

Spring 2005

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# THE COMMUNIST



P R O G R E S S I V E   L A B O R   P A R T Y

THE COMMUNIST SPRING 2005

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**PLP**

**PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY**

**Printed by CHALLENGE PERIODICALS, GPO 808 BROOKLYN, NY 11202**  
**ONLINE VERSION AVAILABLE @ WWW.PLP.ORG**



# Workers Need a Social Tsunami . . . To Sink Main Cause of So Much Devastation

"There's no reason for a single individual to get killed in a Tsunami. The waves are totally predictable. We have travel-time charts covering all of the Indian Ocean. From where this earthquake happened to hit, the travel time for the waves to hit the tip of India was four hours. That's enough time for a warning." — Dr. Tad Murtry, University of Manitoba tsunami expert (quoted in interview with free-lance journalist Lila Rjaiva).

Tsunamis are phenomena of nature. However, the mass destruction, disease, and homelessness caused by the December 26 undersea earthquake in the Indian Ocean were anything but a natural disaster. The blame for 150,000 deaths and the tens of thousands more who will surely die in the tsunami's aftermath falls squarely on the profit system. Capitalism murdered these people — mostly very poor workers and their children — just as surely as capitalist bullets and bombs are murdering Iraqi workers in Bush, Jr.'s oil war.

A key to preventing the tsunami's havoc would have been a simple system of buoys, each costing about \$250,000. These detector buoys, called "tsunameters," have been in existence for decades. According to Dr. Eddie Bernard, director of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Pacific Environmental Laboratory in Seattle, just a few, costing a couple of million dollars, could have done the job.

If the tsunameters had been in place, a warning network would have had to have been established. Several hours could have made all the difference, and hundreds of thousands of people could have been evacuated. But as recently as a June 2004 meeting of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, when experts determined that the Indian Ocean faced a significant threat from local and distant tsunamis, the governments of Thailand, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries in the region chose to ignore this warning and twiddle their thumbs.

Individual reasons may vary. The Thai government didn't want to perturb the lucrative tourist industry with potential false alarms. Many thousands have died in Aceh, Indonesia, but the Indonesian military has been slaughtering Acehnese workers in even greater numbers for years to keep the energy resources there safe for

Exxon Mobil and the Indonesian bosses tied to U.S. imperialism. The rulers of India—as racist as their U.S. counterparts—could care less about the corpses of a few more thousand poor workers.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is using the tragedy to build a coalition with Japan, Australia and India, mainly as a future force against the Chinese bosses. And India is using it to expand its naval operation throughout South Asia. So even during such a tragedy, all the bosses are mainly concerned with their imperialist goals.

In essence, the overall culprit in the situation remains the racist profit system. The technology to detect tsunamis and avoid their devastation exists. But the social organization needed to do this does not. Right now, the U.S. is by far the richest and most powerful capitalist force on earth. Yet warfare and, at that, warfare for empire and world domination, is the only kind of intervention for which it can mobilize. After hearing of the tsunami, Bush promised \$15 million for disaster relief. When a U.N. official called him stingy, Bush found another \$25 million. Now he's all the way up to \$350 million and bragging about U.S. generosity. But this sick parody of "A Christmas Carol" stands in stark contrast to the expenses U.S. rulers really consider important:

- The Pentagon spent \$425 billion in 2004 on war and war preparations.
- The cost of Bush's current Iraq war is approaching \$150 billion.
- The U.S. military feeds, clothes, houses, and provides sanitation and health care for 1,246,000 active duty troops.
- In Bush, Sr.'s Desert Storm I, the Pentagon supported 750,000 troops in the middle of the desert for months.
- The U.S. has an extensive network of seismic sensors to catch nuclear rivals, but it isn't set up to warn of natural disasters.

You get the picture: billions to conquer the world, and chump change for the victims of preventable disaster.

The real disaster is the profit system. It's been a long time since the fundamental conflict in society was between humanity and nature. Capitalism continues to make war and tsunami-like devastation inevitable. Workers need the social tsunami of communist revolution. It will take many years of patient, hard groundwork to develop. But it is an inevitable in its own way as the change of seasons, and when our Party leads it, it will send the entire class of war-making profit moguls to a well-deserved grave.☺

# “Dark Night Shall Have its End”

—Message of encouragement from Chinese Communist Party chairman Mao Zedong to U.S. Communist Party chairman William Z. Foster, in answer to Foster’s complaint that U.S. imperialism appeared indestructible.

*The struggle for state power is inseparable from the struggle between correct and incorrect ideas about how to win. keep, and consolidate it. The ideological struggle against revisionism — the ideas and practice of the class enemy within the communist movement — has taken place since the beginning of the struggle for proletarian revolution. Revisionism attempts to distort the revolutionary content of Marxism-Leninism. It assumes many forms; it seeks to ride the revolutionary tide of world history by appearing in increasingly militant disguise; but its counter-revolutionary essence remains the same.*

—From Road to Revolution III

Capitalism is proving every day that it can offer the world’s workers nothing but endless horrors. Its “triumph” brings imperialist war; mass, racist poverty; fascist Homeland Security and police terror; famine and “ethnic cleansing” genocide; and mind-numbing cultural degradation. Such is the legacy of the profit system, and it will continue until it is smashed by communist revolution. That is the main task for workers, soldiers, and students: to destroy the old order and create something new. The task was never easy, but today it is harder than ever. Why? Because of the cynicism and passivity resulting from the old communist movement’s collapse.

Nonetheless, we have every reason for revolutionary optimism. Our Party’s experience in the mass movement

shows that a growing number of workers and students are seeking answers. Their search creates greater potential for winning them to our line. Though we cannot “get rich quick,” what we do now—or what we fail to do—is more important than ever. We must boldly face the fascist onslaught with a vision of a communist future free from exploitation, racism and bosses’ war.

Lacking a center for the world communist movement, the international working class is suffering unprecedented poverty, hunger, war, disease, and racist oppression. The Jihadists in Iraq and Iran, bin Laden, the Taliban, Bush, the liberal Democrats—all represent one set of billionaires or another. These “alternatives”—be they reformist, nationalist, or openly fascist—have no solutions for us. The only solution to imperialist bloodbaths remains international communist revolution.

In the recent period, inner-Party struggle over reformism has intensified. This is a healthy, necessary development. From its origins in the Communist Manifesto through Lenin’s What Is To Be Done and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the communist movement has always advanced through the fight against reformism.

Known to communists as “revisionism,” reformism was the old movement’s Achilles’ Heel. The bosses love to gloat that communism was an illusion from the start and that it could never work. They have rewritten history to portray Stalin as worse than Hitler, and they continue to slander one of the greatest leaders in working-class

history. Despite all the advantages the capitalists enjoy today, the specter of communism still haunts them.

The political seeds of the old movement's collapse were already present in many of its leading documents and policies. These errors weakened and eventually reversed the achievements of monumental revolutionary organizations and unparalleled working-class heroism. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao all believed in socialism as a necessary halfway step on the road to communism. They all spoke on both sides of the question of nationalism. In *State and Revolution*, Lenin upheld the incorrect notion that the state apparatus should remain separate from the Party. All feared that communism was too advanced for workers and that the Party had to win them to something less, motivating through individual material incentives. Mao compounded this opportunism with his theory of "New Democracy," which twisted dialectics to justify alliances with "lesser-evil" bosses. In another example of opportunism, all of these leaders, to one extent or another, practiced the cult of the personality.

Our Party was born in the fight against this opportunism, and has continually deepened this struggle. A series of PLP documents, including *Road to Revolution I-IV*, *Revolutionaries Must Fight Nationalism*, *Reform and Revolution*, and others, were significant developments in communist ideology. The Party began in defiance of the CPUSA's opportunism. In the heat of struggle against the Vietnam War and racism, we came to understand by the 1960s that the Soviet Union had turned into its opposite—that is, it had become an imperialist power in competition with the U.S. Practice and further ideological struggle led the Party to conclude that all nationalism was poison. In the early 1980s, with *Road to Revolution IV*, PLP concluded that winning power—and keeping it to build a communist workers' dictatorship—hinged on bringing communist consciousness to hundreds of millions of workers and requiring a rapid destruction of the wage system replaced by distribution according to need.

These advances were vital ideological contributions to the arsenal of revolutionary communism. On the other hand, we haven't yet managed to replace the old movement as a beacon of hope for billions of the world's workers. In the present period, we have to struggle very hard just to make small advances. Each advance, from the sale of one more CHALLENGE to the recruitment of one more worker, has political significance and value. Each helps us progress toward a higher level of struggle.

If we are to accomplish our task, we must do better at taking advantage of the many existing opportunities.

It is imperative, however, that we approach this question dialectically. While there is plenty of room for improvement, and the quality of work falls far short of our potential, we also need to acknowledge that the current relationship of class forces is not in our favor. Reversing this relationship will take much time, effort, commitment, persistence, sweat, and blood.

A good part of our predicament is objective. The old movement's collapse is the worst defeat ever suffered by the working class. The recovery is taking generations. Stalin warned that a new Dark Age would follow the defeat of the Soviet Union. In many respects, the international working class now labors under heavier economic, political, ideological, and cultural burdens than at any time in its history.

But communists must never use "objective circumstances" to avoid criticism and self-criticism to correct errors and advance the revolutionary process.

Although we may remain small for some time, we must continue to sharpen the internal struggle against reformism/revisionism. Without this struggle, we can never hope to overcome the errors of the past. With it, we can begin to expand the

**'These advances [by PLP] were vital ideological contributions to the arsenal of revolutionary communism.'**

opportunities for growth in this period; we can hand over to our successors, and to their successors, a Party that will move mountains. New revolutionary conditions will emerge. Sharpening our line and practice will determine our future ability to make the most of these conditions.

The most significant error our Party made in the period following *Road to Revolution IV* was to underestimate the significance of the old movement's collapse. We correctly identified the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and China. We failed, however, to understand the devastating consequences that this development would have on the revolutionary process world wide and the new life it would breathe into U.S. imperialism.

In the decade and a half since the Soviet Union's voluntary break-up, U.S. rulers have received a blank check to wreak murder and mayhem in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. The end of socialism, and the subsequent (though possibly temporary) removal of the USSR as a key rival imperialist superpower, also enabled the U.S. rulers to dodge many of capitalism's inevitable contradictions. Even more critical, it has had a chilling effect on class

struggle all over the world.

In 1968, the world was a different place. United States imperialism was rocked by the Tet Offensive in Vietnam. Speculation in the gold market threatened to collapse the entire US financial system. This threat was temporarily contained when the US began to move off the gold standard and to end its troop buildup in Vietnam, but the economic forces that precipitated the 1968 crisis had not been eliminated. By late 1973, the US and Europe had entered the worst recession since the Great Depression. A crash in stock market prices proved larger than that of 1929. Industrial production and the rate of profit plummeted. Both unemployment and inflation soared into double digits. "Stagflation" was a form of capitalist crisis never seen before, and ultimately the "solution" to it produced the bank failures of the 1980s.

Yet in 1969, even as they stepped up their attacks on the working class at home and abroad, U.S. imperialists began negotiations to start trade with China. In 1972, the racist, mass murderer Nixon was feted in Peking as the deals were sealed. New markets for goods and investments were opened up. They helped cushion the crisis of the 1970s, even as the restoration of capitalism in China and Russia prepared the way for the renewed inter-imperialist rivalries of the current period.

At the height of the Vietnam War, capitalists around the world faced massive insurgencies by workers, students, and soldiers. Large sections of the US military were in open mutiny; rebellions led by black workers rocked every US city; the campuses were cauldrons of revolt; and a strike wave suggested that the working class could become unbeatable when led by revolutionary communist politics.

From 1968 to 1971, worker and student strikes rocked Europe, the United States and Latin America. In France, a student strike in May 1968 sparked a general strike that involved 10 million workers (two-thirds of the French working class) and halted all air traffic, railroads and ports. Workers and students marched through the streets of Paris singing the "Internationale." This worker-student strike paralyzed a modern imperialist economy and proved that the profit system's contradictions still have the potential to explode into revolutionary opportunity for a communist party with the correct line.

In Mexico, a June 1968 protest of high school students spread to the universities and to workers in the electrical, railroad, and petroleum industries and threatened to shut down the Olympics.

In November 1969, 143,000 General Electric workers were on strike as 500,000 anti-war demonstrators packed Washington, DC. PLP led thousands in a breakaway demonstration to the Labor Department to



**1968. Students take over Low Library at Columbia University**

build an anti-imperialist, worker-student alliance. Thousands took up the chant: "War-Maker, Strikebreaker—Smash GE!" In 1971, a wildcat strike by postal workers in New York City spread throughout the U.S. The entire postal system was crippled for a week. The strike was soon sold out, but it shook the bosses and gave the world a glimpse of workers' power.

These rebellions reflected 60 years of revolutionary practice, good and bad, inspired first by the Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions, and more recently by the Vietnamese resistance and the Cultural Revolution in China. Hundreds of millions of people were involved.

If the Party is going to further the historical struggle for communism, we must make a balanced, objective evaluation of the old movement's strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths enabled the working class to achieve monumental advances. The first proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, the Soviet-led fight against fascism in World War II, the Chinese Revolution, and the GPCR, along with the great anti-imperialist struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, gave hope to workers everywhere and showed that the oppressed could throw off the chains of their oppression. Failure to recognize the old movement's achievements is a dangerous error. Failure to learn from its errors and to correct them is equally grave.

Revisionism restored the profit system to the former Soviet Union and China. It turned Vietnam into a haven for capitalist investment. Nationalism transformed ghetto rebellions into electoral campaigns for black mayors. These campaigns became breeding grounds for black cops and corporate executives. Pro-capitalist union leaders and patriotic class collaboration destroyed the

once-mighty strike movement.

Reagan ushered in the modern period of fascism when he fired striking air traffic controllers in 1981 and replaced them with scabs. Clinton picked up where Reagan left off by abolishing welfare, instituting "Workfare" as a form of slave labor, forcing former welfare recipients to replace unionized workers and "earn" their old welfare checks.

The damage to workers' struggles appears even greater when viewed in a global context. Inter-imperialist rivalry is currently the main source of international conflict. From the European Union to the Middle East to China, the main opposition to U.S. imperialism has a reactionary, nationalist, and/or religious character.

The resistance to the U.S. rulers' occupation of Iraq is a case in point. There is no "good" side here, only a choice among thieves and murderers: Sunni bosses loyal to Saddam Hussein's old state apparatus; Shia clerics who want their cut of Iraqi oil profits and are more or less in league with Iranian oil mullahs; the U.S. itself; or its Russian, French, German, and Chinese capitalist rivals.

Media polls suggest that Osama bin Laden enjoys some support among oppressed people around the world. But as CHALLENGE-DESAFIO has pointed out from the beginning, this former CIA agent represents a wing of Saudi bosses who want to oust Exxon-Mobil and grab Saudi oil profits for themselves. A bin Laden-led Persian Gulf would only give the oppressed Arab masses a new master to enslave them in the same old chains.

This is fundamentally different from the situation in Vietnam, when communists led the resistance to U.S. imperialism. For all the revisionist weaknesses that eventually defeated them, they rightly inspired millions around the world. The same cannot be said of the current war in Iraq or of bin Laden. The old movement's fatal mistake of promoting "the lesser of two evils" has proven more deadly than ever.

Our seriously flawed estimate of the consequences resulting from the old movement's collapse led to economism<sup>1</sup> and reformism in our press and internal documents. Throughout the 1990s, we frequently wrote about economic upheavals like the collapse of the "Asian Tigers" and the increasing dilemma of capitalist overproduction. Even though we paid lip service to the primacy of politics over economics, these articles emphasized the growing crisis faced by U.S. imperialism

and implied that the U.S. economy might collapse of its own accord. We suggested that the Asian economies were doomed and that the U.S. economy could soon follow them. We were wrong. We placed mechanical economic relations above political relations between classes.

Overproduction is an absolute, inevitable characteristic of the profit system. But our suggestion that overproduction by itself would lead to an irreversible crisis was far off the mark.

As has been shown many times, the bosses can survive any crisis, war, depression, nuclear "holocaust," and more. What they cannot survive is communist revolution. Absent an imperialist rival that can challenge them militarily, or an aroused communist-led working class, U.S. imperialists have managed to contain all of their economic problems and stay on top. This doesn't mean that their problems aren't serious and that they won't ultimately become unmanageable. But the rulers are managing them at the moment, and they are able to do so mainly off the backs of a politically weakened

working class. In *What Is To Be Done*, Lenin exposes the bankruptcy of the idea that the economic struggle will "spontaneously" assume a political character. In other words, worsening economic conditions do not "spontaneously" generate revolutionary consciousness among workers. That requires a

revolutionary Party with a mass base. If it were otherwise, most of the world would already be in the throes of revolution.

While we have always opposed this deviation in theory, opposing it in practice isn't so easy. In our press, this deviation frequently takes the form of one-sided articles emphasizing the immediate economic or reform struggle, with the ever-present paragraph at the end calling for communist revolution. If only things were so simple!

Both the deviation and the correction begin with the Party leadership. The mere existence of *Road to Revolution IV*, however vital it may be, doesn't guarantee immunity from reformism. In fact, seen with 20-plus years of hindsight, *RRIV* only scratched the surface in helping us understand and prepare ideologically for the consequences of the old movement's defeat.

Reality always outstrips consciousness. As we have

**'The life-and-death struggle against reformism/revisionism will be with us as long as social classes continue to exist.'**

said many times, we can't cry over spilt milk. The life-and-death struggle against reformism/revisionism will be with us as long as social classes continue to exist. Mao's prediction about "10,000 years" of struggle after the seizure of power doesn't seem so far-fetched.

The struggle to sharpen CHALLENGE articles, so that the relevant communist points emerge clearly from the start, is only a first step. It's essential to draw correct revolutionary lessons about battles over wages, schools, police brutality, rotten medical care, the bosses' electoral circus, cultural questions, or any other issue that affects workers. But we're after something even more profound.

The fight for communism is, more than anything, a fight to make politics primary. This was the main lesson of the Cultural Revolution in China. Although the Chinese communists ended up with the wrong politics, their insight represented a vital advance, which we are still struggling to absorb. Making politics primary is much more than pointing out that the police can never serve the working class under capitalism, or that imperialism makes war inevitable, or that the profit system couldn't exist without racism. These are all crucial points, and we must struggle in our press and our daily political work to make them skillfully and persuasively.

But the fight to make communist politics primary has another, deeper level. It lies at the crossroads of ideology, philosophy, and psychology. It is a fight against idealism, subjectivity, mechanical thinking, and one-sidedness—in other words, a fight for militant, revolutionary dialectics. Understanding dialectics requires practice, class struggle, and a simultaneous battle against all of the system's rotten "isms." Chief among these is individualism. As Jailbreak, the Party's attempt to popularize dialectics, says from the start, "The worst jail is the mental one you don't recognize."

Individualism is the antithesis of objectivity and working class consciousness. The rulers promote it from the time children are in the womb. The communist principle of Democratic Centralism reflects the need to destroy and replace individualism with a completely different world outlook. The working class needs to develop a sophisticated understanding of grand political questions. Lenin wrote that a baker should be able to analyze the affairs of state. But this knowledge is useless if workers aren't won to replace individualism with commitment to their class.

Veteran PLPers have a certain advantage. They joined the movement when hundreds of millions of people worldwide were engaged in militant class struggle. At the height of the Vietnam War and the GPCR, the contrast between capitalist individualism and communist theory and practice was far clearer than it is today.

Those who participated in these movements learned

that the working class can accomplish monumental tasks, but only when people overcome the individualist, selfish attitudes and habits we are taught under capitalism. In the USSR of the '30s and 40's millions learned the collectivism which is part of working-class consciousness, learned it from political struggle, from collective labor, and from an educational system that taught these ideas.

In *The Soviet Power*, Hewlett Johnson, the "Red" Dean of Canterbury, wrote about the U.S.S.R. prior to World War II: "From the tenderest years the Soviet child is taught to work with others at useful and corporate tasks. Soviet children, like English children, for instance, will play with cubes. But Soviet cubes or bricks will often and purposefully be too large for a single child to handle. He will call a companion, and together they will build their house of cubes. Co-operation becomes instinctive" (P.p. 198-9). The power of this collectivism showed up in the huge relocation of Soviet industry behind the Ural Mountains that was carried out to keep it from falling into the hands of the Nazis in 1941. While the Nazi armies advanced, 1500 complete factories and over 2 million workers were packed onto trains and boats, moved 1000 miles, and started making tanks and planes again in less than three months, while workers lived in tents and dugouts. This enormous job, carried out under horrendous conditions but essential for the Soviet victory over the Nazis, could not have been carried out by people whose outlook was "me first."

In this seemingly insignificant detail of children carrying cubes, one can measure the impact of the defeat our class has suffered. Our Party believes in making class-consciousness "instinctive," but wishful thinking won't make it so. Class-consciousness can replace individualism only after generations of the sharpest class struggle and communist state power. Regardless of its political shortcomings, Soviet education in the 1930s was on to something crucial with those cubes and bricks. State power is a powerful trump.

While we lack that trump, we shouldn't bemoan our fate. Our job is to play the hand we've been dealt and improve it for those who will follow us. We live in a culture infested with reformism, subjectivity, and individualism. Every member and leader of our Party suffers from these diseases. On the other hand, we have powerful tools at our disposal, which, if used correctly, can help us advance.

First, we have the Party and its line. The Party stands for communist revolution. The Party stands for class-consciousness, objectivity, and dialectics. The Party teaches us to serve the working class rather than ourselves. To act on this line, to overcome our errors and bourgeois tendencies, represents the work of several





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lifetimes, especially in an era with a low level of class struggle. But the line remains a beacon to keep in sight at all times.

Second, we have the strategy of building a base in the industrial working class and among working-class soldiers and sailors. We have a lot to offer the workers in terms of political understanding. The tireless struggle to build unbreakable personal and political ties with workers and others is more crucial than ever in the present period. Even when the relationship of forces in class struggle tilts to favor communists, the Party will always need these ties. However, in today's political climate, where rotten capitalist ideas hold sway 24/7 and 365 days a year, they constitute our highest priority. If we are to convince workers that we have the answer, then we must prove to them that communists are on their side. Only deep personal friendships developed over a long time and tested in all kinds of struggle, both among friends and against the class enemy, can get the job done. This is a demanding, labor-intensive process. But it is feasible.

At the same time, we need to understand that it's a

two-way street—that the workers have a lot to offer us, sometimes more than we have to offer them. By having confidence in the working class, and the patience to eventually win masses to the Party, we can build unbreakable ties with many workers, on many levels. Those ties will not only sustain us through hard times, but will also secure the Party against fascist terror. Ultimately, they will destroy imperialism and the old capitalist order. Relying on the workers—and organizing our lives around those we are trying to win—will make us a stronger Party. We can't hope to win any other way.

Despite everything now stacked against us, we can see glimmers of real hope every day. Many of our members try hard to carry out the line and have earned the trust and confidence of their co-workers. One comrade in a school manages to distribute 300 CHALLENGES per issue and has also earned a well-deserved reputation as an excellent teacher. This example and others like it serve as models of communist cadre. And among the masses, we all know people who in their daily lives are communists at heart in search of a Party.

Toward the end of Michael Moore's movie *Fahrenheit 9/11*, a wounded U.S. soldier recuperating in a Veterans' hospital comments about his disillusionment with aspects of the political system. He had been a Republican all his life. Now he hates Bush and plans to make a lifetime commitment to the Democratic Party, which was the filmmaker's goal all along. Moore is a creature of the liberal imperialist establishment.

The Progressive Labor Party has a different goal. There are millions of people like this wounded soldier. They represent both an opportunity and a challenge for us, and they show why what we do—and what we don't do—will determine the future. As the Iraq war drags on with its horrific civilian casualties, many U.S. soldiers are beginning to question its motives. Some have begun to disobey orders. This is an important, positive development and an opportunity for our side. These disgruntled soldiers are potential Party members.

Hating Bush is good. But it's not enough, and if it leads only to supporting the liberal Democrats, then U.S. capitalism will still have a vigorous future. There's another scenario. The soldier in *Fahrenheit 9/11* and the millions he symbolizes can be won away from the prison of capitalist thinking, which limits workers' choice to the Democrats and their "lesser-evil" lies and genocide. Only our Party's practice in word and deed can bring about this development.

Recognizing the general existence of opportunity is one thing. Acting on it in specific instances is another. On this front, serious self-criticism is in order. In the spring of 2004, when "revelations" about U.S. military personnel's torture of Iraqi prisoners were making headlines, the rulers handed us a magnificent opportunity to organize

for our line. Only the PLP could show that torture and atrocity are synonymous with imperialist war, that they have always occurred in bosses' wars, that mass terror of civilian populations is a strategic goal of imperialist war makers, and that torture and terror have accompanied U.S. capitalism since its inception.

How would we grade our response to this opportunity? Well, we wrote some articles about torture in CHALLENGE. The Party leadership tried to stimulate some action and struggle, linking torture in Iraq to the systematic racist torture of working class prisoners in U.S. jails. A few comrades responded, some in an exemplary manner. But on the whole, the effort and results fell far short of our potential. Even if we are limited by objective conditions, we didn't approach our potential in this case.

Communist criticism and self-criticism looks for correction, not confession or revenge. We must take the same clear-headed, objective approach to our own shortcomings that we take toward the difficult situation we will face for the foreseeable future. The situation is hard, but it offers opportunity for us to grow in numbers and strength. We are trying to do the right thing, but we have serious weaknesses, and we must struggle constructively with each other to recognize and rectify them.

Industrial workers, in and out of uniform, remain the cornerstone of our revolutionary strategy. Throughout our Party's history, we have seen the correctness of this strategy confirmed, even in the bleakest periods. Our comrade's recent success in the D.C. bus drivers' union struggle is the latest case in point. In a microcosm, it contains all the lessons we must absorb to move forward. This success required decades of day-to-day struggle and basebuilding. It involved the consistent mass sale of CHALLENGE. It included the patient, principled fight against reformism, both among the workers and within us. And it's far from over. New opportunities and dangers—new realities and new possibilities—are already arising out of the present situation. The general lesson of this experience is that we must continue to fight for more revolutionary practice in all mass organizations where we have members, particularly in the shops and military.

The Party press is another area in which we need to

make significant improvement. As conditions sharpen and the Liberal Establishment implements its plans for police state fascism, the importance of CHALLENGE will increase, both as a mass organizer and as a vehicle for internal Party communication.<sup>2</sup> At the moment, sales are modest. The hand-to-hand distribution of CHALLENGE and the development of networks of CHALLENGE reader-sellers, the so-called "concentric circles" of PLP loyalists, remain crucial to our basebuilding strategy. Increasing these sales and improving the quality and communist content of CHALLENGE articles are intimately related.

The presently dormant state of class struggle won't last forever. World War I gave birth to the Bolshevik Revolution; World War II gave rise to the Chinese revolution. If war is a prerequisite for communist revolution, there's plenty of it coming our way, with each one looming bigger and deadlier than the last. The capitalists will do their part.

In particular, U.S. imperialism must continue its military adventures. Other imperialists will find a way to challenge it. Rebellion within the rulers' armed forces will increase. Workers on the home front will not sit still indefinitely while the rulers fortify their fascist police state. These contradictions may take many years to reach a full head of steam. But at some stage, the pace will quicken qualitatively.

Opportunities abound, even today. The rulers are rightly

worried about motivating impoverished and oppressed workers to join the military and die for U.S. imperialism. Winning black and latin soldiers to sacrifice their lives for this rotten system remains as big a contradiction as ever, especially in the wake of Bush's Iraq fiasco, which has demoralized the military. Perhaps more time will be necessary before the military erupts into open rebellion, but this demoralization doesn't favor the imperialists. It represents another opportunity for us.

The economy gives us further opportunity. "Recovery" is a relative term.

The present "recovery," if it deserves the name, is occurring on the collective back of the working class. The liberal agenda for fascism and war will further grind down workers' living conditions. As retirements vanish, medical care worsens, schools deteriorate, housing collapses, and racist police atrocities mount, workers will eventually become more militant. Cynicism and passivity will give way to anger. Once this transformation occurs,

**Opportunities abound, even today.  
The rulers are rightly worried  
about motivating impoverished  
and oppressed workers to join the  
military and die for U.S.  
imperialism.**

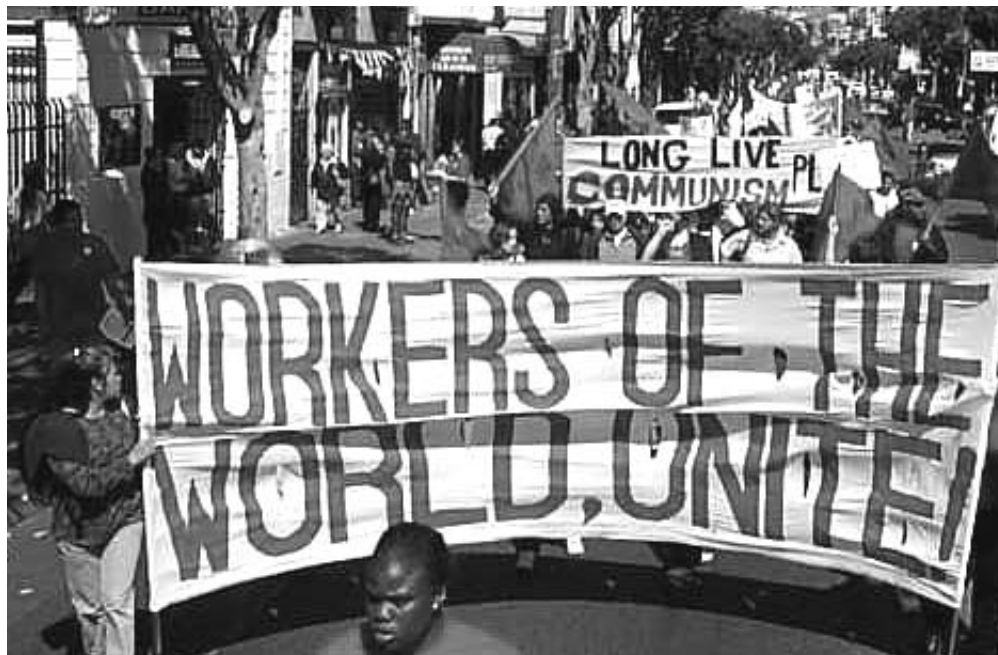
our communist practice today will determine our potential.

We have an immense responsibility. The future of class struggle and hence of humanity depends on workers' political activity, both in the shop and on the battlefield. The political line of the working class will come from one of two sources: capitalists or communists. The torture of Iraqi prisoners offers a case in point. The liberal-capitalist line points to Bush as the enemy and offers liberal Democrats as Plan B. The communist line takes a class position on imperialist war and calls for revolution. There is a world of difference, just as there is a world of difference between lines on the most modest of reform struggles.

Our responsibility is to make this difference. If we don't, workers will remain imprisoned in the enemy's fortress. If we do, the working class will finally break out to create a communist society, no matter how long or arduous the road to it may be.

The international mass protests in 2003 against the invasion of Iraq should be viewed as straws in the wind showing the potential for a mass movement. They died out because the protestors couldn't see a political alternative beyond the immediate protest. When the war began despite their efforts, they were demoralized. Even so, we should view this unrest and the mounting worldwide turmoil that will accompany U.S. rulers' coming wars as a challenge. With a sharpened internal struggle against reformism, we can train ourselves to carry out this all-important assignment.

The international character of these protests should confirm the correctness of our commitment to build an international PLP. The profit system's essential contradictions are universal and absolute in every corner of the world. The Party's ability to grow flows from these contradictions and from our practice. Inter-imperialist rivalries and wars will increase our potential for growth in every country where we function, and will generate new possibilities for building the PLP in countries where our organization doesn't yet exist.



Each Party member is capable of building a base and becoming a leader, both in the Party and within the mass movement. Each Party club can recruit members, spread CHALLENGE and our ideas, and pick a fight against the racist bosses. No amount of fascist repression, imperialist war, or reformism within our own ranks can erase the historic need of the international working class to make communist revolution. Marx wrote that every problem creates at least the elements of its solution.

The "Dark Age" won't last forever. PLP represents the future. For all our shortcomings, despite the very difficult period we are facing, many opportunities exist. We can do a lot better. By learning to diagnose the disease of reformism and the extent to which we still suffer from it, we can also learn to cure it. The task is arduous and will remain all-consuming through generations of struggle, but history and the working class demand nothing less of us. PLP retains the potential to become the midwife of a new humanity.

**1 The opportunist belief that economic conditions spontaneously generate revolutionary political consciousness.**

**2 See *What Is To Be Done?* on the role of the Party press in periods of intense repression.**

# STATE POWER

## UNDER CAPITALISM ENFORCES PROFIT SYSTEM

No matter who wins the 2004 electoral circus, the United States is and will remain a class dictatorship. Under the profit system, political parties exist for two primary reasons: first, to serve individual groups of bosses pursuing their particular profit goals; and second, to mislead workers into backing these profit goals with the illusion that the right to cast a ballot makes the U.S. a democracy.

Many people correctly saw through the crude, racist swindle that enabled Bush, Jr. to steal the White House in 2000 by denying black workers the right to vote in Florida. But this isn't the main reason the present government is a dictatorship. Swindles and voting fraud are as American as apple pie. In 1960, the Democrat John Kennedy beat Nixon because Chicago's Democratic political machine handed him the Illinois electoral vote by counting the votes of dead people.

The main lesson for workers in this election is the nature of state power in a class society. By "state," communists mean the entire government apparatus that enables the bosses to rule at the federal, state and local level. It includes all three so-called "branches" of government on each level. Every elected official, from Bush to the mayor of the tiniest town, every legislative body, from the U.S. Senate down to the smallest state legislature all belong to it. So do all four branches of the military and every cop, judge and immigration officer.

The capitalist state apparatus exists to prolong and protect the profit system, regardless of the party in power at any given moment. The state in this sense was born long ago, as a product of society's first historical division into antagonistic social classes. Under slavery, the state existed to protect the privileges of the slave-owning class. Under feudalism, it served kings and lords, helping them rule over serfs and bondsmen. Now, under capitalism, it protects the profits and private property of the wealthiest bosses, primarily against the working class, but also against real and potential rivals to U.S.

imperialism.

The capitalist state therefore reflects the essential class violence of the system itself. This is perhaps less obvious today in a temporary period of relatively low class struggle, but even under present conditions, we see the class role of the police, for example in their systematic racist war of terror against workers living in the most oppressed sections of U.S. cities. The moment class struggle sharpens, the role of the police becomes crystal clear, as they protect bosses' interests at gunpoint, shooting workers, protecting scabs and enforcing back-to-work court injunctions.

A classic recent example of the state's role in class struggle was the decision by the Republican president Reagan to fire striking air traffic controllers in 1981. This fascistic action set the tone for the increasingly virulent anti-worker policies the bosses have been implementing ever since. The Democrat Clinton followed suit with his racist "welfare reform," which was a thinly disguised union-busting, slave labor scheme.

The entire ruling class now agrees with the need to cloak its post-9/11 moves toward a police state in the form of "anti-terror" measures. Anti-Bush squawking from the Democrats reflects their discontent over Ashcroft's clumsy, inept tactics rather than over goals. The real purpose of these measures is to discipline our class, preparing it for the sacrifice in blood and living conditions that the rulers' long-range war plans will require. All the rulers agree on this question.

In foreign policy, none of the big bosses in any significant section of the Republican or Democratic parties disputes the U.S. imperialism's need to rule the world by force, to control the flow and pricing of all major sources of petroleum, particularly in the Persian Gulf, or to prevent the rise of serious imperialist rivals in Asia or Europe. The rulers differ only on methods and approach (see article on page 1 on the tactical differences between Kerry and Bush).

The post-World War II history of U.S. Middle Eastern policy reflects the consistency of the class role the bosses' state apparatus has played on this issue.

Immediately after World War II, key U.S. advisor George Kennan warned the Democratic Truman administration that control of Middle Eastern oil must become and remain an absolute priority for Washington and Wall Street.

The Republican Eisenhower organized a coup to overthrow a nationalist government in oil-rich Iran and replace it with the nazi-loving, pro-U.S. Shah. Eisenhower also forced British, French and Israeli bosses to back down when their 1956 invasion of the Suez Canal threatened potential U.S. hegemony in the Middle East.

After the Israeli fascists proved the strength of their military in the 1967 Six Day War, every U.S. president from Johnson through Bush Jr. has armed Israel to the teeth and given it the assignment of serving as U.S. imperialism's local gunslinger.

In 1979, when a nationalist-Islamic fundamentalist uprising overthrew the Shah, Democrat Jimmy Carter announced the "Carter Doctrine," which stated that the U.S. would consider any attempt to wrest control of Persian Gulf oil from U.S. companies as a cause for war. Every U.S. president since then has followed this strategic line. The cost in human life has been staggering. The U.S. cynically backed both sides in the murderous 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. Bush, Sr.'s 1991 Desert Storm in Iraq slaughtered hundreds of thousands. A million people, mostly young Iraqi children, died in the wake of Clinton's brutal sanctions and bombings. And now the Bush-Cheney war is adding to the toll.

As CHALLENGE has often said, the biggest mistake workers can make is to choose among supposed "lesser evils" under capitalism. Understanding the class nature of the state helps avoid this error. As long as classes exist, a state apparatus will exist, and its role will be to keep one class in power to rule over the class that directly antagonizes and threatens it.

Communists have an alternative to the bosses' dictatorship: the Dictatorship of the Working Class (or Dictatorship of the Proletariat). But the working class cannot seize political power by voting for it. Only a prolonged, violent revolution supported by communist workers and led by a communist party can achieve this goal. History shows that even when the first stage of the goal is achieved, keeping power and building communism are even harder than the seizure of power. Nonetheless, the future of humanity and the survival of the working class demand nothing less.

These are the goals our Party expects to win, regardless of all obstacles and of the time needed to win

them. As the rulers' presidential circus unfolds, workers can take an important step in the right direction by shedding their illusions about capitalist elections and the capitalist state and by joining with the IKKPLP to sharpen the class struggle and carry our class forward on the long, violent and inevitably victorious road to revolution.

(Another article will explore the ideological arms of the capitalist state apparatus and how the working class and PLP can fight them.)

## **RACIST IDEOLOGY A BOSSES' CRUCIAL WEAPON TO HOLD STATE POWER**

Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong wrote, "Political power flows from the barrel of a gun." He was referring to the relationship between political authority and violence in class society. But the bosses cannot rule through violence alone. They also need a system of ideas and beliefs to support their oppressive system. The exercise of naked force is a last resort, and they use it ruthlessly when they need it. But they prefer to govern through the force of persuasion, by convincing workers and others that the profit system represents the best of all possible worlds and that revolution is impossible.

The bosses' ideology is tightly bonded to their state apparatus. The state extends far beyond the official organs of government, like the presidency, the Congress, the military, the courts, the cops, etc. It also includes major foundations, universities, media chains, etc., all linked to the rulers' various factions. The processes involved are far too numerous and complex for us to describe in one article. They are easier to understand if we examine specific examples. Here we will offer one related to racism.

Racism is the rulers' bread and butter. It ensures the super-profits their economic system demands. But they also need a body of ideas and beliefs to justify these super-profits. Over the last several decades, the major universities, foundations, think tanks, and the government have all collaborated to transform racist ideology into policy. Here are a few examples:

- In 1969, Harvard's Review of Education published an article by Arthur Jensen, a professor of educational psychology. Relying on long discredited "evidence," he argued that the federal government should stop funding educational programs in school districts with large numbers of black children, because black people in general had fewer "intelligence genes" than whites, and no amount of social engineering could alter the supposedly biological nature of intelligence. Anyone could see that this racist filth was no different from Nazi eugenics. Nonetheless, every establishment publication,

including the New York Times, trumpeted Jensen's "research" as though it were a groundbreaking discovery. Republican President Nixon used it to justify drastic education budget cuts, which helped fund U.S. imperialism's raging war of genocide in Vietnam.

•Another Harvard professor, Daniel P. Moynihan, who later became the liberal Democratic Senator from NY, commented that the "winds of Jensen [were] gusting with gale force" in Washington. Already established as a prominent racist theorist, he argued that the problems of the poorest black workers were not due to racist oppression, but to the "matriarchal" structure of the black family. Moynihan supported Nixon's budget cuts, including a wage freeze in the early 1970s.

•Jensen inspired a host of imitators. Richard Herrnstein, who chaired the Harvard Psychology Department, weighed in with a series of articles and books claiming that "socioeconomic status" was genetically determined. These lies helped Nixon's successors, both Democrat and Republican, slash social services and wages. Before his death, Herrnstein teamed up with still another Harvard storm trooper, Charles Murray, to publish *The Bell Curve*, which launched another salvo of racist genetic venom.

•From 1975 until today, a Harvard entomologist (i.e. ant specialist) named E.O. Wilson has made a fortune with his theory of "Sociobiology." He says that all of society and all human behavior, from financial success to wars of conquest, is in the genes. When *Sociobiology* was first published, Wilson received vast media coverage, including cover stories in all the big weeklies, TV appearances, favorable New York Times reviews and was awarded a Pulitzer Prize.

The practical consequences of the policies that flowed from Jensen-Herrnstein-Murray-Wilson & Co., is racist misery for tens of millions of workers. The most tangible are the ongoing effects of social programs wiped out by the liberal Democrat Clinton. In one stroke, Clinton erased welfare, a process begun by Reagan, and replaced it with a racist scheme of slave-labor scabbing known as "Workfare." Workfare replaced masses of laid-off, unionized municipal workers with unemployed workers on welfare. They were forced to accept their welfare checks for jobs that once paid union wages and benefits. This served to grind down even further the wages, benefits, and working conditions of the entire working class. Bush has just stepped up those attacks.

We can draw several important conclusions about the nature of the rulers' state apparatus and the ideology that supports its dictatorship over workers:

Regardless of the party in the White House, the bosses' social and economic policies are racist to the core.

An onslaught of racist theorizing paves the way for racist policies.

The "theorists" are often linked to Harvard or other elite universities, and usually begins in the comfort of a research lab, seminar room, or the halls of a think-tank like the Brookings Institution.

The big guns of the capitalist media arsenal popularize racist theories by blasting them into newspapers and magazines and over the airwaves.

Understanding the class nature of the state requires that we also understand the class nature of all the major institutions in society and the complex relationship between them and the government.

Communists must expose this relationship and the

racist, anti-working class ideas and policies the bosses need to maintain political power and maximum profits. PLP's goal is to lead hundreds of millions of workers to smash the boss's state and replace it with the revolutionary, communist

***Understanding the class nature of the state requires that we also understand the class nature of all the major institutions in society and the complex relationship between them and the government.***

dictatorship of the working class. Clarifying the class nature of the state can become an unbeatable weapon once it has been grasped by the working class.

## **CRIMINAL HUNTINGTON JUSTIFIES**

### **U.S. BOSSES' WARS**

The long, shameful career of Samuel P. Huntington illustrates the close link between the government, major universities and the think-tanks and foundations that define and justify U.S. bosses wars to maintain their world domination.

Huntington is the Weatherhead University Professor at Harvard, where he directs the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies and chairs the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. The Olin Foundation reflects the views of the more openly right-wing section of U.S. bosses, but it still camps under the tent of the dominant liberal establishment. Every member of the

Harvard Corporation belongs to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) or the Brookings Institution, both leading liberal think-tanks.

Huntington considers himself an "old-fashioned" Democrat. He plans to vote for Kerry and was "dead-set" against Bush, Jr.'s Iraq adventure. (New York Times Magazine, 5/2/04)

Although Huntington may disapprove of the current White House tactics for securing Persian Gulf oil, nonetheless he's a leader among academics who rationalize U.S. rulers' goals and the racist lies that disguise them in order to validate the wars needed to carry them out. In 1993, he published an article in the CFR's magazine *Foreign Affairs*, entitled "The Clash of Civilizations." The phrase caught fire. Actually, Huntington didn't invent it; he stole it from a fascist British professor named Bernard Lewis, who had coined it in 1964.

### **A CALL FOR ALL-OUT WAR**

In Huntington's version of this pseudo-theory, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the class struggle is now dead. Ideology is dying. In the future, "the great divisions among humankind will be cultural...the United States must forge alliances with similar cultures...With alien civilizations, the West must be accommodating if possible, but confrontational if necessary." (*Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993)

Huntington adds the usual academic disclaimers and pleas for tolerance, but his message is clear: get ready for all-out war between the "civilized" West and the "barbarians" in the Muslim and Arab world.

After 9/11, the "Clash of Civilizations" took on a life of its own, launching a jingoistic anti-Arab witch-hunt and paving the way for the U.S. military's wanton slaughter of Iraqi civilians, including thousands of children. Huntington's racist notion of "alien civilizations" had already helped dehumanize Arab people in the minds of U.S. workers, helping the liberal Democrat Clinton to carry out regular bombing raids over Iraq and a deadly sanctions policy that led directly to more than a million Iraqi deaths between 1992 and 2000, most of them young children.

The Hitlerite ravings of this prominent professor are used to mask inter-imperialist oil rivalry as a "conflict among cultures," first to the limited audience of think-tank and university specialists and then to the mass media. After Huntington had published his *Foreign Affairs* article, the process almost duplicated the popularization in the late 1960s and early '70s of Arthur Jensen's racist claims about the "genetic inferiority" of black workers. (See CHALLENGE, 9/22)

The article became a book, entitled "The Clash of

Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order." More importantly, the networks and print media launched a mass campaign to spread Huntington's thesis. The usual "loyal opposition" debates took place, during which various liberal opponents had their chance to take issue with Huntington over details. However, in the end the deck had been stacked, and the norm had become — and remains today — the overwhelmingly racist characterization of Arab and Muslim peoples that fills the airwaves and the press. All this started in the pages of the Liberal Establishment's leading foreign policy journal.

### **THE CARTER DOCTRINE: WAR FOR OIL**

Huntington has also worked directly with the official state apparatus, always for Democratic administrations. Under Jimmy Carter, he was Coordinator of Security Planning at the National Security Council, serving under Zbigniew Brzezinski, another academic (Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins), whose recent "The Grand Chessboard" gave U.S. bosses their current blueprint for continuing world domination. Huntington and Brzezinski therefore played a key role in helping elaborate the "Carter Doctrine," announced in 1980, which commits the U.S. to wage war to prevent any "hostile power" from seizing Persian Gulf oil. This grand strategy continues today, as presidential policy from Bush, Sr. through Bush, Jr. demonstrates.

Huntington's contribution to U.S. imperialism's genocidal wars goes back to his 1957 book, "The Soldier and the State," complaining that U.S. society wasn't sufficiently militarized. He called for the U.S. to establish a global empire similar to the pre-Civil War Southern slavocracy. Within a few years, Huntington was tapped as a consultant to the U.S. State Department under President Lyndon Johnson. At the height of the Vietnam War, he reported that the only way to pacify Vietnam was a strong Vietnamese police force — i.e., homegrown fascism. It didn't work, and Huntington complained later that his advice hadn't been followed. The U.S. military adventure ended in a fiasco, but Huntington hasn't stopped trying — and the bosses haven't stopped listening. His 1968 "Political Order in Changing Societies," another rant about the need for social order, still appears on college reading lists as a "classic" theory of "nation-building." His 1975 opus, "The Crisis of Democracy," which laments the dangers of "excess" democracy, objectively paved the way for the Hart-Rudman commission's current strategy for turning the U.S. into a police state.

### **TRAVELING THE NAZI ROUTE**

Huntington has recently broadened his "clash of civilizations" poison to include an attack on immigrants

## **WORKERS VS. BOSSES: ONLY ONE CLASS CAN RULE**

within the U.S., particularly Hispanic workers. His new book, "Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity," blames Hispanic immigrants for "undermining" the greatness of the United States.

If this sounds familiar, it should. Huntington has invented nothing new here. The notion of "outsiders" and "aliens," from hostile "foreign" cultures and civilizations who "pollute" the supposed purity of a society follows the well-worn road traveled by Hitler and his Nazi gangsters. Huntington is merely their successor wrapped in red, white and blue.

But, as we have shown, he's hardly a lone fascist working in isolation. He occupies a place of honor in the most prestigious U.S. university. He publishes in U.S. imperialism's most influential foreign policy journal. He shuttles back and forth between his Ivy League ivory tower and the halls of government. The insidious message of his racist poison is packaged for mass consumption. He could not exist in this capacity without the full support of the rulers' state apparatus, which promotes him because he serves its most essential needs.

Huntington is a valuable case in point for communists to study and explain, because he is typical of the relationship among intellectuals, ideology, policy and the state under the profit system. Many others, including his

**"First, we must expose their [the ruling class] lies and show how these lies serve the bosses' class agenda.**

**Second, we must deepen our understanding of their relationship to the state and work to arm millions with this understanding."**

pal Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger (Brzezinski's Republican Tweedle-dum), could have served the purpose. Our task here is twofold. First, we must expose their lies and show how these lies serve the bosses' class agenda. Second, we must deepen our understanding of their relationship to the state and work to arm millions with this understanding. In the process, we will advance our ability to build a Party that can organize workers to smash this state and the ruling class that will wield it as a weapon against us until we do so.

The state as an instrument of class rule came into existence with the rise of social classes. It will continue to exist as long as they do, because classes reflect a society based on antagonism and therefore the need for organized violence to maintain the ruling class in power. The triumph of communism will also require a state. (The abolition of classes altogether is a topic for future discussion.)

The revolutionary dictatorship that will enable workers to rule society will be a state of a thoroughly different type from any other in history. Firstly, it will represent the dictatorship of the vast majority over a small minority. Secondly, it will eliminate exploitation and profit as the basis for social organization. Socialism in the former Soviet Union and China provided a glimpse of this state, but the communist parties that led those societies committed deadly political errors that transformed the burgeoning workers' dictatorship into its opposite.

The Progressive Labor Party's document, "Road to Revolution IV," summarizes them. The key error involved misunderstanding the crucial need to win workers to fight for communism and misleading them to fight instead for socialism, a halfway house in which revolutionary communist form disguised capitalist content. Now, even the pretense of communist form is long gone in Russia and modern China.

The great communist revolutionary Lenin set the tone for this error as it relates to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In his classic work, "State and Revolution," he argued that the state and the communist party should remain two separate entities. Another great revolutionary, Mao Zedong, compounded the error and took it one step further to the right, in his essay "On New Democracy." Where Lenin had argued that the state and the Party were separate, implying therefore that non-communists could participate in a communist state apparatus, Mao openly advocated the concept of the state as an alliance between communists and "progressive" capitalist forces. Antagonistic classes cannot share power. History has exposed the tragic bankruptcy of these positions. Lenin and Mao are titanic figures in the history of our movement, and we say that we stand on their shoulders. But their theory of the state was wrong, and it led to political practices that destroyed the old communist movement and caused our class to suffer the worst defeat in its history. This was not their purpose, but it was the result — we must face facts.

We need to fight for something different. The



Progressive Labor Party believes that the overwhelming majority of the world's workers can eventually be won to fight for a communist dictatorship of the proletariat. This will be a long, very difficult process, but it is the only goal worthy of a communist party. Anything less will merely prolong the horrors of the profit system. We must break thoroughly with the fatal illusion that society should be ruled by any other organization than the Party. The working class must not entrust the building of its own society to non-communists. "Democracy" under the profit system permits parties to exist for two reasons: to represent tactical camps among the bosses and to delude workers into marching behind the banners of one or another.

Today, tomorrow, forever, in good times and bad, weak or strong, we hold only one banner: the red flag; we fight for only one goal: communism; and we envision only one Party as the instrument of the working class's dictatorship, composed of hundreds of millions of workers.

We understand the grueling, long-range character of the course this grand strategy implies. History has shown that the dictatorship of the proletariat is easier to achieve than to maintain and preserve. It has also shown that the world's bosses will stop at nothing to strangle a fledgling communist state in the cradle. After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, every participant in World War I, including the bitterest of capitalist enemies, united to send troops to crush the new Soviet Union, which had freed one-sixth of the world from capitalism. This action failed, but it cost the lives of seven million Soviet soldiers and civilians. Barely a generation later, the imperialists then allowed the defeated German bosses to rearm, giving Hitler the special assignment of wiping out Soviet socialism. Hitler also failed, but not until his hordes had murdered tens of millions more.

We should expect no less brutal a response once we or our successors succeed in establishing a communist state anywhere. When conditions eventually ripen for a revolutionary seizure of power in the United States or any part of the world, we can assume that the process will follow the massive destruction of major warfare, including armed struggle in the region where the

revolution is occurring. We can also assume that other imperialists — Chinese, Russian, European, Japanese — will imitate the capitalists after World War I and the bosses who backed Hitler against the Soviet Union in World War II.

History also shows that the working class can take anything the murderous bosses dish out. The main danger comes from within, in the form of political and ideological concessions to capitalist values that in turn lead to practical betrayals, often despite the best of intentions. The only guarantee against this disaster is a

Party that wins many millions of workers to join it and build communism. This is the core of the communist state apparatus.

In other words, our class here and worldwide should expect a very long-range future of sharpening and widening struggle. The transfer of power from the bosses to our class will take many years and much blood and sweat. We must never retreat on the principle of working-class dictatorship

of, for, and by communists. This lesson has cost too many working-class lives for us to abandon it now or at any time in the future. It's a hard lesson, but it holds the key to the future of the working class and humanity.☺

**We understand the grueling, long-range character of the course this grand strategy implies. History has shown that the dictatorship of the proletariat is easier to achieve than to maintain and preserve.**

# WHO RULES

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# THE UNITED STATES?



As the push to the 2004 election has developed, newspapers have filled with attacks on the Bush administration and Wall Street. Martha Stewart is on trial, so are the bosses of Enron, and even some drug companies are in the hot seat. Dick Cheney's Halliburton is being investigated and charged with cheating. And liberal politicians, labor leaders, and anti-war activists tell workers and students to vote—for Dean, for Kerry, for “anybody but Bush”—in order to exercise their power against the war-mongering Republicans. This call must be seen for what it is—a deadly illusion, aimed at winning workers to patriotism, at winning us to die for US imperialism.

Real power in the US lies in a ruling class centered in finance capital, which in this period is becoming increasingly concentrated and centralized. Inter-imperialist rivalries, not hawks in the White House, are the driving force behind war; and the increasing centralization of capital is a characteristic of fascism. We must understand the theory and the facts behind who rules the United States so we can expose both “liberal” and “conservative” bosses as enemies of the working class and build the revolutionary movement that will smash them all.

## Imperialism and finance capital

At the dawn of the twentieth century, capitalism entered the stage of imperialism, a stage characterized by the rise of monopolies, the power of finance capital, and the division of the world among the dominant powers. Finance capital, i.e. money in control of industry, is the dominant force in imperialism. And for most of its history, the institutional form of finance capital has been large banks that control industry by sitting on the boards of directors of large companies, by owning stock, and by refusing or agreeing to loan money. In this way finance capital works to transform

“scattered capitalists into a single collective capitalism.” Finance capital is also the driving force behind imperialism as it exports capital abroad in order to profit from every spot of the globe. In Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Lenin noted that by 1914 the imperialist powers had claimed and divided all areas of the world, often by seizing them in the form of colonies or through military occupations. As each company and each imperialist power sought increasing profits, the only change possible was re-division, either by economic or military power. But whatever the means, the goal for each imperialist is the same—to control more labor power, more resources, and more markets than its rivals—and war is an inevitable outcome of their competition.

In making this analysis, Lenin argued against others who interpreted the growth of finance capital differently. The German Social Democrat Kautsky, for example, argued that the growth of large banks and transnational corporations created not imperialism, but a form of capitalism he called “ultracapitalism.” According to Kautsky, ultracapitalists would not go to war, but would unite in the effort to spread exploitation around the world. In a sense this interpretation anticipated that of many in the anti-globalization movements who ignore inter-imperialist rivalries to focus on the expanding role of transnational corporations, a trend often identified with the power (often defined as “hegemony”) of the United States. Kautsky's argument, however, was proven false by the outbreak of World War I, which was a fight between the major imperialist powers over the control of Africa and the Middle East. Now, as in 1914, inter-imperialist rivalry is again the dominant contradiction in the world.

## Inter-imperialist Rivalries and the US Ruling Class, 1945-73 & 1973-1999

In the 1970s, PLP produced a pamphlet entitled "Who Rules the United States?" that analyzed the structure of US finance capital, the mechanisms through which it controlled the government, and the role of the media. The pamphlet identified the power blocs of industrial and retail firms led by the major banks. It focused on the Morgan and Rockefeller blocs that dominated US policy but also described the smaller regional blocs around Bank of America in California, the Mellon banks of Pittsburgh, First Chicago in the Midwest, and other regional banks. In essence we made concrete the power relations within US imperialism at that one particular moment.

The moment of this earlier analysis is important. The period between World War II and the US defeat in Vietnam was the peak of US economic power. It was a period in which the ruling class spoke in one voice. Local fractions of capital, local interests, and the demands of some segments of the working class could be accommodated by the major wing of finance capital which felt secure in its power in the world. But by 1970, the situation was beginning to change. During the late 1960s, the US ruling class was increasingly challenged by the growth of imperialist rivals in Europe and Asia.

Capital is not just a power bloc. It is a process, a social relationship, based in the extraction of surplus value from the working class and its realization through the sale of commodities. Both the profits of individual firms and the power of capitalists as a class depend on the ability to control labor, resources, and markets. By the late 1960s, Germany and Japan had recovered from the devastation of World War II and were becoming increasingly serious competitors with the US. As German, Japanese and other rival capitalists produced and sold more goods, the US share of world manufacturing and world trade began to fall. In the late 1960s, increased competition for markets produced the first US trade and balance of payments deficits since 1945. The United States found itself pressured economically by rival capitals when the central banks of France and Germany refused to hold the dollars that were flooding the world. They demanded payment in gold. The US responded by going off the gold standard

and letting the dollar float. The dollar became just another commodity traded in international markets.<sup>1</sup> The details of currency markets are complex, but the essence of this situation is simple: the US ruling class was forced to blink by its imperialist rivals. US capital was placed on the defensive and had to adapt its policies to meet the demands of imperialist challengers. This was a profound setback for a ruling class that only three decades earlier had announced the arrival of an "American Century." Soon after, the United States was defeated in Vietnam.

The US ruling class responded in a variety of ways that it hoped would reverse the trajectory of relative decline. Individual banks developed techniques to compete in the new arena, including buying and selling dollars for profit, increasing their loans to poorer nations needing to purchase increasingly expensive oil, and inventing complex processes to "hedge" potential losses in increasing volatile markets. As a class, US capitalists intensified their attacks on the working class at home and overseas. They slashed wages, laid-off and sped up workers, moved factories and reorganized manufacturing to increase productivity. In Latin America and Africa, the IMF imposed even more draconian cuts on workers so governments could pay their debts to US finance capital.

In the late 1970s, the ruling class also initiated the process of "deregulation," a process that accelerated during the 1980s. Here the purpose was twofold. On the one hand, the goal was to limit what was provided to the working class. The impact of this attack was quickly realized in the declining quality of education, health care, and urban life. On the other hand, deregulation was an effort to change the rules that structured US institutions and firms in order to increase the power of US finance capital in the world. These efforts could not eliminate inter-imperialist rivalry and competition and did not staunch the loss of market to rivals. The US share of world manufacturing continued to fall (from 60% in 1950 to 25% in 1999) and so did the international power of US banks. By 1990, only one US financial institution made it into the top 15 world financial institutions.<sup>2</sup> The efforts did, however, stimulate increasing capitalist conflict at home—they pitted capitalist against capitalist—a conflict that boiled over into the public arena during the bitter political

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1. The particular impact of a fall in the value of the dollar varies. When the value of the dollar falls, it makes US goods cheaper (in essence it devalues labor power) in international trade. This helps exporters since their goods are now relatively cheaper than those of competitors from other countries. But money is not only a medium of exchange. It also represents stored value; it measures the stored surplus value of capitalists

and the stored wages of workers. Thus, when the value of the dollar falls, capital stored in the financial system is destroyed.

2. Richard B. Du Boff, "U.S. Hegemony: Continuing Decline, Enduring Danger," *Monthly Review* (December, 2003), pp.1-15; "Capitalism and its Troubles: a survey of international finance," *The Economist* May 18, 2002.

attacks of the Clinton impeachment era.

In part the shrillness of US politics in the mid-1990s was the result of new players. The financial innovations of the 1970s and 1980s increased competition for business among the individual banks of finance capital, and they brought in sources of capital that were outside the established regulatory regime. This "new" money funded new enterprises and raised new voices within the capitalist class.<sup>3</sup> But the shrillness also reflected the costs of this competition and of reorganizing finance capital to meet the needs of the new era. In the period 1979-1999, there were 90 international banking crises, each involving bank losses greater in relation to GDP than the losses of the Great Depression of the 1930s.<sup>4</sup>

The ruling class (led by the Treasury Department and the leading New York banks) realized it had to reorganize US finance capital if it were to regain power in the world. Under the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, US banks were divided according to function, between commercial banks (that took deposits and loaned money to businesses and individuals) and investment banks (that bought and sold stock and facilitated mergers and acquisitions). Other laws prohibited interstate banking. By the 1990s, leading bankers were pushing for the elimination of these divisions (i.e., to "deregulate") in order to concentrate assets into fewer, larger banks that could better exert the power of US finance capital both at home and overseas. Rewriting these laws meant changing part of the unique relations of production of the US, and this provoked conflict among the dominant firms of US capitalism. Each proposed change favored some particular capitals and harmed others. Some capitals would be destroyed so that US imperialist power could be reasserted.

The fight over reorganizing finance capital was resolved in 1998-99 as a result of rules changes made by the Federal Reserve and the passage of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, which eliminated the legal barriers between investment banks, commercial banks, and insurance companies. The victors were the leading New York banking groups associated with the Rockefeller and Morgan blocs that had dominated US finance capital for

most of the twentieth century. As a result of the merger wave of the last five years, large numbers of banks have disappeared into the behemoths of contemporary US finance capital, which once again operate as both commercial and investment banks. Fewer banks and fewer centers of financial power now exist in the United States, and by 2000, US financial institutions had gained in international stature, making up 8 of the top 15 world financial institutions. The ruling class hopes to use this new concentration of finance capital to impose unity at home and to assert power in the world.

## Who's Who in US finance capital

At the time Lenin published *Imperialism*, there were tens of thousands of banks in the United States. The major New York banks dominated US imperialism, and they had just begun to assert power over other US banks through the creation of the Federal Reserve System.<sup>5</sup> By the 1970s, finance capital had coalesced in the hands of about a dozen regional blocs led by the largest New York banks, but was facing new challenges from abroad. Now, as a result of the "deregulation" of the 1990s and the mergers that followed, thousands of banks, and the regional blocs of the 1970s, have disappeared. The economic and political leadership of finance capital has been concentrated in a handful of large banks and financial services companies—Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, and American International Group—and few smaller investment banks—especially, Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs. These banks are intimately linked to both industrial capital, through corporate interlocks and control of capital, are tightly linked to the policy making establishments of the ruling class, and have forced other large banks to follow their lead.

### Citigroup:

Citigroup is the product of the merger of Citibank (originally the National City Bank associated with the William Rockefeller family) and the Traveler's Insurance group, which had already acquired the investment bank Salomon Smith Barney. Citigroup is currently the world's largest financial services institution, having a market

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3. This "new money" included Eurodollars and commercial paper. Eurodollars are dollars located in European banks and the European branches of leading US banks. Eurodollars are not regulated by US banking law and can be loaned to US firms which wish to invest overseas. Commercial paper is short-term corporate debt that is sold in the financial market known as the money market. The primary dealers in commercial paper are investment banks and brokers. As a result of these changes, commercial banks which were the key institution of US finance capital saw their share of US financial assets fall from 55% in

1946 to 24% in 1993.

4. "Time for Redesign: a survey of global finance," *The Economist*, 30 January 1999.

5. See James Livingston, *Origins of the Federal Reserve System: Money, Class and Corporate Capitalism, 1890-1913* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986) for a good account of the formation of the Federal Reserve that stresses the role of New York banks and the creation of class-conscious organizations among finance capital.

capitalization of \$260 billion in 2001. By comparison, the market capitalization of the world's largest bank in 1990 was \$57 billion. Citibank has a large US customer base, especially in credit cards, and branches throughout the world. These operations provide it the assets and revenues to be a major player in corporate and international finance. Citibank has a major presence in Japan and in Mexico, where it owns Mexico's largest bank, Bancamex. This is an important change. In the past Citibank was a large holder of Mexican debt and exercised influence indirectly through the IMF. Now Citibank can exercise power in Mexico more directly.

The board of directors of Citigroup interlocks with leading US corporations. The CEOs of Alcoa, TimeWarner, and United Technologies sit on its board. Through these and other directors, Citigroup is interlocked with DuPont, Chevron Texaco, Potlatch, Halliburton, Cummins Engine Company, Ratheon, Conoco, Colgate Palmolive, and Ford among others. It is closely linked to the ruling class policy establishment. John Deutch, the former CIA director, and Robert Rubin, the former Treasury Secretary, are both board members. Citigroup directors are also members or directors of the key institutions of ruling class policy institutions, including the Council on Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institution, the Ford Foundation, Harvard University, and MIT.

### **JP Morgan Chase**

JP Morgan Chase is the product of the merger of two of the most important banking houses in US history, that of J. P. Morgan Bank and two Rockefeller-family banks, Chase Manhattan and Chemical Bank. In 2004, JP Morgan Chase also announced that it will acquire Bank One, the leading Midwestern bank which includes within it the former First Chicago. This merger of four major institutions of finance capital illustrates the efforts of the ruling class to reorganize and consolidate the center of finance capital. With its acquisition of Bank One, JP Morgan Chase will become the second largest bank in the United States, gaining a large base of domestic and credit card assets that will allow it to continue its role as a leading instrument of US finance capital. Morgan Chase operates as an investment bank in 60 countries, is a leader in global syndicated loans, such as those financing the Latin American borrowing, and is the largest trustee of US government debt.

Like Citibank, JP Morgan Chase is interlocked with key US Corporations. In 2001, the CEOs of ExxonMobil, Wyeth, and Bechtel, as well as the retired CEOs of BPAmoco and Ryder Systems sat on its board of directors. Its board is interlocked with those of AIG,

Deere& Co, Honeywell, The Hearst Company, J.C. Penny, Black & Decker, Motorola, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Dell Computers, Pfizer, Merck, Viacom, and Verizon. It is also tightly linked to the ruling class policy establishment. Three MorganChase directors are members of the Council on Foreign Relations, two were members of the Trilateral Commission, and David Rockefeller, George Schultz, and Henry Kissinger sit on its international advisor board.

### **American International Group (AIG)**

In 2001, AIG was the second largest financial services company in the world, with a market capitalization of \$207 billion. AIG is primarily an insurance company, providing business insurance around the world, and is a major provider of capital to private banking groups at the core of the ruling class. It is allied with Kissinger Associates and with the private investment bank, The Blackstone Group, chaired by Peter Peterson, the former head of the Council on Foreign Relations. Like the Citigroup and JP Morgan Chase, AIG's board of directors is linked to a number of important US corporations, including JP Morgan Chase, Eli Lilly & Co, TRW, Bristol-Myers Squibb, ConEdison, TimeWarner, ChevronTexaco, and Lucent.

Directors of AIG are especially connected to the foreign policy elite. In 2001, the CEO of AIG, Maurice Greenberg (a former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York) was a domestic adviser to The Blackstone Group and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission and a variety of specialized groups considering US policy in Asia and Europe. Other directors include Martin S. Feldstein, a professor of economics often linked to the economic policies of the Bush II administration, who is international advisor of J P Morgan Chase, and a member of the Trilateral Commission; Carla A. Hills, the primary negotiator of NAFTA and member of the Trilateral Commission; Richard C. Holbrooke, former member of the Clinton administration and member/director of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission and the World Economic Forum; and Eli Broad, former chairman of SunAmerica, trustee of Caltech and other Los Angeles institutions.

### **Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs**

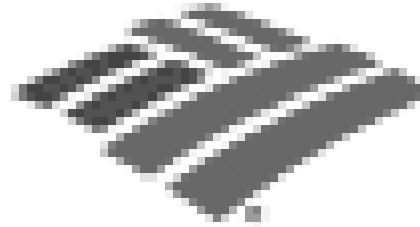
The investment banks Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs are much smaller than Citigroup or J P Morgan Chase, but they are tightly linked to US industrial capital and the policy making establishment. Morgan Stanley was a product of the Glass-Steagall Act that forced J P Morgan & Co to separate its investment and commercial

banking functions. Through a recent series of mergers, it became the twelfth largest financial services institution in the world in 2001, and is an important presence in Japan and China (where it arranged the initial stock offerings of China Petroleum and Chemical Company, i.e. Sinopec Corp.) as well as in the United States. Its board of directors is linked to such US industrial companies as American Airlines, 3M, Allstate, Unicom, Anheuser-Busch, Coca Cola, Borden, EDS, IBM, SBC Communications, BPAmoco, Tribune Company, Whirlpool, Forstmann Little & Co, Sears, Time Warner, Dell Computers, Eastman Kodak, and Human Genome Sciences.

Goldman Sachs was one of the last of the major Wall Street investment banks to move from a partnership to a corporate structure. Despite being smaller than the other banks discussed here, it has clearly been an influential player in defining US economic and foreign policy since World War II, generally in alliance with the Rockefeller banks. Goldman Sachs is interlocked with Ford Motor Company, Rupert Murdoch's BSKyB plc, Laura Ashley, British Petroleum, DaimlerChrysler, Fannie Mae, Cummins Engine Company, Gannett, Inc, Target Corporation, Pfizer, Texas Instruments, General Motors, Bank One Corporation, Sara Lee, Taiwan Semiconductors, and Wal-Mart. Goldman Sachs directors are also key parts of the ruling class foreign and economic policy apparatus, serving as members and directors of the Brookings Institution, the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, MIT, the NYSE, and the World Economic Forum. Robert Rubin, the Clinton Treasury secretary who brokered banking law reform and Stephen Friedman, Bush's new chairman of the National Economic Council, both came to government from Goldman Sachs.

### **Bank of America and Wells Fargo**

The other two US banks of significant size are Bank of America and Wells Fargo. Bank of America, now headquartered in North Carolina, is the result of the merger of two ambitious regional banks, California's Bank of America, and North Carolina's Nations Bank. In 2001 Bank of America was the world's fifth largest bank in terms of capitalization, and it is currently in the process of acquiring Fleet Bank of Boston. The current Wells Fargo is headquartered in San Francisco and grew from the merger of a growing Midwestern bank, Norwest, and the San Francisco based Wells Fargo, which itself had been acquiring other banks in California. Their ties are primarily regional: to the high tech corridor of



***" The current role of Bank of America and Wells Fargo demonstrates the essential process of the current period: that some banks are the drivers of US imperialism and policy and others play a secondary, though highly profitable, role. "***

the California and to retail firms that originated in the Midwest in the case of Wells Fargo and to retail firms and the industries of the Southeast in the case of Bank of America. Both of these banks have links to the New York banks. Directors of Bank of America, for example, sit on the board of directors of Sara Lee, which includes a virtual Who's Who corporate figures and B of A director Kathleen Feldstein is the wife of Martin Feldstein, who sits on the boards of AIG and is an international adviser to J P Morgan Chase.

The current role of Bank of America and Wells Fargo demonstrates the essential process of the current period: that some banks are the drivers of US imperialism and policy and others play a secondary, though highly profitable, role. In the past, the Bank of America (and to a lesser extent Wells Fargo) were active competitors in US international banking with a focus on Asia and Latin America. Bank of America and Wells Fargo continue to have international offices, but in the current reorganization of banking they have accepted a primary role as domestic banks serving medium-sized businesses. Rather than lead the formation of international loans, Bank of America now brags of its role as the second bank in international lending syndicates organized by banks such as J P Morgan Chase.

These consolidations are hallmarks of fascism. They have increased the ability of finance capital to control other capitals, providing a material base for disciplining domestic capitalists as well as for meeting the challenge of imperialist rivals. There are fewer banks that can loan the kind of money a company needs to operate in large national and international markets, and there are fewer firms that can fund the continuing mergers of industrial firms. The power of these reorganized banks was made clear in the financial crisis (and dot.com bust) of 2000.

As the stock market fell, the market for commercial paper dried up, and many corporations were unable to refinance their extensive short term debts. A wave of bankruptcies loomed, stopped only by the willingness of the largest banks to extend loans with the aid of the Federal Reserve. Once again industrial companies were in debt to the banks at the core of US finance capital. Some, including Enron and WorldCom, whose businesses were revealed to be based on lies and little else, were left to fail and more. Having transformed the structure of finance capital, the ruling class is strengthening the SEC and cheering on the prosecutions of small fry like Martha Stewart, high-flying mutual fund dealers, and the officers of Enron and WorldCom.<sup>6</sup> The new centralization and unity of finance capital means that those who seek personal profit at the expense of capitalism as a whole will be disciplined.

## How the Ruling Class Rules: the CFR and Other Think Tanks

Despite his public image, the president is not the most powerful force in the governing of the United States. The dominant force is the ruling class. We have used this term already, but what is the ruling class? The ruling class is not the set of all rich people (for example, many sports and entertainment figures earn salaries in the millions but are not part of the ruling class); it is not the set of all capitalists and businessmen (even though they all exploit their workers). Rather the ruling class is a smaller subset of people, often recruited and trained in elite private schools and clubs. It includes two groups, those class-conscious capitalists who seek to defend capitalism, not merely their own profits, and those from other backgrounds recruited to serve them, all led by finance capital.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1970s, we described the government as the chief instrument of the ruling class, the joint dictatorship

of all ruling circles with the leading position held by internationally oriented finance capital led by the New York banks. Despite the turmoil and divisions of recent elections, this is still true. All groups of capitalists have the same strategies toward the working class—either the carrot or the stick, depending on the needs of the period—and their differences are differences over tactics not substance. Elected officials cannot change class relations, and in this sense real change is not at issue in any election. The key to power is not who is elected. Rather it rests in the role of those organizations where members of the ruling class meet to forge strategies and tactics for maintaining their class as an imperialist power. These groups produce the policies that will be implemented; they train and screen those who will implement them as high-level government officials; and they educate the media figures who will present policies to the public and set the parameters of acceptable debate.

Economic policies are generated by organizations such as the Committee for Economic Development and the Business Council and by think tanks such as The Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institution. The Committee for Economic Development is an association of executives from major US corporations (and a few universities). Founded in 1942, the CED helped develop the Bretton Woods Agreement that structured the immediate post-World War II economic system; in the 1960s and 1970s it developed responses to the balance of payments crisis. Self-consciously concerned with class power rather narrow industry interests, the CED is currently focusing on social security, immigration and education reforms to serve the needs of US capital.<sup>8</sup> The Business Council began as an official advisory panel to the US government, and played a key role in the development of New Deal era regulations such as Social Security. Its membership is limited to 125 people, all of whom must be CEOs of

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6. The prosecutions of those involved in WorldCom and Enron are the most important since the ruling class views their lies as having interfered with the development of essential communications infrastructure. But all the prosecutions play an important ideological role. They suggest that none (not even the rich) are above the law and that the state is a neutral, serving the interests of the "public." While this image is false (only those who damage the long-term needs of capitalism, not those who harm the workers are prosecuted), it is an important element in winning people to the call of national service.

7. A good example of these patterns can be seen in the careers of David Rockefeller, the grandson of John D. Rockefeller and an heir of the Standard Oil fortune, and Richard Parsons, currently CEO of Time Warner and a director of JP Morgan Chase. In the 1970s, David Rockefeller was both the CEO of the family's Chase Manhattan Bank and the leading force in the Council of Foreign Relations. As the inter-imperialist rivalries of that decade heated

up, Rockefeller found he could not give adequate attention to both the bank and foreign affairs. He chose to focus his energy on ruling class institutions such as the Council on Foreign Affairs and the Trilateral Commission (on running the world) and turned over the problems of day to day banking to someone who could focus on protecting the banks profits in the economic turmoil of the period. Richard Parson's father was a Rockefeller family retainer. Parsons was sent to school by the Rockefellers, and after college he was hired to administer the Rockefeller family trusts. Having proved himself capable and loyal, he was promoted as CEO of AOL Time Warner as the ruling class took control of one of its key media firms from the AOL upstarts.

8. Trustees of the CED include among others executives from Xerox, Exxon Mobil, Allied Signal, Chevron Texaco, Raytheon, Merck, Boeing, Pfizer, Brown Brothers Harriman, Perseus Capital, TRW, NYSE, IBM, TIAA-CREF, The Blackstone Group, The Brookings Institution and the Hoover Institution.

major corporations, and it focuses on tactical problems of economic and commercial concern (what it calls, "practical recommendations for action").<sup>9</sup>

The Brookings Institution<sup>10</sup> and the American Enterprise Institute<sup>11</sup> are think tanks that include ruling class intellectuals and members of the corporate elite. The AEI is often labeled "conservative" because it came to prominence in the 1980s when it served as a tool in the ruling-class push for "deregulation." Less prominent now, the AEI is linked to the more "liberal" Brookings Institution, especially through joint committees working to develop a new regulatory regime that can reinforce the renewed unity of finance capital. The Brookings Institution is older, broader in focus, and more important than the AEI, with deep connections to finance capital, to the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission, and to policy makers in both political parties. The Brookings Institution studies both foreign and domestic issues and is especially concerned about their interrelationship. It is here that the ruling class is attempting to formulate social policies that might win US workers to support (and give their lives) for US imperialism.

For the last 80 years the key incubator of US foreign policy has been the Council on Foreign Relations. The Council on Foreign Relations originated in 1919 under the leadership of members of the ruling class, including the Dulles brothers of the law firm Sullivan and Cromwell and the financiers J. P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller. The Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation provided key funding. The CFR has changed over the years (for example it now admits women to membership), but continues to represent the same

groups within the ruling class. Half of the CFR's 1450 members come from New York; others come from around the nation. All come from three groups—leading bankers and corporate directors, those individuals connected to the banks associated with direct public work of foreign affairs, and scholars, university presidents, and important media/news figures who sell American foreign policy to the public. The CFR now has established branch organizations in Dallas, Chicago, and California (Pacific Council on International Affairs), which allow it to reach out to public and corporate figures within these important regional centers. The CFR conducts public meetings of its members (some televised on C-SPAN), publishes the journal *Foreign Affairs*, conducts studies about the state of the world that provide it the intelligence to develop policy, and runs seminars for officials in US corporations (who donate generously for the services). Through these activities, the CFR recruits new members from among scholars and corporate figures who have demonstrated both ability and loyalty to the capitalist class and then works to put these people in place within the government.<sup>12</sup>

The Trilateral Commission is another important forum for policy formation in international affairs. The Trilateral Commission was formed in the 1970s at the initiative of David Rockefeller, who was also the leader of the CFR. The Trilateral Commission includes not only leading figures in the US establishment, but officials and intellectuals from Europe and Japan. Rockefeller hoped that relationships forged at Trilateral meetings would create support for US policies within its imperialist rivals, which in turn would lead to new international structures

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9. Members of the Business Council include (among others) the chairmen of DuPont, General Electric, Proctor & Gamble, Fannie Mae, General Motors, Bechtel, Dell, Sprint, Pfizer, Wal-Mart, Alcoa, Springs Industries, American Express, Lockheed Martin,, J P Morgan Chase, Ford, Merck, Bank of America, Sara Lee, Exxon Mobil, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley. A full list of trustees is available at the CED website.

10. In 2002, trustees of the Brookings Institution included (among others) Richard Armacost, who was also a member of the CFR and the Trilateral Commission; James Johnson of Goldman Sachs, the CFR and the Trilateral Commission; Kenneth Duberstein, of the CFR, Boeing, and a former Reagan chief of staff; Richard Fisher of the CFR, Kissinger McLarty Associates (and Brown Brothers Harriman before that), who was a key negotiator of NAFTA; Ann Dibble Jordan, a director of Citigroup and wife of Vernon Jordan; Rozanne Ridgeway, a former Nixon era diplomat and director of Boeing and other companies; Warren Rudman of the CFR and co-chair of the US Committee on National Security for the 21st Century (Hart Rudman Report); Robert Day, Bush "pioneer," chairman of TCW, director of Freeport McMoran, member of the Business Council; Zoe Baird, president of the Markle Foundation, member of the CFR and former director of Aetna, GE and other corporations; and Jeffrey W. Greenberg, chairman of Marsh & McLennan, son of the CEO of AIG, member of CFR and Trilateral Commission. The complete list of trustees is available from the Brookings Institution website.

11 In 2002, trustees of AEI included (among others) Lee

Raymond, the CEO of ExxonMobil; John Snow, then CEO of CSX Corp; Raymond Gilmartin, CEO of Merck; Harvey Golub, CEO of American Express, and William Stavropoulos, CEO of Dow Chemical. See AEI website for full list of trustees.

12. In 2002, directors of the CFR included (among others) Peter G. Peterson, chairman of the Blackstone Group, director of Rockefeller Center Properties, former CEO of Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb and former Nixon staffer; John Deutch, director of Citigroup, Cummins Engine Co, Ratheon, and former director of CIA and official in departments of defense and energy; Kenneth Duberstein, director of Boeing, Conoco,, Fannie Mae, and the Brookings Institution; Peggy Dulany, daughter of David Rockefeller, chairman of the Synergos Institute, director of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Overseas Development Corporation; the financier George Soros; Martin Feldstein, director of AIG, TRW, Eli Lilly; Fouad Ajami, director of Middle Eastern Studies at the School for Advanced International Studies; Jessica Einhorn, Dean of the Nitze School for Advanced Studies, director of Carlyle Asset Management, of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, of the Trilateral Commission, and before that an official of the World Bank; Lee Cullum, of the Dallas Morning News; and Garrick Utley, a newsman from CNN and NBC before that. Directors serve for set terms and so rotate among leading members, but always include a similar mix of businessmen, academic/policy figures, and media types. The names of the directors and of firms paying for CFR services (though not a list of all members) are available at the CFR web site.



that would protect US power. Despite Rockefeller's wishes, Trilateral personal relationships did not end inter-imperialist conflict, but the Trilateral Commission continues to be a place where US finance capital and its servants in the policy apparatus meet and formulate strategies.<sup>13</sup>

All post-World War II administrations have been dominated by members of the CFR (with the addition of those trained in the allied Trilateral Commission) who were in cabinet and crucial sub-cabinet positions where foreign policy decisions are made. This includes all recent administrations from Carter and Reagan to Bush I and Clinton/Gore, whether Democratic or Republican. Despite the theft of the election of 2000, this is also true of the Bush II administration. Liberals and anti-war activists have often focused on the apparent differences between Republicans and Democrats, especially on the particular life experiences and personal gaffes of Bush and Cheney, to suggest that a Democrat, any Democrat, will be better for the working class. Workers and students must not be misled by appearances. Members of the ruling class may debate the tactics of war and they may disagree on who has good leadership skills, but their essential goal is the same: to increase the profits and power of US imperialism at the expense of the workers, students, and soldiers of the world.

The essential unity can be seen in the origins and ties of the Bush administration. VP Dick Cheney is not only the former CEO of Halliburton (a position he took only after serving in the Bush I administration) but was a member and leader of the CFR, the Rockefeller-led Trilateral Commission, and the Business Council. Colin Powell was recruited as a CFR military fellow early in his career. Condoleezza Rice, was originally a protégé of Josef Korbel, Madeleine Albright's father, and was then "discovered" and nurtured by such ruling class foreign policy officials as Brent Scowcroft and George Shultz (Secretary of State in Bush I administration and a CFR member). Within the State Department, Richard N. Haass, director of policy planning, comes from the Trilateral Commission and the Brookings Institution; and Paula Dobriansky, undersecretary for global affairs,

came to government from the Trilateral Commission. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, is a former CEO of General Instruments Corporation, of Searle Pharmaceuticals, and a former chair of the international advisory board of the investment bank Salomon Smith Barney (now part of Citigroup); he was also a member and/or advisor to the Rockefeller-linked Bilderberg meetings, the World Economic Forum, and the Bretton Woods Committee, and a member of the Bohemian Club, a ruling class men's group that meets annually in California. Rumsfeld's deputy Paul Wolfowitz was a member of the Trilateral Commission, and L. Paul Bremer, the administrator of occupied Iraq, was a member of the CFR, the former managing director of Kissinger Associates, and an official of a firm linked to AIG.

This unity can also be seen in Bush's domestic advisors. Robert B. Zoellick, the US trade representative, came to the administration after serving as an international advisor for Goldman Sachs, as a director of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission, and as a member of the advisory committee of the Brookings Institution. Andrew Card, the chief of staff, was a lobbyist for General Motors. John W. Snow, the new secretary of the treasury was CEO of CSX Corporation, a director of US Steel, Johnson & Johnson, Verizon and others, and a member of the Business Council. Stephen Friedman, the new chairman of the National Economic Council, came to the Bush administration from Goldman Sachs, and is a member or trustee of the Concord Coalition, the Brookings Institution, the Council of Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission.

## Divisions within Unity

While there is a new unity of finance capital, this unity does not represent the global hegemony of US capitalism. Nor does it mean the end of conflict within the US capitalist class—something demonstrated by the harping of the current election campaign, by the prosecutions of Wall Street operators, and by the investigations of Halliburton and of the intelligence

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**13. In 2002, the North American members included (among others) David Rockefeller; Paul Volcker; Henry Kissinger; Madeleine Albright; G. Allen Adreas, CEO of Archer Daniels Midland; C. Fred Bergsten, director of the Institute for International Economics; John H. Bryan, then chairman of Sara Lee; Douglas Daft, chairman of Coca Cola; John Deutsch, Jessica Einhorn, Martin Feldstein, and Stephen Friedman, all of whom have been mentioned elsewhere in this account; James Houghton, CEO of Corning; Richard Perle, chairman of the Defense Policy Board and member of the American Enterprise**

**Institute; Lee Raymond, CEO of Exxon Mobil; John D. (Jay) Rockefeller IV, Senator from West Virginia; David Rubenstein of the Carlyle Group; Henry B. Schacht, CEO of Lucent; Lawrence Summers, president of Harvard; financier George Soros; and Sarah Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, Jay Mazur, president emeritus of UNITE; and Glenn Watts, president emeritus of CWA. The complete list of members is available at the Trilateral Commission web site.**

"failures" of the Iraq war. But the current conflicts within US politics are not the splits of the 1990s. The main contradiction within US capitalism is not between "new money" and "old money." It is not between the "oil patch" and "big oil" or between domestic and international capital. Rather it is a conflict within finance capital, within the dominant institutions of the ruling class, over how best to meet the challenges of increasingly intense inter-imperialist rivalries.

The ruling class acknowledged the seriousness of inter-imperialist rivalries in the Hart-Rudman report of 1990/2000 which predicted that the US could only expect to remain in a position of economic and military dominance for another 25 years. Another ruling class expert, Charles Kupchan predicted in *The End of the American Era* (a CFR published book) that the US could only maintain its dominance for a decade before it would have to confront China. Regardless of the accuracy of their predictions, these accounts are important for what they reveal. US capitalists don't operate in a world that they control; they don't operate in a world of their own choosing. They operate within the dynamics of capitalist competition and the drive for profits. In this period, the key contradiction is one of imperialist versus imperialist as they compete to re-divide the world. And this contradiction is intensifying the contradictions within the US ruling class itself.

The internal contradictions spurred by inter-imperialist rivalries have developed in three areas. First the conflict between the individual firm's need to make a profit and the long-term need to protect US power; second, a conflict over how best to handle the contingencies and necessities of the control of oil that have emerged over Iraq; and third, a conflict over how to win the US working class, whose interests lie in overthrowing capitalism, to give their lives for US imperialism. We will look at each briefly in turn.

### **1. The contradiction between the short-term, actual need to make profits and the potential dangers this poses to the long-term power of US imperialism.**

All capitalist firms must maximize profits, and thus they act to lower costs of production by seeking low

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14. See for example, Stephen S. Cohen and John Zysman, *Manufacturing Matters: The Myth of the Post-Industrial Economy*, A Council of Foreign Relations Book (New York: Basic Books, 1987); the various reports of Congress's Office of Technology Assessment, such as *Redesigning Defense: Planning the Transition to the Future U.S. Defense Industrial Base* (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1991); Laura D'Andrea Tyson, *Who's*

wage labor and to capture markets from their rivals. Competition is the driving force of capitalism, and maximizing profits is an immediate, actual need, enforced by finance capital. But actions that maximize profits can also conflict with the long-term political and military goals of the ruling class as it assesses potential dangers. Thus Microsoft and Boeing (a firm closely tied to the New York banks, but locked in an intense competition with Airbus) have both made deals to sell products in China that have been slapped down because these deals might increase the long-term military potential of China. Similarly some oil companies are pressing to drill in the Arctic, while others in the ruling class want to keep this area as a future military reserve. More generally, the ruling class has implemented NAFTA to ease the movement of manufacturing to Mexico and has historically subsidized firms moving plants overseas, both moves that increase profits by driving down labor costs. Yet at the same time the ruling class worries about its need to maintain manufacturing strength at home to sustain the nation's "defense industrial base."<sup>14</sup> In the context of the rising the overcapacity and competition for markets that are the economic markers of intensifying inter-imperialist rivalries, these conflicts between the short-term and long-term needs of capitalism can be expected to continue to intensify.

The ruling class uses different methods to pressure firms to forgo quick profits in favor of the long-term need to protect US imperialist power. It subsidizes some industries; it grants others protective tariffs; it provides foundation funding for to movements to protect the environment, to "Stand Up for Steel," and to demand "Fair Trade"; it broadcasts exposés of "bad" capitalists. Ultimately the contradiction can only resolved through fascism, through using the power of the state to discipline the capitalist class, as is occurring in the prosecutions of WorldCom, Enron and others whose drive for personal profits and willingness to lie to finance capital harmed the investments necessary to prepare for war.

### **2. The contingencies and necessities of controlling oil in the Middle East**

Since World War II, the United States has used its

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*Bashing Whom? Trade Conflict in High Technology Industries* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1992); and Charles W. Wessner, ed., *Securing the Future: Regional and National Programs to Support the Semiconductor Industry* (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2003).

control of oil as a tool against rival imperialist powers. In the case of Iraq, the US (and the British imperialists before it) worked to keep Iraqi oil off the world market. The post-Gulf War sanctions regime provided a means to do just that. But by 1998, new pressures were being brought to bear. France, Russia, China, and others had signed contracts to develop Iraq's fields, and were pressing for the end of sanctions. In 2001, more problems arose. The Saudi Arabian ruling family, a key ally in US oil diplomacy, was threatened by internal rebellion. (Remember, Osama bin Laden and the 9/11 terrorists were not Iraqi or Afghani but were Saudis who wanted to expel US troops from their homeland.) Saddam Hussein began demanding euros, not dollars as payment for Iraqi oil, and Iran hinted so the same. This was a serious threat. Oil has long been priced in dollars, and thus oil importing countries hold dollar reserves, which they park in US Treasury bills and the US stock market. A switch to the euro (if followed by other oil producing countries) would pull money out of US financial markets, and pitted the US ruling class against not just Iraq, but Europe as well.<sup>15</sup>

In 1998, Clinton had responded to the pressure to lift sanctions by accusing Iraq of violating the sanctions regime and then intensifying US bombing of the country. In the context of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, the ruling class renewed its debate on how to react to the contingencies that threatened their imperialist power. One group, led by Wolfowitz, Cheney and others associated with the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) placed faith in the military, which they had been involved in modernizing since the failed attempt to rescue of Iranian-held hostages in 1979. Arguing that no rival, (certainly not Iraq, but none in Europe or Asia as well) could match US military superiority, they proposed acting on this strength. And they predicted that the assertion of US military power would provide a simple solution since the US would be welcomed by the people of Iraq. Other ruling-class thinkers disputed this argument. To CFR theorists like Charles Kupchan, the plan to use unilateral military actions was short-sighted and likely to fail. Kupchan saw the greatest danger to US power as laying in a future

conflict with China; he called on policy makers to acknowledge the rising power of Europe and to rebuild US alliances on a new basis that could meet the potentially larger Asian threat.

Under the pressure of this debate, the Bush administration tried but failed to get France, Russia and other rivals to endorse an invasion of Iraq. And when Bush made the decision to go to war, The New York Times and other ruling class mouthpieces who had advocated a multilateral approach gave the war their endorsement. Now that the occupation has turned messy, the ruling class is looking for somewhere to place the blame—the CIA, Halliburton, Cheney or anyone else who might pop up in the multiple “investigations” that are taking place—and to take the focus off US imperialism and capitalism as a whole. Cheney, as the most visible advocate of the unilateral position and as the man with the most obvious ties to companies that benefit in the short term, may well be the fall guy.

But the debate needs to be seen for what it is. The disagreements are over tactics not goals. For example in October 2003, a conference on “New American Strategies for Security and Peace” brought together such ruling class actors as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Robert Ruben and Richard Holbrooke.<sup>16</sup> They called for “new strategies” because, they argued, the military approach threatened to weaken rather than strengthen US power. The alternatives they suggest hark back to tactics that were tried and failed in Vietnam: relying on US economic as well as military power, and bringing more civilian aid to Iraq and other areas of conflict (in the words of one participant, bringing “carrots as well as sticks to the table”). The debates are heated because the stakes are high and because inter-imperialist rivalries have increased the uncertainties, the contingencies, US imperialists face. But at the core of the debate within the ruling class is the necessity to defend and strengthen US imperialism against its rivals, to defend and strengthen the power of the capitalist class to exploit the working class for its own profit.

### **3. The problem of mobilizing the US population for war**

As the US ruling class has gone to war, it faces serious obstacles in winning the US population to go to war. The

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15. For a more detailed account see, F. William Engdahl, “Iraq and the Hidden Euro-Dollar Wars” at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/401A.html>; and RUPE, volumes 33 & 34 of *Aspects of the Indian Economy* (reprinted by Monthly Review Press).

16. Information on this conference is at its web site: [www.newamericanstrategies.org](http://www.newamericanstrategies.org).

Hart-Rudman Commission, the New York Times, the CFR's Charles Kupchan, and the Brookings Institution in United We Serve have all addressed this problem. For a number of reasons—the anti-government political rhetoric the ruling class generated in its campaign to “deregulate,” the individualism spurred by the rhetoric of the stock market boom, the destruction of urban institutions and unions that was part of the effort to increase profits since the 1970s—Americans are detached from political life. The young seldom vote, participate in few civic movements, and most importantly do not enter the military in the numbers or with the willingness to sacrifice their lives that the ruling

## ***Bush has appealed to patriotism and religious values to encourage support for the war effort, but many in the ruling class find his efforts wanting.***

class needs in the current period. Given this, the question of how to build nationalism, of who best can inspire youth and workers to sacrifice their lives for US imperialism, is a major topic of debate.

Bush has appealed to patriotism and religious values to encourage support for the war effort, but many in the ruling class find his efforts wanting. While many rushed to serve in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Center, Bush did little to encourage sacrifice (remember the calls to go shopping and the continuation of the tax cuts) or to fund institutions that could corral this temporary patriotic enthusiasm. Other ruling class thinkers worry that unemployment, inadequate health care, and the heavy-handed efforts of John Ashcroft et al to round up terrorists have alienated immigrant communities, whose youth are needed as future US soldiers. Clearly few have rushed to join the military, and many of those already in are trying to get out. Even the CIA is having problems finding personnel

willing to take the risks of service in the Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>17</sup>

In this context, the Brookings Institution has joined the call raised by the Hart-Rudman Commission to set up some type of national service. While advocates of national service have not agreed on the form service should take (some support a military draft, others do not), all want programs that can win and discipline youth in the US to serve the nation. This debate is also driving much of the current electoral campaigns. Democrats are seeking the candidate who will best motivate young people to sacrifice in the name of the nation. All hope to play the role of earlier Democratic war presidents such as Wilson, Roosevelt, Kennedy and even Johnson. Howard Dean was given a great deal of publicity because he seemed to be able to bring young people into politics, to energize interest in the election. Now attention is focused on John Kerry, whose military service in Vietnam (and even his later opposition to that war) is presented as a model of citizenship to motivate people to sacrifice now. John Edwards is campaigning as a defender of US jobs, and believes that he can best use this line to win US workers to nationalism.

Calls for health care reform, education reform, and immigration reform are also part of the debate over how to win people to sacrifice for US imperialism. For “liberals” in the ruling class these issues raise real material concerns—they need youth with adequate health and education to be good soldiers—and play a crucial ideological role—can you win people to fight for a “nation” that provides none of the promises of “democracy.” In the case of health reform, the immediate profits of drug companies may well be sacrificed on the altar of inter-imperialist rivalries and war.

What lies behind all of these proposals is the ruling class's need to build nationalism, the primary ideological tool of fascism and inter-imperialist competition. Liberals calling for national service and trade union misleaders demanding that US jobs be protected from Mexican, Brazilian or Chinese workers are just as much a part of the development of fascism as anything John Ashcroft is doing. The main danger is that of social-fascist ideology, which aims to win workers to fight their brothers and sisters around the world in the interests of US bosses.

What does this mean for the party and the working class? One thing is clear, the unity of finance capital and

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17. “CIA Struggles to Spy in Iraq, Afghanistan,” *Los Angeles Times* (20 February 2004), pp. A1, A6.

the rise of fascism mean worsening conditions for all workers. NAFTA lowered wages for workers in the United States, in Canada, and in Mexico. National health care plans will be used to ration, not expand health care. Imperialist wars will continue to kill workers around the world. Not just the 500 US soldiers who have died in Iraq, but the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis in the Clinton-Bush war that began in 1998, and those dying in Africa in the wars sponsored by French imperialists, and those hundreds of thousands around the world dying from lack of health care.

Working people will fight back, must fight back, to preserve their lives from the devastation of imperialism. But the bosses will trot out liberal misleaders to put these demands and reform movements in the service of nationalism and war. We must join these fights, and we must initiate fights ourselves to defend the lives and health of our class; we must join the bosses' armies and mass organizations. No reform can fix the system, but the way to build revolution is to be in these struggles, working to understand and to expose the role of the

ruling class and its lackeys at every turn. We must understand the particulars of each job, each industry, each struggle to see what inter-imperialist rivalries mean to an imperialist trying to preserve its power. We must use these particulars to explain the general—that capitalism is the problem, that the working class must unite to overthrow the system and replace it with communism, a system with no wages, with no borders, where the health and well being of all workers—women and men, black, white, latin and asian—will be the main concern of society. We must be in the day-to-day struggles of workers, students, and soldiers, armed with revolutionary theory to turn these fights into fights for internationalism and communism.

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## HISTORY

# The 1910 Philadelphia General Strike

A strike of 6,000 Philadelphia transit workers in March of 1910 turned into one of the most militant general strikes in the U.S. labor history. At its peak, well over 125,000 workers, union and non-union, stopped work in support of the strikers, who were fighting for union recognition and other demands. The general strike lasted three weeks, virtually shutting down the entire city. It nearly provoked the first state-wide general strike in the country's history.

A long-running dispute between the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Co. (PRT) and Division 477 of the Amalgamated Association of Street Car and Electric Railway workers erupted in a strike in May of 1909. The company had refused to recognize the union and its demands for a 25¢ minimum hourly wage, the shortening of the split-shift 18-hour work-day to ten hours and the right to buy uniforms from retail stores instead of exclusively from the company.

When the PRT imported scabs to break the strike, the workers and their supporters destroyed streetcars, track and wiring. The brutality of the police attacks on the strikers brought the latter widespread support from fellow workers in all industries. When the city's Central Labor Union threatened a general strike by its 75,000 members, the company agreed to try to negotiate a settlement and the workers returned.

Seven months later the struggle broke out again when the company rejected a wage increase and unilaterally invoked its own plan. On Jan. 3, 1910, the PRT fired seven workers who had charged that the company's unilateral moves were undermining the union and collective bargaining.

In a strike authorization vote on Jan. 18, workers voted for another walkout, 5,121 to 233, a margin of 22 to 1.

The company answered by firing another 173 union members "for the good of the service."

Within hours, workers counter-attacked and struck. Crowds of strikers and sympathizers gathered to harass scabs and stop PRT operations. They battled cops in the Kensington and Germantown neighborhoods, threw stones at scab motormen and demolished cars that attempted to leave the terminals. Crowds near the downtown Baldwin Locomotive Works seized and destroyed a railway car. When the police rushed the crowd, Baldwin's workers (non-union) joined the strike, some hurling nuts and bolts at the cops from the upper-story factory windows.

Mayor Reyburn openly sided with the company, calling for 3,000 "citizen volunteers" and for a private military organization, the Pennsylvania Fencibles, to help the police break the strike. Local 477 president C. O. Pratt and Central Labor Union president John Murphy were arrested for "inciting to riot." Within five days, the despised State Constabulary arrived in the city at the Mayor's request. Union supporters declared that Philadelphia was now "in the hands of the Cossacks."

The Mayor's action only solidified increasing support behind the strikers. Workers city-wide joined forces with the strikers and stopped production in several industries. On March 5, when the Mayor and the company continued

to ignore union ultimatums, well over 100,000 workers stopped work, even including unorganized workers like the 12,000 at the Baldwin Locomotive Works. The budding general strike added many new members to the unions' ranks.

When 20,000 sympathy strikers defied the Mayor's ban on public demonstrations that same day and rallied at Independence Square, mounted cops with long night sticks charged the workers, injuring hundreds. The State Federation of Labor threatened a state-wide general strike if the company had not settled with the transit strikers by March 26.

However, on March 22, with the city still shut tight, large numbers of textile and metal workers returned to work. Two days later United Mine Workers president John L. Lewis said his union would not join a state-wide general strike. Three days later the Philadelphia Central Labor Union called off the city's General Strike.

The original striking transit local continued its walkout, rejecting PRT offers that ignored many of their demands. However, the company's loss of \$20,000 a day forced it to negotiate. A compromise proposal included reinstatement of all strikes, 1¢-an-hour wage increases every six months until the minimum reached 25¢ an hour, the right of workers to join the union and arbitration for the 173 workers fired on Feb. 19.

Despite the rank and file narrowly rejecting the offer as a sellout, union officers accepted it and called off the strike, claiming that the company promised to honor it. But within a year the company took advantage of divisions within the local to impose its own plan, which undercut the union.

Although the PRT remained a non-union fortress for the following 20 years, the General Strike was a warning to employers and a lesson for workers that it was possible for workers across all union and industry lines to combine forces, defy police attacks and successfully shut down an entire city (then the second largest in the country) in support of a local's — and/or even city-wide — demands.

The action had many features of militant class struggle. On the workers' side, the city-wide general strike supporting the transit workers represented a high degree of working-class solidarity. The unorganized sections backed it as well, realizing the struggle served their class interests. Scabs were attacked. The workers defied bans on demonstrations. But the top union officials, while backing it initially, were not ready to go all the way. John L. Lewis bowed out, the unions called it off, and despite rank-and-file rejection of the agreement,

the local settled, based on the bosses' "promises." This all led to the destruction of the union itself.

On the bosses' side, the government — the State apparatus — played its class role, openly acting on behalf of the company. Cops and state troopers were ordered out to protect scabs, break the strike and arrest workers for "inciting to riot."

Now, nearly a century later, the union leaders are much more in the hip pocket of the bosses. Their calling a city-wide general strike would be unthinkable. They rarely, if ever, organize to stop scabs or defy bans on demonstrations. They tell workers to "obey the law," the bosses' law. Their version of "solidarity" is boycotts, rallies featuring Democratic politicians and spending millions of the workers' money for advertising in the bosses' media. Direct action is verboten. The latter erupts only when the rank and file is ready to take matters into their own hands.

What's needed now is communist leadership and a base among these workers, to expose the laws, the State, the system as geared to crush the workers. Organizing to stop scabs, general strikes, real class solidarity, nationwide and internationally? Absolutely! But upping the ante in this fashion must not stop short to compromise with the bosses, to try to reform an unreformable system, to give the bosses a chance to use their power over society to wipe out any gains. Rather it must lead to turning such struggles into schools for communism to make state power itself the prize; to win workers to see the need to take all this potential power they have to really go all the way — all the way to revolution.



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# Communist Morality and Behavior Today

Our stated aim, as a revolutionary communist party, is to smash the exploiters, bring the working class to power, and build a society of equality, where all can lead lives of fulfillment.

For humanity to move to the new communist system, wages and privileges—and money itself—will have to be abolished. The experiences of Russia and China show that half-way measures allow capitalism to make a comeback.

But, is it enough to form a party that says it is determined to abolish wages in the future? Don't we, as communists, have a duty right now to behave in a communist manner? How far should this duty go? What are the dangers of failing to root out capitalist morals among ourselves TODAY?

The Russian communist party brought the country along to a point where poverty and unemployment were wiped out and the economy was functioning well. They regained this progress quickly after a devastating war. During these decades of economic success there was no economic reason to postpone the steps to communism which had long been promised. But these steps were not taken—wages and privileges were not wiped out. A large factor in this failure was the fact that party leaders and lower-level functionaries liked their extra income and privileges.

In today's world we are buckling down to a long,

tough task in building a communist revolution. When we succeed we don't want to leave doors open for a reversal back to capitalism. Naturally, we can learn from the economic-program mistakes of failed revolutionaries. But we should also give some thought to the behavior of party leaders and members, especially where their behavior doesn't live up to their stated ideals. Lifetime habits of acting in an individualist, selfish way can carry over into important work and will not produce a mass party which, when the chips are down, will establish true communism.

This discussion was kicked off among a small group of party people because some had a gripe about members spending money eating at upscale restaurants—after all, the party could use that money. But the group quickly realized that these meals, or similar extravagances, were only a small part of the question of what it should mean to live as a communist under capitalism.

For communism to work, people cannot just accept orders handed down from above. There will be no money incentive, so the economy will depend on enthusiastic participation and feedback. More and more people—eventually everyone—must wake up every day thinking and acting on how to make life better for all.

This communist motive must replace the



profit/greed motive in a mass way. Otherwise the danger grows of waiting for "the word" from a small group of educated leaders who may gradually begin to enjoy leadership privileges and drag their feet on pushing for wide-spread equality.

Also, at the time of the revolutionary uprising, the party will probably find itself depending on an underground group of leaders, probably including many intellectuals. This could be a danger if not recognized here and now.

Progressive Labor Party's central document, Road to Revolution, fully recognizes the importance of a morality or value system in making communism succeed. But the document to some extent implies that since we know all this now, we will definitely implement the proper plan when the time arrives. However, this article reflects our groups questioning whether plans will really be implemented if questions of morality and behavior are not raised earlier.

Vigorous criticism and self-criticism on these issues should, we feel, be on the agenda of many club meetings during this pre-revolutionary era of our party.

Here are some relevant quotes from Road to Revolution.

*"We want a system that encourages every worker to become involved in running society, that trains everyone to act for the common good..."*

*We want a system that corrects or punishes capitalist behavior..."To each according to need" will be as basic as "every man for himself" is to capitalism. Children will understand this from the moment their senses awaken..."*

*If there is selfishness—and there must be some—the party will struggle politically to overcome it, or, if necessary punish it."*

(Obviously this program realizes the need for training and even punishment. It does not assume that wiping out wages will automatically produce communist morality. The right party decrees are of course needed, but the party must campaign for ideals and morals as well, and set an example in that area.)



*"Failure to eliminate privilege will surely show up inside the communist party. Past socialist societies retained privilege, which quickly found its way into the party. Some party members and many leaders were often better off than others. This practice made many workers cynical..."*

*"Organizing for revolution means educating masses of workers, soldiers and students with communist ideas. To agitate successfully, to fight and win battles, to educate people politically, we must know workers very well. We must build long-term relations that can lead to the total transformation of most individuals, including ourselves...This mutual confidence will develop only through long class struggle and political debate."*

So, our basic document agrees that abolishing wages will not by itself produce communist morality. However, it also confidently assumes that when the time comes the leaders of the party will be dedicated to bringing full communism to flower, and will not hold back in pushing the necessary laws and education.

In Russia at such a critical stage, one thing that happened was that some leaders and active members

grew to like their small privileges. They were in no hurry to denounce people who owned a nice house or car or who steered their children to the front of the line for higher education and softer jobs. Therefore, it seems that building communist morality is required at an earlier stage if we don't want this to happen again. Privilege and inequality must be fought from the first.

This article comes from a group which is not sure that it is enough to say that big revolutions were reversed only because wages weren't wiped out early enough. The question remains: Why didn't the Russian leaders want to wipe out wages and privileges at a time when the economy was in good shape and they could no longer claim they needed to bribe non-communist experts to run factories and laboratories?

If a focus on communist morality is needed in early stages of party-building, in order to avoid repeating mistakes of earlier revolutions, then, what, exactly, are we supposed to do now?

It cannot be correct for the small group that produced this paper to give detailed lessons in behavior to party members and sympathizers. We are a materialist party and we believe that our social being determines our consciousness. A communist party bases itself on the working class because the working class contains the people who need and will fight for communism. So, a materialist approach to the question of communist morality in today's party must begin with input from the less well off workers in our ranks.

Non-communist moral behavior in this pre-revolution era should be defined as moral behavior which causes working-class members and their sympathizers to doubt the party's sincerity when we ask them to fight for the future advantages of communism. That is, behavior that undermines our political work.

We should encourage criticism by members who perhaps have felt intimidated by brainy comrades and have kept a few nagging doubts to themselves. Are there elements of behavior—from eating in finer restaurants to snapping back at a friendly criticism by a fellow party member so sharply that the comrade decides to shut up next time—that are non-communist attitudes and practices that can be an entering wedge for a split some day between party leaders and the true interests of the working class? History teaches us that this has happened in the past.

Toward the end of Lenin's days he pushed more and more for bringing workers—even if they seemed technically or intellectually a bit "over their heads"

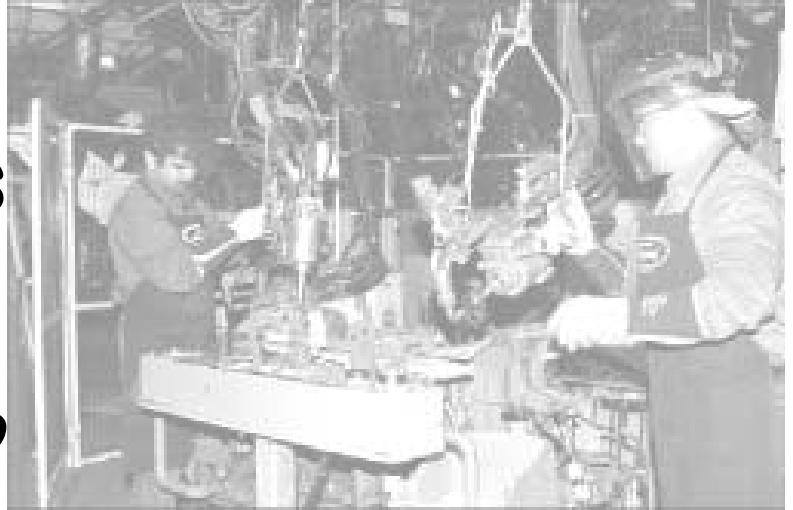
into committees that ran the economy. He included the central committee of the party, which he proposed to enlarge from about 20 to about 50 or 100 by bringing in workers. He wasn't able to do win this so obviously both the pro-Stalin and anti-Stalin groupings were against it. But judging by how the revolution eventually went wrong, it would seem that Lenin early recognized the danger of sometimes treating workers as those who obey and should be grateful to party leaders.

If we want communism, a materialist plan says that more power must be in the hands of the people who have the most to gain from true communism—the less well off workers. When they are exposed to communist teachings, they like them not only intellectually but in the gut because of life experience. As our party grows, it must continue to push vigorously to bring workers into leadership. These workers must feel that they have a party that makes them feel confident about expressing their ideas about what other leaders are proposing and doing, judged in the light of a road to full communism—a world without exploitation or privilege.

Communism does not boil down to acting like a do-gooder 24 hours a day. Our enemies, the capitalist ruling class, push "good" self-sacrifice when they rally people for their wars, to their churches, and into their dead-end reform organizations. Communist morality must be judged by how well it serves communist politics—which means how it helps build the working class into a group that understands its true interests and how to fight for them.

Wiping out petty, selfish behavior within the party is only a partial step toward communist morality. More importantly, all behavior must be judged in the light of how it strengthens the working class. This requires bringing more workers into the judgment seats and not being smug and preaching down to them.

# **Industrial Workers Hold Key to Smashing Capitalism's “Covenant with Death”**



**For sixteen years of continuous decline the finest body of skilled [industrial] workers in the world is allowed to dwindle, their energies and capacities largely unused...a younger generation grows up without the skill of its fathers. During all this process of decay not a dog barked in the capitalist camp; economic forces were left to take their course. But so soon as it comes to the task of war, of destruction, all capitalism awakens to the need for skilled workers. Truly of capitalism it may be said: “We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement.”**

*—R. Palme Dutt, World Politics, comments on speech by Lord Eustace Percy, British Minister, 1936.*

**The prime cause of California’s steep downturn a decade ago—defense spending—could emerge as a major contributor to a new boom. Defense...could stimulate the state’s long-suffering industrial sector, which has lost 250,000 jobs since 2000. Already, the tide of military dollars flowing into California—up about 44% since 2000, to nearly \$30 billion last year—has washed over a broad range of companies. California must become more competitive to participate in the new military buildup. Companies...are struggling with a lack of skills. There’s hardly a single machinist-training program in all of L.A. County.**

*—Joel Kotkin, “Spoils of War,” Los Angeles Times, 9/8/2004.*

**New security is central...Its foundation is an imaginative program of public investment in...our private productivity. America’s twenty-first-century strategy must be based on...productivity rather than unnecessary consumption. It means rebuilding a modern, production manufacturing base. It means an efficient national infrastructure... Our national goal must be security through productivity...**

*—Liberal Former Senator Gary Hart, The Fourth Power: A Grand Strategy for the United States in the Twenty-First Century, 2004.*

**[It’s] guns or canes, weapons or walkers.**

*— Council on Foreign Relations chairman Peter G. Peterson, Running on Empty, 2004.*

**T**he U.S. bosses bombard us with a maddening array of doublespeak. The Bush regime slaughters 100,000 Iraqi civilians and over 1400 GIs, maims tens of thousands more, and calls it a "mission for peace." The liberal Gary Hart proposes giving workers' money to the bosses so they can more efficiently exploit the working class and calls it "an imaginative program of public investment in our private productivity." Hart uses "our" like the president uses "we" when he talks about the sacrifice of the troops. "He is not the one missing the first breath of a firstborn or the last breath of a soldier, mom or dad," writes a pissed-off U.S. soldier in Iraq (Syracuse Post-Standard, 12/20/04). Industrial workers are used to this gobbledygook. Nary a crew meeting passes without the boss finding a new way to say cuts and the elimination of jobs, pensions and benefits is for our own good. Lies and deceit: that is the way of the capitalist.

Truth and clarity: that is the need of the working class. We need an accurate picture of the present state of affairs so we can formulate a plan to fight our enemy. The capitalist would cloud our minds; we need to shed all illusions. Karl Marx said, "Freedom is understanding necessity." How can we know what is necessary without knowing what is?

The absolute number of U. S. manufacturing workers has remained fairly stable at between 15 and 20 million since 1965, with ups and down dictated by various recessions. Manufacturing employment today stands a little above 18.1 million, the most recent nadir reached in 2003. To that, you can add millions employed in key transportation and communication networks crucial to industrial might. Of course, the percentage of industrial workers has declined relative to the expanding U.S. workforce, while the absolute and relative numbers of industrial workers has surged worldwide. Five-hundred million people were employed in the world's industries in 1995, three and a half times more than in 1950. The relative increase was also considerable, as the world's population only doubled during the same period.<sup>1</sup>

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**1** Pietro Basso, *Modern Times, Ancient Hours: Working Lives in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Verso, 2003) p. 23.

**2** As quoted in "A Response to 'Blue Collar Is Not Key in Employment, Profits, Output or Military Utility'" A Progressive Labor Party Document (2004).

**3** Eamonn Fingleton, *Unsustainable: How Economic Dogma is*

Focusing on the U.S., some, even on the "left," have argued that blue collar workers are no longer key to capitalism and that "industry—as traditionally defined—is becoming less important to capitalism."<sup>2</sup> First let's look at what's causing this relative decline and then examine the importance of industrial work to a revolutionary communist party today.

You Can't Make a Silk Purse Out of This Sow's Ear

Productivity is often cited as the culprit, as if the strength of the U.S. economy is somehow responsible for the relative decline in manufacturing jobs. Productivity is measured as output per worker. By that measure, it has increased as it has throughout capitalism's history. Some economists, the most famous being Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan, have argued that since the U.S. spends more on computers and software it has reaped greater benefits in productivity.

Of course, these post-industrialists' ardor has cooled since the dot-com bust, but even before then businesses were complaining of disappointing results, widely known as the computer productivity paradox. "You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics," writes the Nobel-prize winning economist Robert Solow.<sup>3</sup>

## **Competitive pressures have forced manufacturers to seek cheap labor and manufacturing expertise abroad.**

One area where computers, the internet in particular, have had an effect is in outsourcing. The "just-in-time" connections via the internet have enabled manufacturers to outsource work to lower-paid subcontractors. The workers in these plants—large numbers of whom are black and Latin, often immigrant—are more intensely exploited

and work longer hours. Seven out of ten, according to the Labor Department, are located in the U.S. The intensification of exploitation and the longer hours these subcontracted workers face more than accounts for any short-term measured differences in labor productivity between the U.S. and its imperialist competitors.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, if relative advances in U. S. productivity were solely responsible for the percentage decline in manufacturing jobs, we should see the results in a positive trade balance. Actually, just the opposite is happening. Many are aware that the 2004 trade deficit

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**Destroying American Prosperity** (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2003), p. 73. For a more technical analysis of the diminishing returns of computer investment see Daniel E. Schel, *The Computer Revolution: An Economic Perspective* (Brooking Institution Press: Washington, D.C., 1997)

**4** See Pietro Basso, *Modern Times, Ancient Hours*.

exceeded \$600 billion. Even during the heady 1990s, America's trade deficit totaled \$1.423 trillion. More than a quarter of these imports come from countries where wages are actually higher than those in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> So much for vaunted American productivity!

"The sad reality is that after the rundown of so many once-great American manufacturing industries in the previous two decades, the United State simply did not have the capacity anymore to meet its consumers' needs from its own manufacturing resources," writes the former editor of Financial Times and Forbes, Eamonn Fingleton.<sup>6</sup>

## A Threat to U.S. Hegemony

Nor do this relative dearth of manufacturing and the resulting huge trade deficit serve the political needs of the ruling class. The U.S. must borrow a mind-boggling \$2 billion in foreign capital everyday to finance this deficit. As the chairman of the Council of Foreign Relations, Peter Peterson, puts it, "Leading nations cannot indefinitely borrow massively from those they intend to lead."<sup>7</sup>

The advanced manufacturing prowess of the EU and Japan, let along the cost advantages of production in places like China, is a great temptation to American manufacturers. Here too, internet technology has made it easier to transfer manufacturing and design capabilities in pursuit of the quick buck to, in this case, foreign producers. Boeing, for example, has farmed out design on its new 7E7 to Fuji Heavy Industries in Japan and Alenia Aeronautica in Italy (as well as domestically to Vought Aircraft Industries of the now infamous Carlyle Group).<sup>8</sup> "It's a lot easier when you don't have to send a 500-page document every time something changes," said Hank Queen, vice president for engineering and manufacturing for Boeing Commercial Airplanes (New York Times, 12/30/04). The same sentiment was repeated by a manager on the defense side, describing how Boeing is now able to offload defense maintenance to foreign countries.<sup>9</sup>

Competitive pressures have forced manufacturers to seek cheap labor and manufacturing expertise abroad. Once foreign capitalists learn how to organize this outsourced production, they acquire the inside track on

the next generation of technology. In addition, they obtain physical plants and the knowledge of how to quickly bring that technology to market. For example, when TV production was outsourced to Asia, firms there ended up owning the next generation of technology—VCR and DVD players. Now they have a crucial lead in related laser production, a key military technology. In fact, the Mainichi Daily News just reported (1/10/05) that the U.S. has approached Japan, on the sly, about a joint research project on military applications of airborne laser technology—after realizing how far behind Boeing is in this field. Japan has reservations.

Gaps in U.S. manufacturing capability already crimp U.S. political maneuverability. The Bush administration recently announced that the Pentagon would provide conventional powered (that is, non-nuclear) submarines to the Taiwanese navy, despite angry objections from the Chinese. The headquarters of the European Union (EU) in Brussels scotched the deal, earning points with Beijing. Nobody in the United States these days is building diesel-powered submarines; the shipyards that turn out these boats are in Germany and the Netherlands. Ignoring protests from Washington, the EU denied the necessary export permits for the submarines, thwarting a high-profile Washington policy initiative in East Asia.<sup>10</sup>

The Council of Foreign Relations (CFR), the premier foreign policy think-tank, has awakened to this threat to U.S. hegemony. In addition to issuing a number of books, their public journal, Foreign Affairs, has of late run articles with titles like "The Global Economic Challenge" and "Is America Losing its Edge?" The authors of these articles fret about "the growth of complex corporate supply chains that straddle the globe" and that "Today, [the U.S.] technological edge—so long taken for granted—may be slipping."

China and the EU have passed the United States in total manufacturing output, according to the CIA World Factbook (2004). Toyota Motors is now the second largest auto producer in the world, planning to become number one by the end of the decade.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Standard & Poor's Credit Rating Agency downgraded the debt of both GM and GMAC to BBB-, one step above "junk" status. Delphi, GM's recently spun off parts-making subsidiary, has already sunk to junk. Oh, how

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5. Eamonn Fingleton, *Unsustainable: How Economic Dogma is Destroying American Prosperity* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2003), p. 227.

6. Ibid.

7. Peter G. Peterson, "Riding for a Fall," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 84, no. 5 (September-October 2004), p. 124.

8. "There probably will be more Japanese working on the 7E7 than Americans," says researcher David Pritchard, Ph.D., of the University of Buffalo Trade Center.

9. Personal Conversation.

10. The U.S. now makes less than 1% of commercial ships. The top producer, South Korea made 40% of the \$39 billion in commercial ships sold in 2004. Next is Japan with 24%, followed by the surging China with 14%. Keep your eye on China, as it leverages its increasingly sophisticated commercial prowess into a green and then blue-water Navy to protect its far-flung efforts to secure raw materials and energy resources.

11. Todd Zawn, "Expansion Costs at Toyota Limit Its Earning Growth," *New York Times*, February 4, 2005.

the mighty have fallen!

The challenge to U.S. manufacturing prowess goes beyond the sheer quantity of goods produced. Advanced technology production, crucial to military might, is also slipping. For example, Japan's output of advanced manufactured products—high-tech components, key materials, and sophisticated production equipment—is now estimated to exceed that of the U.S. by a factor of five.<sup>12</sup>

Even the Chinese, who are portrayed as specializing in cheap-labor, low-tech manufacturing, have leveraged this production into more advanced technology. In addition to demanding—and getting—advanced manufacturing “offsets,” they have developed technology that “could leapfrog...past the U.S. in developing alternative energy sources.” (Fortune, 10/4/2004)

The EU has also taken the lead in several state-of-the-art markets. From cell phones to giant new passenger jetliners, the most innovative products are coming out of Europe now. Huge, one-time American steel and auto companies are now European. The list of once American companies snatched up by Europeans with their strong Euro would fill the pages of this magazine.<sup>13</sup> Even Motown Records is now a European subsidiary.

Today Europe's Airbus, the largest commercial jetliner producer in the world, is owned by two private corporations—80% by the European Aeronautical, Defense, & Space Corporation (EADS), and 20% by British Aerospace, Ltd. It may take a while—in typical European fashion—but EADS seems destined to merge with other Continental “defense” companies to become the biggest aerospace company on the planet, with most of its resources devoted to war production. The Europeans prepared this colossus for such spectacular growth by routinely investing 8 to 9 percent of annual revenue on research and development; Boeing, its main competitor, has spent at about half that rate.

Not satisfied with this planet, the Europeans look to be the dominant player in outer space in the next decade. The European Space Agency (ESA), an increasingly military-orientated organization, will launch its own, more advanced GPS satellite system in 2006. Despite tough American lobbying, the Chinese have partnered

with the EU—to the tune of an investment of a quarter of a billion euros. The significant military advantage the U.S. today enjoys through global positioning technology will be lost to the EU—and its partners—when the superior Galileo system becomes operational in 2008.

The proof of this trend is no longer limited to anecdotal evidence as the gathering of statistical data catches up with reality. “In November [2004], the U.S. had a record deficit of \$5.8 billion in advanced technology products. For the most recent 12 months, the deficit was \$36.9 billion, also a record.” (New York Times, 1/14) U.S. exports of these high-tech products dropped 21 percent during the last five years, while imports increased 28 percent. (The U.S. did, however, increase exports a whopping 135 percent in another category—scrap and waste. There's a big business exporting the scrap salvaged from torn-down industrial plants.)

This relative manufacturing slippage has gotten so dire that even the notoriously arrogant U.S. military is now worried. “The latest in a series of five studies by the Pentagon's Office for Industrial Policy point to...significant problems with the defense industrial base..., raising concerns about U.S. technology lead in traditional weapons,” reports Defense Daily (11/02/04). The Pentagon's Office of Industrial Policy wants to answer this threat with an Industrial Base Acquisition Fund, using our money to bribe manufacturers to build up their capacity in the states.<sup>14</sup>

## The Bosses' Achilles Heel

The much touted post-industrial economy is more smoke and mirrors than substance. The hollowing out of U.S. manufacturing presents a threat to U.S. economic, political and military dominance. The slipping manufacturing base, the source of all created value, limits the bosses' maneuverability, forcing them to more often choose the military option, as in Iraq. Even that's not working out in their favor. The potential for soldier revolts increases as the war drags on. GI resistance is a dagger at the heart of the bosses last, best hope for imperialist supremacy through control of Mid-East energy resources.

The more the U.S. is forced into a belligerent military

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12. Eamonn Fingleton, *Unsustainable: How Economic Dogma is Destroying American Prosperity* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2003), p. xvi.

13. See T. R. Reid, *The United States of Europe: The New Superpower and the End of American Supremacy* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004) pp. 111-143.

14. Meanwhile, the European ruling classes are trying to dismantle their much-touted “welfare state,” to free up the capital to invest in a more serious “EuroArmy.” “This is the end of the Germany I grew up with,” said Martin Bongards, a sociologist in the town of Marburg, north of Frankfurt, referring

to the welfare and unemployment cuts scheduled to take effect January 1, 2005. “This country I knew no longer exists.” Workers will foot the bill as the European ruling classes see they have no choice but to build a military worthy of partnering with in the sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry ahead. No less a luminary than Henry Kissinger worries those partners will be Russia or China—or both!

posture, the more crucial becomes the industrial base. The bosses are limited by the capitalist system; but make no mistake about it: they can't and won't allow their industrial base to wither at the mercy of the market. From autos to steel to airlines to aerospace production, the bosses are reorganizing their industries on the backs of workers. Wages, benefits, pensions are all sacrificed to set up a domestic system of "just-in-time" subcontractors, specializing in dirt-cheap component fabrication. The bosses may argue over which military products and systems deserve priority, but overall we can expect war reorganization to accelerate and broaden to every nook and cranny of the workforce.

Calls for more direct control of the reorganization and expansion of the industrial base will not be left to languish in the pages of academic journals and books. The bosses have a "covenant with death" that requires a vastly expanded military industrial base, powered by a huge, ever-growing—and generally lower-paid—reorganized industrial workforce.

How then will the ruling class motivate this vast industrial army—many of whom will be under severe attack? The bosses themselves are not sure. Traditionally, they have built a "labor aristocracy" of well-paid workers in key spots in important industries. They will undoubtedly try to bribe some, despite limitations imposed by the profit system and the relative decline in U.S. competitiveness. Terrorizing others is always an option for capitalism, particularly if aimed at black, Latin and immigrant workers. Racist super-exploitation of these workers in the new industrial "sweatshops" has already paid for a good part of the war reorganization. But for the vast majority of the working class, it ultimately comes down to winning us to the bosses' pro-imperialist, nationalist outlook.

Herein lies the bosses' Achilles heel. The fight against racism and nationalism not only creates the unity we must have to make a revolution, but also drives a wedge between our class and the bosses' imperialist ambitions. The jig is up when industrial workers—together with their allies among teachers, students and other workers—adopt the anti-racist, internationalist politics of our Party. The questions of imperialist war, a war economy and whether we are to unite with the worlds' workers or fall prey to the nationalism of the union misleaders and their capitalist masters is organic to the industrial workplace. Every manufacturing worker sees how these questions affect him or her on and off the job. To paraphrase the great communist poet, Bertholt Brecht, industrial workers can think...and we are in a crucial position—along with the soldiers themselves—to

smash once and for all the bosses' imperialist wars with communist revolution.

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# HARVARD SPEECH

*The following speech was given by a comrade on July 27, 2004 at Harvard square during the PLP summer project 2004 march from Central square to Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

Harvard is an enemy of the international working class. Many of the most exploited workers at Harvard are immigrants. Many of these immigrant workers come from Latin American countries whose workers have been brutally oppressed for decades by U.S. imperialism. Harvard leads the academic establishment in providing the ideological underpinnings of U.S. capitalism's deadliest crimes. For centuries, research, theorizing and teaching carried on in Harvard's ivy-clad halls has justified and enabled genocidal U.S. wars of imperialism abroad and racist assaults on workers at home. Thus, workers and students should speak out against Harvard's role in oppressing workers both in Cambridge and in the rest of the world.

Harvard's historically liberal veneer only hides its iron fist. Funded by the owners of the nation's biggest corporations, Harvard leads the academic establishment in providing the ideological underpinnings of U.S. capitalism. The Rockefeller family and its allies (i.e., the Eastern Establishment) cemented their ties to Harvard in the 1930s. To ensure that the economy and other key aspects of society would work in their interests, the Standard Oil heirs acquired Chase Manhattan and other big banks and made massive donations to major universities like Harvard.

Harvard serves the interests of the dominant eastern establishment (e.e.) wing of the U.S. ruling class. Its board of directors include a director from Exxon-Mobil and Chase Manhattan Bank. Another Harvard director held a position at Enron. Others are on the boards of e.e. think-tanks: Council on Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institution. The Eastern Establishment uses the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the single most influential think-tank, to formulate U.S. foreign policy. Often working jointly with Harvard, the CFR has helped guide U.S. imperialism from World War II to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. David Rockefeller is a generous Harvard benefactor, long-time Harvard overseer and the CFR's chairman emeritus.



Harvard bears a large measure of guilt for the killing of 3 million Vietnamese workers and 55,000 U.S. troops in the Vietnam War. As a key advisor to Kennedy and Johnson, Harvard Dean McGeorge Bundy insisted on building U.S. forces to over 500,000 and on escalating attacks on North Vietnam. When it became clear that U.S. rulers were losing the war, former Harvard professor and Rockefeller protege Henry Kissinger improved the U.S.'s bargaining position by orchestrating the infamous Christmas bombing of Hanoi. Napalm, the U.S.'s most barbaric weapon in the war, had been invented by Harvard chemist Louis Feiser who was assisted by Harvard president James Conant.

In the past few years, Harvard has transformed its Kennedy School of Government (KSG) into a major policy factory. It focuses on retaking the Middle East's oilfields by force and on helping U.S. imperialism prevent the rise of Russian and Chinese rivals as threats to its world supremacy. Robert Zoellick, a KSG research fellow and senior advisor to George W. Bush throughout his campaign, "proposed seizing control of parts of Iraq as a way of undermining President Saddam Hussein" (AP,



***The Kennedy School has begun a Caspian Studies Program, which "analyzes the geopolitics of the Caspian Basin border states as well as their strategic importance to the U.S." A consortium of companies led by Exxon Mobil and Chevron "makes the program possible."***

5/19/00). KSG professor Richard Falkenrath, a member of Bush's National Security Council researches major threats to U.S. imperialism. He studies nuclear proliferation, Russia's influence in Europe, Europe's military readiness and the balance of power in the Persian Gulf.

The Kennedy School has begun a Caspian Studies Program, which "analyzes the geopolitics of the Caspian Basin border states as well as their strategic importance to the U.S." A consortium of companies led by Exxon Mobil and Chevron "makes the program possible."

Much of the academic scholarship produced at Harvard as well as other universities justifies racism, sexism, anti-communism, imperialism and identity politics, which helps the capitalist class divide and maintain control over students and workers. In particular, Harvard has taken the lead in supporting racist attacks against U.S. workers. Two former Harvard professors, James Q. Wilson and Richard Herrnstein wrote in *Crime and Human Nature* (1985) that the cause of crime is genetic. In addition, Herrnstein was the author of many other racist tracts, including the *Bell Curve* (1994). This book argued the racist lie that black people were genetically less intelligent than whites. Harvard professor E.O. Wilson has argued that fascism and war are part of our genetically determined human nature. Recently, thanks to E.O. Wilson and others, the capitalists have worked, with some success, to get workers and students to believe the fascist lie that the causes for poverty, racism, violence, etc. are genetic.

Harvard government professor Edward Banfield's policy recommendations paved the way for the Clinton White House's "welfare reform, known as workfare," a racist policy that forces former welfare recipients to work for slave labor wages. Welfare recipients are disproportionately black and Latin, with all immigrants having been thrown off welfare. Workfare is a fascist attack on all workers because workfare slave laborers replace unionized workers who were paid higher wages. New Harvard president Lawrence Summers was a Clinton

Treasury Secretary intimately involved in moving Banfield's racist welfare theories into practice.

William Julius Wilson, Harvard sociologist, also provided an ideological justification to abolish welfare and affirmative action as "racially targeted" programs. Wilson argues that fighting racism is divisive and that living wage campaigns should not explicitly fight racism. Wilson is thus spreading the lie that racism is not a serious problem. He is helping U.S. imperialism by advocating a multiracial reform coalition under the leadership of Democratic politicians and the sectors of the capitalist class who control the Democratic Party (and the AFL-CIO). If college students, faculty and workers enlist in the coalition Wilson advocates, they will be helping Democratic politicians and labor union leaders maintain racist wage slavery and build support for fascism and imperialist war.

Current Harvard president Lawrence Summers continues Harvard's racist legacy of attacking workers. He and the administration have intimidated workers and students who have courageously fought against Harvard's racist wage policies. Summers as part of the Clinton administration was intimately involved in moving Banfield/Herrnstein's racist welfare theories into practice. As head of the World Bank, he called for dumping toxic waste in Africa because it is "economically efficient." While in the Clinton administration, he helped the IMF bail out Wall Street houses by launching massive racist, economic attacks on workers throughout the world, from Mexico to Korea. Now, he has called for an increase of patriotism (read support for U.S. imperialist wars) on college campuses like Harvard. He also is attempting to build support for the current U.S. imperialist war for oil in Afghanistan on campus, and build support for the return of ROTC. Indeed, part of the reason he took the position as Harvard president was to gain firmer control of Harvard for the main wing of the US ruling class.

Forcing Harvard to fire a racist professor, or to increase the number of students and faculty of color, or winning a seat for students on the Harvard governing board won't change the fundamental nature of Harvard. It will certainly not end racism, imperialism and exploitation. In order to end these horrors, workers, students and professionals of all races and nationalities must unite to eliminate capitalism and all its elitist institutions, including Harvard. Progressive Labor Party is an international revolutionary communist party dedicated to eradicating the capitalist system and replacing it with a communist society with distribution according to need, not profit.

Workers and Students unite to Smash Harvard University with Communist Revolution!☛

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## A Challenge for Youth

# Remarks on the Need for Revolutionary Work among Industrial Workers

Hi, I work at a huge aerospace giant. I'd like to start with a few recollections from our strike in the mid '90s. Before we even hit the bricks, we started "rolling thunder." We called it rolling thunder because every hour, on the hour, you could hear this thunder start at the end of the plant as my co-workers started banging hammers on metal—any metal, anything you could find. Slowly, the thunder rolled across the shop floor until the sound became deafening, sending anybody without serious ear protection scurrying for the exits.

Rolling thunder was followed by marches through the plants. Two black women in our base led the march through the plants in my area. After marching around our building, we decided to march through the neighboring building. "Are we really going to do this?" my friend asked me. "Just keep chanting!" was the only advise I could offer.

We entered that building 400 strong chanting "Strike, Strike, Strike!" Soon, we literally couldn't hear ourselves. We were surrounded by workers, who had left their machines, shouting, yelling, blowing air horns, and hammering on any piece of metal in sight. I looked around. Our fellow workers were hanging from the rafters, enthusiastically welcoming us.

Somebody called the local radio station. "Listen to this," he said, holding up the handset microphone.

"The building is shaking! The building is shaking!" we heard the radio host shout over the radio.

Now, the local cops were afraid to go on the factory grounds, so the company called the SWAT team from a nearby major city. Meanwhile, plant security scurried around trying to contain us as we marched from building to building, picking up more rebels along the way. Finally, we ended the march, returned to our own building. Two company cars came chasing after us and, like the keystone cops, they bumped each other—to thunderous applause from the marchers and bystanders.

Scenes like this were repeated in plant after plant, involving many thousands of workers. We emptied the factories the day the contract expired, marched to the union halls and the strike was on. We stayed out more than three months.

Mid '90s: Lessons Learned In the School Of Class Struggle

After the strike, I asked a friend what lessons he had learned. He answered that his greatest fear was that all that happened that fall would become nothing more than fading memory in those of us who experienced it.

In some ways, my work over the next 9 years has been to make sure that doesn't come true. We've made some modest progress in that regard. (By the way, my friend is still helping us make these gains, while still questioning every move)

We've initiated lots of class struggle, led other marches through the plants, built solidarity in support of other strikers, caused lots of "trouble" during the WTO convention and earned the hatred of the union misleaders.

We've led unprecedented walkouts on the bosses' crew meeting.

We've ran an unprecedented anti-war electoral campaign, becoming the main contender for leadership in this crucial union. Some consider us the "political beacon" on the shop floor.

We've recruited one of the leaders of that march and her daughter, who also worked at our plant.

With ups and downs, we've established a circulation of 50-100 Challenge readers and sellers. In some areas, Challenge has become the "paper of record" as most issues of the paper contain some article on our industry.

We've built a small Party club.

That's a few examples off the top of my head. We can do more still. We'll talk more about that as we discuss the new situation here.

May 1968: French Workers Rebel

Of course, there are many bigger, more significant, more revealing struggles of the industrial working class. One such struggle occurred in France, May through June of 1968.

The "Barricades of May" started when the cops were called into the Sorbonne (the main campus of the University of Paris) against students protesting the closing of a branch school, cuts and the war in Vietnam. A six hour battle ensued leading to a general strike throughout the university system. On the 13th, 600,000 demonstrated. So far pretty standard stuff!

But then the workers struck, starting with the auto plants. Within a few days, 4 million were out, then 6 million by the 24th. Soon after, 10 million workers out of a country of 50 million people were hitting the bricks. Uh-oh!

The French ruling class started to worry about the loyalty of their armed forces. After all, the soldiers were the sons and daughters of the working class. Here's how one soldier saw it in a letter to *Le Nouvel Observateur*:

I want to make it clear that there is not a single enlisted man (here) who wants to (fight the strikers). Just the opposite: committees have been organized to turn against the officers and also to sabotage all transport vehicles, armored or otherwise. For this reason, the Minister of the Armed Forces has rapidly

moved to take security precautions against these measures (personnel transfers).

Given this situation, you have to say there was a revolutionary situation. Here's how our Party saw it at the time, as excerpted from a PL magazine article:

It seems reasonable to say that the situation was objectively revolutionary...In order for "May" to have developed into a full-scale insurrection, certain key conditions were necessary:

The masses, and particularly the workers in heavy industry, would have had to be organized around the concept of workers' state power over a period of years;

The party, having estimated the potential inherent in the May rebellion, would have had to supply the workers with weapons in order to launch armed struggle;

The party would have had to call for the seizure of power as the only logical course for the struggle to pursue...

We might add that a base would have had to been built in the armed forces if there was to be any thought of revolution.

The article continued:

The history of "May" defines the contradiction between "Reform and Revolution": about as sharply as it can be defined. The present paper emphasizes the role of the PCF [the revisionist French "Communist" Party] in order to show that the failure to build a base for proletarian dictatorship in the working class must lead to the complete, abject betrayal of Marxism and workers' struggles. You fight either for [communism] or for the maintenance of the profit system. There is no middle ground

The epitaph of the May revolt was written by a 20-year old worker in a letter to *Le Monde*. "Too bad!" he said. "It seems we came so close to something really new."

So what lesson do I draw out of all this; if you start something, you better know who is going to finish it!

October 1917: Russia Workers Finish the Job with Revolution

Now we'll go back in history a little farther before discussing the present day. The Russian revolution of 1917 is even more revealing. After the seizure of State power, Russia was thrown into years of civil war. Here's how the industrial workers organized to win the battle at Pulkovo Heights as war broke out...and how the working class, particularly the industrial working class, finished it!

"The workers of the different factories and mills vied with each other in heroism. Some, in response to the call of the Military Revolutionary Committee, took up arms and went to the front. Others worked on fortifications at the approaches to Petrograd...In the factories the production of war material went on day and night. The

# ***'Each and every industrial worker must deal daily with the ramifications of the main contradiction in capitalism today—the inter-imperialist rivalry.'***

workers repaired armored cars, assembled guns and fitted up armored trains...

"I myself went to the forward positions with a workers' unit of 200 strong and remained there five days. Very often mechanics were sent to repair guns. Over 500 workers [from the Putilov Works] and 50 carpenters were sent to the trenches with all the tools they needed.

"...In the October days alone the Putilov workers received over 2,000 rifles, of which 1,212 were issued to the works proper, and 804 to the Putilov shipyard. About half the youths employed in the Putilov Works joined the Red Guard. A large number of men served in the technical forces...."<sup>1</sup>

By now, you've probably figured out I'm a big one for lessons. So here are the lessons one party member drew from these events, and others like it, in an article entitled "Armed Insurrection: The Road to State Power"<sup>2</sup>:

Industrial workers have the training, the collectivity, the discipline, and the know-how to accomplish what from the outside seems impossible. When they have learned communist ideas, and are under the leadership of a communist party, no force on earth can stop them.... We must keep firmly in front of our minds that we are in the shops to build a political base for revolution. Workers will not march out of the factories as described above by the Commissar of the Putilov Works if the primary political perspective we have provided them has centered around their particular boss and the immediate grievance in the plant.

I hope this history can give you a taste of the central role industrial workers play in revolutionary movements. Today: The Changing Composition of the Industrial

Working Class

So what about the situation today? Workers still create all value in society—every bit. The working class is the majority in every country in the world, potentially the most powerful force on earth.

Within the working class, we focus on industrial workers and soldiers as the main forces for revolution. They are not, and can not be the only force. Teachers, students, service workers and many in the professions must be won to smashing imperialism. They all play vital, indispensable roles. Transportation and communication workers, which are often classified in the service sector, are really key contributors to maintaining industrial might. It is these workers—industrial, transportation and communication—that are central to revolution because of their organization and direct relationship to the means of production (which potentially gives them both the power and the understanding of that power and its class relationship).

Each and every industrial worker must deal daily with the ramifications of the main contradiction in capitalism today—the inter-imperialist rivalry. To paraphrase Mao, "Before the U.S. imperialists can attack the world's workers; they must attack the U.S. working class." This is nowhere more clear than in the industrial plants.<sup>3</sup>

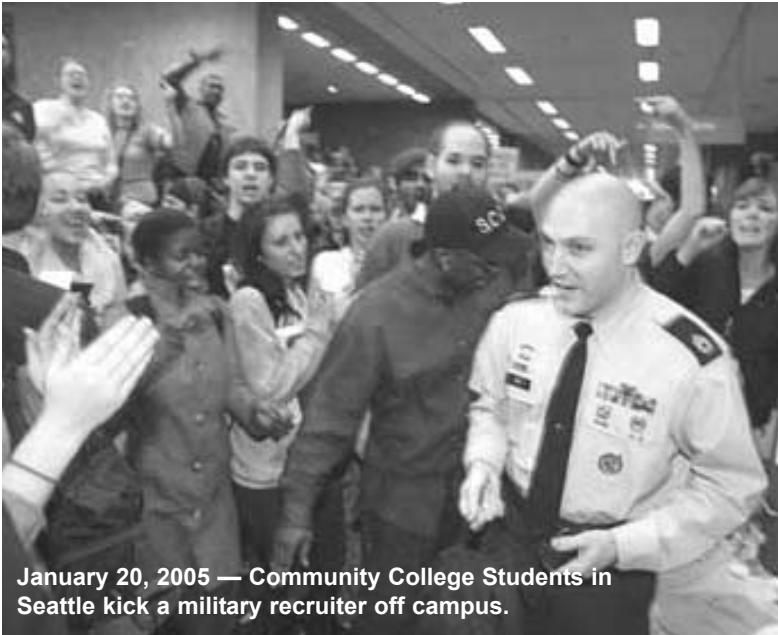
So what is the state of industrial workers in the U.S. today? The U.S. industrial workforce has stayed stable at 15 to 20 million since 1965, with variations according to the state of the economy. A similar number in transportation, communication and other related fields provide direct support for manufacturing. U. S. manufacturing workers numbered 18.1 million in 2003 and have risen slightly since then.

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<sup>1</sup> **The History of the Civil War in the USSR, vol. II, pp.364-366.**

<sup>2</sup> **PL Magazine, vol. 1, no. 2 (April-May 1978) pp.7-20.**

<sup>3</sup> **See "Industrial Workers Hold Key to Smashing Capitalism's 'Covenant with Death.'"**



January 20, 2005 — Community College Students in Seattle kick a military recruiter off campus.

But there has been change in the composition of the industrial workforce. Last month, our union “leaders” refused to tell us how many members were left in our union. This last month, they bragged that we were going to “have lots of leverage” because a few hundred workers were going to be recalled from layoff. Some wit then asked our president what was going to happen to the Indiana division. “Oh, the company is probably going to sell it,” he answered.

“So how many union members will no longer be in our bargaining unit if that goes through?” followed up our co-worker.

“About 3,800!” the president had to admit.

Some leverage! In fact, almost all of component fabrication, which employed tens of thousands, is being sold.

The Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston gives another clue as to what’s happening. It reports that 2.7 million manufacturing jobs were lost in the last recession. At the same time, 320,000 new jobs went to immigrants in the manufacturing sector, concentrated in Texas and Southern California.

Further, the labor department reports that 7 out of 10 jobs outsourced go to U.S. subcontractors. The role of computers in productivity has been greatly exaggerated, but the internet has allowed subcontractors to provide “just-in-time” delivery of subassemblies and components.

So here’s the picture. Most industrial workers have been forced to work for suppliers or mini-mills. Millions of these workers are Latin and other immigrants; most are non-union. At this point, only 8% of the private workforce is unionized. The hours are long and the work

often dangerous. Some suppliers have built around the old industrial plants to be near final assembly; others that are not in Texas and Southern California are spread throughout the south, employing large numbers of black workers.

Former presidential candidate John Kerry sop to the unions was a plan to withhold a 5% tax credit from firms that sent jobs overseas. This proposal and the slue of similar proposals coming out of the ruling class think-tanks, like the Council on Foreign Relations (often known as the CFR) and the Brookings Institute, aim to beef up war production in the U.S. Each of these proposals implicitly endorses the fascist grinding down of the industrial working class we’ve talked about.

Subcontracting is being driven by the laws of capitalism—the need to maximize profits while facing the inevitable crises of overproduction that plague capitalism. Nonetheless, the main section

of the U.S. ruling class is not content to let the marketplace dictate all developments.

No less a luminary than Jay Rockefeller, heir to the Standard Oil fortune and democratic Senator from West Virginia, has said, in no uncertain terms, that the U.S. must maintain a robust steel industry for strategic reasons—in other word, for war!

Rockefeller’s think-tank, the CFR, has been saying things like this for years. Today, the drumbeat from the ruling class advisors on this topic has become inescapable. As far back as 1987, the CFR published a book, *Manufacturing Matters* that warned the ruling class to pay more attention to its industrial base if it wanted to remain “a leading economic, political and military power.”

Industry is the “tip of the spear” for the bosses’ plans for imperialist dominance and conquest. For the working class also, industrial workers are the “tip of the spear”—along with soldiers themselves—in our need to smash imperialism and the rotten capitalist system that breeds imperialist wars and racist oppression and exploitation.

Matt Taibbi, a reporter for New York City paper, looked over the half million demonstrators at the Republican Convention last fall and concluded we could march till hell freezes over and still not end the war. Strikes, he said, could not be ignored. Strikes at industrial war plans would certainly sharpen the contradictions! (Not to mention rebellions among the troops, many of who are the sons and daughters of industrial workers. To tell the truth, some of those fighting are industrial workers themselves, in the Guard or Reserves.)

## Your Future: Live a Life of Meaning

Today, most, if not all, of our industrial work is in

unions. In the future, some of this work, of necessity, will be non-union.

Union or non-union, our goals remain the same. We're after political leadership of the workers. Within the working class we are particularly concerned with winning a base among industrial workers and soldiers.

In France '68, we saw what happened when you don't have that base among industrial workers. The revisionist, the union reformist leaders hold sway. Eventually, they were able to corral the revolutionary aspirations of the working class into dead-end economic reforms.

Now, I'm not saying that every process doesn't have its limits; you can't pull a revolution out of a hat. But you could see that in France of '68, the limits reflected the weaknesses of the left, not the objective situation.

I remember my friend—the one who was afraid our strike would become a fading memory—reading an article we did for Challenge on rolling thunder and the marches through the plant that led to that strike. "It's the best article I've seen on what happened," he said.

Now when I sent that article to our ace editorial staff, they were not so laudatory. They had some [useful] criticisms. "It's like all this class struggle came out of nowhere!" they complained. So I wrote a box detailing our paper sales of 45/issue, our attempts to defeat nationalism with Airbus workers and the thousands that fought with us over the years. The Challenge staff was right: only nothing comes from nothing.

Now the Bolsheviks, the Russian Communist Party, had, maybe, 30 workers in the Putilov Works just prior to the revolution. But those workers represented years and years of political basebuilding. The Bolsheviks, because of this base, were able to take advantage of the changing objective conditions—to wit: war! A revolutionary communist, political base opens up all sorts of opportunities.

The same long-term revolutionary basebuilding applies to non-union work as well. Long ago, when I was your age, I worked at a couple of subcontractors. After a few months on the first job, I talked to some workers about the need for a union. I was fired the next day. I changed my tactics at the second job. I spent more time building a base for the Party. I spent more time with my co-workers off the job, circulating our paper. My main concern was building the party. I got hired at the plant in which I now work after about a year. Two others that I had worked with at this second subcontractor eventually got hired on as well. They still read Challenge.

I'm not talking about the Protestant work ethic here—you know, if you slave for the boss, you get into heaven, pie in the sky when you die. If you work hard basebuilding, if the quality of your relationships with your fellow workers runs deep socially, personally as well

**“Nonetheless, capitalism is an inherently unstable system. During the Spanish civil war in 1937, it was said that power was spread on the ground, ready for the taking. The communists were not prepared to take it so the ruling class saved itself with a fascist dictatorship.”**

as politically, if you distribute our papers in sufficient quantities, so that in some areas of the plant Challenge becomes the "paper of record," if you struggle on each and every point, whether or not it is "outside" the immediate economic struggle in the shop, if you look for every opportunity to draw out the revolutionary lessons, you probably will still make relatively modest advances. That is the nature of the period.

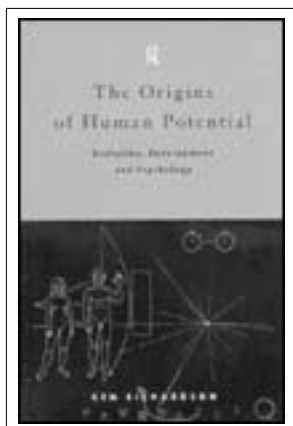
Nonetheless, capitalism is an inherently unstable system. During the Spanish civil war in 1937, it was said that power was spread on the ground, ready for the taking. The communists were not prepared to take it so the ruling class saved itself with a fascist dictatorship.

If we do our work today in these industries—and, probably, for a good number of years—we will be able to take advance of the inevitably more revolutionary situation ahead. Indeed, the more revolutionary work we do today the more quickly we will hasten the day this revolutionary situation is upon us. Revolutionary work builds confidence in the possibility of revolution.

One more example of what we should look for in our political work comes to mind. One of our comrades was recently elected president of his industrial union. We had breakfast the other day. The first story he told me about his campaign was about a friend of his that had just been rehired after nearly twenty years. The first words out of his friends mouth when he greeted our comrade after all those years was, "Are you still selling that paper [i.e. Challenge]?" That's putting first things first; are we still fighting for communism is the most important question before us!

That is what happens, even in this relatively slow period—when you understand that we are in this to serve the working class. We all have a long way to go in this regard: me above all. Whatever progress I've made, it is because of what my political relationships with my fellow workers have taught me; how this or that worker came through. Stalin used to refer to his political work, struggle and life among the Baku oil workers as his apprenticeship in revolution. I'm here today to invite you to start your apprenticeship. Thank you for your time!☺

# READS . . .



***The Origins Of Human Potential***, Routledge, 1998, and ***The Making Of Intelligence***, Columbia UP, 2002 by Ken Richardson,

Ken Richardson is a British researcher in human development and learning. He has written several books on

the subject. These two were written in 1998 and 2002, respectively, to refute the ideas of sociobiology (SB) and evolutionary psychology (EP). SB and EP are the latest waves of the genes-determine-behavior school of science. Rather than answering the many fallacies point by point, Richardson offers an alternative global view that is completely incompatible with SB/EP. Among the many excellent refutations written in the last few decades (see, for example, Gould, Hubbard, Keller, Lewontin, Oyama, H. Rose, and S. Rose—references at the end), these two books of Richardson's, while not necessarily the most comprehensive, are two of the most penetrating antidotes I have read.

This review was written for those who want a better understanding of the most fundamental and coherent basis for rejecting these particular forms of pessimistic ideology. Even if it doesn't prompt one to read Richardson her/himself, I hope it will give a reasonable summary of his writings, as I understand them. The main reason it is critical to see through the pseudoscience that comprises SB and EP is that widespread acceptance of their ideas constitutes an obstacle to the replacement of capitalism with an egalitarian, working-class-run society. It is Richardson's greatest shortcoming that he doesn't draw the conclusion himself that such a society is possible, let alone desirable. Nevertheless he provides a powerful basis for the reader to draw her/his own conclusions.

Pseudoscience has in common with science the offering of evidence from which logical inferences can be drawn, but differs from science in three main ways: 1) what is offered by its practitioners as evidence is often false, 2) pseudoscientists judiciously overlook evidence that implies different conclusions, and 3) they draw

***The Diary of a Soviet Schoolgirl: 1932-1937***  
by Nina Lugovskaya

The London Financial Times (Weekend edition, Nov. 6) reviewed a new book on the diary of Nina Lugovskaya, an anti-communist Soviet citizen imprisoned in the 1930s. The article compares it to the Diary of Anne Frank. Nothing could be more false.

Nina L. was 14 when she confided to her diary her dream of killing Stalin. Four years later she was arrested and sentenced to five years hard labor plus seven years exile in Siberia for plotting against the life of the Soviet leader.

There does not seem to be anything shocking in the book at all! Criminal things did occur in the USSR, though not as policy. However, Nina L. does not seem to have experienced any of them. She was born of an intellectual, privileged background. Her father was anti-Bolshevik, "a well-known Socialist Revolutionary" — i.e., a member of a terrorist party that assassinated politicians during the Tsar's time. Then, in 1918, the SRs killed the German ambassador to impel Germany to continue the war against the Bolsheviks. Then they tried to kill Lenin, and did shoot him, hastening his death.

Nina's father was exiled, but continued to live in Moscow illegally with his family. In 1937 — the year that the Military Conspiracy was discovered and arrests and executions became numerous — they were all arrested and sent to a prison camp (the "Gulag"), and then to internal exile (away from the major cities and the frontier). Later Nina became a famous artist, got



**September 2003  
Glas  
5 x 7, 200 pp.  
Trade Paper**

inferences for which the offered evidence, even when true, may be necessary but is not sufficient—in other words, alternative inferences would equally follow but are neither raised nor refuted.

### **THE CORE OF THE PSEUDOSCIENCE OF SB/EP HAS BEEN AROUND FOR MILLENNIA**

Richardson points out the continuity between the modern genes-determine-behavior outlook of SB/EP and that of Plato, who, over 2000 years ago, set out to justify the hierarchical Greek world of inequality, in which the small number of rich persons exploited, enslaved, and murdered the great number of poor persons. Plato justified social inequality primarily through the ranking of human individuals and groups according to a variety of characteristics held to be innate and therefore unchangeable. That is, he postulated invidious distinctions according to claimed scales of value.

Today's Platonists, such as E. O. Wilson, S. Pinker, S. Dawkins, R. Plomin, J. Tooby, and L. Cosmides, may or may not be as aware as Plato seems to have been of their role in shoring up what is today a dying system, but shore it up they do. Their "science" is pure subjective rationalization, in which they are forced to ignore the major portion of scientific progress made in the last few decades in fields as disparate as evolutionary biology, genetics, psychology, paleontology, education, history, sociology, anthropology, and even mathematics. But even more important than the factual and theoretical issues they ignore is the perceptual framework from which they operate.

The modern Platonic search for the ranking of human individuals according to allegedly innate characteristics is a consequence of the competitive quest for profit. Ranking people with respect to any allegedly innate characteristic opens the door for ranking groups and individuals by ethnicity, gender, and geography. In other words, ranking opens the door for racism, sexism, and nationalism, even if the authors deny, as they sometimes do, that this is their intention and even if they explicitly oppose one or another of these genocidal concepts. In a different kind of world from today's, in a world in which all cooperate to achieve mutual ends and to satisfy mutual needs, the question of how to rank human individuals might not even arise, as it would be without a *raison d'être*.

### **RICHARDSON'S KEY POINTS**

First I list for easy reference what I see as the key concepts that Richardson raises, though, taken one point at a time, he is not necessarily the first author to do so. Then I follow this list with fuller discussion—discussion in which I give free rein to my own interpretation of these points, such that Richardson may or may not always

married, had a family, and in general had a successful life.

A Russian-language web page describes this "heroine" as follows:

"She hates Soviet power; hates the people who submit to it — 'they recognize only eating and bribes, they know neither honor nor pride' [so much for the working class and peasants] and praises terrorists [the 'People's Will'] to the skies. Why 'must we listen to all the Jewish swine [she's an anti-Semite too] and kowtow to Stalin, the low-down Georgian [also racist against minority nationalities] who has crippled Mother Russia? He should be killed as soon as possible.' She admired Nikolaev, the man who shot Kirov — 'he was better than all the other so-called leaders of the working class put together' [Nikolaev was mentally ill]. Therefore, there was no possibility for her rehabilitation."

Nina L. REALLY hated the workers. Here's a line from her diary (quoted in the Russian-language article) — she was working with her mom in an adult school, teaching workers:

"These strange and hostile workers become like meek and obedient children once they are in school."

A revolution in the U.S. would be at least like other countries — about 10-15% of the population will be unalterably hostile. Many may move abroad. But what will be done with the many who will be hostile? We're opposed to shooting them all — as were the Vietnamese Communists, who instead put those who were the backbone of the Saigon regime into re-education camps.

And how about Anne Frank, the Dutch Jewish girl, victim of Nazism, who the Financial Times compares to Nina L.? For three years, Anne lived in an attic where she wrote her diary. Captured, the Nazis shipped her off to a concentration camp, where she died of disease and neglect, none of her fellow inmates being able to give her medicine, etc.

Just what is the comparison? "They both wrote diaries." This is the kind of nonsense to which knee-jerk capitalist anti-communism leads.

All these anti-Stalin, anti-communist books always minimize or fail to mention is the fact that the Soviet Union in the 1930s was facing the world's most powerful military machine (Nazi Germany and fascist imperial Japan), as well as U.S., French and British support of Hitler's plan to "destroy Bolshevism."

In 1939, the Japanese fascists invaded the Soviet Union through Mongolia and were roundly defeated by the Red Army. If they had succeeded, they would have seized Siberia and split the Soviet Union by half. In

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agree with the end product. Since my goal is to discuss the ideas rather than to praise (or bury, certainly) Richardson, where his ideas end and my ideas begin may not always be clear. Nevertheless, unless I state otherwise, all the ideas expressed are ones I accept as true, in my present state of understanding. Richardson's key points, to my mind, are as follows:

Each stage of development in the embryo/fetus and during life, is brand new, rather than being merely the unfolding of predetermined stages.

There is a hierarchy of levels of human existence, from genetics to epigenetics to cognition to culture, and all these levels are involved in mutual, two-way interactions.

The concept that people are the passive products of, and innocent bystanders in, a battle between nature and nurture (i.e., genes and environment) is demonstrably false.

A person's activity helps to determine her/his development.

Natural selection requires many generations to produce change in a species, while animals (including humans) have to respond to environmental changes that are so rapid (much shorter than a lifetime) that natural selection has no chance to operate.

These rapid environmental changes are in part produced by the activity of the animals/humans.

What natural selection and other evolutionary mechanisms have done for humans is to produce a plasticity and capability of responding to these rapid environmental changes that occurs on a level above that of the genes and biology.

Any innate aspects of human abilities are common to all members of the species—except (the usual disclaimer) for that small number of people with defects that are either genetic or congenital or a result of injury or illness.

The absence or mutation of a single allele (one of the forms of a gene) may be shown to produce a particular negative effect in the organism, but this does not mean that the presence of the allele causes the positive effect (i.e., while an allele may be a necessary factor, this does not make it a sufficient one).

The primary difference between humans and all other animals—including our closest relatives, chimps and gorillas—is not that only humans learn during their lifetimes (because other animals do as well), not that only humans use or even make tools (because in primitive ways other animals do as well), not that only humans walk upright nor that humans speak (beginning to differentiate), but rather that only humans teach each

other (e.g., adults teach youth).

As a result, only humans, as a species, make and have a cumulative history of social stasis and change spanning thousands of generations.

The invention of IQ was intended as an artificial way to rank humans in a class divided society (capitalism), and the various IQ tests were specifically designed to rank humans according to the prejudices of the test designers, both among individuals and among groups. When the test failed to rank people according to these prejudices it was modified over and over again until the results came out as desired.

One of the desired features of IQ tests was that the distribution of results in the population follows a bell curve (also known as a normal or Gaussian curve), and only by judicious selection of hard and easy questions in designing the tests could that result be obtained. This counters the claim by Herrnstein and Murray (among others) that the bell curve reflects an underlying reality about humans rather than about the tests.

Most measured traits in humans do not, in fact, follow a bell curve distribution in the population.

All studies of prodigies (children with unusual talents) have shown that their abilities were far from innate, but rather that their development required tremendous amounts of work and sacrifice of other activities by both the children and their parents.

Even skills like math are developed when they become necessary (even without direct teaching), one example being 10-year-old street traders in Brazil.

Cognitive skills are not a property (much less an innate property) of individuals, but rather are a shared property of humans in society as a result of human culture, and culture develops over generations, with a changing and non-repeatable history.

Science is an important example of these developing cultural features.

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1941, a 4-million-strong Nazi army invaded the Soviet Union.

Yes, there were abuses and injustices in the Soviet Union. But they were on our side! And on the side of the working class. We'll never learn the real story of what happened in the USSR from anti-communist writers who can't see the truth.

*Soviet Historian Buff*

The understanding by individuals of things that require human cooperation can only be obtained through actually engaging in such cooperation, i.e., an isolated human could not achieve such understanding.

Cognitive skills can not be reduced to rules that a computer can follow but rather involve context and past experience, and often serendipity (sudden insight that favors the prepared mind). As an incidental point on which I do not enlarge in this review, this suggests that the search for artificial (computer) intelligence that completely mimics human intelligence is futile.

Humans, and perhaps other animals, learn from infancy by being able to single out, from among the myriad changeable relationships among things, those relationships that are relatively fixed. This is also described as the recognition of patterns imbedded in a profusion of otherwise chaotic features, or the discernment of signal within noise.

I'll expand on most of these points, but first, to restate what I believe to be the main point and that I mentioned above, these points add up to a certain conclusion that Richardson, for whatever reason, does not draw in either book: The only way that each individual will be able to develop her/his cognitive abilities, limited only by her/his time on earth, is in the context of a social order in which competition and its inevitable companion, ranking, are abolished. Only in such a social order will it be possible for the concept of innate inequalities among individuals and groups to vanish.

#### **DEVELOPMENT VERSUS UNFOLDING**

Judging from what is published, most researchers and professors in the field of psychology harbor and espouse the notion that human development represents simply the unfolding of predetermined stages. Richardson, on the other hand, correctly, I think, maintains that human development is a process of creation of new and novel characteristics—whether prenatally or during the lifetime of an individual, or indeed over the history of groups and societies. That is, development is truly an act of creation, of something that has not yet existed out of what already exists. Learning, for example, for an individual is the creation of new psychological states that are not predetermined, and therefore cannot have been preprogrammed anywhere in the body, much less in the genes.

This is no less true for many, if not most or even all, animals, particularly mammals. Karl Marx pointed out over a century ago that humans create our own history, and this history is not written out in some monk's heavy manuscript prior to the events of which it is comprised. The new is continually arising out of the old. It is truly new, even though it will always bear aspects of the old, as well as differences from the old. The latter was

another aspect of Marx's observation, namely that humans cannot make that history outside the context of the state of affairs to which past history has already brought us.

Historical context may be seen as analogous to traffic laws. Such laws do not determine where we go, when we go, or what route we take, but they do limit the speed at which we follow whatever route we choose, when we choose it, and do help to keep us from colliding with other vehicles at and between intersections. So to follow predetermined traffic laws is not the same thing as following a predetermined route and timing, much less to a predetermined destination. The confounding of the former with the latter is analogous to one of the essential fallacies in SB and EP, though the theoreticians in those fields apply this confounding reasoning to genes and organisms rather than to traffic laws and trips through town.

#### **NESTED HIERARCHY**

Richardson makes full use of the concept of a hierarchy of levels of existence, from the individual human's biological makeup (including her/his genes) to the influence that environment exerts on selecting which genes are expressed (called into use) and when, to cognition and learning by the individual, to the social and cultural context in which all humans learn. The active role of the individual, both alone and in cooperation with others, is not lost on Richardson. He shows how this activity operates back on the selection of which genes are expressed and even on the selection of genes for reproductive success, particularly through the changes in the environment brought about by that human activity.

Richardson takes the linguist, Noam Chomsky, to task for claiming that humans have predetermined grammatical structures built into our genes. Chomsky claims that only such genetic structures make it possible for a newborn infant to acquire language from listening to adults (and other children). But the point is that young children do not, in fact, acquire language merely by listening. Rather they acquire it both by listening and, primarily, by acting, and indeed through the teaching activity of adults and other children around them. It is through countless, repeated, painstaking, and often frustrating efforts at trial and error in social interaction with others that children learn to speak. These trials at trying to speak are either reinforced (usually when basically correct) or discouraged (usually when in error) by the response of the adults and/or other children, and over time this active trial and error constitutes the process of language acquisition. By omitting the active role of the child, Chomsky is driven to supply some other explanation, since he is correct that listening alone could

not explain the child's ability to speak.

13. An important implication of the primacy of human activity, as opposed to passivity, is that we don't have to simply accept the current situation in our lives, in our local and national surroundings, or in the world. Our activity—particularly collective activity—can change all that. We are not limited by any (imaginary) innate human characteristics, as SB/EP, and indeed much of bourgeois social science, would have it.

#### **HUMANS ARE NOT PASSIVE IN A MYTHOLOGICAL BATTLE BETWEEN NATURE AND NURTURE**

14. The cliché, nature versus nurture, is a cute and concise way of saying that humans are mainly a product of their genes (nature) modulated by the effects of environment (nurture). Richardson points out that even those SBers and EPers who seem to give a balanced role to each of the two players, always end up sneaking in an unbalanced and predominant role for the genes. The most fundamental antidote to such thinking is to resupply the missing activity of the human as she/he develops throughout life, even leaving aside for the moment the social context in which each of us carries out this activity.

(As an aside, Oyama gives a much more complete treatment of the fallacies involved in the opposition of "nature versus nurture." One of her most revealing points is that causation is always multiple—i.e., no effect has only one cause—and that the particular cause among many that is said to be the "determining" cause depends entirely on the author's arbitrary, and often unwitting, choice of which of the contributing causes are taken for granted, or taken as given, with the remaining contributing cause then artificially raised to the level of "determining cause." She further undermines the "nature/nurture" opposition by indicating that they are not the same type of entity: rather her conception is that "nature" represents the current state of being of the organism, a product of all its prior development, while "nurture" represents some of the contributing causes to that development. Her writings are not easy to read, at least for me, but I find the effort to be extremely rewarding.)

#### **SPEED OF CHANGE IN DAILY LIFE IS TOO FAST FOR NATURAL SELECTION TO WORK**

Richardson points out that while natural selection may explain a significant amount of human evolution, i.e., the history of the development of humans out of ancestral animals, as well as possible evolutionary changes within the human species, it can only be an explanation for changes that take place over thousands and thousands of generations, in other words over many hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of years. But how can that

explain the rapid adaptability of individual humans to rapidly changing situations with which they are confronted every day? There must be a level above the genes on which some capability has arisen to enable that rapid adaptation.

I recall a discussion in class many years ago in which one student maintained that certain ethnic groups would have to go another century or so before catching up socially with whites, in partial answer to which I merely pointed out that it had taken him less than two decades to get where he was. I refrained from suggesting that that was none too far, or indeed from throwing something at him, and later treated myself to a beer for my equanimity.

During the course of a single day, we are all confronted with many familiar situations, and often with ones that are less familiar, or even completely unfamiliar. And certainly not a single situation reproduces exactly any of those we have already experienced in our past.

Again let's use traffic for illustration. Learning to drive a car is not learning ahead of time where and when to drive, at what speed, and where and when to turn, slow down, or stop, every day for the rest of our lives—or at least until our offspring take our cars from us, in fear that our worsening eyesight and reflexes will cause the death of either ourselves or of some innocent bystander. Instead, learning to drive amounts to giving us the capability to act safely and effectively in a huge variety of novel situations every day, ones for which our driving teacher won't be around to help us.

Every time we speak we make sentences that we have never before spoken in precisely that particular context. Moreover every time someone else speaks to us we are hearing a combination of words that we have never before heard precisely in that context. So learning to speak is not a prescription for what to say every day for the rest of our lives. Only a playwright expects that of her/his characters. Only an actress/actor learns lines that way—and even then the tendency to ad lib is sometimes overwhelming. But learning one's lines in a play is certainly not the same as learning to use a language in the first place. Indeed, learning lines presupposes knowledge of at least one language already, even if not the language of the play.

Therefore humans must develop a capability to adapt minute by minute to novel situations, and this cannot possibly be in the genes, since the genes are only formed and selected after hundreds of thousands to millions of years of experience by members of the species. Besides most of these daily novel situations do not relate to our ability to reproduce, and therefore the capability of dealing with them is not even a candidate target for natural selection. Novel situations cannot

change genes, yet they can change the responses of humans. Only if human cognitive abilities are on a level of organization different from the genetic level can they possibly equip us to respond to such rapidly changing circumstances.

It is that plasticity—in particular, capacity for developing the capability of rapid adaptation—with which natural selection and other evolutionary mechanisms have endowed us. The advocates of SB/EP often allow that humans have a certain flexibility, but unforced by any observation or experiment, they unnecessarily postulate that violations of our genetic programming are exceptions and reflect the evanescent success of our individual struggle to rise above our genetic constraints. When such exceptions remain unexplained by a theory and are merely relegated to the status of exceptions, the theory explains nothing. Indeed such a body of thinking is not even a candidate for a scientific theory, despite the number of votes it may receive.

23. This ability to adapt to circumstances that cannot be anticipated is not peculiar to our mental activity. The ability of our bones and immune systems to adapt to changing conditions is also part of our genetic make-up, but the particular adaptations cannot possibly be preprogrammed in our genes. For one thing, our bones can adapt to a wide variety of circumstances by shoring themselves up to resist repeated or continuous mechanical stresses, and our immune systems can manufacture antibodies to invading antigens that the body has never before seen, or indeed that no human body has ever before seen. After all, harmful microorganisms are continually evolving, and new ones arise all the time, but our bodies are capable of producing antibodies that are specifically designed to attach to new invaders. Astronauts lose bone density rapidly in outer space under conditions of weightlessness. How could this have been preprogrammed when no human had ever been in sustained conditions of weightlessness before the 1950s? So if our bones and immune systems have the plasticity required to adapt to new situations, why should not our mental faculties as well? To postulate that we have preprogrammed mental states that were selected by nature hundreds of thousands, or millions, of years ago flies in the face of rationality. Among other mysteries it leaves unexplained the lack of change in such mental states ever since. Certainly such a concept did not itself arise in the savannah during the Pleistocene epoch.

## **CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS**

Changes in our environments do not always happen without our participation. Indeed much of the changing

environment of the entire earth, such as global warming, destruction of the ozone layer, leveling of forests, and multiplication of pollutants in air and water, is a product of what humans do. So not only does our environment influence what we do, but we influence how our environment changes. The same is true on the level of the individual. For example, we make friends, we elicit responses from our fellow workers and relatives, and we raise our children to, among other things, take care of us in our old age—though when we build an egalitarian society based on human need and cooperation, rather than private profit, the entire collective society will take care of us in our old age, rather than placing the entire burden on our own children. Lewontin, among others, has made the even more profound point that what constitutes the environment of an organism (or of a molecule or a cell, etc.) is determined by the mutual interaction of the organism (molecule, cell) and its surroundings, such that the various creatures in one and the same meadow, say, may have very different environments—the grasshoppers one, the birds another, etc.

Clearly humans are not simply passive victims of the environment in a one-way relationship.

## **INNATENESS**

The only thing that can be said to be innate in humans concerning cognitive abilities is the ability to learn throughout life. What we learn, when we learn it, the order in which we learn it, etc. are all aspects of development (not simply an unfolding) and as such are not predetermined. When we test, or observe, the intellectual accomplishments of a particular individual at any particular time of any particular day under any particular circumstances, all we are doing is taking a snapshot, and often through a distorting lens at that (see below about IQ tests). To attribute this to the individual as a fixed characteristic is patently absurd. It's like testing a third grader and concluding that she will never be able to learn calculus. The most that could possibly be learned from this is that she doesn't currently understand calculus. And even that conclusion may be false, since it is based on certain assumptions, for example that she was willing and able to do her best during the test. Many people may be having a bad day or may always find the testing context one in which their understanding cannot easily be expressed. After all, a test taker has to understand and trust the intentions of the tester, which is anything but a foregone conclusion.

Another assumption is that the test is really capable of differentiating between those who do and those who don't understand calculus, let alone differentiating

between those who will some day be capable of coming to an understanding and those who won't, or that the test is capable of assessing the current depth of that understanding. Such assumptions are rarely if ever even questioned, let alone tested, by those who are otherwise such ardent test makers and test givers.

28. There is an entire science of methods to evaluate diagnostic tests and devices. This science deals with such properties of a test as its sensitivity and specificity, as well as the way these each change when the criterion for pass/fail is adjusted up or down. This science has grown up mainly since World War II, when there was a need to tell whether radar was picking up enemy planes or just undergoing random fluctuations from birds, wind, equipment noise, etc. It has found a rapidly growing application to medical tests and devices in the last couple of decades, and it is similarly applicable to educational testing, though it is rarely if ever used by school systems. In the absence of such a scientific approach to educational testing, the tests remain in the middle ages along with alchemy and astrology, and lend themselves only to the ranking of individuals for the needs not of the individuals but of the present and future employers of the individuals.

Fundamentally the very concept of innateness of anything within the cognitive level fails to take account of the social interactions that determine a person's cognition. Things social cannot be preinstalled in the individual, since they are a joint property of the individual and the others around her/him, and individual relationships and social forms change over time.

#### **THE EFFECT OF GENE DEFECTS CANNOT PROVE THAT GENES CAUSE THE AFFECTED TRAIT**

There are occasional individuals with a missing or defective allele (one form of a particular gene) that is associated with some defect in her/his apparent cognitive achievement. However, contrary to common claims, this proves nothing about that gene's contribution to that achievement, much less to the capability of greater achievement in the future.

31. Possession of the common allele shared by the rest of the species (and we share the vast majority of our alleles with all humans, with only a small proportion varying throughout the population) cannot be said to determine a characteristic that is absent when the allele is absent. It would be like concluding, just because you can't drink water out of a badly broken glass, that an intact glass determines that water will always be in it to drink or that water is the only thing you can drink from it. A necessary condition (intactness) to drink water is not the same as a sufficient condition to drink water. Yet

the confounding of necessary and sufficient is the logic applied by psychologists and others who draw these conclusions from genetic defects.

#### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS**

Richardson makes the interesting observation—and for the moment I'll take his word for it, not having read enough in this area myself—that no other primates (monkeys and apes—our closest relatives) have ever been observed teaching their young. The young may learn from watching and doing, but there is no deliberate teaching. Only humans, he says, teach each other. Other differences between humans and non-human primates are often matters of degree, though the degree may be minuscule or gigantic. There are chimps and gorillas who have been taught to use language with a degree of understanding, even though they have to use non-oral forms such as signing or selecting symbols shown to them. So speech is not a sharp qualitative dividing line. And other animals use and make rudimentary tools—e.g., chimps. And still other animals walk more or less upright on two legs—e.g., flamingos.

It is teaching and the subsequently developed ability to extend memory by recording on stone or other surfaces that allow human experience to accumulate on the societal level. Without such accumulation there would be no development of history. While certain kinds of changes over the short term in social organization have been observed by primatologists in non-human primates (apes and monkeys), and by other scientists in other animals, only humans develop a history of noticeable changes in social organization over thousands of years, and with technological advances that stand on the shoulders of past technologies.

#### **IQ AND ITS PROPONENTS**

While Richardson is far from the first to expose the fallacies of IQ, he adds some interesting points. He, and others, have explained that the tests designed to measure something called "IQ" were deliberately designed to produce the outcome that they do, namely the ranking of individuals according to their current and future success in school. First, he points out that no correlation whatsoever has been found between a person's performance on an IQ test and the quality of her/his performance in her/his chosen career.

Second, he points out that one of the desired outcomes of IQ testing was that the results distribute according to the bell curve. The bell curve is a common, though far from universal, distribution of many features in the universe across a population. For example, height of

children in a classroom (who are therefore close in age) has an average with some shorter and some taller than that average, and with most being relatively close to the average, and many fewer being much taller or shorter.

All that was required in the design of the IQ test for the scores to follow a bell curve among children of the same age and same ethnic background, and therefore roughly the same general social treatment, is the increase in the number of questions of either low or high difficulty and the decrease in the number of questions of medium difficulty. (Richardson has this reversed, but whether he has it right or I do, his point is still correct that a judicious choice of questions determines the shape of the distribution of scores.)

The main point is that the test was deliberately pushed and pulled and fixed and adjusted, over many, many testing sessions, precisely in order to yield the predetermined result, namely a bell curve distribution of scores. Thereby it would feed the illusion, even perhaps in the minds of the test makers, that this must be measuring something natural and innate.

Authors such as Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, who wrote *The Bell Curve* in 1994, used that feature as their title and to argue for innate abilities, and indeed to argue that therefore white children were clearly innately superior to black children. One psychologist, to prove a point, constructed a test many years ago in which he picked and chose questions to produce the outcome that on average black children got higher scores than white children. His point was not to show that black children were superior to white, but rather to expose the fact that any outcome is a feature not of the children tested but of the test itself, and therefore of the prejudices of the test makers. Nor can any such test be invented that measures some fixed feature of the test takers.

Partly in response to the suffragette movement, a similar set of adjustments was made in order to force the tests to yield similar results for boys and girls. This, too, was accomplished by trial-and-error removal and insertion of various questions about things that were more or less familiar to boys or to girls.

40. Richardson decries the fact that IQ tests have so much become a part of the armamentarium of psychologists and teachers over the better part of the last century that the vast majority of them fail to see that IQ tests embody a complete and total lie. More often than not, it is said that, while IQ tests have their weaknesses, they are the best instrument we have to evaluate people's cognitive abilities. The primary point that Richardson makes is that that characteristic of people for the evaluation of which IQ tests are

instruments, is a mythical characteristic, and therefore any instrument for its evaluation is necessarily based on a falsehood. To purport to choose the "best" instrument to measure a non-existent characteristic is to engage in deception, of others and possibly self. But not content to stop at that, he shows precisely how the IQ test lies when it purports to evaluate the test takers rather than the test makers.

Another interesting, but incidental, point made by Richardson is that most features of humans do not, in fact, follow a bell curve distribution. Changes in populations over time play a large role in just how these distributions may look—for features such as height, weight, age, number of teeth, etc. The example given above of height of age-matched children in a classroom may follow a bell curve, but for the population as a whole, of all ages, it does not. Rather, in the case of height, the distribution is skewed to one side, and to a degree determined by the age distribution in the population, i.e., how many people there are of each age, which is in turn determined, for example, by the life expectancy and the birth rate. However, even for age-matched children or adults, not all characteristics to which a number can be assigned follow a bell curve. There are potentially an infinite number of differently shaped distributions, each of which must be determined empirically by observation or experiment.

#### **DOES THE EXISTENCE OF CHILD PRODIGIES PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF INNATE TALENTS?**

Richardson says that all studies of prodigies, whether it be musical, or mathematical, or poetic, or athletic, have failed to show innateness of these talents. Of course, finding innateness may be difficult, since it is a rule-out diagnosis, which is to say that one can only conclude, and tentatively at that, that something is innate if you cannot find, at least for the time being, an alternative explanation for it. But these studies have found the alternative explanation, according to Richardson. They have shown that the prodigious talents of these children are always the result of hard work, by both the child and her/his teacher(s)—who are often the child's parent(s).

A couple of examples serve to illustrate the point. Mozart's father was a composer, who taught his son how to play several instruments and how to compose music when he was barely old enough to communicate. His father traveled around Europe showing off his son for his own aggrandizement—a common enough phenomenon in this day and age in the U.S. The apocryphal story is told that when a man came to the young adult Mozart asking if he would teach him how to write a symphony, Mozart responded that he would be better advised to

start with something simple, such as a string quartet. When the man protested that Mozart was writing symphonies at age 4, Mozart responded, "Yes, but nobody had to teach me how." If the story is true, he had apparently been taken in by the innate prodigy myth, and presumably, as with his toilet training, he had been too young to remember his father's earliest musical lessons.

As other, more modern examples, the Williams sisters, Venus and Serena, were taught to play tennis by their father practically before they could eat with a spoon, and they've been practicing it for many more years than most people their age. Similarly Tiger Woods's father taught him to play golf at a very early age.

Nothing here is meant to take away from the literally extraordinary skills of these persons. On the contrary, to imagine that these skills are innate is to take away from the credit that is due them, since if such outstanding skill is innate, then what credit do they deserve for possessing it? We praise them for what they have done, not for what they were given, though in capitalist society, the opposite is usually the case. The myth is enshrined and promulgated in the very terminology of the "gifted" child. The rich, who have inherited their wealth, are given great adulation by the media and cultural outlets, as though they deserve praise for what they were given, rather than for what they had earned through hard work. Since they run the society in their own interest, they see to it that others are praised along similar lines—for what they were given—thereby perpetuating illusions.

The most harmful result of these illusions, a point that Richardson stresses, is that everyone who is not a prodigy is taught to believe that she/he lacks the ability, or rather the ability to acquire the ability, for such achievements. Indeed we are taught that not only we ourselves, but virtually all those around us, lack the ability to acquire such ability. This is highly destructive to billions of individual children and adults, but, and this is a point that Richardson fails to make, such destructiveness is in the interests, indeed is critical for maintenance of the class position, of those who run the society and who need to forestall a challenge for that control.

### **EVEN MATH ABILITY IS NOT INNATE**

Richardson points out that 10-year-old street traders in Brazil, who are children living in poverty and scraping on the streets to survive, learn to manipulate the mathematics they need in their trading, despite the fact that they do not have the advantage, such as it is, of formal schooling in advanced placement classes. Necessity is the mother of invention, to coin a phrase—

yet another reminder that invention is the source of this kind of ability and not innateness.

Mark Twain couldn't have put it better when he said that the only years his education was ever interrupted were the years he was in school. Richardson discusses the destructiveness of the schools, and even places the blame on capitalism, but in arguing that this must change, he fails to conclude that the only way it can change is that the power holders must be removed and replaced by a class with different interests—a class who need to value all members of the human species and who do not need instruments designed to rank people, and thereby divide them, so that they are ripe for conquest and exploitation.

### **CULTURE IS THE MAIN MISSING INGREDIENT**

Richardson discusses the various levels of human organization, from genes to organs to the entire organism to social organization of multiple organisms, i.e., society. Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist of the early part of the twentieth century, is given credit by Richardson for the further development of the Marxist concept that humans are raised in a social context, without which we would not really be human. Indeed, says Vygotsky, we would have no language, and without language we would be incapable of forming concepts (Vygotsky).

Our common abilities to speak and form concepts derive from our interrelationships, our active interrelationships, with hundreds and thousands of people around us. This includes everyone from our parents and siblings to our teachers and fellow students to our friends and neighbors and coworkers, as well as to others with whom we are connected only through books, movies, etc. Numerous studies of feral children (wild children growing up outside the context of society, either with animals or locked up and isolated in cellars) have shown just how inhuman and animal-like such children can be.

This review doesn't begin to do these books justice, but should give enough of a flavor to encourage everyone to read them. In conclusion, in a world based on cooperation for the common goal of satisfying everyone's needs, ranking, by any criterion, would not arise, as it would be completely irrelevant. For example, if a number of persons hold a firemen's net to catch someone jumping out of a burning building, the only thing that matters is that each of them contributes to the saving of the jumper's life. It would be meaningless to ask which person had contributed the most, so the question would not arise.

While one can always imagine competition for the position of greatest contributor to such things as

industrial production, such competition should be discouraged, and there will be no material basis for its continuation. It may take several generations for us to completely unlearn the social habits born of centuries of class society, though it may occur much faster than that—it will be, after all, a matter of development, the creation of newness, so it is difficult to predict with any degree of certainty. But with the material basis for competition gone, the learning, or unlearning, will be enabled to proceed without hindrance. And then the ruling-class concept of individual intelligence will vanish from the earth.

by Lucas MacKenzie

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**1097-3087.**