction, with extreme poverty going in the other direction.

Half the world can't afford to eat properly. Even in the U.S., 48% are just barely above the poverty line. People are only able to buy food, clothing and shelter if that. They don't have enough money to buy the results of these gigantic productive forces. This situation cannot continue for long without some kind of collapse.

Russia also has serious economic problems, and has never been stable since the Soviet Union was overthrown.

And on top of it all are the ideological aspects. The Donbas area in eastern Ukraine, for example, with its coal mines and steel mills, was one of the foundations of socialism. The other half of Ukraine fought on the side of Germany in both WWI and WWII. There is a history of hatred and fear because in WWII, western Ukrainians slaughtered the Ukrainians from the east, and the eastern Ukrainians have not forgotten it. Most of WWII was fought in Ukraine, and fascism has a long history there. Further, Ukraine has a century's old history of being divided and fought over by surrounding countries, such as Poland, Germany, and Romania. It was only consolidated in the 20th century under the Soviet Union. So, there is this deep historical antagonism on top of the current objective situation.

## HEADING FOR WAR

The truce is being broken. The U.S. has sent in combat troops. Add the wars and instability in the world, and the explosive situation in the Middle East, and the world is facing a very difficult situation.

The American people have no comprehension of how close we are to war. Adolph Hitler let everyone know that sooner or later he was going to attack the Soviet Union, so they were somewhat forewarned. But there is no warning that the U.S. is going to attack Russia.

The Russians have given fair warning that they consider U.S. moves in Ukraine and in the Baltic States a direct threat to their national security and will act accordingly. Russia recently announced that it has developed a fuel that will allow missiles to fly five times the speed of sound, and plans to develop hypersonic missile systems. The U.S., India and China are also in the process of developing such systems. There would be no way to defend the U.S. or any other country against this kind of attack. It is within the realm of possibility that we could wake up one morning and London is gone, Moscow is gone. There is little chance that any country could stay out of such a war with the interconnected economy we have today.

All it will take is the death of American soldiers and the politicians will be screaming, "Defend America." It will be like the battle of the Alamo in the Mexican War. The Alamo was in Texas, Texas was part of Mexico. The politicians kept screaming, "American blood has been shed on American soil!" Abraham Lincoln kept getting up to say, "Will you please tell me where blood was shed!" So for propaganda purposes, Ukraine will become part of America.

The important thing to grasp is that war is an *objective* thing. It's not a matter of somebody saying, "Let's go to war." War becomes so entangled as an instrument of policy that if the policy is going to be put forward, war becomes the inevitable means of developing and implementing that policy. This is why war is inevitable. There is no way back.

*Report of the LRNA Central Body, March 2015.*

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# Strategy, Tactics and Private Property

A tiny ruling class is amassing greater and greater wealth, while millions of workers are being thrown out, or to the margins of the dying economy. The cause of such extreme economic polarization is the transition from human labor to electronic production. Wage labor is the fundamental economic relation of capitalist society. It is becoming obsolete in the production process. However, electronic production allows for the creation of abundance, and for cooperation to define human society, not scarcity and competition. This is the overwhelming content of our time.

Economics is not just a part of human life. It is every part of human life. Today, the rapidly accelerating and widespread global use of electronics (robots, computers, etc.) in all work processes and forms of production is destroying and permanently ending the global capitalist economic system. The society we live in is being permanently destroyed, along with wage-labor jobs, the ideas, the culture, the institutions and the social relations that were all necessary to serve, build and maintain a capitalist economic system developed over several centuries. The resulting polarization of wealth and poverty is increasing at breakneck speed. The social response of the workers to their worsening conditions of life is maturing.

The workers who struggle to make it through the day, be it for food, water, clothing, shelter, housing, or healthcare are the new, revolutionary section of the working class, those who have next to nothing to lose, those who are up against the ruling class power structure on a daily basis. The social response to the worsening conditions in the U.S. today is maturing within a historic moment, where a new equality of poverty is creating the opportunity for a section of the workers to unite. However, this unity can succeed only if the workers take into consideration the content of our time and begin to develop a vision of a new society worth fighting for.

In every social struggle today, there are growing flashes of awareness, impulses toward an understanding that society is composed of a ruling class and a subordinate class.

Conscious revolutionaries need to be integrally connected to these struggles, uniting with the immediate goals of the combatants, while simultaneously identifying the revolutionaries, to provide them with a revolutionary strategic outlook based on the content of our time. To secure the future, revolutionaries collectively make and carry out plans to identify and further develop the stages of awareness and consciousness of the revolutionary combatants each step along the way.

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**To win, our class must move from the tactical defensive to the offensive, fighting forward to make private property — public property, to construct a new society that is compatible with the new electronic means of production.**

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The ruling classes of countries around the world fear social upheavals and even worse a global uprising of the masses. The theme of the World Economic Forum, held in Davos, Switzerland, in January of this year was “The New Global Context.” Growing income inequality, global tensions and the global economy were the major issues addressed at this annual event of the global ruling class. The forum pessimistically focused on the continuing growth of income inequality. They pointed to the use of quantitative easing in the U.S. Its use was designed to ease the growth of income inequality. It failed to do so. In a related conference at the forum, “The Changing Face of Employment,” where different income inequality containment tactics were presented, one participant remarked, “Most Davos delegates expected barcodes and robots to replace humans at an accelerated rate.”

Accelerated advancements in electronic technology will continue to permanently replace more workers by the millions. It cannot be reversed by the rulers, even if they want-

ed to. All they can do is try to deal tactically with the resulting consequences of increased economic, social, and political polarization. In the U.S., 21st century fascism is objectively in place. The corporations are fully merged with the State apparatus. This modern day fascism developed in stages to prevent the collapse of the capitalist economy. It evolved to manage and control the complexities of a globally integrated and fragile U.S. economy. It is a form of rule that provides protection for capitalist

necessities of life is to fight forward for the public ownership of the new electronic, socially necessary means of production in order to construct a new, economically compatible, cooperative, communist society.

The ruling class is on the strategic defensive, since the global capitalist economic system is being destroyed by the new, electronic means of production. Its strategic goal is to protect private property. This is its last line of defense. This is where the ruling class is weakest. Tactically, the ruling class is on the offensive, with the purpose of repressing, dividing and preventing the workers from uniting around common class interests.

Strategically, our class is on the offensive. This is because the new, electronic means of production provides the economic foundation for producing abundance and a world without private property. There is a lot of social response to what is going on, but our class is tactically on the defensive because it is trying to defend what it once had. It is trying to make capitalism work, because the combatants are unaware of and therefore not considering the new opportunities made possible by the content of our time.

Conscious revolutionaries need to offer a vision of what is possible and a strategy on how to get there. Our class must align its tactics with its strategy. This means moving from the tactical defensive to the offensive, fighting forward to construct a new society that is compatible with the new electronic means of production. Fighting for the abolition of private property and for transferring the socially necessary means of production into public property is compatible with our strategic class interests.

*This is the first of two Building Block articles on strategy, tactics and vision. Building Block articles help explain a basic concept of the revolutionary process, challenging readers to explore its meaning for political work in today's environment.*

private property and the later development of the subjective side of fascism. Global tensions are rising, increasing the threat of world war. And the global economy teeters on the brink of another downturn. If such a crisis should occur, it could advance a coalescing of government, military and openly fascist forces to go on a full-blown fascist offensive.

Strategy is defined as the direction of delivering the main blow towards achieving a desired end or goal. Tactics are part of strategy, subordinate to and facilitating it. There are two strategic paths the movement can take. One is to embrace a ruling class strategy to maintain a system of private property, that diverts the revolutionary impulses of our class back into a struggle to reform a system that cannot be reformed. However, it is not possible to turn back the clock, overturn fascism, and restore democracy. The capitalist mode of production and exchange is not compatible with the new electronic means of production. There is only one solution: the only way to have real democracy and to obtain the

## From the Editors, May Day – Rallying Cry for a New World

May Day, celebrated the world over as International Workers' Day, has its roots right here in the United States. The United States of the 1880s, with the Civil War less than two decades behind it, was a time of Robber Barons and general strikes, massacres and mass immigration, organization and proletarianization. In this time of accelerated industrialization the workers' struggle in Chicago was a key battleground.

In the 1880s workers in the city of Chicago and elsewhere rallied around the common cry for an 8-hour work day. The capitalists responded in brutal fashion through the official police apparatus, and when that proved insufficient, used the no-

torious Pinkerton agency, which operated as a paramilitary arm of class rule in that time. The class struggle in Chicago, the clashing of the two rising forces of industrial capitalist and industrial labor, came to a head at the Haymarket Massacre in 1886. That signature event gave shape to and crystallized the struggle in the hearts and minds of the workers for generations to come.

As conditions today again change, as industrialization gives way to automated production, and national markets give way to a global economy, workers find themselves beset by new struggles and opportunities. Quite simply, money is making money, machines are making machines and workers are being cut out of the entire process. The social con-

tract of the previous day is being torn asunder, pensions are in peril and youth unemployment is skyrocketing. Not only in the U.S. but across the globe workers are struggling under new conditions, including Egypt, Greece, Mexico, Tunisia, Spain and elsewhere.

It is in this context that revolutionaries must win the day. The Fight for \$15 is one flashpoint of this struggle. The Fight for \$15 is largely taking place around the fast food workers' struggle for a living wage. But as recent history shows, those jobs can be quickly automated, as is already happening throughout Europe.

We need a system of distribution that rationally and fairly reflects current developments in the means of production. We need

entirely different economic relationships for those developments to be rationally pursued in ways that don't chain production to commodification. The Fight for \$15 must be seen as a fight for the basic necessities of life itself.

Undergoing this leap from one technological base to the next under the continuing political rule of private property threatens the very life and future lives of working people.

This is important. Only a politically conscious new proletariat can obtain the political power necessary to reorganize society based upon distribution according to need. What we do in the coming days matters. We can win. We must win. We shall win.