

Basic Curriculum 2.1

League of Revolutionaries for a New America
Introductory Curriculum

National Education Committee
League of Revolutionaries for a New America

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With much hard work, this curriculum was developed by a League committee. We thank them for their valuable contribution. This is an updated edition of the “Introductory Curriculum” originally published in 2012.

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Recommendations for people teaching this curriculum:

- Read the material aloud as a group. Don't stop reading for discussion until you come to a discussion question. Then discuss. That is the time for questions or comments.
 - Do your best to keep bringing the discussion back to the key concepts that are at the top of the first page
 - Have copies of *The Future Is Up To Us* and *Rally, Comrades!* with you.
 - Make notes on the strengths and weaknesses of the discussion. What parts of this lesson were most helpful in bringing clarity, in raising consciousness? What parts of this lesson need to be improved?
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Basic Curriculum 2.1, Lesson 1: What is a Revolution?

**“Peace out to revolution
I know there’s confusion”**

Erykah Badu

Key concepts in this lesson:

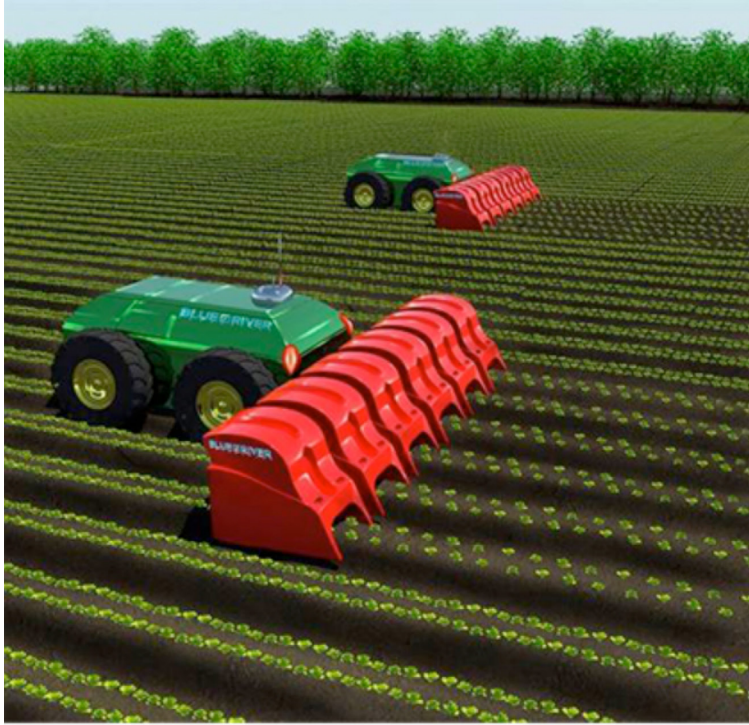
- A revolution begins in the economy. The political revolution is the last stage
- The revolution in the economy today is driven by the replacement of labor worldwide by computers and robots
- Reform is no longer possible. We have entered the path to revolution

People generally recognize revolution as such only when it reaches the stage of an imminent overthrow or political revolution. In order to lead the revolution, revolutionaries need to understand how a revolution develops since a revolution cannot come simply from the will of people. We need to know the roots of the revolution, which are in the economy. No revolution starts out as a political revolution.

An economic revolution is caused by changes in technology, a shift in how things are produced and distributed. An article in the Los Angeles Times detailed how technology will eliminate all service jobs in the United States within a generation. For example, the vending machine company AVT is designing a gas station that will dispense gasoline, snacks, bottled drinks, even hot coffee with the swipe of a credit card—without a single clerk. FoxConn, the giant Chinese manufacturer, has begun to install one million robots in its factories. That will lead to the loss of millions of Chinese jobs. The idea that a rising Chinese market will somehow save us is a myth. Permanent job elimination by technology is expanding into all fields: law, medicine, even software engineering.

New technologies are being developed that will automate farm work. There are drones that can herd cattle and spray chemicals, green houses with robots which can sense the need for watering a particular plant or determine when a tomato is ready to be picked. There is a wine-grape pruning robot which does the job of manual labor at half the cost. A lettuce-thinning machine is in development that can do the job 40 times faster than a person. Experts estimate that complete automation in the fields is only two to 10 years away.

Detroit has plunged from 1.8 million residents in 1950, supported by an industrial base of 200,000 factory jobs, to a population of only 700,000 today. Only 20,000 factory jobs remain, while 36 percent of the population lives below the federal poverty line.



Agricultural Robotics: The production of agricultural robots is done in stages. The first generation of robots is being developed as crop scouts that collect data in the field. The second generation of robots will be able to perform field operations such as mechanical weeding and micro spraying. This operation will most likely be performed with large robots that resemble current equipment. The third generation of robots will be as part of a fully autonomous crop production system.

“Cheaper, better robots will replace human workers in the world’s factories at a faster pace over the next decade, pushing labor costs down 16 percent, a new report says. The Boston Consulting Group predicts that investment in industrial robots will grow 10 percent a year in the world’s 25-biggest export nations through 2025, up from 2 percent to 3 percent a year now.”

— *Associated Press* February 10, 2015

Discussion question 1: Is there an economic revolution going on in the United States right now? What is the evidence that such a revolution is taking place?

Changes in the economy force changes in society. The social problems of drugs, crime, homelessness and so forth are the result of an increase in a new kind of poverty. The increase in poverty is caused by unemployment. The unemployment is caused by something new—electronic production via labor-replacing robots and computers entering the system. The robots and computers produce but they don’t buy or sell anything.

Imagine a factory built in 1970. Thousands of workers are hired for three shifts. They spend their money in the community and eventually that money returns to their factory and many other factories to purchase new raw materials that are transformed in production into commodities and sold back to the workers all across the country. This movement of money and goods in an endless circle allows the capitalist system to function. It functions very unequally and with many problems, but most people are able to get what they need to survive.

Now imagine that, in the year 2010, all the workers in that factory are replaced by computers and robots. The workers are all fired. The factory can produce more than ever before but no one can buy the products. The workers cannot get the things they need to survive, to care for their families. The circle of production and distribution which had previously sustained the country is broken. The circle cannot spin. Our very survival is called into question.

Discussion question 2: Why doesn’t the capitalist system work anymore?

Economic revolutions do not come from the will of people. They result from the application of science to social production. Robotics is creating an economic revolution. Since the economy is the basis of society, when the economy changes, society has to be restructured to fit the new economy. In order to accomplish that restructuring, a political revolution is necessary.

When the economy changes so fundamentally, it creates movements for reform. Today, we see many movements trying to reform capitalism, to make it work more fairly. Reform means to restructure. Capitalism is based on exploiting labor. But labor and jobs as we've known them are on their way out. Capitalism cannot be restructured or reformed. A revolutionary transformation is the only way to get society to function again.

Other movements begin outside the system and, since they are outside the system, they do not have the goal of reform of the old but the goal of creating something entirely new. Such a movement is beginning to form today. Very few people involved in that movement call themselves revolutionaries. Yet their demands for food, housing and health care without having to pay for these things are revolutionary demands. These demands express an elementary understanding of how and why a new society has to be organized. If production is carried on without wages, then the means of life have to be distributed without money.

Money is actually a fairly recent development in human history. It came into being in order to facilitate exchange between the owners of different commodities. The owner of cattle accepted money as payment in exchange instead of, say, corn. As industry emerged, the worker would exchange his ability to work for money. Money was necessary for society to function at earlier levels of technological development. Today, in an increasingly jobless economy where so many people have no money, the demand for money in exchange for the necessities of life is causing society to disintegrate.

Discussion question 3: Most people can't imagine a world without money. How can we get them to understand that today, "If production is carried on without wages, then the means of life have to be distributed without money?"

Revolution is a stage in the development of human society when the tools humans use change in such a way that the old social arrangements—the way necessities are distributed to those who need them—are no longer adequate, and need to be changed to fit the new condition.

The last stage of the revolutionary process is political. This means that the class understands itself as a class, aligns itself in line with its common interests and with a common vision. The class organizes itself politically on that basis, with the goal of political power and the transformation of society in its interests. This stage ends with a seizure of political power and the remaking of society in the interests of the revolutionary class and humanity itself. When this stage is achieved, the work of the reconstruction of society can begin.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

— *United States Declaration of Independence, 1776*

Discussion question 4: What is a political revolution? Can one happen in the United States? Why can't the people just decide to have a revolution?

The material in this lesson is taken from:

The Future is Up To Us by Nelson Peery

Rally, Comrades! (rallycomrades.lrna.org)

People's Tribune (peopletribune.org)

Tribuno del Pueblo (tribunodelpueblo.org)

Study Guide of the LA Culture Committee of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

LRNA webinar

Basic Curriculum 2.1, Lesson 2: What is Communism?

“I envision a world where water, electricity, food, and education would be for free for everyone on this planet.”

Carlos Santana

Key concepts in this lesson:

- Communism is an economic system, not a political system.
- Private property is not the same thing as personal property.
- Scarcity has been the most important factor in how societies are organized but this is no longer true. Today the need to distribute abundance is the most important factor.

What is communism? First, it is a system that allows every person to contribute to society. This comes first because self worth, the foundation of happiness, is based on social contribution. Secondly, it is the rational distribution of the necessities of life according to need. Of course, needs are different than two hundred years ago. Then, a person’s needs were food, shelter, and clothing. Today, our necessities include education, culture, health care, and other entertainment and comforts.

Communism is a social form of organization based on the common ownership of the socially necessary means of production. Throughout most of human history a cooperative, communist society was necessary because the low level of the means of production meant that life was impossible without a collective effort. The greatest part of human history was carried on within some communist form.

Until very recently the world was defined by scarcity. No matter what the economic form of society was, some people were going to do without and some were going to have all they needed. This created constant conflict and reinforced ideas such as “the poor will always be with us.” The incredible abundance created by computerized, robotic production today has put an end to scarcity. The lack of food, water, shelter, and medical care that plagues the world comes from a scarcity that is imposed, not one that is inherent in society. Scarcity can now be overcome by the transition to a communist economic system where things are distributed according to need, not according to who has money and who doesn’t. We have the economic foundation in the United States already so that tonight everyone could live in a nice home, have plenty to eat and good schools to go to.

Living under a system of private property we fight each other over access to resources that are deliberately withheld from us. In a cooperative, communist society there will be no more prejudice, discrimination, or street violence. The underlying cause of it, enforced scarcity, will be gone.

If the worker doesn't work anymore and the robot creates the commodities how is it possible to sell them? You cannot sell them, and if you don't sell them how are you going to distribute them? If you can't sell the cups and everybody needs cups, how are you going to distribute those cups? You've got to distribute one cup to one person, two cups to two people and ten cups to a family with eight children. You've got to distribute them according to need.

"The third group was the most interesting because they were open minded and wanted information. After a reading or lecture, the first thing they would say is "but I thought communism was dead." That was their opinion and, of course, they can have no other opinion given the history of the last seventy years. They thought communism was dead because they think communism is a political system. It is very difficult to tell them that it is an economic system and explain that system as such."

— *Nelson Peery*

We don't need a state that is the owner of all the means of production to guarantee their development. The state as we know it today will collapse almost immediately. **We need a government that regulates things, but not people.**

When we set about reconstructing the earth, for example, reclaiming the earth, becoming part of the earth again, that will be a real accomplishment. The first task of communism is to rebuild the earth, to clean it up, understand its rhythm, and become part of that rhythm. The first part is to stabilize the earth, and consequently stabilize humanity. Happiness will arise in that process.

We have been taught that politics means only elections. Politics is the control of one class by another class. There were no classes under primitive forms of cooperative, communist society and so there were no politics. There will be no classes under an economic communist system based on computers and robotics so there will be no politics then either.

Discussion Question 1: Why is communism an economic system, not a political system?

Private property. Private property is the infrastructure of the economy and the wealth that exceeds any human's personal needs. Private property arose in history when society developed to a point that communities produced enough surplus (especially food) that one section, or class, of society could be freed from hunting and gathering and live off the labor of another class.

Personal property. Personal property is the things we need to live and function, as individuals or families: Food, clothing, shelter, computers, phones, personal transportation, etc. It is under capitalism, not communism, that the masses are being pushed rapidly from the ownership of personal property.

People are taught to fear a cooperative, communist society so they can be convinced that the abolition of private property means the confiscation of what little they personally own. In a cooperative, communist society the only thing that will be confiscated is private property, including all corporate property, in order that it may become public property for the benefit of all.

In a cooperative, communist society our personal property will be securely in our hands. That will be guaranteed by law, by custom, and by the very nature of a society where there will no longer be any reason anyone would want to take it away.

Under communism there will be no money but not because getting rid of money is a good idea. Money will be gone because money is a medium of exchange. Under capitalism, we exchange our ability to work for money. Then we exchange money for the things we need to live. Under communism, abundance will be distributed to all but not by exchange. Without exchange, there will be no role for money. It will no longer exist.

Discussion Question 2: What is the difference between private property and personal property?

During the era of industrial production, the vision of a world without exploitation, hunger and war galvanized a working class movement for communism. But industrial production was unable to create the material conditions required for a communist economic system. The idea of communism came before the possibility. Today, in this era of electronic production, the reverse is true. Now, the material conditions for communism exist, but the ideas are lagging behind.

Though people may have different ideas about it and different ways of describing it, at this moment in history the essence of every struggle for a better life is objectively the struggle for communism. Communism is not just an idea, but the practical resolution to immediate problems. Nationalization of health care is a matter of survival for millions. The people of Detroit must take over the water corporations or go without water in their homes.

Discussion Question 3: How is communism the practical solution to our problems?

People less than 60 years old have grown up under an unending barrage of anti-communist propaganda. This attack against communism has been powerful because it was linked to a steadily rising standard of living throughout the country. When thinking and activity are linked with rewards, we all become Pavlov's dog. The physiologist Ivan Pavlov conducted experiments in which he would hit a dog and then feed it. As the dog was conditioned to this process, if it was hit and not fed, it would still go back to be hit again. We also have been hit and then fed by the capitalist system and its leaders. If we get hit and not fed, we tend to go back and to get hit again in hopes of being fed.

Following World War II, the United States entered a long period of economic growth at the expense of the colonial peoples of the world. Full employment and rising wages bribed the American working class into discarding the sympathy for communism that had developed during the Depression and World War II.

Understanding that the fundamentals have changed is of decisive importance. Anticommunist ideology united with a rising standard of living is one thing. Anti-communism linked with a declining standard of living is something else. Since the robot is more efficient than human labor the capitalist must fire the human and utilize the robot. By doing so, they strike at their indispensable base of political support. Our class enemy is losing its decisive advantage.

<p>Discussion Question 4: Why has America been so anti-communist? Is anti-communism growing or shrinking among the people you know?</p>

The material in this lesson is taken from:

The Future is Up To Us by Nelson Peery

Rally, Comrades! (rallycomrades.lrna.org)

Study Guide of the LA Culture Committee of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Basic Curriculum 2.1, Lesson 3: What is Democracy?

**“I wish I knew how it would feel to be free
I wish I could break all the chains holding me”**

Nina Simone

Key concepts in this lesson:

- Capitalism and democracy are not the same thing.
- If someone else controls your ability to eat, you are not free.
- Equality of distribution is more democratic than equality of opportunity.

What is democracy? Democracy, the rule of the people, rests upon the ability to make choices freely. There can be no political democracy unless there is economic democracy. There is no economic democracy under capitalism. The fundamental decisions in a capitalist society are made by the owners of the corporations. The people have no say in the direction of society. If you depend upon someone else to determine whether or not you get food, shelter and clothing, then you are that person’s slave. You are compelled to do that person’s bidding, no matter how subtle the command may be.

Capitalism and democracy are not the same thing. Capitalism is an economic system. Democracy is a political system. By saying democracy and capitalism are the same, the U.S. makes it appear that defense of democracy is defense of the U.S., and that the United States has the right to impose its brand of democracy on the rest of the world.

Under communism, we will move from a society based on control of people to one based on control of things. Everyone will be a co-owner of public property so everyone will have a say in the direction of society. Scarcity will be gone, swept away by universal abundance. Under systems of private property, someone else controls your ability to eat and live, so you can never be free. With the elimination of private property, bountiful personal property for all, and universal access to public property, freedom will become a reality for everyone.

In the United States, democracy has been limited mainly to property owners. At one time only white males who owned property were allowed to vote and the dominant property owners were those who owned slaves. As slavery was eliminated and the ranks of property owners grew via the family farm and high-paying jobs, democracy expanded. But this meant only voting rights. The strategic economic and political decisions have always been made only by those who own private property. Today, some of those who call the shots are women, some are minorities, but all are owners of private property or

are politically controlled by them. As for the state, do we elect the FBI, the CIA, the head of Homeland Security, the local police chief? As for the economy, do we elect the head of the New York Stock Exchange, the head of the Federal Reserve, or the heads of the Wall Street financial firms?

A propertyless class has no role in capitalism or any other system of private property and will not be allowed any say in how it is run. With mass foreclosures and evictions, the end of the family farm, and the destruction of small business, capitalist democracy is no longer possible. It is being rapidly dismantled.

Discussion Question 1: What is democracy? How is it different from capitalism?

Democracy is not the same thing as consensus. What basis for consensus could there be between the 1 per cent of the population that controls 90 per cent of the wealth in America and the lowest 40 per cent of the population which has no wealth?

Smashing the record for the most money ever donated by a candidate in a political election, Republican Meg Whitman wrote her 2010 California gubernatorial campaign a \$15 million check that brought her personal stake in the race to \$119 million. The new infusion pushed the billionaire candidate past the previous record-holder, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who spent \$109 million of his own money in his 2009 election bid. At the Koch brothers annual winter donor retreat in January 2015, the right-wing billionaires announced they will raise and spend \$889 million dollars in the 2016 election.

We should be concerned not simply with voting, but with the full range of human rights. These must include the right to own the personal property and to use the public property we need to live a full and meaningful life.

We own our ability to work, with our bodies and our minds. It is our personal property. Living under a system of private property we still own our ability to work but cannot use it because jobs are being permanently eliminated by technology. Under communism, abundance will be distributed to all and we won't have to desperately try to sell our ability to work in order to live. But we will still own our ability to use our bodies and our minds. We will be free, truly free, to use those capacities to make the contribution to society that we want to make. At that point, we will finally live in an actual democracy.

Discussion Question 2: Are elections the same thing as democracy? Do we have democracy in the United States?

Most of human history has been defined by scarcity, by the fact that there just wasn't enough to go around. During this time, there were many attempts to equalize distribution but the best that could be done was to equalize poverty. More recently, we have seen movements for equality of opportunity by groups of people who had previously been excluded (minorities, women, the disabled). These movements have given more people access to the pie but they haven't increased the size of the pie.

Today, the possibility exists to equalize the distribution of abundance for the benefit of all. This is not the same thing as equality of opportunity, which has meant only the chance for a few to be winners in societies where most people, through no fault of their own, were losers. The abundance we have today can create, in a truly democratic society, universal opportunity.

Discussion Question 3: Which is more democratic: "equality of opportunity" or "equality of distribution?"

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Rally, Comrades! (rallycomrades.lrna.org)

People's Tribune (peopletribune.org)

Study Guide of the LA Culture Committee of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Los Angeles Times

Basic Curriculum 2.1, Lesson 4: What is the new class?

“I see the power
Changin’ hands
Rising from the streets”

Van Halen

Key concepts in this lesson:

- The very section of working people who were once the basis for the capitalist system’s stability are now being driven into poverty.
- There is no middle class.
- The new class is the only force which can lead humanity to establish a peaceful, prosperous society.

Who is the so-called ‘middle class’? They are really a section of the working class that has had stable, good-paying jobs. As the way of life of millions of these formerly stable working people is destroyed, those who had jobs, an education, relatively secure lives, and were active politically and in their communities are being pushed into insecurity and poverty. Because both political parties represent the interests of the corporations, they will not and cannot not talk about the destruction of human lives and the impoverishment of the very section of working people who were once the basis for the system’s stability.

Formerly secure people who are being thrown out of work, working part-time and contingent jobs, losing their homes to foreclosure fraud and their savings and retirement to financial fraud, are waking up to the fact that their interests haven’t been protected, addressed or heard. Today fifty million Americans are in poverty. People who a few years back had skilled and middle management jobs, homes, and some savings and benefits, are finding themselves in food lines and living in their vehicles. This is the reality of the dispossession of millions of Americans, each with their own story, but all part of an irreversible historical process.

Nothing that either party of the capitalist class, Democrat or Republican, proposes will turn this around. Their appeals to the “middle class” are an attempt to confuse people and obscure common class interests. It is also a coded way of dividing them from each other, based on what is most historically backward in American society—the false divisions of race, nationality and ideology. They are being told that their problems are their own fault, or the fault of some other section or color of workers.

A new social group is forming. They have been driven outside the market place of the capitalist economy but as human beings they must consume. This new class is growing daily through the process of technological innovation.

Discussion Question 1: What is the new class? How is the nature of poverty changing? Give examples.

There has always been unemployment and poverty under capitalism. Today's unemployment and poverty is something new. The economists are calling it structural unemployment because it is an integral part of the emerging economy and cannot be eliminated.

The important thing is to see that the new class is outside capitalist society. It is being forced into a position where it must attack and destroy this society in order to live. Despite its current disorganization, it is a revolutionary class and is destined to organize all the non-capitalist mass of people around itself for the transformation to a practical kind of communist society.

The media focuses its attention on the problems of the inner city poor. Poverty is portrayed as a racially identified or color identified phenomena that the white poor can distance themselves from, even if it means identifying with their class enemy.

The similarities between the inner city black and the people in these semi-rural, formerly industrial towns of the Rust Belt are undeniable. Sometimes 60% of a town is on welfare in the heart of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. When you have poverty spreading out, people look at one another and say, "You know, it's not true this is a black problem, or a brown problem. It's a problem of a growing section of society."

That section is the new class, a class that was first formed around a core of common laborers who lost their jobs. It is being reinforced by technicians and highly skilled workers whose jobs have been eliminated by electronics.

The capitalists cannot halt the downsizing and the development of a whole new class of people, of throwaway workers and part-time workers. They can't turn it around. You ever heard of a freight train turning around? It's going to run it's course.

This polarization of wealth and poverty is going to continue. The only way to profitably sell anything today is to cut costs. And cutting costs means downsizing. Little by little, the poor and propertyless are going to recognize themselves as poor and propertyless. We have to help them understand that. We have to help them understand that they are part of a new class.

WHAT WAS THE CAUSE AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LOS ANGELES REBELLION OF 1992?

The new part time, unemployed, minimum wage, and temporary workers form a new class at society's edges. Computerized control opened the door to shift production to the

lowest wage areas of the world. Opening the neocolonial national boundaries to financial investment and industrial production destroyed their subsistence economies and unsettled millions of workers, who then migrated to foreign countries, including the United States.

L.A. held a large number of this new class. They were black, white, Asian, Native American, Mexican and Central American. They were united by the fact that they were outside of and oppressed by bourgeois society and its property relations. By 1990 this new class was an uprising looking for a place to happen.

The Los Angeles rebellion will be remembered as the opening round of revolution by the new class of people created by robotics. This new class rejects existing society. It is not possible to overthrow a society which you respect and whose laws you obey. The L.A. rebellion was contemptuous of anything smacking of bourgeois law, order or property relations.

Industrialization brought about a great social revolution in Europe and America but it couldn't go far enough to bring about the kind of political revolution that could lead to the elimination of private property. As more and more production is taken over by electronics, the displaced workers are forced into lower and lower paying jobs and many of them end up in the growing mass of permanently unemployed. A huge section of those who do have jobs work at or below minimum wage. They are forming a new class that has few or no ties to capital. This class is revolutionary because it is increasingly outside of and hostile to the wages system. It is revolutionary because it cannot fight the individual employer—it must fight the state. It is revolutionary because robotics makes it impossible for them to co-exist with private property. The only way for them to prevent these gigantic means of production from crushing them is to make them public property.

Discussion Question 2: Why must the new class attack and destroy the institutions of existing society in order to build a new society in which it can live?

Discussion Question 3: Why is the new class the only force which can lead all of humanity to a peaceful, prosperous cooperative society?

To make the transition from private property to universal abundance in a cooperative society we must rely on the new class of propertyless people. Since this new class owns no property and is without employment or resources, it cannot move in the direction of securing individual property. It has no ties to any system of private property and so it is free to lead humanity toward a cooperative, communist society. It is of the greatest importance to make this new class aware of its role in history and to spread that awareness throughout society.

At this point, there is little or no ideology involved in this movement, only the practical need for food and shelter. Until today, our weakness was an ideological movement without a practical base. The problem today is the development of a practical movement without an ideological expression. The tasks of today's revolutionaries are clear.

Discussion Question 4: Today millions of people who are being foreclosed are fighting to stay in their homes, yet they lack a clear understanding of the underlying cause: A society based on private property instead of the public good. How do other movements, such as immigration, anti-police brutality, or the environment lack a full understanding of the underlying cause?

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Rally, Comrades! (rallycomrades.lrna.org)

People's Tribune (peopletribune.org)

Study Guide of the LA Culture Committee of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Basic Curriculum 2.1, Lesson 5: What is Fascism?

“The police become necessary in human society
Only at that junction in human society
Where it is split between those who have and those who ain’t got”

Dead Prez

Key concepts in this lesson:

- We cannot attempt to defend our country and our future by simply attempting to win back the liberties that are daily taken from us.
- The choices are: attempt to contain the crisis through a fascist dictatorship, or resolve the crisis by creating a cooperative economic order that is compatible with electronic, wageless production.

Seventy years ago the world was in the grip of the greatest economic crisis the capitalist world had ever known. Old solutions were not working. It was a time when thugs and gangsters emerged as political leaders. In a large section of the world, fascism was imposed as a new social order.

We are again in the grip of a world economic crisis. Again the old solutions are not working and again we see the frightful features of fascism emerging. Some see this as a replay of seventy years ago and are looking for the same solutions. That is a dangerous mistake.

The crisis of the late 1920s through the 1930s was a severe capitalist cyclical crisis of overproduction. The consolidation of international cartels and giant monopolies made the people so poor that they simply could not buy enough to sustain the economy. But the system itself was not at an end. Huge sections of the world had not been fully drawn into the sphere of international finance capitalism. Countries such as Germany, Italy and Spain were struggling to restructure their feudal political systems to conform to their advanced industrial economies. Fascism developed as an idea—a method of dealing with this economic and political turmoil. Its essence was the open and complete control of government by finance capital. After World War II, capitalist democracy was installed in those countries that made up the fascist Axis. This was proof enough that fascism in that period was an option to be taken or rejected.

Today we are in the beginning stages of a worldwide crisis. It is a typical capitalist cyclical crisis of overproduction, where the economy churns out far more goods than people can afford to buy. In the past, these crises were resolved as time went by and the surplus of goods was paid for and consumed. This time, however, the cyclical crisis is taking place in the middle of a technological revolution which floods the market with

commodities. The ongoing advance of the productivity of computers and robots in the economy means the glut of the market grows every day. Instead of stabilizing with the passage of time, today the operation of the market—more products, fewer consumers with money—becomes more unstable each day. The revolutionary shift from industrial production with labor to electronic production without labor makes it impossible to solve the cyclical crisis.

The economic aspects of fascism are now in place, as seen by the merger of the state and the corporations. The political aspects of fascism are in place as seen in the passage of laws such as the National Defense Authorization Act. This allows the U.S. government to kill anyone labeled a “terrorist” and to jail a suspected “terrorist” without charges and without a trial. The corporate-backed Stand Your Ground Law is on the books in some 30 states. In Florida alone, this law has been responsible for the shooting of some 130 people since the law was passed in 2005. In 70% of these shootings the victim died. In most cases, the killer did not even face trial. Laws are being enacted that outlaw feeding of the hungry or that subject people to arrest simply for protesting.

Today we are in the beginning stages of a worldwide crisis. It is a typical capitalist cyclical crisis of over production. This time, however, it is occurring within and intensified by a revolution from industrial-labor production to electronic labor-less production. This economic revolution makes it impossible to solve the cyclical crisis.

Fascism was imposed during the 1930’s as an option of control during crisis. Today fascism is arising as the only way to contain the antagonism between a society based on wage labor and an economy based on wage-less production. Wage-less production creates a huge propertyless class. A propertyless class has no role in capitalism or any other system of private property and cannot be allowed any say in how it is run. With mass foreclosures and evictions, the end of the family farm, and the destruction of small business, capitalist democracy is no longer possible. It is rapidly being dismantled.

Discussion Question 1: What is the difference between the fascism that is arising today and the fascism of Germany and Italy in the 1930s?

Modern fascism is more than a political system hostile to democracy. It is more than monopoly capitalism without the restraints of democracy. It is the political attempt to maintain a social system of privilege by force and violence. Privilege arises from scarcity. How is it possible to maintain privileges while the emerging economic structure produces undreamed of abundance? Today, this social motion is taking the characteristics of a police state. A state wherein the police, charged with protecting the privileges of the few, become a law unto themselves and answerable to none. This fascist danger is real and it is near.

The choices are: attempt to contain the crisis through a fascist dictatorship, or to resolve the crisis by creating a cooperative economic order that is compatible with electronic,

wageless production. We are at a fork in the road. There is no possibility of going back and no possibility of continuing on the same old path.

On the other hand, any child understands that if consumers can't work and earn money, then the necessities of life must be distributed without money. This objective economic demand will sweep aside any political system that cannot conform to it. As the robot destroys the economic order, this new class will destroy the social order. The ideals of communism have moved from being good political ideas embraced by a small group of people into the realm of the economic, the practical, , and the inevitable.

Discussion Question 2: Why are the only possibilities for the future fascism or communism? Is there a third way?

The American masses have always been controlled by bribery (well-paid, secure jobs and a social safety net) backed with deadly force. Huge sections of the population, locked into "McJobs" or permanent joblessness, can no longer be controlled by bribery. The ruling class absolutely must stop the drift toward the political awakening of this new class. They must prevent their political organizing. They must deepen the poverty and at the same time prevent the social upheavals. This can only be done with a fascist police state. Hence the explosive expansion of prison building and police forces.

Like it or not, we are all being swept into this decisive fight. We cannot attempt to defend our country and our future by simply attempting to win back the liberties that are daily taken from us. While fighting every step of the way to maintain the existing liberties, we realize that the economic foundation is changing, and the political structure that rests upon that foundation must change with it. We must move forward. There is no rallying point save the actual demands of this new class for food, housing, water, education, and medical care.

Discussion Question 3: Why is it true that today you cannot fight fascism simply with anti-fascism?

The material in this lesson is taken from:

People's Tribune (peopletribune.org)

Rally, Comrades! (rallycomrades.lrna.org)

Study Guide of the LA Culture Committee of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

What We Are Changing To by Nelson Peery

Basic Curriculum 2.1, Lesson 6: Political Independence

**“But we are sick and tired of hearing your song
Telling how you are gonna change right from wrong
‘Cause if you really want to hear our views
You haven’t done nothing!”**

Stevie Wonder

Key concepts in this lesson:

- The Democrats have carried out the program of the Republicans.
- Political independence is about more than elections.
- No political law can change an economic law.

In 1956 the distinguished African American intellectual, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois said, “I believe democracy has so far disappeared in the United States that no two evils exist. There is but one evil party with two names.”

Whenever election time draws near, the battle cry of “Support the lesser of two evils!” is used to block any rational examination of the record of the Democrats. While we are constantly urged to “unite to fight the right” (the Republicans), the fact is that the Democrats have carried out the program of the Republican Party, and gone even further. The lesser of two evils deception comes down to death by the velvet glove or by the iron fist.

In the case of the Obama administration, it’s more than the facts of attacking the Constitution, destroying such pillars as due process and handing the President the power to arrest, disappear, torture and kill Americans without trial. It is more than breaking treaties such as those prohibiting torture. It is more than bailing out banks with trillions of dollars. The lesser of two evils rhetoric covers the common agenda of the two parties, confuses the people and helps to consolidate the power of fascism. It is time to face the real world.

That real world shows that no political law can change an economic law. Both the Republican and Democratic candidates claim they can fix the economy, create jobs and stabilize the middle class. Neither party dared to discuss the economic law that threw us into the Great Recession. That law is simply this: “A capitalist must maintain maximum profit or be driven out of business.” Maximum profit goes to the capitalist who produces the cheapest, thereby capturing the market. Producing the cheapest means cutting production costs to the bone.

If one capitalist replaces the worker with a robot, the rest must do the same. The result is the escalating, permanent replacement of workers. Every worker replaced by electronics shrinks the market for buying and selling while expanding production. Eliminate jobs and

the market shrinks. More sophisticated equipment is called for to allow corporations to fight over what's left of the market, which shrinks the market even more.

All countries face the same reality. Jobs are disappearing never to return. Production is increasing alongside indescribable poverty. The final correction to this overproduction is a major war which could spell the end to civilization. Yet both the Democrats and the Republicans work to keep expanding production while expanding America's military.

Political independence is about more than elections. We have to ask, independence from what? In countless ways, we are taught that as Americans we have one common interest. Rich and poor, capitalists and workers, those who control the economy and those who have been pushed out of it. If we believe this line of disinformation and see ourselves as part of an all class unity, we are expecting our problems to be solved by those who caused them in the first place. We become helpless.

The Democratic Party is the most obvious promoter of nonsense about class unity between the common people and the one per cent, but the Democrats are just part of a vast web of people and institutions that we call the "middle." This includes compromised leadership in the unions, the churches, the environmental movement, the non-profits, the media.

This middle defends the system and keeps us stuck to our real enemies—the corporate owners of private property. **Because we are united with the middle, we cannot unite with each other.** This sticky, tricky middle protects the one per cent, working overtime to convince us that our visions of a better life are unrealistic.

When we unite with each other based on our common problems we weaken the hold of the middle upon us, just as we do when we put forward a vision of a better world. Today the middle is weakened by the polarization of wealth and the end of work. They are vulnerable. We can now realistically set our sights on separating from them, achieving political independence, taking on our main enemies in the one per cent, defeating them, and establishing a cooperative society that cares for everyone.

Discussion Question 1: What are some examples of the political "middle?" What is the difference between a political strategy of "Unite to fight the right" and a political strategy of "Throw the blow at the middle?" How does each strategy relate to the need for political independence?

The middle tries to convince us that economic laws are universally applicable everywhere for all time. But that's not true. For instance, the economic law "a capitalist must maintain maximum profit or be driven out of business" is a law only in a capitalist economy. In a cooperative, communist economy such a law makes no sense because there

will be no capitalists in such an economy. In a cooperative economy, the economic law that drives everything is “The constant raising of the people’s standard of living based on the advance of new technology.”

We cannot become politically independent if we accept the economic laws of capitalism as eternal. We cannot become politically independent if we allow the capitalist political parties, Democrat and Republican, to fool us into thinking they can or will break the economic laws of capitalism to make our lives better. Our political independence depends on winning over the people to the need to have a new economic system whose laws, very different from the laws of capitalism, will operate to benefit everyone.

Discussion Question 2: “The real world shows that no political law can change an economic law.” How does the economic law “A capitalist must maintain maximum profit or be driven out of business” apply to the introduction of robots and computers into the workplace?

The relationship between a capitalist and a worker is a contradiction. Their relationship is contradictory because the capitalist wants to pay the worker less and the worker wants the capitalist to pay more. But they are the two parts of a system and they need each other for that system to function. Neither wants a new system. The millions of people in America who have been pushed outside the economy are not in contradiction with the capitalists because they have no relationship with them. They have no reason to want to preserve the current system. They are hostile to it and the state which protects it. They cannot survive without a new, cooperative system and so they must be the leaders of the drive toward political independence. They are not in a position to compromise. They have no connection to the political middle that keeps us stuck to our enemies. They have been forced out of the economy and are independent of all systems of private property. What remains is to deliver the education that will allow them to understand their key position in the liberation of humanity. In other words, to become politically independent.

Discussion Question 3: Who must lead the struggle for political independence? Why? What is the relationship between revolutionary education and political independence?

The material in this lesson is taken from:

People’s Tribune (peopletribune.org)

Study Guide of the LA Culture Committee of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Basic Curriculum 2.1, Lesson 7: Vision

“Where there is no vision, the people perish”

Proverbs 29:18

Key concepts in this lesson:

- We have to grab the future, not the past.
- We have the economic foundation today to give everyone in the U. S. the fundamentals for a cultured, orderly, decent existence.
- The only way we can transfer the necessities of life to those who need them is to do so without money.

Since capitalism is incapable of providing for our most basic needs, we need something new and better. We envision a world where all life is cared for and nurtured. Is this utopian? When one form of human society reaches the end of its development, objective conditions are set for a leap to another. We are undergoing such a leap. Capitalism has reached its limit of development and is in the process of destruction. Conditions now exist to restructure society on a new basis, with the means of production owned in common and everyone’s needs provided for.

Visionaries portray a future made possible through an examination of objective forces in the real world. Dreamers create impossible images and are unable to understand the forces at play in the real world. Yesterday’s dreamers were the destitute, the exploited, the downtrodden. The visionaries were the owners of the new industrial means of production. Today, that world stands on its feet. The visionaries are those who have been driven from the factory and from society by the more efficient electronic means of production. They visualize their social liberation, the happy, prosperous future if only they could collectively own and direct the instruments that are destroying them. The dreamers are those wallowing in increasingly valueless wealth, still believing that wageless production can be circulated with money.

What the American people have lost has been lost forever. We have to grab the future, not the past.

Discussion Question 1: Why do people seek to return to the past? How can we get them to “grab the future?”

What happened to our country? The dull and leaden mind of America is the harvest of anti-communism planted during the McCarthy era; it is the harvest of greed planted by Ronald Reagan. As they planted their poisonous crop, every lofty vision, condemned as communism, was forsaken. Equality for the minorities and women, peace, and finally democracy itself, was branded “communist” and forbidden. There was nothing left save consumerism and greed. Reagan elevated this malignancy to the level of a national program. America lost its way as it lost its vision.

Vision is a statement of where we are striving to go. Clarity of vision by the people is the ultimate defense against misleaders. Any tyrant can take a nation that doesn't know where it's going down any path. Now, more than any time since World War II, our country desperately needs a clear vision. Vision arises from actual possibilities. Anyone can see that we have, in the new electronic production, the possibility of doing away with poverty and privilege. We can create a world of love and peace. First we must take these marvelous means of production away from those who use them only to create poverty for the many and privilege for the few. We must convert them to public property and for public welfare.

We concentrate too much upon trying to build with people who are only angry with the system. We don't need malcontents, we need thinkers with a vision of the kind of world that is possible.

Discussion Question 2: Discuss the difference between visionaries, dreamers, and malcontents.

The time of social reconstruction is the real revolution. This time it is going to be different because the economic foundations of this new society are already laid to such a great extent within the old society. In every previous revolution there has been a severe drop in the standard of living of the people as they organize the new society. But we won't have to hold back the aspirations for a new society while we build the factories and roads. In all other revolutions, it was necessary to accumulate the capital to do it. That meant taking it out of the backs of the people who made the revolution. We aren't going to go through that. Everything we need for a paradise on earth is already here, or at least in formation.

Already, practically all the manual labor is done by machines, and a huge section of the intellectual labor is done by machines that add up four columns of figures and program other computers and robots. The Soviet Union had to go through and China is still going through an economic stage very dependent on the low productivity of manual labor. That will not apply in the United States. We are already past that. We have the economic foundation today to give everyone in the U. S. prosperous, peaceful existence where everyone's needs are met.

Everybody tonight could go into a nice home; tonight everybody could eat a sumptuous, healthy meal; tonight everybody could go to a concert. We have the ability

to make this happen right now. It will be expanded and made better, but we don't have to create it. The Soviet Union was organized to industrialize the country. This country is already industrialized. We don't need a state that is the owner of all the means of production in order to guarantee their development. The state as we know it today will collapse almost immediately. We need a government that regulates things, but not people. We will need, for instance, an agency that determines that if there will be ten million babies born this year, we will need so many million diapers this year. Somebody has to do that.

That's the kind of government that we are going to have, a government that organizes the distribution of the necessities of life, but is not ordering people around. What are you going to order people to do? Order them to go to the movies? The questions of the cultural development of the people will most likely be left in the hand of the locals. The local people will figure out how to ensure their education, their recreation. Some work will need to be done, of course, but the allocation of human resources for that work could be done on a local level. Reconstruction will be so much easier to organize because of the tremendous productivity of the machinery that we have.

It is often said that in any new society some people will take over the government and use their positions for their own selfish ends. This is what we are used to. But the corruption and discrimination we have come to expect from government is a result of a society built on the control of scarcity—some will get, most will not. The new society we will create won't be built on trying to fairly manage scarcity—history has proven that is impossible. Instead it will be built on unleashing unlimited abundance, creating a society that will sweep away the possibilities for corruption that come from either selfishness or corporate domination.

Discussion Question 3: Compare the vision of “We need a government that regulates things, but not people” to conventional wisdom such as “You can't fight city hall” or “Power corrupts.”

The only way we can transfer the necessities of life to those who need them is to do so without money. The American people are basically willing to listen to this.

The major question in the world today is peace. Peace in the streets, peace between different ethnic groups, peace between nations. What is the basis for strife if it's not the division and redivision of scarcity? Today scarcity can be eliminated. We're talking about a world where the electronic means of production are cranking twenty four hours a day. We're talking about a world where everyone becomes involved in the development of society.

The foundation of happiness is contentment and its foundation is the elimination of strife. Our troubles arise from material scarcity. When we do away with that, we can begin to build the positive thing, happiness. Happiness is an emotion that arises with contribution. This contribution can be in the form of raising a child, of painting a picture,

of building an organization or a neighborhood. Happiness is a social thing. The idea is to have as full a life as humanly possible.

Up to this point all we've really been is animals. Reacting to scarcity, struggling to get food, struggling to get clothing, struggling to get a house, struggling to get an education, struggling for all these things. If these necessities are in abundance then we can turn to the real matters of life, the intellectual, cultural and interactive well being.

"Some people say this heaven sounds a little dull. But if things were dull in heaven, so many people wouldn't spend so much time and effort trying to get there. We are still going to be boogying and falling in love and raising our babies. We are going to do all the things that make us happy. What's going to be dull about it? The only dull thing that we'll get rid of is groping along for a living. Piling those bricks two on one, one on two. That's the dull part of my life. Dancing and reading books has never been dull to me."

— *Nelson Peery*

Discussion Question 4: What would you do with yourself if you no longer had to worry about getting your food, shelter, and clothing?

The material in this lesson is taken from:

The Future is Up To Us by Nelson Peery

Rally, Comrades! (rallycomrades.lrna.org)

People's Tribune (peopletribune.org)

What We Are Changing To by Nelson Peery

RALLY, COMRADES!

THE VOICE OF THE LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARIES FOR A NEW AMERICA

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

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