

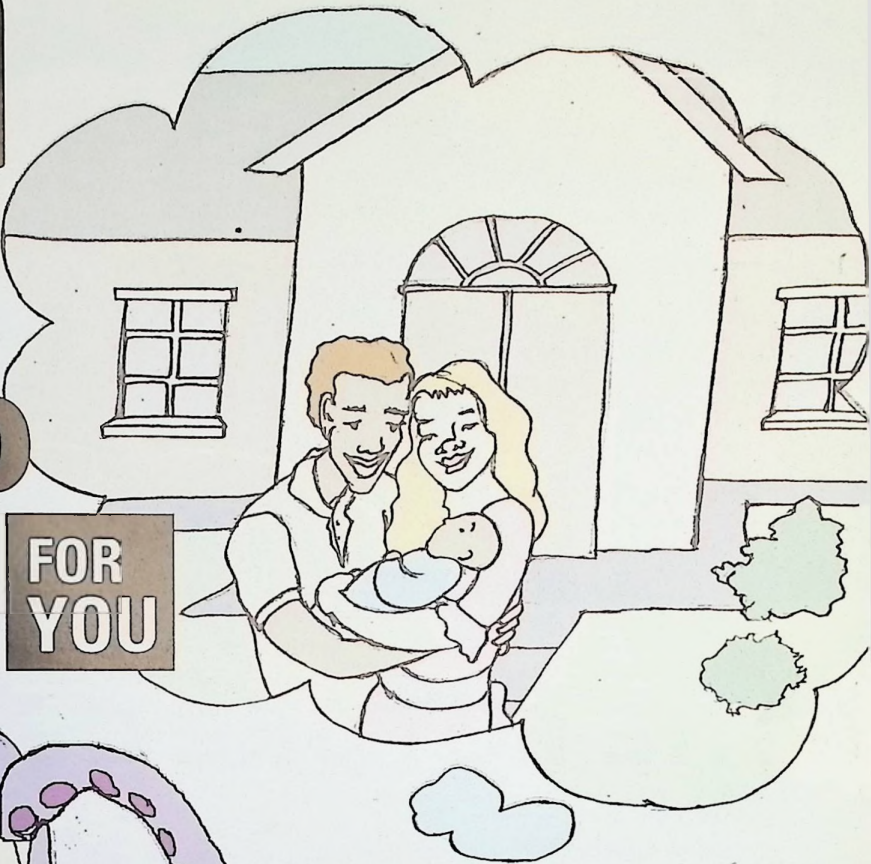
U S I M P E R I A L I S M O N T H E R O P E S

POLITICAL AFFAIRS A MARXIST MONTHLY

pa

December 2007 www.politicalaffairs.net

HAVE I GOT A GOOD DEAL



FOR
YOU



**CLIMATE CHANGE
AND PUBLIC
HEALTH RISKS**

**DASHIELL
HAMMETT AND
THE DETECTIVE
NOVEL**

**FRIDA KAHLO:
ARTIST AND
REVOLUTIONARY**

\$4.95



IN THIS ISSUE...

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Illustration by Jennie Santos

Communist Party Economics Commission Chair Art Perlo discusses the causes of the housing crisis in the US and its likely devastating economic impact. He shows how the problem is emblematic of the central contradiction of capitalism, and outlines immediate steps to aid those affected by the crisis. Writers David Cavendish and David Pena in two separate articles examine the key ideological question of the transition away from capitalism to socialism. Lawrence Albright studies the role of the brokerage firm Goldman Sachs in the US ruling class. David Lawrence sketches some of the pressing public health issues related to global warming. Eric Green and Norman Markowitz collaborate in a celebration of the courageous life of writer Dashiell Hammett. And artist Claire Carew takes us through an exhibit on the life and works of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo.

Please also find book reviews, poetry, and other items.

PA Editors

THE FUTURE OF PA

Dear Readers,

Due to high costs, the editorial board along with the leadership of the Communist Party has been forced to take cost cutting measures. This includes layoffs of two valuable and committed staff persons along with changing both the format and frequency of *PA*. The number of times we print will change from 11 to 6, and the glossy cover will be eliminated. Each issue will contain the same amount of reading material: however, the changed format will mean printing without pictures and therefore a reduced number of pages. The *PA* editorial board remains committed to insuring the same quality of editorial work and content. In fact, we will work even harder to improve it. We also intend to maintain our concept of *PA* as a magazine of politics, culture and ideology, but with longer and deeper articles.

We want to strongly encourage you to continue to follow *PA* online as our publication expands its presence there. In this world of 21st century publishing, more of our resources have to be devoted to publishing in the interactive online environment, where print, video, audio, and telephone are combining into one powerful platform. The fact is that the press – be it capitalist or working-class – is in transition from hard copy to electronic publishing, and we must become part of it. Already we have 3 times the number of regular readers online as we do in print and this number is sure to grow.

We look forward to working, struggling and dynamically interacting with you to achieve our goal of a new society and the realization of the scientific socialist and communist idea. If you have any questions about your subscription, we can be reached at paservice@politicalaffairs.net or 646-437-5336.

In struggle,

PA Board

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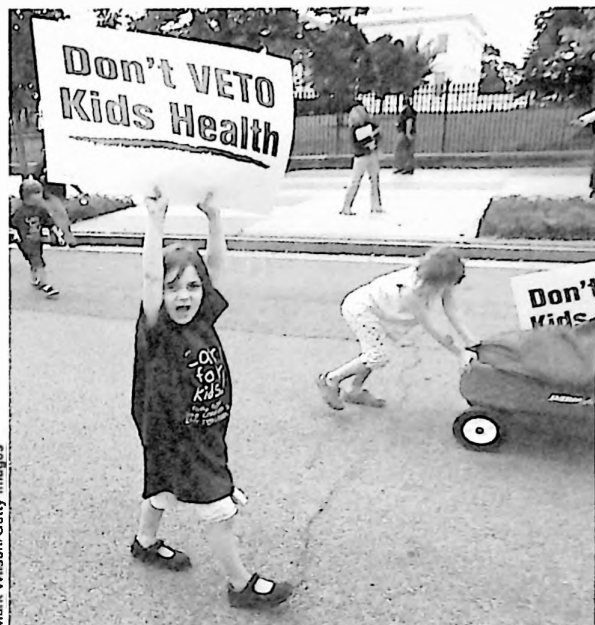
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Mark Wilson/Gaty Images

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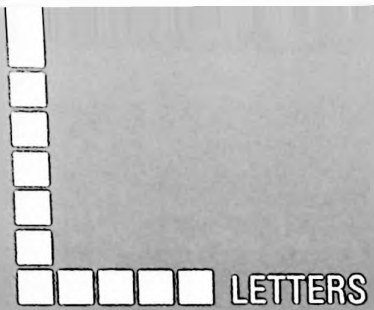
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Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Deeper Analysis Please
 Via e-mail

I hate to write a negative letter to *Political Affairs*, a magazine that I truly appreciate. However, when I got home and saw the latest issue in my mailbox with its cover: "Can Al Gore Save the World?" I was really looking forward to the article. I assumed that it would give the obvious answer, that Al Gore cannot save the world and politicians like him with such obvious ties to polluting corporations respond only to pressure from below. Instead I got a lightweight piece that had not a critical thing to say about Gore.

Then I saw an article about the Sandinistas, certainly an interesting subject. However, there was no mention of the fact that these new Sandinistas have outlawed abortion, which many feel is a stark betrayal of their past and principles. I'm not griping with *PA's* political positions, I'm just saying that a little more depth is in order.

Christopher Teret

Al Gore's Peace Prize
 West Palm Beach, FL

So, Al Gore, Jr. has won half a Nobel Peace

Prize for popularizing climatology among the middle classes in the G-7 (or 8?) countries. I suppose the world owes him a share of gratitude for that. But a mere glance at his record will make you wonder whether he deserves even half a prize. Gore was one of a handful of Democratic senators who voted in favor of Gulf War I. He was vice-president in an administration that bombed Iraq, Afghanistan and Sudan; sent US troops to Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia; terrorized Serbia with a 79-day bombing campaign; and enforced an economic blockade of Iraq that killed up to half a million Iraqi children. During the 2000 presidential campaign, Gore opposed relaxation of the economic embargo against Cuba and supported Elian Gonzalez's kidnappers. His environmentalism is overrated because he fails to attack capitalism, the root cause of the environmental crisis. Why would he, when he's made a bundle from his investments in Apple, Google and other corporations? Our environmental problems will never be solved as long as we have an economy that allows big business to profit from the destruction of the environment. The real Al Gore is a partisan of capitalism and war, not environmentalism and peace.

David S. Pena

Viva Cuba
 Yakima, WA

The US response to "worldwide revolution" has been to pit the Cold War ideology of freedom from oppression, otherwise described as anti-communism, against the political and economic interests of nations emerging from brutal exploitation. After January 1, 1959, defense of Cuban sovereignty and independence became a priority in the face of US subversion, paramilitary raids and sabotage operations. Unity, the right to self-determination and international solidarity proved decisive in their fight for recognition. During this period the continuity of foreign policy initiatives by the Cuban government to support independence among struggling African countries expressed their conviction that the attainment of democracy and equality is a conscious decision resulting from the need to overcome subservience and economic dependency. This has been the enduring legacy of the Cuban Revolution.

Richard Grassl

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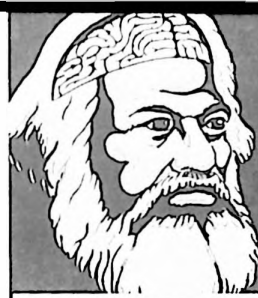
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1. For Marx and Lenin, participation in elections:

- a. should be opposed as capitalist tricks to divert the working class from revolution.
- b. supported at all times as the only democratic road to socialism.
- c. seen as tactics to mobilize the working class, not as ends in themselves.
- d. used to raise funds for the revolution.

2. Proportional representation in elections should be supported because they:

- a. permit voters to vote for a number of candidates on the basis of first and second choices, giving minority and particularly working class and left party candidates a serious chance to get elected to office.
- b. lead to campaigns where voters are introduced to a broad spectrum of views which mass media takes seriously, since minority candidates can be elected to office, leading to greater dissemination of pro working class, left and socialist ideas in politics.
- c. lead to various coalition governments at many levels which are more representative of what voters really want, leading also to a more effective representation of working class parties and influence.
- d. all of the above.

3. Marx and Lenin saw the state (government) as both

- a. an instrument of class rule and an instrument that the working class fights to gain control from the capitalist class.
- b. a mediator between capital and labor and a friend of the people.
- c. an oppressive force that must be smashed and replaced with voluntary cooperatives.
- d. a bureaucracy which is the model for both capitalism and communism.

4. As an example of the crucial link between socialism and democracy, left and socialist oriented governments have recently won elections in many Latin American countries where dictatorships were in power in the past. Which one of the following countries is not an example of this trend?

- a. Venezuela.
- b. Bolivia.
- c. Guatemala.
- d. Chile.

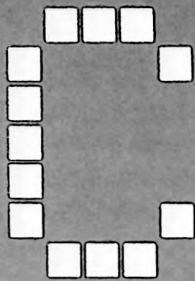
5. George W. Bush is "unique" in the political history of the US in that he:

- a. is the only president in US history who lost the popular vote.
- b. is the only president in US history who lost the electoral vote.
- c. is one of the two presidents in US history who reached the presidency by a five to four Supreme Court decision.
- d. is the only president to lose both the popular and electoral vote and reach the presidency by a five to four Supreme Court decision.

How to score yourself:

0-3 correct answers: Read *The Communist Manifesto*, by Marx and Engels and *The State and Revolution*, by Lenin.

4-5 correct answers: With your sharp knowledge of history and ideology, you should write book reviews for *Political Affairs*.



COMMENTARY

VIVA FRIDA: A TRIBUTE

"Frida Kahlo showing us all that suffering could not wither, nor sickness stave her infinite variety."

Carlos Fuentes,
The Diary of Frida Kahlo

"I paint myself because I am alone. I am the subject I know best."

Frida Kahlo

By Claire Carew

A woman of strength and courage graced this earth and lives through her art and photographs today. That woman we know as Frida Kahlo.

Over 400 thousand people attended the exhibition *Homage to Frida Kahlo* at the Museo Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City from June to August 2007.

The long lines of people waiting 2, 3 and up to 5 hours to enter Bellas Artes was history making and confirmed Frida's rightful place as an artist of great recognition.

On the last day August 19th Bellas Artes extended its hour of closing until midnight and still people were turned away.

Snaking, double and triple snaking around Bellas Artes and along city blocks we quietly waited, purchasing treats from vendors who constantly worked the lines beckoning us to eat a little and save our strength to view



Omar Torres/AFP/Getty Images

△ Pictures of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo taken by some of the most famous photographers of these times are on display at the Frida Kahlo museum in Mexico City.

Frida's work.

As a visual artist who is often globe trotting and gallery hopping, I have not seen lines of people waiting to see an art exhibition such as this one. Pablo Picasso and Vincent Van Gogh exhibits have not had lines like this.

Art exhibitions do not often attract this many people.

Reflecting on this phenomenon I began to conduct informal interviews. "Tell me why you like Frida's work. Why did you come?"

The answers were often vague. Some went to see her art work, others because they couldn't get enough of her life story and some, because they heard so much about the exhibition from the media and knew it

was history making, attended the show.

Ricardo and his wife Alejandra both lawyers were visiting the Bellas Artes for the first time even though they work within walking distance. They, like most people, are not gallery goers. "We came because we like her work and her life story."

On entering Bellas Artes it was "stop and go" we slowly made our way to each painting each letter, each photograph with the reverence you would pay to someone who had just died.

We marched often silently reading the analysis by historians and art critics below each painting. On occasion tears flowed readily from the eyes of those who identified with her pain and her art. With 65 well executed oil paintings, 45 drawings, water colors, and etchings; this retrospective clearly established that Frida Kahlo was a talented artist who understood the principles and elements

Frida the artist.
Frida the communist.
Frida the feminist.
Frida the naturalist.
Frida we will never forget you.

of design, composition and had a thorough knowledge of oil painting techniques.

Taking a closer look at her biographical paintings I took note of the intricate details of her work.

For example in the painting *Two Fridas* 1939 the prominent display of the hearts speak of sacrifice and reminded one of the Aztecs sacrificing human beings. In many of her paintings the hands dance, gesture and direct the viewer's eye to another aspect of the painting. One of the paintings that I was quite impressed is titled *Autorretrato con medallón* 1948: Self portrait with medallion. Frida painstakingly painted the intricate details of the lace head dress the folds of the fabric and the flowers and once again her eyes confront the viewer straight on. Her expression is serious.

There were also more than 50 letters and over 100 photographs of Frida that exemplified the depth and strength of this woman. I don't recall seeing any photos of Frida smiling. She was always serious and dressed in a dignified regal manner. However there is one photo that showed the tenderness of the

woman. It is a black and white photograph by Paul Juley of her sitting with her shoulders revealed.

She commanded respect and ensured that we the public took her seriously and learned of the various groups of indigenous people living in Mexico by the type of clothing she chose to wear.

Frida consciously decided against the norm of wearing sensuous frivolous uncomfortable clothing that so many women are encouraged and feel obliged to wear.

In a world of clear class distinctions, arrogance, race and often disparaging dismissal of all that is Indigenous, Frida stood and continues to stand above all in demonstrating her love and respect for the Indigenous peoples of Mexico. Her forthrightness, strength and portrayal of herself proudly dressed in indigenous traditional clothing were truly a statement of courage. Not too many would risk the ridicule and the stares she faced in Mexico, USA and France as she walked down the street wearing colorful indigenous clothing distinctly different from European style of dress.

Frida Kahlo suffered a terrible bus accident as a teenager that resulted in over 32 operations and her inability to conceive children. She lived a tumultuous life with Diego

Rivera the famous muralist and they were married twice. Frida Kahlo appeals to many of us as her life and art represents the diverse people we are today. Physically disabled, she used a wheel chair when need be. She was openly bisexual and of Indigenous, Spanish and Jewish ancestry. An accomplished artist and a member of the Communist party she voiced her opinions often in demonstrations. One of her last photographed public demonstrations was in support of the people of Guatemala.

Today she would be considered an environmentalist as her work often depicts landscapes animals and flowers.

Her emotional and physical pain many of us know of personally. She gives meaning to our vulnerabilities. Her struggles are ours, her beliefs and values we share and support.

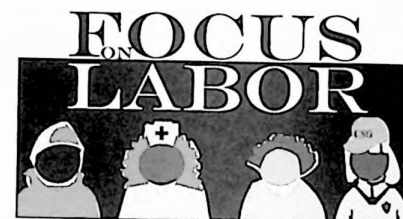
Long Live Frida is indeed true. She continues to live in the hearts and minds of many people. She is a part of us and will continue to live as long as we continue to identify with her trials and triumphs.

Frida the artist. Frida the communist. Frida the feminist. Frida the naturalist. Frida we will never forget you. □



△ People look at the 1939 painting "Las Dos Fridas" (The Two Fridas), by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo on exhibit during the World Forum of Culture September 28, 2007 in Monterrey, state of Nuevo Leon, Mexico.

Standing Up FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



"We can't live with this for another five years."

By Ben Sears

These words from Jerry Jordan, president of the 17,000 member Philadelphia local of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT Local 3) captures the mood of educators across the country as the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) comes up for re-authorization in the current session of Congress. The law, originally passed in 2002, is the Bush Administration's response to rising demands for an increased federal role in support of public education. But, after five years, growing numbers of Americans are deciding that the administration did not "get it right."

The law has generated widespread frustration and resentment among teachers and administrators at the state and local level, but the opposition now goes beyond educators. Numerous polls suggest that dissatisfaction with NCLB deepens as parents and others learn more about the law and its effects. As early as January of 2004, surveys suggested that NCLB was not what people wanted from the federal government. At that time, an Opinion Research Corporation poll found that over half (52%) of those responding would use federal funds to reduce class size, a goal not included in the law. On the other hand, a large majority (70%) said they would oppose taking money away from their own child's school, should the school be classified as "failing."

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that pollster Monty Neill, director of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing, found "growing resistance" to NCLB in December 2006. By May of this year a survey of over 1,000 adults by Scripps Howard News and Ohio University found that nearly 2/3 of those responding wanted the law either rewritten or abolished and that the more people learn about its provisions, the more likely they are to oppose it.

So, what are the problems with NCLB? A summary of its provisions would read as follows: It requires schools to meet, each year, increasingly unrealistic goals in reading and math, as measured by standardized test scores. The threatened sanctions for failing to meet the goals, are punitive and not likely to result in school improvement. This is resulting in narrowing the curriculum as schools focus on preparing for the tests and are forced to reduce instructional time for "non tested" subjects such as social studies and the arts. At the same time, the law provides for little or no support from Washington for the considerable efforts demanded of schools in order to meet the goals. In other words, NCLB amounts to one enormous "unfunded mandate."

All of this forces one to wonder. Could NCLB as presently written be part of the long range plan of the administration to undermine public education? If the law's harsh provisions result in more schools being branded "failures," could that lead to an exodus from the public schools into the proliferating charter schools or religious or other private "academies"? Could the educational crunch currently facing post Katrina New Orleans or the proliferation of charter schools in Philadelphia represent outcomes envisioned by the Bush team? And, could the law generate such frustration with the federal government's clumsy attempt to influence education policy, that it causes a "backlash" movement opposing any federal role?

We can not say for sure, but what seems clear is that NCLB needs major revision and that the expanding dissatisfaction with the law presents an opportunity as well as a challenge. The current Congress is not the same one that passed the original version of the law. While the 2006 election was not exactly a referendum on NCLB, the changes wrought by the voters in that election have created an opening that supporters of public education cannot afford to miss.

This brings us to the key role that the two school employee unions are playing in this

process. The unions can, for instance, use their organizational structures to mobilize their members. Working teachers and their unions, The NEA and the AFT, have expressed some doubt that proposals now in Congress for amending the law will address their primary concerns. Both organizations have campaigns in progress aimed at urging their members to contact legislators and express their views. They have urged – and organized – their members to let legislators hear their voices. At their national meeting last July, the NEA distributed an "Action Guide" to members with the title "NCLB: It's Time for A Change." This folder contained a wealth of useful information about the problems with the law. The NEA takes sharp issue, for example, with the "single snap shot fill in the bubble" test scores as the basis for assessing student – and school – progress. It also notes that the federal class size reduction program, which originally provided \$4.1 billion to hire some 37,000 teachers, was eliminated under NCLB. The AFT's American Teacher reports that AFT members have organized Activists for Congressional Education (ACE) committees across the country to meet with senators and representatives.

In addition to organizing, bringing the teachers' point of view into the mix is an important contribution. The NEA literature, for instance, notes some of the problems with NCLB's stated goal of putting a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom.

The NCLB teacher quality mandates are overly focused on "content" knowledge... and overlook the importance of knowing how to teach, of presenting information effectively and connecting with an increasingly diverse student population... The rigid "highly qualified" requirements force too many teachers and paraprofessionals to clear a succession of hurdles, and they are driving some out of the profession, making it even more difficult to recruit and retain quality educators.

Another union contribution to the debate is the NEA's explanation of the history of federal legislation regarding education. As their literature states, NCLB is actually a revision – a drastic revision, but still a revision – of the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Many of us use the term "Title

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Dear Reader,

Because of your support, we may achieve our goal of raising \$40,000. Will you help us get over the top by sending your check today?

This has already been an exceptional year. In addition to stepping our activist role in the struggles for peace, workers' rights, and civil rights, *PA* has pushed the envelope on the ideological front.

In this issue, for example, Art Perlo discusses the causes of the housing crisis in the US and its likely devastating economic impact. He shows how the problem is emblematic of the central contradiction of capitalism, and outlines immediate steps to aid those affected by the crisis. Writers David Cavendish and David Pena in two separate articles examine the key ideological question of the transition away from capitalism to socialism.

This past year, we have published numerous articles that examine the question of global warming and the much needed development of Marxist theory that incorporates the latest science on climate. Marc Brodine, who authored a ground-breaking essay on this subject for our September/October issue, argued for the need for pro-socialist advocates to fight for real ecological changes now and to link the issue of private property as a roadblock to taking the necessary steps to prevent disaster.

In our August issue, we published articles on today's information revolution's relation to the class struggle. John Bachtell looked at the impact of the information age on workers, ultimately arguing that our class should embrace the new era because in the hands of working people the scientific and technological revolution can be made to benefit humankind.

Other articles have examined ideological questions in the sciences, on the global capitalist front, on Marxist thinking on social organization, and in contemporary US politics, e.g. the immigration policy reform debate, the struggle for gay equality and rights, the history of the labor movement and our current struggle for international solidarity, among many other things.

These are just some of the highlights. The list of theoretical and ideological work *PA* has produced over the past year is very long. We hope you have found some use for it.

You can donate at our Web site at PoliticalAffairs.net. If you prefer to send a check, please make it payable to Political Affairs. Send to: 235, W. 23rd St., NY, NY 10011.

In Struggle,
Joe Sims, editor

\$15K

I," for example, without remembering that it refers to a part of that law. The ESEA, was passed as a result of the struggles of the Civil Rights movement. It established the precedent for a supportive federal role in public education and it has funded Title I and other programs. The most destructive parts of NCLB, on the other hand, can be seen as part of the right wing attack on Civil Rights, but there is more to this story. The NCLB law, itself the result of political deals and trade-offs, retained programs such as Title I and, in fact, includes some progressive additions. For example, it strengthens the rights of homeless children to attend local public schools, as well as of English language learners and special education students. (In fact, the name of the law was hijacked by the Bush Administration from the Children's Defense fund slogan "Leave No Child Behind".)

Therefore, simply abolishing NCLB is not the goal of supporters of public education. The original character of the 1965 law needs to be restored and further improvements made. In the first place, that means providing federal funds in amounts necessary to insure that teachers and students in every school district have class sizes that make real teaching and learning possible. The "teacher quality" and testing provisions also need major revisions in order to make the federal role in education a supportive one.

With the ESEA/NCLB due for reauthorization in the coming year, now is the time for educators, parents, students and all those who support equitable quality public schools to make their voices heard. If Americans have one nearly universally shared experience, going to school is it. Despite the confusion sowed by well publicized campaigns for vouchers, religious schools, charters and other "alternative" options, the fact is that around 90 percent of American young people attend public school. The fact is that, while well aware of the work still needed to fulfill the promise of public schools – full funding for every school, breaking down barriers of race, class and geography that students face – most americans support the concept of equitable, universal, state supported education. It is an urgent issue for the majority of Americans. We can make a start by making sure Congress gets ESEA/NCLB right this time. □

For more information see:

American Federation of Teachers – www.aft.org
National Education Association – www.nea.org
People for the American Way – www.pfaw.org

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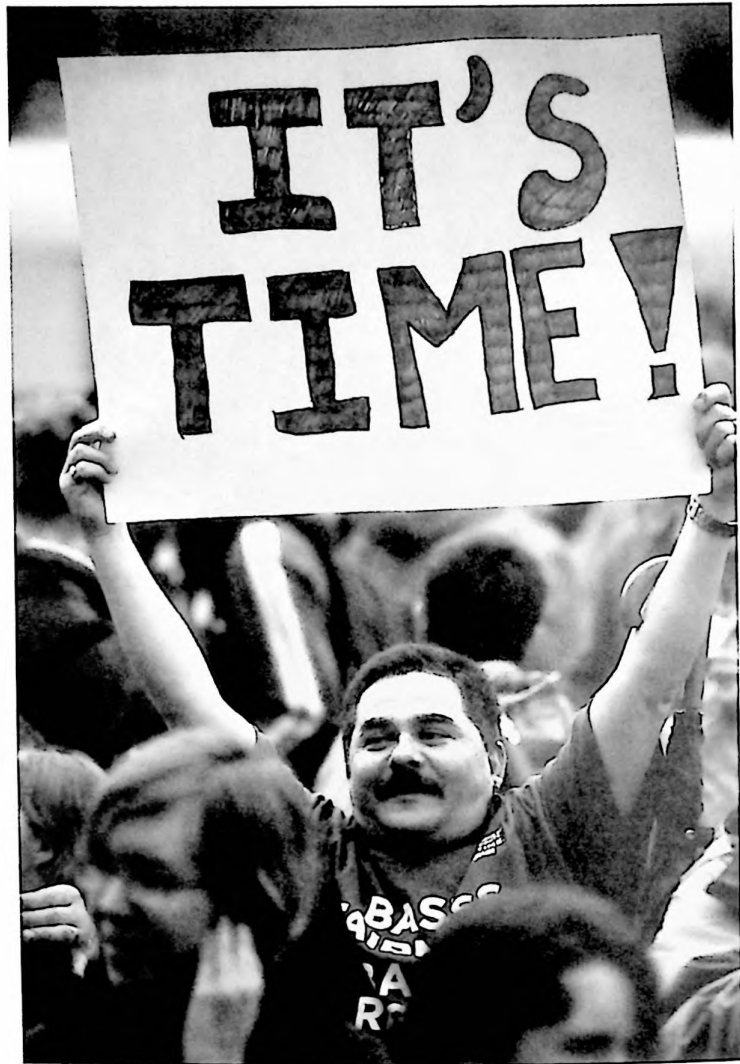
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AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

HOUSE PASSES ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BILL



Craig Mitchell/yer/Getty Images

▲ Lonnie Martinez of Portland, Oregon, holds up a sign at a rally for gay rights at the Oregon State Capital to support the Oregon Equality Act, a statewide non-discrimination bill that would prohibit discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation, on the basis of sexual orientation and the Oregon Family Fairness Act, a relationship recognition Civil Unions bill that will extend to same-sex couples benefits, protections and responsibilities similar to those afforded opposite-sex couples through marriage.

By Political Affairs

This past November, the House of Representatives passed the Employment Non-discrimination Act (ENDA), an historic civil rights measure that would bar discrimination against workers in hiring, firing or promotion based on sexual orientation.

Language that would have extended protections from discrimination based on gender identity to transgender individuals was stripped from the bill in committee, however. This move sparked tremendous controversy among supporters of the bill.

In an interview with one media outlet, Rep.

Barney Frank (D-MA), who shepherded the bill through the committee process, said eliminating the more inclusive language was needed to help the bill pass.

"If you insist that you can't protect anybody until you protect everybody, you'll protect nobody," Frank insisted.

Despite the fact that the employment non-discrimination bill had nothing to do with redefining marriage, a last minute amendment incorporated language explicitly denying marriage equality.

Even with the changes, Democrats praised the bill as a monumental piece of civil rights legislation. Speaking on the floor of the House the day the bill was brought up for a vote, Speaker Nancy Pelosi said ENDA is part of a long tradi-

tion of the expansion of equal rights in American history.

"Progress on civil rights is never easy," she said. "It is often marked by small and difficult steps. We take this step today toward the ideal of equality that is both our heritage and our hope."

In an extremely moving speech, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) saw passage of ENDA as part of America's democratic values. "No one in America believes you can pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness without the opportunity to have employment."

ENDA, Hoyer said, is a "momentous step in breaking down centuries of rank injustice, unthinking prejudice, and unjustified discrimina-

tion against gay and lesbian Americans."

Long-time civil rights activist Rep. John L. Lewis (D-GA) compared passage of ENDA to passage of past civil rights legislation. "Call it what you may, to discriminate against someone because they are gay is wrong. It is wrong. It is wrong. It is not right."

Breaking with his party on the bill, Republican Rep. Mark Steven Kirk (IL) reminded the House of the historic expansion of equality to various groups. "Now it is our turn to offer protection to those of a different orientation," he remarked. Most Republicans, including George W. Bush, opposed passage of the bill, arguing that harboring hate for and practicing discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people is both acceptable and protected by religious rights.

Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) offered an amendment that would have reintroduced language to include protections based on gender identity. "Irrational hate and fear have no place in our society," she said. She withdrew the amendment before it could be brought for a vote because it did not have the votes needed to pass.

An Inclusive ENDA

The bill was originally introduced in the 1970's by Rep. Bella Abzug (D-NY). Support for the bill grew over the next two decades,

and many people were optimistic about its passage after President Clinton's election in 1992. But the Republican takeover of Congress put passage of ENDA on the back burner until this year.

In the late 1990's, more and more groups came to support an ENDA that included protections for transgender people, including huge national organizations like the National Organization for Women, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the AFL-CIO among many other faith-based organizations, civil rights groups and LGBT-support organizations.

As expected, however, the bill did not come up for a vote in the Senate this fall, and probably will be tabled in the 2008 election season. President Bush threatened to veto it.

Organizations who support an inclusive ENDA see the delay as giving them time to lobby harder to have inclusive language reinserted into the bill and to have language denying marriage equality stripped.

In a statement, Pride at Work, AFL-CIO, the voice of the LGBT community in the labor move-

ment, said, "the labor and LGBT community and its friends and allies to continue the struggle for a fully inclusive ENDA."

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, praised the work of supporters of the inclusive ENDA bill and called for continued lobbying to pass a better bill. "We are relieved this episode is behind us, and starting right now we are going to pick up where we were six weeks ago – namely, working to pass into law in 2009 the ENDA our entire community wants and deserves."

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Vice President Nancy Zirkin applauded passage of ENDA, saying, "While we celebrate this victory, we do not intend to let another 10 years pass before we protect the entire community. Today's passage creates momentum that we intend to use to push for legislation that is fully inclusive."

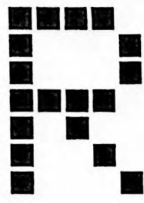
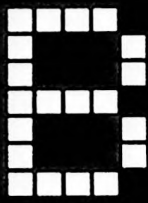
The delay gives us all time to remember the meaning of the old labor slogan: "An injury to one is an injury to all." It gives us time to join together to fight with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender working brothers and sisters for equality in the workplace. This is a key democratic and class issue; the unity and strength of our whole class depends on it. □

■ This is a key democratic and class issue; the unity of our class depends on it.

▷ Kent Kullby and Tim Smith of Eugene, Oregon hold their 13-month old daughter Amelia at a rally for gay rights.



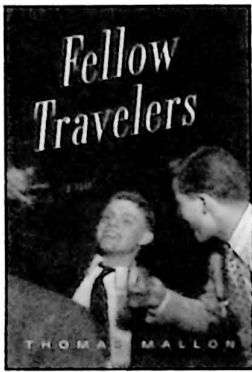
Craig Mitchell/Getty Images



Fellow Travelers, a Novel.

Thomas Mallon, New York, Pantheon Books, 2007.

Reviewed by Martha Kramer



As suggested by its title, Thomas Mallon's most recent political novel, *Fellow Travelers*, is a story about the McCarthy-era and the assault on political dissent that dominated it. But it is also about the intersection of right-wing witch hunts to expose and punish Communists and the right's obsession with sexuality and the search for gay and lesbian "infiltrators" at the same time, also known as the "lavender scare."

The novel provocatively uses real historical figures such as paranoid anti-Communists such as Joseph McCarthy, Roy Cohn, David Schine, and numerous others along with fabricated characters to dramatize conflicts of forbidden desire, political machinations, patriotic loyalty, and global struggles between capitalism and communism. Mallon's great success is that he manages this hefty scenario with skill, producing a riveting tale of love, passion, and betrayal.

Rising State Department star, Hawkins Fuller, is handsome and confident. All the ladies love him. But he doesn't return the favor. He has a secret, which could cost him everything in Washington's paranoid world in 1953: he's gay. According to the government's internal security types not only are gay people morally deficient and a threat to our "way of life," but those in government positions pose a national security threat because if their secret is found out they could be blackmailed for classified material.

In this world, the solution is not to alter federal regulations, national laws and society's customs and habits to include and normalize gay and lesbian people, but to perpetuate homophobia by hunting them down and forcing them out of government service.

But Fuller fears little. A conservative white, upper crust Protestant, he is about as normal as it gets, other than his one small secret. Used to the privileges of his social position, he almost enjoys thumbing his nose at the system, fearing little retribution. Who'd think he of all people would be a "cookie pusher."

Into Fuller's world walks Tim Laughlin, a young Irish Catholic legislative assistant, wracked by guilt about his desires. Fuller, ever on the prowl, picks up Tim and a passionate relationship follows. In fact, Tim refers to Fuller as "Hawk" throughout. Constantly fearful of exposure, Tim also struggles to handle his feelings for the more experienced Fuller who dominates the relationship. Ironically, Tim is a staunch conservative who happens to agree with the social and religious proscriptions on homosexuality.

Intersecting this private world is the public story of the McCarthyist search to uncover Communists. Because Fuller is a State Department bureaucrat, he is less inclined to voicing partisan

While the US claimed to promote democracy against brutal and violent foreign regimes, it deployed fear and hysteria and punishment here to target its internal critics and marginalized populations.

political positions. Tim, on the other hand, is a rabid anti-Communist and a supporter of McCarthy. Some in his family, though proud of Tim's fancy government job, are slightly disappointed that he doesn't work for McCarthy. Tim hates Communists and believes they should be hunted down and punished. While he never comes to this same conclusion about gay people, his own self-loathing leads to life compacted by guilt, fear and repressed ego subsumed under the dominate personalities around him.

Mallon uses the rumors that persisted about McCarthy's bisexuality and his drunkenness as well as Roy Cohn's own sexual orientation to link the "red scare" with the "lavender scare." But it isn't Mallon's intention to simply label McCarthy as a "pervert" in order to undermine the credibility of his actions.

Mallon's great feat in this novel is not in portraying a single political viewpoint, but to expose and provoke thought on a host of social contradictions. While the US claimed to promote democracy against brutal and violent foreign regimes, it deployed fear and hysteria and punishment here to target its internal critics and marginalized populations. (Mallon even hints at international US exploits and racial oppression domestically though those issues comprise very little of the story.) At the same time, promoters of freedom helped to demonize a section of the population based on sexual orientation.

Cohn and McCarthy were among this crowd. Roy Cohn would ultimately be diagnosed with AIDS in 1984 after a public life during which he attacked both communists and gays. Cohn, along with McCarthy, spearheaded a sort of movement of closeted hard right public figures who would denounce homosexuality and push antigay laws and beliefs while at the same time hiding their own gay or bisexual orientations. In the novel, it is the threat of publicizing evidence of McCarthy's sexual overtures to a teenage boy that ultimately bring him down.

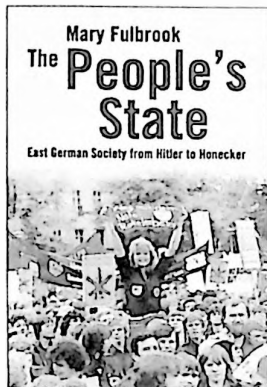
On the whole, the book is engrossing but complex. It helps to be a fan of the intricacies of politics and somewhat knowledgeable about US history to keep pace with Mallon's tale. Some passages seem contrived in order to push the plot along, but such instances are few and far between.

In addition to Mallon's excellent writing and to the thought-provoking themes, one gets satisfaction knowing that a book like this will get under the skin of contemporary supporters of McCarthy like Ann Coulter. Anything that gets her into a tizzy is worth reading twice. □

The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker.

Mary Fulbrook, Yale University Press 2005.

Reviewed by Tony Pecinovsky



It has been almost 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dismantling of the German Democratic Republic. Since then a lot has been written about the former socialist state. However though, like the history of the former Soviet Union and Eastern European People's Democracies, the history of the GDR has, for the most part, lacked balance, objectivity and perspective. Fortunately, Mary Fulbrook's *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, is a welcomed change.

The premise of Fulbrook's book is the simple, yet neglected question: What was life really like for East Germans. From the very beginning of *The People's State* Fulbrook makes clear her goal: to tell the story of normal, everyday East Germans, their lives, their perspectives, not the perspective of a minority of dissident voices. She writes,

...once historians, sociologists and political scientists started to write about East Germany under communist rule, protesting voices began to be raised. Faced with accounts of repression, complicity and collusion, former citizens of the GDR claimed that their own memories and experiences told them otherwise.

Fulbrook continues, "Most East Germans did not feel that they had spent up to four decades of their lives trembling in 'inner emigration,' or conspiratorially plotting against the regime, or making a pact with the Red Devil for private advancement." For most people, the GDR was not the way it was described by western sources. It was something else. And as a result, most East Germans sought and lived normal lives, worked, went to school, went to the doctor, went on vacation, spent time with family and friends, and participated in the democratic processes of the East German state.

While Fulbrook claims that the GDR was still a dictatorship, she makes this claim without redbaiting. The unique historical circumstances which lead to the development of a specific East German society isn't lost by Fulbrook; she deals with the remnant affects of Nazism, with the hostility of the western capitalist world and with the socialist goals and Marxist vision guiding East German society. She depicts a government sincerely trying to do its best to provide for the people, despite conditions of scarcity.

What makes Fulbrook's book so good is the depth of thought she puts into understanding the dynamics of power within East German society. She writes, "The exercise of power was in many areas both far more multifaceted and complex...less sinister and repressive, than totalitarian theorists would have us believe." In fact, in many ways, her analysis challenges the dominant historiography and urges us to look

Fulbrook paints a complicated picture of a society in flux, struggling to develop and provide opportunity.

at East Germany and other formerly socialist states from a new perspective. "The notion of what constituted the East German state thus needs in some way to be extended..." she writes. "We have to recognise [sic] that political goals were not always or only to do with the maintenance and retention of power; there were many common humanitarian goals, as in areas of health policy, housing and gender equality..." that greatly benefited the East German people.

According to Fulbrook, the East German state took special care to provide for its citizens. "In 1978 between one-half and one-third of people ate their main weekly meal in a school or works canteen. The state provided seven million dinners daily...the hard statistics," she continues, "do tell a story of a continually rising, if limited, standard of living..." However frustrated people may have been because of shortages and delays, most citizens saw the GDR as trying to live up to its socialist ideals, and as a result, most East Germans benefited from socialism.

Social mobility for working-class Germans, especially women, was also heavily emphasized in the GDR. However according to Fulbrook, the struggle for gender equality was, like any other industrial nation, "lopsided and partial." While, "There were very radical changes in the public and professional aspirations of women" there was only "minimal changes in assumptions about what was 'normal' [behavior] for men." Fulbrook goes into more detail: "So women benefited massively from the strenuous campaigns of the 1950's and '60's to ensure they achieved similar levels of education and qualification as men and had comparable careers aspirations, and [as] they fully entered the East German labour force, their capacity to combine motherhood and employment [was] greatly eased by the institutional and legal framework..." set up by the Socialist Unity Party (SED). But, too often, women "did not rise to levels of leadership and management" like their male colleagues.

Fulbrook paints a complicated picture of a society in flux, struggling to develop and provide opportunity. She methodically details the real life situations of most East Germans – who for the most part were content with their lives - while truthfully acknowledging the short comings within East German society. Unlike right-wing, anti-communist historians searching zealously to prove that capitalism has won, Fulbrook's objective analysis gives a glimpse of the realities of life in a very complex, multidimensional society. This is a honest book. Well worth the read. □



POETRY

Full Moon

The homeless man plays a jaunty flute
and sits propped next to a wall.
Bright moon shines above the high rises.
Ashen-faced, a thin woman huddles,
head wrapped in a scarf
in the same place she's been for months,
blankly facing the dark like a broken pigeon.
Holding hands, a young couple strolls past.
They're in head to toe leather
on their way to Neiman Marcus.
They almost knock the woman into traffic.

Nearly full, the moon is a white wafer.
It illuminates everything shallow as a contest
of cell phones or deep as a candidate
who executes black men while he stamps paperwork.
Two more will die tonight.
Their families won't save them by voting or praying.
The old rule holds: Some have and some have not.
Some protect platinum cards and some pull blankets
around themselves to keep from being cold.

Carolyn Gregory

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Illustration by Jennife Santos

Notes on the Long Poem (Tuscaloosa, AL)

'letters from an imaginary friend'—begin there
edwin honig did a class on this beginning with Lorca

the women and the men meet at scylla/charybdis
(your long suit is lyric grace short shrift)

always begin with metrics make them count
whether they can read or write irmus next

lots of Whitman in Tuscaloosa many lessons
in guerilla warfare ala Nathan Bedford Forrest

all three volumes of Shelby Foote on battlefields
(Keats's letters Proust Milton an exegesis

of Donald Justice's sonnet on Eden for Berryman's lowan work-
shop)
Rukeyser Bishop Kumin Brooks "For My People"

and JUBILEE together, Walker's dissertation on Vyree
(some Alice Walker student of Rukeyser tutelage)

make them study the industrial north Pittsburgh's
steel the music of the hill Homestead Grays Josh

when it comes to the agrarians make them translate
Bear Bryant always won at home new stadium museum

no traffic in the olympic swimming pool your lane
not many eating holes but lunch on the river dutch

best bbq is out of town make sure you visit Oxford
good French restaurant in Birmingham 16th St church

documentary on George Wallace Owens&Louis birthmarks
Elvis in Tupulo angola lunch on Natchez Trace

you will need AC in the endowed house already there (the park-
ing lot)
get buildings&grounds for pine needles now record rebel graves

who dug them
why the Big House and those shacks are so close together

Michael S. Harper, 2006

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Can We Have Some Peace and Quiet Please?

The belligerent voices are yelling in the streets & on the radios calling for the big bombs of peace to fall, the smart bombs, the bombs that have passed their college entrance exams. It's Orwellian the way everyone claims Orwell for their side -- these days everyone is fighting on behalf of Orwell and God. Years ago Don Rumsfeld & Saddam Hussein met in the corner & exchanged secret diplomatic handshakes -- it is only after peaceful gestures like these that the missiles can fly. In the meantime, the time between the world mean as is and the world we mean to become, the endless rains are Yehuda Amichai's tears watching men still violently beating their swords into plowshares and back into rifles & remote-control fighter planes. On the corner of Spring & Broadway, a taxicab driver threw a baby lamb out the passenger-side door -- everyone in a two-block radius ran away screaming. In New York City the yelling is so loud and the quiet so quiet that everyone I know, just below the surface, is scared out their wits, knowing the violence these days that can follow an apparent peace. They are calling Senators with empathetic American voices, urging earthly generosity and kindness, which their elected leaders interpret as a vote for pre-emptive strikes. The next century's gods have not yet been born and the last century's are no longer able to show a child the simple magic trick of pulling its fingers away from a newly lit flame.

Eliot Katz
New York City.

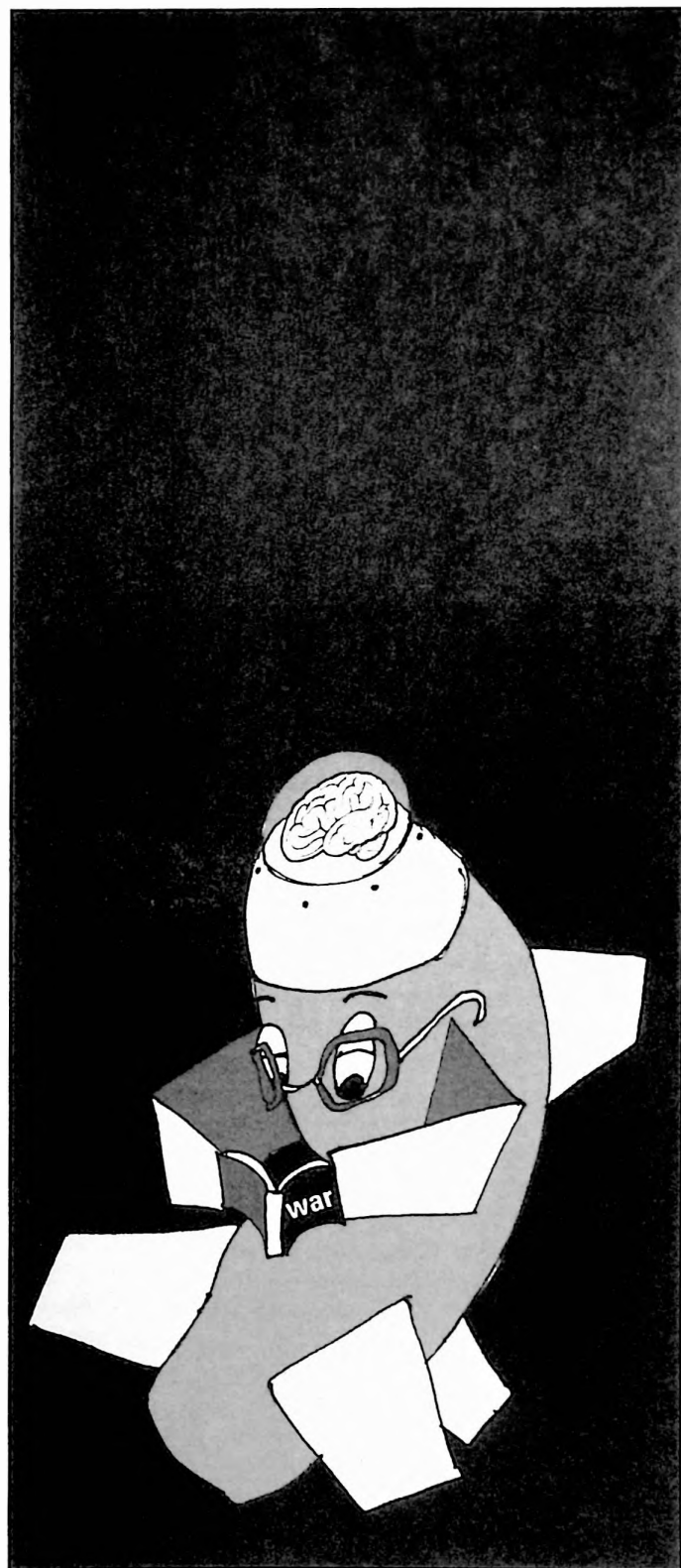


Illustration by Jennie Santos

HOW GOLDMAN SACHS PLAYS BOTH SIDES AND WINS

By Lawrence Albright

Some years ago there was a TV commercial in which two or more actors appeared to be in conversation with the backdrop being a party, a restaurant or some other crowded location. One of them would say, "Well, my broker is E.F. Hutton, and E.F. Hutton says..." At that point, all conversation around them stopped, and a broad pan of the scene would reveal that everyone in the room was waiting to hear what the actor had been told. The inference, of course, was that the E.F. Hutton firm was successful and influential.

Fast forward to 2007, and it is clear that one firm has come to dominate both private markets as well as the hallowed halls of government. And unlike E.F. Hutton, they have felt no need for marketing themselves in the form of commercials, but have made inroads consistently and quietly. The firm is Goldman Sachs or, to be formal, the Goldman Sachs Group.

Goldman Sachs is one of the oldest and largest investment banks in the United States. Its history dates back to 1869 when it was founded by Marcus Goldman, a German immigrant. The firm took on its present name in 1885 when Goldman's son-in-law, Samuel Sachs, joined the firm.

It is Sachs who is credited with pioneering the concept of the sale of stock as a way to raise funds for new companies, underwriting security offerings for companies like Sears and Roebuck. The firm was also lead advisor for the Ford Motor Company's initial public offering of stock in 1956. Goldman Sachs itself remained a private company until 1999, when it went public in an offering that yielded millions of dollars for its partners. In early 2007, Sachs Goldman stock was trading at \$222 per share, its highest price at the time, according to CNN.com finance reporter Grace Wong.

Goldman Sachs is not the traditional "bank" that offers checking and savings accounts. "The firm has historically focused on corporations, government institutions and individuals of substantial wealth," Wong writes. Goldman Sachs leads in global mergers, and it tops the list of firms helping com-



Stan Honda/AFP/Getty Images

△ Demonstrators calling themselves "Billionaires for Coal" walk to the Goldman Sachs office in the Wall Street district of New York. The group was protesting the financing of new coal-fired power plants in the US by seven large banking companies. Goldman Sachs has come to represent the close collusion between finance capital, industrial capital, and the government.

panies "go public" or begin selling shares in the stock markets. Goldman Sachs "benefited from the wave of dealmaking that has swept across markets worldwide – not just in its advisory business but from private equity as well," writes Wong.

In addition to making money for its clients, the goal of all investment banks, Goldman Sachs has pursued a successful "second tier" strategy, either formally or informally, of serving as a recruitment source for executive-level government officials.

So solid is the nexus between the Wall Street firm and the Bush White House that Agence France Press speculated that the Wall Street investment firm had "taken over" the administration. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson "was not the first Goldman execu-

tive to join the Bush administration from the 137-year-old investment bank described by the president as one of America's "most respected firms," noted an AFP published last year.

"In fact, he was following in the well-heeled footsteps of three other former Goldman alumni who answered Bush's call."

Aside from running a billion-dollar bank, it is also likely that Paulson's political donations of tens of thousands of dollars to Republican senators added to his luster.

AFP noted that a "revolving door" between the halls of big finance and the halls of government is not new, "but Goldman leads the way by far in terms of its managers infiltrating the White House and other top

government posts."

The AFP report didn't mention one José A. Fourquet, who had Goldman Sachs credentials on his resume and who, in 2001, was appointed by Bush's former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill as "the youngest US Executive Director to the Inter-American Development Bank in U.S. history," according to a 2001 Treasury Department press release. (O'Neill, a former Aloca executive, resigned as Treasury Secretary in 2002 and angered the Bush administration by his criticisms not only of the White House's economic policies, but with his assertion that the invasion of Iraq was planned in the first National Security Council meeting shortly after Bush was sworn in to office.)

Of course, the Goldman Sachs-Bush administration axis is aided and abetted by the fact that both Wall Street and the higher echelons the US government have shown a predisposition for individuals who have Ivy League educations, particularly from Harvard and Yale. Yale has also served as a transmission belt of source for many federal government bureaucracies and political careers.

One example of its unique positioning as a company has been explored by the progressive magazine, *Mother Jones*, which tied Goldman Sachs to numerous politicians and business enterprises. Citing just one major example, Goldman Sachs, according to *Mother Jones*, has helped state and local governments privatize highway management systems while creating investment funds for privately constructed highways and arranging campaign contributions for politicians who push for privatizing highway management and construction. Privately operated toll roads and tunnels in Texas, Indiana and New York are the result of Goldman Sachs efforts.

Notwithstanding the close ties that have existed between Goldman Sachs and numerous administrations in Washington, the firm has found itself on the receiving end of penalties meted out by regulatory agencies. In 2003, for instance, the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) brought an action against Goldman Sachs, among others, related to trading based on non-public information about the Treasury Department's decision to cease issuing 30 year bonds. The SEC found that "the firm violated the anti-fraud laws applicable to broker-dealers and government securities broker-dealers," and that "Goldman Sachs and the Treasury

Desk in particular, employed numerous paid consultants who provided a wide range of information and analysis." Goldman Sachs was fined \$9.3 million for this particular case and did not dispute the SEC findings.

Control of the financial market place isn't an issue of religion, ethnicity or heritage. It is an issue of class.

It is naturally in the interests of Goldman Sachs to cooperate with government inquiries and investigations, and to comply with consent arrangements. The "revolving door" between the firm and the marble buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW could surely find itself less accessible were any other posture to be adopted. Because if the main desire of wealthy firms and individuals is to acquire further wealth, an equally important desire of officials in Washington, DC is to avoid scandal or, alternatively, to be able to get away with it.

There can be no dispute that Goldman Sachs has become a political and economic powerhouse from humble beginnings. While the media has frequently and properly focused on Halliburton and Vice President Dick Cheney's connections to that multi-national, the connections between government and Goldman Sachs go back far longer.

The firm's success has inspired any number of anti-Semitic rants, particularly on the Internet. Since some of this anti-Semitism comes from individuals who have self-identified as "conservative" and "Republican," one would think the close relationship between Goldman Sachs and the ultra-right could have awkward moments. This isn't the case. In an article that appeared in the ultra-right journal, *National Review* twelve years ago, writer Richard Neuhaus examined the issue of anti-Semitism. In that piece, he quoted well-known neo-conservative Norman Podhoretz, the former editor-in-chief of *Commentary* magazine, as saying, "conservatives don't hate Jews. They hate liberals. As it happens, most Jews are liberals."

In fact, control of the financial market place isn't an issue of religion, ethnicity or heritage. It is an issue of class. And the class that produces the wealth that is traded in the markets is markedly absent in the executive

board rooms of Wall Street.

The success of Goldman Sachs demonstrates the extent to which the ties between government and investment capital have evolved and merged into a sterling example of what Marxists refer to as "state monopoly capitalism." Moreover, this ascendancy brings with it an observable disconnection between official policy and the popular will, of which the continued US intervention in Iraq – which now includes countless private firms and contractors like Blackwater – is another prime example.

A Democratic victory in the 2008 elections will likely not impact a firm like Goldman Sachs. New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine worked at Goldman Sachs between 1994 and 1999. Robert Rubin, who served as Treasury secretary during the Clinton administration, also had Goldman Sachs on his resume.

More recently, it was reported that Senator Hillary Clinton had been busy establishing closer relationships with Wall Street. In a July 10, 2006 report the *Financial Times* of London disclosed that Clinton attended a meeting hosted by John Mack, chief executive officer of Morgan Stanley, and had also met with executives of Credit Suisse, Merrill Lynch and other firms. The *Financial Times* also quoted GOP spokespersons as expressing dismay that Clinton was successful in tapping into financial resources that had previously been the virtually exclusive preserve of Republicans.

Investment bankers as a group may be said to be gamblers. But they are, by and large, not overly reckless. They may, in fact, have better political antennae than the professionals at GOP headquarters on Capitol Hill; there is nothing unusual in the marketplace in hedging one's bets.

Wall Street firms, Goldman Sachs chief among them, have become the modern day version of the Oracle at Delphi, and their counsel has and will continue to be sought by both major parties. Progressive have been given a lesson of value; a textbook example, in pure form, of the extent to which the politics of corporate wealth translate into government policy. This lesson, properly learned, will yield benefits in the form of a growing movement that puts pressure on elected officials in state capitals and in Washington to be mindful of confusing corporate interests with those of the people. □



Shaun Curry/AFP/Getty Images

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT: DORIS LESSING IS POLITICALLY INCORRECT

△ British writer Doris Lessing holds her head in her hands outside her home in north London, last October, as she is told by photographers that she has won the Nobel Literature Prize, after returning from a shopping trip.

By Joel Wendland

US newspapers were all abuzz last October when Doris Lessing, most well-known for her novel *The Golden Notebook*, won the Nobel Prize for Literature. (Lessing also raised eyebrows when in an interview she proclaimed that 9/11 wasn't as bad as Americans thought).

The *Los Angeles Times* "Books" section printed an interview feature on her titled "With age comes wisdom, and Lessing's Nobel Prize" last week.

Earlier, the *New York Times* saw fit to reprint an essay by Doris Lessing it had originally published in 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union titled "Questions You Should Never Ask a Writer." In a nutshell, its central argument was "that Communism debased language."

Lessing accused the communist movement, which she took part in as a member of the Communist Party until 1956, of imposing on its affiliated writers the imperative of using "mind-deadening slogans" in their works. In this way communism demanded that art, novels, poetry had "to be about something." She further argues that feminist "conscious-

ness raising" and "political correctness" are the political heirs of communism.

While her views might suit the *New York Times* or the *Los Angeles Times*, or *FOX News* for that matter, they are a distortion of history says Philip Bonosky, a Communist novelist and contemporary of Lessing's.

Bonosky is a contributing editor of *Political Affairs*. He is the author of two novels, *Burning Valley* and *The Magic Fern*, several short story collections, and a number of non-fiction books such as *Afghanistan—Washington's Secret War*.

"This statement of Lessing's is ridiculous," says Bonosky. "What Marxism did was to liberate language for millions of workers the whole world over, and still does to this day."

Marx's major contribution in the arena of language, Bonosky states, was in injecting into historical writing the very people who had been rendered invisible in the writing up to his time, the working class and the racially oppressed.

Further, Marx sought precise, scientific language to explain who those people were, how they got to be where they were, and what were the social forces keeping them imprisoned.

Rather than debasing language, insists Bonosky,

Marxism tried to put history and sociology on a scientific basis. After Marx, history, instead of being about the actions of powerful men, kings and whatnot, or even simply the product of happenstance, now involved ascertainable laws, which Marx was able to isolate and point out. If social events and social behavior could be put on a scientific basis, it meant that all the features involved in historical situations had to be defined very precisely, and words were needed that would fit these scientific needs. Very precise language was needed.

On the issue of writing fiction, Bonosky's personal experience contradicts Lessing's account. Bonosky's first novel, *Burning Valley*, which was published by a press that was affiliated loosely with the Communist movement back in the 1950's, was an international best-seller, but was completely ignored in the US.

While McCarthy and others hunted people like Bonosky, an open Communist

Party member all of his adult life, and liberals they insisted were controlled by the communists, Bonosky's first novel went through several editions in Russia, his parents' home country of Lithuania, Poland, East Germany, and China. Hundreds of thousands of copies were sold. In the US, hundreds. (Though the University of Illinois Press republished it along with several other books by leftists as part of its "Radical Novels Reconsidered" series in the late 1990's.)

No major periodicals outside of the Party's orbit reviewed the book. *The New York Times* saw a review of it as unfit to print.

"I remember when I was traveling in the GDR," recalls Bonosky, "and I was passing through customs, the officers there looked at my passport and said, 'Bonosky, didn't you write *Burning Valley*?' He had already read it in German, and there was a big discussion in the German press about it. So there was a literary life that existed for me, but not here in America."

So was this novel a Party-mandated political tract?

Bonosky chuckles. It was the story of a young Catholic altar boy, an ardent Catholic who is, as Bonosky says, "a real believer in religion," living in a Depression-era steelmaking, immigrant community in Pennsylvania not unlike Bonosky's own background.

The young man finds himself caught in the middle of the struggle between the workers and the steel bosses to form the union and to win rights and benefits for the workers. In his own artistic and literary way, Bonosky presents the story of a boy caught between powerful social forces – the church, his family and community, his class, the owners of the steel mills, the law – and has to decide how his actions will conform to his conscience.

But, as Bonosky quickly points out, agitational, social literature has a long history in American letters before the Communists came along. "When Harriet Beecher Stowe met Lincoln," Bonosky says, "Lincoln is supposed to have said to her, 'So you're the little lady that started this war?'" Stowe's book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "was very polemical," Bonosky says. "Another example is John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, which directly attacked a social phenomenon, and by implication at least it implied what the solution should be." Numerous examples could be cited.

No, Bonosky says, his book wasn't a

Party tract.

Nobody told me to write the book like that. As a matter of fact, from a formal point of view, that should have been impossible to do. What! A communist writes about this? The church was not attacked; it wasn't condemned. I didn't get on a soapbox. I let the events tell their own story, and that's what I think the truth of the situation was. Let the truth speak for itself. But without Marxism, I couldn't have seen it myself. I couldn't have seen the struggle there and where it was going.

Though polemical literature was a major industry in American letters prior to the Communists, Marxism helped render things once hidden visible, Bonosky says. He had always been a writer as long as he had been conscious, and a part what motivated that was his love for reading.

While reading the classics the aspiring writer is expected to read, Bonosky came to realize something significant. "There's something missing," he says. "And I answered my own question about what was missing? I was missing. By that I mean not me personally, but that my class was missing. I came from the working class, directly from the working class, and all my friends were from the working class. Everybody in the town of Duquesne, Pennsylvania was working class.

We had one industry, steel, and we were all working class, but there was no working class in the literature."

At the moment of this realization, sometime in the 1930's, Bonosky began to search out those writers who told the story of his class. Those writers were the Communists. They also happened to be the great American writers who told the stories of African Americans and the racially oppressed. They told the story of women. They turned American letters on its head and gave voice to those who had been silenced by the literature celebrated among the canonical "great writers."

Another brilliant, if short-lived writer who is deserving of as much notoriety perhaps as Lessing was Lorraine Hansberry, best known for her play *A Raisin in the Sun*, later made into a film starring Sidney Poitier. In discussing her views of art and writing Hansberry is reported to have said. "All art is ultimately social; that which agitates and that which prepares the mind for slumber."

While Hansberry and Bonosky, and so many others like them who have been disappeared into the folds of history by words like Lessing's, sought to agitate. Lessing has sought to simply "prepare us for slumber." As the title of the *Los Angeles Times* suggests, Bonosky brings his own special wisdom to the discussion about writing and communism. □



△ Bonosky (L) Interviewing Najibulla (far right), the head of Afghan government. Najib was eventually murdered by two Taliban. Kabul July 23, 1986

THE HOUSING CRISIS AND THE ECONOMY:

INTERVIEW WITH ART PERLO

PA: Could you briefly describe some of the basic causes of the current housing crisis?

AP: There are two basic, interrelated causes: sub-prime mortgages and the unprecedented bubble in housing prices. The sub-prime mortgages are what are getting all the headlines. This was a great invention by the financial community, which allowed people to buy houses at prices they couldn't afford. They did this by setting low introductory monthly payments, and then after a period of time, usually about 2 years, the payments would increase. So somebody might buy a house where the initial monthly payments were \$1,200 a month, which they could barely afford, and then after 2 years, the payments would reset overnight to \$2,000 a month.

The other cause of the crisis, which is closely connected, was the bubble in housing prices. People not only got stuck with home mortgages they couldn't afford, but they were for amounts far more than what the house was realistically worth. In the last 10 years, house prices have risen 70 percent faster than inflation, which has created \$8 trillion in surplus wealth on paper. What that means is that people paid far more for houses than they were worth. Eventually, over the last year, this hit a wall. All these sub-prime mortgages were resetting, and people could not afford to pay them. As houses were being foreclosed, housing prices had risen so high that people could not afford them. The builders and developers, who had been cashing in on the high housing prices, built like there was no tomorrow, until the number of unsold homes increased from 2 million in 2001 to over 4 million unsold houses today. There got to be so many unsold houses on the market that they just couldn't keep the prices up. Suddenly people were stuck owing huge mortgages. They might owe \$300,000 on a house and if they tried to sell it – if they were able to sell it at all – they could only get maybe \$200,000 or \$150,000 for it. Now they owe more on the house than the house is worth.

PA: Who are the people that have been most negatively affected by the crisis?

AP: The people who directly are affected, first of all, are at least 2 million families who have lost or will lose their homes, and there could easily be 3 or 4 million before this is over. Then there are the millions more who are working 2 or 3 jobs and sacrificing their health-care, their kids' education, even their food, in an effort to hold on to their homes. There are also at least 100,000 workers who have lost jobs in construction, building supplies, and real estate and mortgage finance, and the job cuts are only beginning to roll in. There will probably be millions of jobs lost. Some state and local governments are already facing budget shortfalls because of lower than expected tax revenues. There is also a broader economic downside, but that's a brief summary of those most directly affected.

PA: How would you evaluate the timing of Bush's response to the crisis and its content?



Joe Raedle/Getty Images

△ Diane Goldsborough (L) holds her son John Goldsborough, Jr., as she watches Nathan Goldsborough (2nd-R) and Klaus Goldsborough (R) buy ice cream from a truck in front of their home that they have lived in for the last year October 9, 2007 in St. Cloud, Florida. Goldsborough and her husband are in the process of losing the home after being late on a mortgage payment.

AP: My impression, although I have not studied his proposal closely, is that he proposes to make 100,000 or 200,000 homeowners eligible to apply for federally-backed mortgages. This means he is offering to possibly provide some relief to only one-tenth of the homeowners who are affected by this crisis. And the bulk of relief will go to bailing out the lenders who made the bad loans in the first place. The investors will get the full value of the mortgage repaid to them, even though on the market the mortgage is not worth nearly the full amount.

PA: What are some immediate solutions to help people avoid losing their homes?

AP: Nationally, I think we have to recognize that there are millions of homes that were overpriced and that homeowners owe far more than the homes are worth, far more than they can pay back. Literally trillions of dollars in wealth, wealth that has now proved to be imaginary, will have to be written off. This needs to take place in a planned, organized way, and at the expense of the lenders and financial institutions, not the homeowners. That means that mortgages should be marked down to a realistic value the homeowner can afford to pay. For example, if a family has an income of \$50,000 a year, they can realistically afford a

People not only got stuck with home mortgages they couldn't afford, but they were for amounts far more than what the house was realistically worth.

mortgage of about \$180,000, with monthly payments of \$1,100. If a mortgage company lent them \$350,000 to buy an overpriced home, they are now trying to pay over \$2,200 a month. They can't afford it. The mortgage banker should never have made the loan, so the banker should be the one to live with the consequences.

It is important to organize at the local, community level. This is already being done in some communities around the country, both by community organizations and local governments. The first step is to reach out and find those families who are in danger of losing their homes. There should be public hearings. It needs to be acknowledged that this is a community problem, that these are not just individual disasters that each family has to meet in isolation. It is possible to negotiate with lenders to improve payment terms, but this is most effective if it is done as early as possible and with the backing of an organized group. There is no single formula that is going to work in every community.

In terms of the larger economic picture, the housing crisis appears to be turning into a trigger for a more general financial crisis and probably a recession.

PA: How do you relate this picture of crisis you present to the system of capitalism itself?

AP: The housing crisis and the general economic situation in the country is almost a classic case of what Marx described as a crisis of overproduction. Marx said,

The ultimate reason for all real crises remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses, as opposed to the drive of capitalist production to develop productive forces as though only the absolute consuming power of society constituted their limit.

This means that, in their drive for profits, capitalists expand production almost without limits. That's with their right hand. But with their left



Joe Raedle/Getty Images

△ Mike Brown stands in front of the home his parents built by hand which he has lived in for 36 years October 9, 2007 in Orlando, Florida. Brown is in the process of losing his home after being late on mortgage payments.

hand and also in their drive for profits, they do everything they can to keep down the wages and the consuming power of the worker. So they produce more and more, but workers can't buy what they produce.

An economic crisis has been held off since 2001 by filling in the gap with debt. Working families have gotten deeper and deeper in debt, and now that the housing crisis has hit, people can no longer borrow any more money against the value of their homes. Not only do we have overproduction in housing – I talked about the 4 million unsold houses people are unable to afford – but an estimated \$400 to \$900 billion a year of purchasing power stands to be lost by consumers, just on the basis that they can no longer borrow against their homes. And so there is a real danger of the economy slipping into a steep and possibly prolonged recession, because people can't afford to buy what they need.

I don't have a roadmap for how socialism should work. But socialism is a rational system where the economy is owned and run by working people for their own benefit. The goal is to meet the needs of the people, not first to make profits. How does that apply to housing? If we look at the housing question broadly, it is not only a question of how many houses are built and what they cost, it's also a question of where they are built and under what conditions. It ties in with all the environmental issues.

A socialist society would look at housing holistically. One, it could avoid bubbles. It would be able to look at the demographics and say, over the next 20 years we are going to need this many new units, and we are going to need to refurbish this many apartments. You'd build housing at a steady rate and employ a steady number of workers, and you would not have huge booms and busts, which disrupt the lives of millions of people. On the other side, you would say, okay this is where the population is. This is where economic development is planned. This is how we can integrate the need for more housing with environmental concerns and with energy efficiency.

Socialism, as a system, does not always create the right answers, but it creates the possibilities for the right answers, because the people, acting through their elective bodies and their mass organizations, can plan and determine what they need. □

ON THE ROPES

US IMPERIALISM TODAY

Editor's Note: This essay is an excerpted version of the introductory chapter of Home's forthcoming book, *Blows Against the Empire: US Imperialism in Crisis*, International Publishers.

By Gerald Home

The entire island of Puerto Rico was riveted. As palm trees swayed and ocean waves crashed lazily on the shore of this Caribbean colony, jaws dropped and eyes glistened with tears as they strained to watch the image on their television sets when the mother of slain Army Corporal Jason Nunez, a mere 22 years of age, angrily removed the alien US flag draping his coffin and deliberately dropped it to the floor. Later she implored other parents not to allow their children to fight for the US military – least of all in the conflict in Iraq that had claimed her child's life.

This stirring scene from March 2007 pithily illustrated why the criminal and illegal US invasion of Iraq is now routinely described – even by those who stroll the corridors of power – as the most serious foreign policy disaster in recent US history. For not only is Washington spending billions of taxpayer dollars in a failed attempt to dominate Iraq and the region, just as it imposed its diktat on tiny Puerto Rico more than a century ago, this is occurring as a tectonic shift is taking place globally, as China continues its inexorable peaceful rise.

Despite the diabolical and demonic schemes of the present occupant of the White House, the insistent cry of Jason Nunez's mother is being heeded. For just as the great scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois pointed to what amounted to a "general strike" among enslaved Africans was the final nail in the coffin of the devilish dream of the Southern states of the US to overthrow the government in order to perpetuate human bondage, today those who have been designated as cannon fodder for the war machine are refusing to fight and, thereby, are contributing mightily to the current and



△ A volunteer helps to align military boots which are part of a memorial to the nearly servicemen and women killed in Iraq in Chicago, Illinois.

irreversible crisis of US imperialism.

Thus, a staggering 57 percent of Puerto Rico's high school students, or their parents, have signed forms over the past year withholding contact information from the Pentagon – effectively barring US recruiters

from reaching out to an estimated 65,000 high school students.

Not to be outdone, those who have pioneered in this potent strategy of aversion to joining the legions of death, have been in the vanguard once more. For years,

African-Americans have made up nearly 25 percent of the Army, more than twice their representation in the general population but by February 2005, this number had dropped to 13.9 percent. This stems directly from a blazing anti-war sentiment spreading like wildfire in this traditionally progressive constituency. Thus, in April 2003 when the war in Iraq seemed to be the cakewalk it had been bruted to be, a Gallup Poll revealed that 78 percent of whites yet only 29 percent of Blacks supported the war.

Increasingly, the militantly antiwar sentiments of Puerto Ricans and African-Americans are spreading beyond these two communities, presenting yet another obstacle strewn in the path of US imperialism.

Rebekah Roberts, a 24-year old mother of a two-year old residing in Scranton, Pennsylvania, might be able to explain why. As Corporal Nunez was being mowed down in the sands of Iraq, this member of the military reserves found herself stationed in this same country. She was worried about the enemy – but not the one the White House had in mind. Yes, she was worried about snipers, ambushes, and improvised explosive devices – but she had a further dire concern: her fellow soldiers. From 2002 to 2006 more than 500 women soldiers serving in Iraq or Afghanistan have been sexually assaulted, leading these troops to devise crafty methods to avoid being attacked by their "comrades," just as their male counterparts have sought to being assaulted by Iraqis and Afghans.

The export of capital has been the hallmark of US imperialism and helped to propel it into the front rank of imperialist nations – but the times are changing.

Certainly, the murderous attack on civilians on 11 September 2001 provided the Bush regime with an opportunity to unleash its already percolating war plans. But Z. Palla Jordan – a key leader of South Africa's ruling African National Congress – was not alone in pointing to the ineradicable fact that those who had attacked Manhattan on that fateful day had shared the same trench with Washington

during the bloody intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980's against the Moscow-backed regime. "The so-called mujahadeen, led by Osama Bin Laden," he argued within days of the assault on New York, had been "an ally of the United States intelligence community for well nigh two decades." His passion growing in intensity, comrade Jordan asserted vigorously that "the 'bleeding ulcer' of Afghanistan was among the many factors that sapped the strength of the Soviet Union, leading to its collapse."

Of course, there are few among the chattering classes of the US who are as bold in announcing the simple reality that it was precisely the anti-Sovietism of the Cold War that not only empowered a murderous so-called "Islamic fundamentalism" but as well opened the door for massive foreign investment (notably after Richard Nixon's Beijing journey some 35 odd years ago) that has placed China on track to dislodge the US as this planet's most formidable economic force and, likewise, destabilized the domestic left as it propelled forward the draining designs of the right.

Indirectly, Jordan's insight has been confirmed by the former national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski. It was under his direction that the US launched the largest "covert" operation in the history of the infamous Central

Intelligence Agency. Strangely, future historians will look long and hard for evidence of opposition in the US to this disastrous policy – beyond the confines of those in the orbit of the Communist Party USA – which resulted in 9/11. With such nonfeasance, Brezinski did not hesitate to boast in early 1998 that "American intelligence services began to aid the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan six months before the Soviet intervention" – though all too many in the US continue to subscribe to the fairy tale that Moscow's intervention had nothing to do with the harassment of Kabul by Washington. In a nutshell, the current crisis of US imperialism cannot be divorced from the doctrine of anticommunism.

Unfortunately, like a patient who does not seem to realize that the cream being used to reduce blemishes is actually worsening the problem, Washington cannot seem to avoid collaborating with those with whom it collaborated during the Cold War – with similarly disastrous results awaiting. In a sadly neglected report by ABC News on 3 April 2007, it was noted that Washington is aiding "Jundullah," a group of Baluchis, a minority grouping in Iran, "responsible for a series of deadly guerrilla raids," not to mention "the deaths and kidnappings of more than a dozen Iranian soldiers and officials." According to a commentator on ABC News, this band's leader is "part drug smuggler" and "part



Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images

△ Protesters march against US-imposed privatization of Iraq's oil resources in Washington, DC, June 2007.

Taliban" – i.e. Washington is aiding in Iran those who they are fighting in neighboring Afghanistan.

While wildly beating the drums of war,



Chris McGrath/Getty Images

△ Bolivian President Evo Morales Ayma addresses the 62nd session of the General Assembly at the United Nations on September 26, 2007

targeting Afghanistan, then Iraq, now Iran, the venal Bush regime has been busily and greedily dipping their paws in public coffers. Naturally, being an advocate of "family values," Bush has not neglected his "Uncle Bucky" – William Bush – who holds a coveted seat on the board of Engineered Support Systems Incorporated (ESSI), a St. Louis based company that has flourished mightily as a military contractor to the Pentagon. ESSI has received the prized "no-bid contracts" that have so enriched Halliburton, formerly led by Vice-President Dick Cheney. In January 2005, as ESSI shares reached a record \$60.39 apiece, "Uncle Bucky" cashed out, selling a whopping 8,438 options worth around \$450,000. Of course, ESSI's fortunes have arisen as the quagmire in Iraq has deepened, as this Midwestern giant has supplied \$49 million in military trailers and

\$18 million in "communications services" to Baghdad.

Being a dedicated and conscious class warrior, Bush has not just assisted "Uncle Bucky" but those of his class as well. In early 2002, as the nation was still reeling from 9/11, Bush announced a multi-billion military buildup that brought smiles to the jowly faces of shareholders of Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, Litton, General Electric, United Technologies,

■ Like a patient who does not seem to realize that the cream being used to reduce blemishes is actually worsening the problem, Washington cannot seem to avoid collaborating with those with whom it collaborated during the Cold War.

TRW and Textron. This occurred as the United Way described Los Angeles County as being in "the most precarious [condition] since the Great Depression." Three million there are deemed to be "poor" and 1.4 million are classified "food insecure," including 45 percent of children in poor families.

Yet as millions writhe in the agony of poverty and disease, in August 2007 it was announced that the war in Iraq alone could ultimately cost well over a trillion dollars – or more than 10 percent of all the government's annually appropriated funds. This occurred as the White House called for slashing an eye-popping \$78.6 billion from Medicare and Medicaid over the next five years.

Imperialism bends toward irrationality in any case, yet even this well-worn truism hardly explains the nature of conservatism today. For as challenges to US imperialism mount in Beijing, Havana, Brussels, Moscow, Teheran, Caracas, Brasilia and elsewhere and as the nation cries out for more spending on education and health care, conservatism instead continues to spend almost drunkenly on the military. What has to be grasped is that as a frontline state during the Cold War, the US bent further toward conservatism

– notably hostility to the public sector and government itself – than its allies. But now the planet has moved on, state owned oil companies are challenging private ones like Exxon-Mobil; government subsidized universal health care provides Japanese automakers a distinct advantage over the US, where conservatism blocks the adoption of such a rational measure: in sum, conservatism – along with seeking to exclude the left from the political table – is deepening US imperialism's crisis.

For the fact is that although US imperialism routinely describes itself as the "indispensable nation" and the "sole remaining superpower," it finds itself enmeshed in an irrevocable and irreversible decline that belies the pretensions of its acolytes. Strikingly, this is a consensus that encompasses a broad swathe of the ideological spectrum. Niall Ferguson, a Scot who teaches at Harvard while being affiliated with the nursing home of the mind that is the neo-conservative Hoover Institute at Stanford University, has proclaimed that "what befell Venice 500 years ago may well be the imminent fate of its North American counterpart: New York;" i.e. just as this city-state was eclipsed by the rise of Great Britain and Spain, he suggests that China may very well surpass the US. From the other shore, the progressive South Asian born writer, Dilip Hiro, has written contemptuously of "America on the downward slope" and "the rise of a multi-polar world." The Italian writer, Francesco Sisci, also has invoked Venice, noting that William Shakespeare set some of his best plays there – *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello*, for example – in what had been thought to be the most advanced region in the world, though as it turned out the famed playwright was ensconced in what was already the most advanced nation: Britain. And now, he argues, "China's growth has brought a systemic change to the world at large," which "foreshadows a different world, where for the first time in at least two centuries the West [sic] will become an economic minority."

Thus, while the right-wing bathes unworriedly in the muck of national chauvinism, the nation over which they preside is undergoing a profound crisis. Marxists have spoken confidently of the "general crisis of capitalism," said to have been ignited by the October Revolution of 1917, then propelled by the rise of a socialist camp, the existence of a sturdy working-class movement, not least in the metropole, and national liberation move-

ments in what had been the colonized world. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991 was thought by some to have eviscerated capitalism's general crisis.

Setting that debate aside, there is little doubt that those who felt that these epochal events had turbo-charged US imperialism have been sadly mistaken. The evidence abounds. In fact, just as the rise of so-called "Islamic fundamentalism" is tied inextricably to the anti-Sovietism that animated the US intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980's, this doctrine also propelled Washington to back the concept of European unity – which eventuated in today's 500 million strong European Union – that is now bedeviling the declining fortunes of US imperialism.

For example, the euro – the currency of Washington's ally cum competitor, the European Union – has replaced the dollar as the world's pre-eminent currency in the all-important international bond market. Dumbfounded, the *Financial Times* of London announced quizzically, that this "represents a startling turnabout from the pattern seen in recent decades, when the US bond market dwarfed its European rival: as recently as 2002," Wall Street was in the lead – but not anymore. This is a handmaiden to the fact that increasingly nations are abandoning the dollar in favor of the euro – indeed, the allegation has been made that Saddam Hussein's decision to do so, was a factor in his overthrow. It was in February 2006 that Iraq's neighbor, Syria, announced that it was dropping the dollar in favor of the euro. This is no small matter, not only because to that point Damascus held billions in dollars but also because this amounted to an interest free loan to a cash-strapped Washington. A stampede away from the dollar would be of profound significance financially.

Similarly, in years gone by the seal of approval for, say, a Korean steel manufacturer, would be having its accounts conform to the US based accounting principles, known as GAAP. But today the non-US, IFRS standard is the global norm. As one business columnist put it, "and so the reins of power slip further from American fingers." Jubilant capitalists in London chortled that "it now seems a given that they inhabit the financial capital of the world. New York is regarded almost with condescension."

It was in the spring of 2007 that Robert Pozen, a member in good standing of the US

ruling elite, announced morosely that "in the past six months, three studies have been published on the declining role of the US in global capital markets...of the 10 largest global IPOs [initial public offerings of stock shares] in 2005, eight were headquartered in China and Europe, so they launched in the Hong Kong and European markets." This trend, combined with others, he predicted sadly "will prevent the US from regaining the dominant position of the mid-1990's." The export of capital has been the hallmark of US imperialism and helped to propel it into the front rank of imperialist nations – but the times are changing.

The industrial decline of US imperialism is well-known. Once it was said that "what is good for General Motors is good for the nation" as this industrial behemoth was seen – by some – as the bell-cow of imperialism. But it was only recently that GM, Ford and Chrysler "suffered the humiliation" – as the



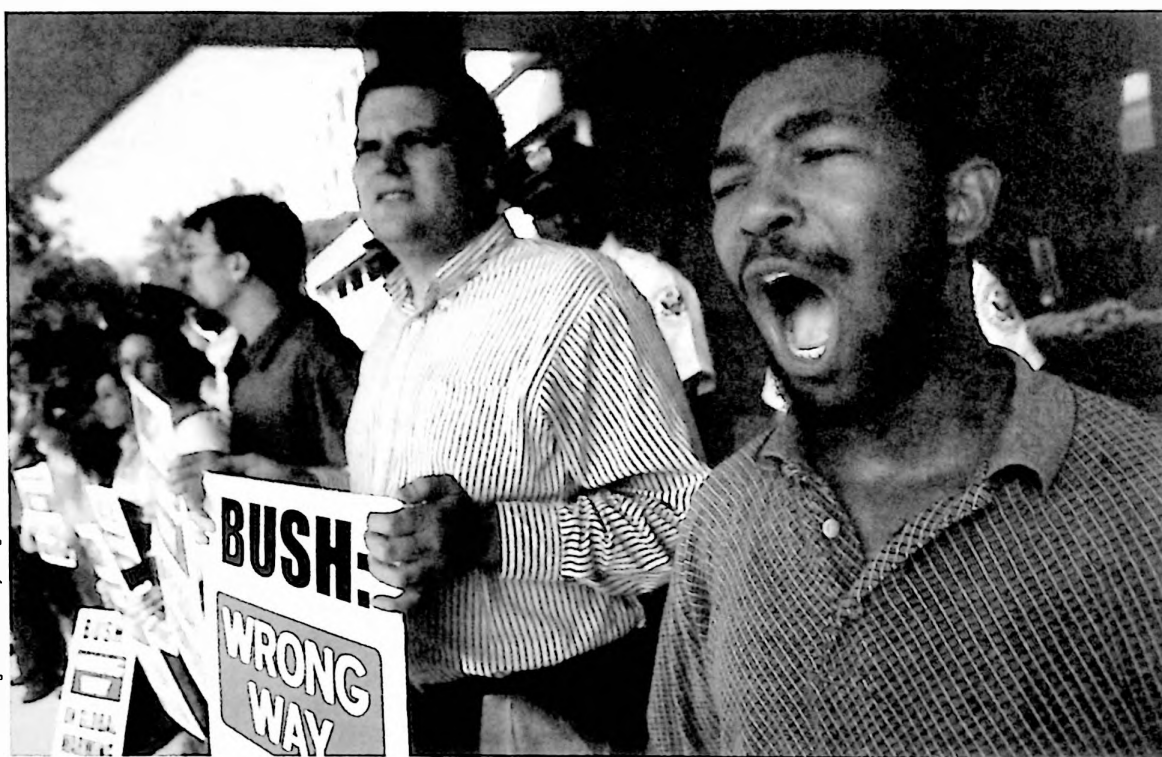
△ Supporters of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez holding a national flag, rally before the National Assembly in Caracas, in support of the constitutional reform.

Financial Times waspishly put it – "of seeing their home market share sink below 50 percent for the first time."

Even Hollywood, where global domination had been thought to be a God-given right, has been in retreat. In the Spring of 2007, 7 of the top 10 movies at the South Korean box office were made in Seoul, China or Japan. French films accounted for 46 percent of the total box office in France in 2006, up from 35 percent in 2005. As the *Los Angeles Times* put it, "anti-Americanism" – i.e. hostility to US imperialism – is hampering the profiteering of the movie studios.

This relative decline of US imperialism has emboldened its rivals, all of whom have more sizeable progressive movements and correspondingly, less potent conservatives. Because US imperialism was at the tip of the spear during the Cold War conflict with the former Soviet Union, it felt compelled to accentuate almost hysterically the ideology of deregulation and privatization and bowing down obediently before the diktat of capital. This has meant that executives here are compensated much more handsomely than their counterparts abroad. But in a move destined to be duplicated in other spheres, the union activists who have been clamoring and complaining about this unjust enrichment have now been joined by allies abroad. The US rule giving shareholders no say on executive compensation contrasts with the system in Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. Now overseas investors are insisting that their global rules be adopted by US corporations, which has added wind to the sails of similar demands of union-backed pension funds. Fewer millions – and billions – going to these captains of industry can be the difference in determining whether US workers will enjoy retirement – or scrounge for dog food.

The point is that the US working class and mass movement either must take advantage of what has been termed (euphemistically) as globalization by forging tighter bonds abroad – or fall victim to our antagonists who are determined to turn global forces against us. □



◀ An environmental activist shouts slogans while protesting outside of the State Department where a conference on Energy Security and Climate was taking place September 27, 2007 in Washington, DC.

WARNING: CLIMATE CRISIS MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH

By David Lawrence

The world today is entering a period of rapid climate change due in large part to increasing the atmospheric concentration of energy-trapping gases. This amplifies the natural "greenhouse effect" that makes the Earth habitable. These greenhouse gases are mostly comprised of carbon dioxide (mostly from fossil fuel combustion and forest burning), plus other heat-trapping gases such as methane (from irrigated agriculture, animal husbandry and oil extraction), nitrous oxide, and other chemicals.

There is very little that is "natural" about this. It is largely the direct and indirect consequence of the plundering of the world's resources and exploiting the world's people

by multinational corporations maximizing short-term profits. There is little room for long-term environmental stewardship in this endless, unquenchable, scorched earth quest for maximum profits. There are many casualties in this rush to profit – perhaps the most important, ultimately, is the health of the people.

In its Third Assessment Report, released a few years ago, the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated: "There is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities." Perhaps it would have been more accurate to have said "corporate policies guiding human activities," but the general concept is evident.

■ It is increasingly evident that all people will not be equally affected by climate change. Working families, the poor, the elderly and the disabled will be affected the most because they have the fewest resources.

During the 20th century, world average surface temperature has increased by approximately one degree Fahrenheit, and approximately two-thirds of that warming has occurred since 1975. Climatologists, using increasingly sophisticated and accu-

rate methods, forecast further warming and changes in precipitation and climatic variability during the coming century and beyond.

The global scale of climate change differs fundamentally from the many other familiar localized environmental concerns. World-wide climate change signifies that Earth's biophysical and ecological systems are being altered at the planetary scale. Among other processes, this is evidenced by stratospheric ozone depletion, accelerating biodiversity losses, stresses on land and marine food-producing systems, depletion of freshwater supplies, and the global spread of persistent organic pollutants.

The IPCC has estimated that the global average temperature will rise by several degrees Fahrenheit during this century. In addition, the IPCC has projected changes in extreme climate events that include more hot days and heat waves; more intense precipitation events; increased risk of drought; increase in winds and tropical cyclones over some areas; intensified droughts and floods with El Niño events; and increased variability in Asian monsoons. A key question is, "What will be the health consequences in all of this for human beings?"

150,000 Deaths

Scientific evidence relating climatic trends to altered health outcomes remains sparse. This impedes estimating the range, timing and magnitude of likely future health impacts of global environmental changes. Even so, an initial attempt has been made by the World Health Organization. Analyzing only the better studied health outcomes, the climate change that already occurred since the climate baseline period 1961-1990 was estimated to have caused 150,000 deaths and 5.5 million "Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYS)" in the year 2000 (DALYs are the sum of the years of life lost due to premature death in the population, in addition to the years of good health lost due to disability).

The IPCC concluded with high confidence that climate change would cause:

- increased heat-related mortality and morbidity,
- decreased cold-related mortality in temperate countries,
- greater frequency of infectious disease epidemics following floods and storms, and,
- substantial health effects following population displacement from sea level rise and increased storm activity.

Both temperature and surface water have important influences on the insects that spread infectious disease. Of particular importance are those mosquito species which spread malaria and viral diseases such as dengue and yellow fever. Mosquitoes need access to stagnant water in order to breed, and the adults need humid conditions to live. Warmer temperatures enhance mosquito breeding. However, very hot and dry conditions can reduce mosquito survival.

Malaria in the US

For North America, the IPCC concluded that insect-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever, may expand their ranges in the United States and may develop in Canada. Malaria, today, is mostly confined to tropical and subtropical regions. However, other carriers of human disease in the United States may increase as a result of climate change. Recent analyses have shown that the malaria epidemic risk increases around five-fold in the year after an El Niño event.

Rodents, which proliferate in temperate regions following mild wet winters, act as reservoirs for various diseases. Some rodent-borne diseases are associated with flooding. Other diseases associated with

Jewel Samad/AFP/Getty Images



▷ A polar bear displays a placard supporting the Kyoto Protocol during a demonstration in Sydney where the world leaders met for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

▷ Humphrey Bogart's signature role may have been Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*, written by Dashiell Hammett. Bogart was also a supporter of civil rights causes.



Corr/APP/Getty Images



APP/Getty Images

△ Actor and singer Paul Robeson listens to a speech during the Peace Partisans World Congress in Moscow 20 April 1949. The US government cancelled Robeson's passport in 1950 and forced him to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956.

PRIVATE EYE, PUBLIC ACTIVIST: DASHIELL HAMMETT AND THE DETECTIVE NOVEL

By Norman Markowitz

Dashiell Hammett was many things. After a stint as a Pinkerton detective, Hammett created the American literary private detective. He became an activist who lent his famous name to anti-fascist, pro-labor and civil rights causes, a partner in a much-publicized relationship with playwright Lillian Hellman, and a political prisoner in the 1950's under the McCarran Internal Security Act for refusing to turn over membership lists to the government.

Samuel Dashiell Hammett was born in Maryland in 1894 in the midst of an economic depression. Dashiell was his mother's family name, and as he grew up in Baltimore and then Philadelphia everyone called him Sam. The year of his birth saw the Cleveland administration smash the American Railway Union and imprison its leader, Eugene V. Debs. Two years earlier, a small army of Pinkerton detectives (hired as strikebreakers and scabs) had fought it out with unionized steel workers at Homestead, Pennsylvania in another strike

that ended in defeat for the workers.

Hammett dropped out school at 13 and bounced around for the next eight years. At the age of 21, Hammett signed on as a detective for the Pinkerton agency. Here Hammett found himself involved in brutal Pinkerton espionage, provocations and strikebreaking against labor unions, particularly against the radical Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). In 1917 in Butte, Montana, Hammett was offered \$5,000 to murder the anti-war IWW leader, Frank Little, who was leading a strike of miners against the Anaconda mining company. He refused. Little was subsequently lynched by band of masked men who were generally believed to be either Pinkerton's or in the pay of the agency. The police of course did nothing to apprehend the culprits.

Hammett volunteered for World War I and served as an ambulance driver. He was forced to quit when he contracted both the flu, during the global epidemic that killed millions, and tuberculosis, which remained a chronic problem for the rest of his life and help produce further respiratory problems.

Returning to Pinkerton's after the war, Hammett developed the idea of using the work as inspiration for stories he planned to write. He also began to drink heavily, perhaps as self-medication because of his ill health and the wretched nature of his detective work.

Hammett quit the agency in 1921 to focus on writing crime fiction. In 1928, Hammett published his first novel, *Red Harvest*. *The Dain Curse* followed, and readers of detective fiction began to realize that Hammett's work represented something that was both new and remarkable. Unlike earlier and contemporary crime solvers, such as Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes or Agatha Christie's Hercules Poirot and later protagonists, or characters like Lord Peter Wimsey, Charlie Chan, or Mr. Moto, Hammett's detectives were neither elite figures nor exotic characters. They were ordinary men who survived on "street smarts" and understanding of what motivated people to act the way they did.

The elite and exotic figures in Hammett's stories were usually the criminals and they often had powerful allies in the establishment to assist them. His stories, though often taking wild, unrealistic turns, followed the action as the detective, who, with a sense of honor and justice even if his employers had neither, sought to due his job. As Hammett developed as an artist, his villains also became more realistic.

In 1930, Hammett wrote what is still his best known novel, *The Maltese Falcon*, introducing Sam Spade, who would be the prototype for the American "Private Eye" for generations. *The Maltese Falcon* would

be made into two movies before the classic 1941 version starring Humphrey Bogart. Sam Spade would also have his own radio show and would eventually influence Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe, Mickey Spillane's misanthropic Mike Hammer and movie and television private eyes like Richard Diamond, Mannix and many others from the 1930's to the 1970's.

In Hammett's next novel, *The Glass Key* (1931) (made into two successful films), the authorities and the criminals operate through the worlds of business and politics as a kind of interlocking directorate. *The Glass Key* gained Hammett a major literary reputation and entry into literary circles. Coming to Hollywood in 1930 after *The Maltese Falcon*, he met the playwright Lillian Hellman

Nikita Khrushchev once asked Pablo Picasso why his paintings were not more political, the answer was widely circulated: "You take care of the politics, and I will do the art."

and established a relationship with her that lasted for the rest of his life.

In 1934, his last major work *The Thin Man* was published and became a great success. *The Thin Man* led of course to a series of movies starring William Powell and Myrna Loy. Eventually its upper class New York amateur detectives created another genre character that spawned many imitators.

After the rise of Hitler in Germany, Hammett was to devote much of his energies in the 1930's and 1940's to the struggle against fascism and for workers rights. He became a leader of the League of American Writers, which sought to both represent writers as workers and also to encourage pro-working-class and anti-fascist work.

Hammett political work and personal integrity limited his success as a screenwriter in the Hollywood studio system. Although his political enemies would mock him for his drinking and partying (portraying him in many respects as a kind of real life Nick Charles, which he didn't especially mind), he worked to fight fascism, racism and anti-Semitism.

After *The Thin Man* Hammett was never able to complete another book. This was largely due to his alcoholism, which also curtailed his film work. He also devoted a good portion of his time mentoring Hellman and helping her write her first success, *The Children's Hour*. His final screen credit was for the film adaptation of *Hellman's Watch on the Rhine* produced in 1943 by the Warner Brothers.

During World War II, Hammett actually fought to rejoin the service, an incredibly courageous albeit quixotic act, given both his age (he was 46) and the fact that he had suffered chronic disabilities from his World War I service. He served in US Army the Aleutian Islands in the Pacific where he edited the local army newspaper. The service intensified his respiratory problems, adding emphysema to his list of ills.

His wartime service as a writer and organizer contributed to the war effort. In the postwar era though, he and his comrades would become the hunted. After the war, US government agencies and the military began to remove his books from US libraries through the world.

Hammett taught courses at the CPUSA supported Jefferson School of Social Science, in which teachers, many of whom had already been victims of blacklisting, provided working-class people with an open,



△ After a brilliant career as a novelist, Dashiell Hammett's typewriter fell silent as the McCarthyist hounds dogged his every step.

non-competitive college education, from 1946 to 1956. Hammett became active as a supporter of the Civil Rights Congress.

Although far less so than his lifetime companion, Lillian Hellman, Hammett participated in the circles of artists and intellectuals to mobilize opposition to postwar Red Scare, which served as a major foundation for the global Cold War. Hammett served five months in federal prison in 1951 for his refusal to name names or hand over membership lists for the Civil Rights Congress to federal authorities.

After his release, the IRS continued the

work of HUAC, attaching whatever he had left financially. He was left financially dependent on Lillian Hellman as TV continued to produce series based on or derived from his work.

Hammett spent the last decade of his life living with Hellman, who continued to work in the New York Theater after her blacklisting and became a heroine to anti-McCarthyites because of her eloquent resistance to HUAC in 1952. Hammett died in 1961 of long cancer as the literary genres that he largely created continued to attract large audiences among readers of crime fiction, moviegoers and most of all television viewers. He

Although his political enemies would mock him for his drinking and partying, he worked to fight fascism, racism and anti-Semitism.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

- The world economy will be impacted as a result of the credit and mortgage crisis in the US according to the IMF's recent report on global financial stability. The crisis represents one major factor in the deterioration of credit discipline worldwide and "the adjustment process is likely to be protracted." R. Rato (managing director of the IMF) said, "the losses in the financial markets and bank balances will take some months to become totally evident."
- Rwanda has been rated the "Most Improved" country in Africa over the last five years by the Ibrahim Index put out by the African based Ibrahim Foundation and calculated by Harvard University researchers using information provided by, among other sources, the United Nations and Transparency International. The index is officially "The Index of African Governance" which measures safety, security, human rights, development, etc. Rwanda was rated most improved because it jumped (on a list of 48 countries) from 36th to 18th from 5 years ago. The best governed was Mauritius. The worst was Somalia. South Africa was 5 and, to the surprise of many, Zimbabwe at 31 outranked Nigeria (37).
- The Military crackdown in Burma [Myanmar] last September and October was not only fueled by the lack of democracy but also by the grinding poverty of the masses of people compared to the wealthy life styles of the military officers. More than 50 percent of the annual budget goes to the military. The UN says a third of the children are undernourished, the World Food Program feeds 500,000 people ["the poorest of the poor" it says] and the per capita income is less than \$300 a year (83 cents a day). About 70 percent of income goes for food. Government workers made about \$36.00 a month. Meanwhile we watched the wedding of Senior Gen. Than Shwe's daughter [covered in millions of dollars worth of diamonds] on TV. The clock is ticking on the generals.
- Even though Costa Rica approved of CAFTA [Central American Free Trade Agreement] the closeness of the popular vote in the October referendum [51.6 percent for, 48.4 percent against] gave critics some solace. Despite a gigantic propaganda campaign based on fear [a no vote would result in economic collapse] orchestrated by Washington and the government of President Arias the anti-CAFTA left almost prevailed and hundreds of thousands were educated about the dangers of neoliberalism by means of mass rallies. Costa Rican conservatives were surprised by the closeness of the vote.
- The European Union has restated its opposition to the death penalty "under all circumstances" as a result of a recent international conference in Lisbon on the death sentence. The EU declared, "The European Union is unreservedly opposed to the use of capital punishment under all circumstances and has consistently called for the worldwide abolition of this punishment." 133 countries have renounced the use of the death penalty either in law or as practice.



Corr/AFIP/Getty Images

PA contributing editor Phil Bonosky was both a contemporary and colleague of Dashiell Hammett. Here he talks briefly with PA about Hammett's life and work. Interview conducted by Eric Green.

PA: How did Hammett become interested in mystery writing?

Hammett knew very well the dirty tricks of Pinkerton's, the private police force depicted in *Red Harvest*. He used to work for them. The Pinkerton's Detective Agency was the military force of employers. Hammett actually worked for them following World War I. Hammett knew them since he was one of them. Pinkerton's played a major role in attacking the hard coal miners of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Walter Bernstein, who wrote the film script *The Mollie McGuires*, which told the tale of the coal miners, also employed this writing technique. Bernstein was very close to the CPUSA; like so many writers of the time. In *The Mollie McGuires*, Bernstein accurately described the anti-worker, anti-union Pinkerton's.

PA: What is it about Hammett that impressed you?

Hammett combined pure entertainment of the mystery with a social reality beneath it all. His unsentimental characterizations are still a guidepost for me. His characters were who they were with no apologies. This seemed to have affected the filmmaker also.

I read *Red Harvest* and was struck by

the introduction of a political idea, i.e., the owner of a copper company and controller of Butte, Montana, hiring thugs to get rid of a union, but nothing else in the novel talked about that. The rest of the novel was about the very violent struggle to get rid of those thugs. No one comes away looking good in this novel.

While Hammett clearly sided with workers and their unions and had a dim view of the Pinkerton's and its employers, his mystery novels were meant to be novels and not political tracts. But, that said, his books still had deep political overtones, subtle, but they were there.

His critical sense was impeccable. He was a master of form. He could contrive plots and make them extremely well done. Full of surprises, for example, the turns and twists of *The Maltese Falcon*. This was the same as *Red Harvest*.

He did things that many mystery writers didn't do. He made characters as important as the plot. Many mystery characters are thin. He created the American hero who on a personal basis was honest and full opponent of the state. He didn't journalistically make it that way. They weren't pinned on the character or pinned on, they were full integrated into the character and the plot.

PA: What was his relationship to Lillian Hellman?

Hellman was a famous writer and playwright who also had movies made of her plays. *Children's Hour* and *Little Foxes* were two of her best. Hellman was formally a member of the Party for four years and refused to coop-

erate with the House Un-American Activities Committee. She made the famous statement to the Committee: "I will not cut my cloth to suit this year's fashions." For standing up to this fascist tinge, and exercising her Constitutional rights, she was blacklisted. Hammett and Hellman were closely identified, and he was often seen as her mentor.

PA: I understand that Hammett taught at the Jefferson School. What did he teach?

He taught in the last years of the Jefferson School in the 1950's. That was in Manhattan on 16th Street and 6th Avenue. It was a full school at its peak about 5,000 students. The students came mostly from the unions. I taught there about the short story. I believe he taught literature. He was committed person. He refused to cooperate with the same House Un-American Activities Committee and served time in jail. His heroism is almost never documented.

PA: Was Hammett like Picasso, in that, he was a very political person, but his art and writings were in the main not political?

Yes, there is a similarity. I am reminded of an interchange between Nikita Khrushchev and Pablo Picasso. Khrushchev asked him why his paintings were not more political, the answer was widely circulated: "You take care of the politics, and I will do the art." □

was, as a veteran of both world wars, buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Hammett received and continues to receive tribute from his peers, the writers that he influenced whom conventional wisdom has treated more respectfully. Ross MacDonald, whose crime novels were among the most successful commercially and aesthetically of the postwar era (the Lew Archer novels particularly) said of Hammett: "as a novelist of realistic intrigue, Hammett was not surpassed in his or any other time.... We all came out from under Hammett's black mask."

Raymond Chandler, who also made his way into the Hollywood studio system and whom critics have placed above Hammett in the literary pantheon, looked at it very differently. "Hammett," Chandler wrote, "wrote... for people with a sharp aggressive attitude to life. They weren't afraid of the seamy side of things; they lived there... Hammett gave murder back to the people who commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse... he put these people done on paper as they were."

If literary realism is important, than Dashiell Hammett is an enormously impor-

tant writer. If artists should, as many did in the 1930's and subsequently, use their success and celebrity to work actively for social progress and justice, then Dashiell Hammett is an enormously significant writer. His experiences on the "wrong side" of the class struggle led to major literary work that reached many millions throughout the world in the stories and novels themselves, movies and television and to a life of political commitment that put him on the right side of the class struggle. □

LAST EXIT TO UTOPIA

A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO A NEW SOCIETY

By David Cavendish

A question in progressive circles comes up from time to time, and that is "is socialism inevitable?" That is not the question that this essay will attempt answer, except with the general answer that socialism will be the next era of human history. Any Marxist who understands the basic concepts class struggle and dialectical materialism, would answer in the affirmative, of course with the caveat that humans are not atoms or molecules that behave according to clearly defined natural laws.

A better question that progressives should ask is how do we get to socialism from here? We know where we – the United States in the early years of the 21st century – are. Much has been written about the general nature of a future socialist society, though the outlines are usually quite vague because Marxism-Leninism is a guide to struggle, not a blueprint of the future.

Unlike Athena, who sprang from the head of Zeus full-grown and in armor, socialism will not emerge from the corpse of capitalism fully developed and ready to provide its benefits to a waiting populace.

Human history does not work so neatly. The road to socialism is not an interstate highway whose entry point is capitalism and whose last exit is socialism. Social change is often a messy, chaotic, and confusing phenomenon. The conflict between the working class and the capitalist class will be the crucible in which the struggle for socialism will be forged. As such, it is the place of a Marxist not only to study the basic laws of social development, but to develop strategies and programs to confront capitalism's



Chris Graythen/Getty Images

△ Protesters march past Jena High School during a civil rights march on September 20, 2007 in Jena, Louisiana. Thousands of protesters gathered for a march on the Louisiana town of Jena in protest of the criminal trial of six Black teens charged in an alleged attack on a white classmate. The fight was sparked between the youths after several nooses were hung from a tree at a high school.

myriad problems prior to the introduction of socialism.

Any struggle for socialism must go hand-in-hand with the fight for democracy. Socialism without democracy will degenerate into authoritarianism. We live in a society that prides itself on its democratic system. A better description would be a bourgeois democracy. While we have rights protected by the Bill of Rights and we can vote and choose from different political parties, our democratic rights are limited. Capitalists run the show and protect their class interests. The best example in recent years were the controversial results of presidential elections of 2000 and 2004. These issues are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Our democracy and the democratic process are being eroded continuously.

At this point in the history of the United States, we have three major steps to take before we arrive at socialism. The first is to defeat the ultra-right in the 2008 elections, the second is to institute a period of liberal reforms, and the third is to implement a people's democratic revolution that will lead to socialism. The process is very complex, but the main points can be outlined very generally in this article.

For the last 30 years the most conservative sections of the capitalist class dominated the political sphere. One need not have to recite the litany of anti-worker, racist, anti-environment, pro-war policies carried out since the Reagan administration. Even in the Clinton years the right-wing exercised great influence, most notably in the 1994 elections (the so-called "Contract With America") and the impeachment of the president.

The first seven years of the George W. Bush administration have seen even greater

assaults against workers, people of color, immigrants, and the environment. The president and his advisors have used the 9/11 attacks as a pretext to attack civil liberties and fight wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bush has tipped the balance on the Supreme Court to the conservatives, and they have issued numerous decisions that undermine the struggles for progress on many fronts.

The fightback against the Bush policies is well underway. Peace groups have been marching, writing and organizing to end the war in Iraq. Others have protested the erosion of civil liberties under the Patriot Act, and other laws. Massive efforts led in 2006 to the election of a Democratic-controlled Congress. For the first time, the right-wing juggernaut has been blunted.

The road to socialism is not an interstate highway whose entry point is capitalism and whose last exit is socialism.

An immense job still needs to be done so that the people's movements can regain what has been lost. The main goal now is to create a left-center alliance and defeat the ultra-right.

Organized labor has emerged as the centerpiece of this movement. As impressive as its efforts were in the 2004 and 2006 elections, 2008 will be a year of even greater effort. Grassroots organizations will work ceaselessly to bring about a victory against the forces of darkness currently in power. Whichever Democratic candidate emerges as the winner will have a huge task in redirecting government policy. As we have seen since 2006, even though the Democrats control both houses of Congress, they have not yet successfully challenged the Bush Administration in many areas. Only consistent and persistent pressure will lead to pro-people policies. The next administration will be the focal point for these mass movements, with labor at the front.

The new president will have two main tasks; one will be to dismantle the anti-people edifice erected by the right wing in recent decades. Laws that restrict civil liberties and give tax breaks to the rich will have to be repealed. The chief executive will need

to set a new moral tone and sweep out the cobwebs of corruption and law-breaking endemic under the Bush administration. The second will be to initiate a program of reform, in essence create a new "new deal." What Franklin D.

Roosevelt did in the 1930's will have to be adapted to the 21st century.

The major areas calling out for reform include need for a national single-payer health insurance program, an end to a unilateral interventionist foreign policy (including an end to the economic blockade of Cuba), the passage of workers rights, tougher civil rights laws, and laws to protect the environment. The list is endless. The government will have to assert its role as regulator of big business and protector of the powerless.

We will to broaden and deepen the struggle for democracy. The working class and its allies will have to fight to level the political playing field, which now is tilted greatly in favor of big business and its two major political parties. Laws will be needed to limit the influence of money in campaigns, make sure every vote is counted, open ballot to third parties, open up the broadcast media by bringing back the equal time provisions of the Fairness Doctrine, and institute many other electoral reforms.

An important part of the struggle for democracy will be reigning in the domination of the public airwaves by big capital. One can forget that the airwaves used by broadcasters are owned by the people and hence should be controlled by their organizations. Recent laws on media concentration need to be reformed and the process of broadcast license renewal opened up.

After generations of struggle, the government's foreign policy must be changed from one where the United States is first among many counties to one where we are one among equals. The forces of peace will need to gain greater influence and demand that the government renounce its unilateral interventionist foreign policy which had its roots in the Cold War and led to the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan in recent times. The defense budget will be slashed as our country resets its priorities. We will close foreign military bases and renounce the first use of nuclear weapons. Relics of the Cold War, such as NATO and nuclear weapons systems will be dismantled.

How long this period will take is unknown. What is known is that there will be an intense



Chris Hondros/Getty Images

△ A protester holds a sign outside Myanmar's permanent mission to the United Nations October 1, 2007 in New York City. The protesters called on the government of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, to end a crackdown on pro-democracy activists and free political prisoners.



Bill Pugliano/Cathy Images

◀ United Auto Workers member Debbie Kennedy of Clarkston, Michigan, a 22 year General Motors employee, strikes in front of the General Motors Flint Truck Assembly Plant September 25, 2007 in Flint, Michigan.

right-wing counter attack. The center and left forces will have to withstand this onslaught and work to stay united. It would be nice but unlikely that the road to reform will be smooth without potholes and setbacks. Any significant fragmentation or weakening of the people's movements will reopen the door to the ultra-right.

As the liberal reform process develops, people will begin to see that it will have its limits. Workers will have greater rights to organize and strike, but there will still be private ownership across the bargaining table, and these owners will still follow the capitalist imperative, profits first. Environmentalists will win better laws to protect nature's fragile ecology, but again, they will constantly be butting heads with big business. In area after area reform will go only so far, and big business will fight back with its tremendous resources every step of the way.

As time passes and conditions change, social perceptions also change. Larger numbers of activists and rank-and-file workers will see that to continue the progress being made, that they will need to replace an anti-monopoly critique with an anti-capitalist one. General changes in capitalist production,

which will siphon off ever greater wealth from those who produced it to those who own, it will bring many more people to the side of social change. There will be increased calls for stricter governmental controls over private capital or in various industries even public control.

Larger numbers of activists and rank-and-file workers will see that to continue the progress being made, that they will need to replace an anti-monopoly critique with an anti-capitalist one.

Social change does not take place in the same way a person walks through a train, going from car to car, in a very clear and delineated manner. Therefore, at some point in history society will move from a period of liberal reform to the people's democratic revolution. At that time, we move towards what

has been called "Bill of Rights Socialism." This means that we will use our basic rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and expand them to guarantee people's social and economic rights. We could add guarantees against racism, sexism, and homophobia. We could guarantee full employment, free health care, and education. In short, we could guarantee basic human rights in all areas of life.

Unlike many other, less-developed economies, the United States will start the transition to socialism at a highly advanced point. The material conditions for the next stage of economic development are already present.

Our government will break the mold of liberal reform and move in the direction of socialism. The working class and its organizations will be at the core of this movement, but it will include an alliance of other classes, including small business, and farmers. These organizations will draw in an increasingly larger number of people as part of a democratic movement to create a new society.

The peoples democratic revolution will unfold in all areas of society. As such, it will be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the changes in total. Nor can we describe it

in any detail. It would be useful, however, to highlight various concepts.

The last third of the 20th century saw the de-industrialization of many areas of the United States. Factories, many the cornerstone of their communities, closed and their operations transferred abroad. The basic core industries or steel, auto, machinery, and electronics were downsized. Millions of workers lost their jobs, and either moved to places where there was work, or found employment at semi-or-unskilled work at lower pay than before.

A modern nation needs its manufacturing base and under the people's democratic revolution the government will create conditions to re-establish worker-run, popularly-owned industrial enterprises.

Economic decision-making in these areas will be taken out of the hands of big business and given to the working class.

As time passed, the government would take the lead in the conversion of many industries to popular control. This will not be an easy task, needless to say. The capitalists will fight tooth and nail to maintain their ownership. But with the support of the vast majority of workers, the forces of popular power will have the strength to move forward.

A similar scenario will be repeated in many industries, including the energy complex, pharmaceuticals, aerospace, and consumer goods. Again, the only way that the people overcome the capitalists will be through militancy and unity. At this point in our social development, the people will be convinced that socialism will be a superior system and will be motivated to pursue their goals, and defend their victories.

A whole panoply of laws and policies will follow. People will demand full employment, and the introduction of new technology will make work easier and more rewarding. As such, the work week will be shortened and vacation time will increase. People will have guaranteed pensions and as more productive forces are controlled by the state sector, the wealth created will lead to an earlier and more secure retirement. Work will become an honored part of our society.

The people in their social manifestation will become increasingly identified with the government as politics tips in favor of the working class and its allies. "We, the people" will truly signify the relationship of the population to its government. As the economy evolves

towards socialism, the underpinnings of racism will be broken down. Hand-in-hand with anti-racist education and a court system that protects the rights of African Americans and other people of color, real progress towards the end of racism will be made.

Women will tear down the laws and policies that oppress them and the economic climate of the people's democratic revolution guarantees gender equality. Among the changes will be equal pay, opportunity for education, low cost child care, and the right to choose an abortion.

In the political arena there will be many changes, while preserving and enhancing the democratic traditions of the United States. The money-dominated electoral system that exists today will be replaced by one where there will be greater access by workers and others who express a variety of ideas through a number of different political parties. As the working class gains in political strength, its confidence and maturity will increase. Those parties that support the revolutionary changes taking place will gain support, the others will fade away. The Communist party, which under capitalism has been marginalized, will work to unify and strengthen the people's movement and with its program based on Marxism-Leninism will become an increasingly important contributor to the political

discourse.

Our culture will destroy the commercial, racist, sexist, anti-human elements that make it up today. Society will support the arts, so that the image of the starving artist, dancer, or musician becomes a relic of the past. Themes that value the place of work, sisterhood, and peace will come to dominate. Here, the basic values of the new society will be nurtured so that people become used to living in a society that will be a prelude to socialism.

There are a myriad of changes that will take place during the people's democratic revolution, and it is impossible to discuss them all in a short article. What is important to understand is that an advanced industrial economy will need to undergo a transition from a capitalist dominated class structure to one led by the workers. All of the good and positive features of our current society will be carried over and improved in the new one.

The transition will not be simple or direct. The capitalists are a formidable obstacle, but short of them annihilating the human race in a nuclear war, a strong and united people's movement, with the working class at its core, will eventually emerge victorious. It is our responsibility to our descendants that we win the struggle. □



Bill Pugliano/Getty Images

▲ Autoworkers strike in front of the General Motors Flint Truck Assembly Plant September 25, 2007 in Flint, Michigan. The UAW called a nationwide strike yesterday against GM, its first in 31 years, after a settlement on key job security issues had not been reached after a strike deadline.

MANAGING MARKETS AND THE SOCIALIST STATE: AN OVERVIEW

By David S. Pena

Questions about the problems and prospects of socialist-oriented market economies are for Marxist-Leninists, bound up with an understanding of the proper tasks of the proletarian state. A fundamental concern is whether markets are compatible with the political supremacy of the working class, a supremacy that is entailed by the notion of proletarian rule during the transition period between capitalism and socialism. In classical Marxist-Leninist theory the period of transition between capitalism and socialism is known as the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, a term no longer commonly used. However, this is not a tyranny or dictatorship of a minority of exploiters in the sense that we rightly associate with fascism or absolutism.

Under working-class rule, the political representatives of the vast majority of the people, the working class, take control of the state and use its power in the interests of the majority to abolish capitalism and defeat all attempts at capitalist restoration. This is a government which exercises extraordinary powers during a time of crisis when the vital interests of the whole society are under attack by a still powerful minority of exploiters. If capitalist society can be described as a dictatorship of the minority (the bourgeoisie) over the majority (the proletariat), then the proletarian state is the rule of the working-class majority over the capitalist minority that lasts until socialism is established and classes are abolished.

But what about working-class governments, such as those in China and Vietnam, that permit limited market economies to exist during the transition period between capitalism and socialism? Do socialist-oriented market economies represent a rejection of

Marxist-Leninist theory regarding the proper tasks of the proletarian state?

In Chapter III of *The Class Struggles in France*, originally written in 1850, Marx described the proletarian state as "the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionising of all the ideas that result from these social relations." This well-known passage assigns four tasks to the proletarian state, tasks sometimes referred to as the "four alls," because they include abolition of 1) all economic classes; 2) all relations of production that support class society; 3) all social relations arising from these relations of production; and 4) the revolutionary transformation of all ideas resulting from these social relationships.

The four alls are sometimes assumed to encompass all the tasks of the proletarian state, but this is not accurate. *The*

Communist Manifesto speaks of three other tasks of working-class governments that are not counted among the "four alls." In the *Manifesto*, Marx and Engels wrote that once political supremacy has been gained, the task of the proletariat is "to wrest by degrees all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e. of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." Therefore the three tasks mentioned in the *Manifesto*, in addition to the four tasks from *The Class Struggles in France*, are relevant to this discussion.

How are these seven tasks related and how should the proletariat go about accomplishing them? Should they be pursued simultaneously, or should some come before others, and if so, in what order? Clearly, expropriation of capital must be carried out first, because it is necessary for beginning the process of centralizing the instruments of production, increasing the productive forces,



△ A workers rights group in Jakarta, Indonesia marches in front of the Myanmar embassy in Jakarta in October 2007.

Jewel Samad/AFP/Getty Images

ending class society, and achieving the other goals outlined above. But notice that Marx and Engels held that capital would be expropriated by degrees, not all at once.

This raises further questions, although Marx and Engels were probably wise not to attempt comprehensive answers to them. The statement that capital must be expropriated by degrees does not tell us very much. How could it be otherwise? In a complex capitalist society in which ownership is decentralized, it is a practical impossibility to expropriate all capital at once. Furthermore, the fact that capital must be expropriated by degrees tells us nothing about the targeting, speed, and scope of expropriation and how it will vary under different conditions. Nor does it tell us specifically how expropriation should be accomplished. Should it be done by decree, at the point of bayonets, through competition with, and takeovers by, publicly owned enterprises, or by other methods?

The task of increasing the productive forces also raises many questions. By itself, increasing the productive forces cannot be considered a means of achieving the tasks of a socialist state. Capitalist society, for example, increases the productive forces relative to its predecessor, feudalism, but it achieves tasks

opposite of those pursued by socialist society. Nevertheless, it is clear that rapidly increasing the productive forces, while managing the increase in the right way, is an essential task of the working class, because it is necessary for creating a strong, secure socialist nation in which living standards are constantly improving and the advance toward communist methods of distribution becomes possible. What is the right way of managing the increase?

In general terms it must be managed in a way that strengthens a nation's security and preserves its sovereignty against imperialist inroads while raising the people's living standards, eliminating class society and making progress towards the other goals outlined above. It is certainly not necessary or practical to expect the working class to accomplish all of these goals during the transition period between capitalism and socialism. It is reasonable to expect the worker's state to expropriate capital, eliminate classes, and increase the productive forces at a speed practicable under local conditions, but certainly such tasks as abolishing all social relations and all ideas left over from class society cannot be finished until the advent of communism. Marx would have agreed. By calling such a state a "transit point" to

the completion of such tasks, he implied that they would not be completed during the period immediately following capitalism, but rather by the socialist and communist societies that would follow.

What is the relationship between expropriation of capital and increasing the productive forces? The answer depends on the type of society undergoing socialist revolution. Consider an advanced capitalist society, the kind of society which Marx and Engels had in mind when they were outlining the tasks of labor once in power. Here the dialectical contradiction between the existing mode of production and the further development of the productive forces has reached the point of maximum tension. The contradiction can only be overcome, that is, the productive forces can undergo further development, only through revolution, through the seizure of political power and expropriation of capital by the working class. Under these conditions, expropriation of capital undermines and leads to abolition of the economic and social relations of bourgeois society, thereby releasing brakes on the productive forces. This allows their qualitative and quantitative expansion, and begins the process of capitalism's supersession by socialism, a



Alexander Joe/AFP/Getty Images

△ At a rally celebrating the South African Communist Party's 85th Anniversary in Pietermaritzburg.

PROBLEMS IN MARXISM

process which, if allowed to continue to its logical conclusion, will end in communism and the fulfillment of the four alls. In sum, when the working class and its allies take control of an advanced capitalist society in which further development of the productive forces under the existing mode of production has become impossible, relatively rapid and extensive expropriation can result in the desired increase in the productive forces. In this example, the two tasks – expropriation of capital and a rapid increase in the productive forces – are compatible.

By contrast, consider socialist revolutions in underdeveloped countries whose economies are dominated by subsistence agriculture and small commodity production, albeit with a small capitalist sector. When these revolutions have tried to advance directly to socialism through a rapid expropriation of the capitalist sector and elimination of market forces, the longterm results have been prolonged periods of slow growth, stagnant and even declining living standards, and shortages of food and manufactured goods despite often rapid initial gains in productivity and living standards. Why has this happened? In general it is a result of attempting to proceed directly to socialism by skipping the capitalist stage of economic development in which advanced productive forces are created with the help of market mechanisms. Underdeveloped socialist countries expropriated capital and attempted to abolish economic classes and market mechanisms, but they could not benefit from the expropriation of the advanced productive forces that are a legacy of mature capitalism, because these countries had never developed advanced capitalism. Inheriting the backward productive forces of their nascent capitalist,



Teh Eng Koon/AFP/Getty Images

△ Some of the 580 Chinese flags are displayed on the occasion of the 58th Chinese National Day celebration at a park in Beijing in September 2007.

but predominantly feudal, societies, underdeveloped countries undergoing socialist revolutions could not sustain the economic growth necessary to construct socialism successfully and permanently.

The painful lessons learned from the excessively rapid and extensive expropriation of capital and the untimely elimination of market mechanisms have led some socialist countries, notably China and Vietnam, to develop “socialist-oriented market economies” that permit limited private capitalization and managed market mechanisms in an attempt to develop the advanced productive

forces necessary for making the transition to a sustainable socialism. This is not a rejection of Marxism-Leninism, and it is not a return to capitalism; rather, it is a creative adaptation of the theory to the needs of socialist construction in underdeveloped countries. A close reading of the *Communist Manifesto* suggests that there will be a period of continued market relations even in advanced capitalist countries undergoing proletarian revolution.

The *Manifesto*'s ten-point revolutionary program calls for nationalization of land, credit, communications and transport, but not for the immediate nationalization of industry and agriculture. It merely calls for the gradual extension of state-owned industry. Nor does it demand the immediate abolition of market relations. This suggests that Marx and Engels accepted the notion that markets would continue to function, at least for a time, under the proletarian state during the transition period between capitalism and socialism. Granted, Marx and Engels did not explicitly endorse the use of markets and the continued existence of private property during what they called the “proletarian dictatorship.” They clearly viewed private property and markets as institutions that would hinder the advance toward socialism; therefore, they marked them for relatively rapid extinc-



David Liller/AFP/Getty Images

◁ Members of the Communist Party pay tribute to late Chilean president Salvador Allende, in the surroundings of the presidential palace La Moneda, on September 11th, 2007, on the 34th anniversary of the coup that overthrew him from power and saw general Augusto Pinochet become a dictator.

tion. They wrote in the *The Class Struggles in France* that, "For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes."

It should be remembered, however, that they were thinking primarily of proletarian revolutions in advanced capitalist countries in which further development of the productive forces called for rapid replacement of the anarchy of the market with planned economies. And even with advanced countries, Marx and Engels refrained from calling for an immediate expropriation of all private capital. They allowed that proletarian revolutions in the advanced countries could be considered successful if "at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletariat." Notice that they did not say all the productive forces.

There is nothing in Marx and Engels that prohibits the extensive use of market forces to develop the productive capacity of backward economies. *The Communist Manifesto* and other writings of Marx and Engels suggest a period of continued private property and market relations even in advanced capitalist countries, and this strongly suggests that they would favor even lengthier periods of market relations and private enterprise in less developed countries that are trying to make the transition to socialism.

Lenin unambiguously endorsed the view that the proletariat should use markets to prepare underdeveloped countries for socialism. It is common knowledge that his New Economic Policy used market mechanisms to stimulate economic recovery after the devastation of the Russian Civil War, but some do not realize that Lenin saw markets as more than just an expedient. He actually viewed market mechanisms as necessary for moving underdeveloped countries toward socialism. Lenin recognized that the economies of underdeveloped, agrarian countries in transition to socialism combine subsistence farming, small commodity production, private capitalism, state capitalism, and socialism, with small commodity production in the dominant role, as noted in his essay, "The Tax in Kind." These societies contain many more peasants than workers, and because peasants favor the petty-bourgeois mode of production, they tend to side with the bourgeoisie against the labor movement. It is tempting to argue that this situation calls for an immediate transition to socialism, in order to force the peasantry

to cooperate with workers in defeating the wealthy classes. But Lenin did not believe this. He argued that the attempt to push agrarian countries directly into socialism, that is, to eliminate markets before the build up of the productive forces had converted peasant agriculture and small commodity production into modern, large-scale industries, was a mistake that would actually hamper economic development and thwart socialist construction. The solution he proposed was for the working-class led state to use capitalism, i.e., commodity production, free markets, and concessions with foreign capitalists, to promote the growth of the productive forces, and to eliminate the conflict of interest between peasants and industrial workers by converting agriculture into a large-scale industry and the peasants into proletarians.

But Lenin never held that socialism could be advanced by permitting unbridled capitalism, which would surely undermine labor's rule and end the socialist orientation of economic development. Instead, he advocated state capitalism, capitalism under the regulation, accounting, and control of the proletarian state, which harnesses the energy of the free market to eliminate small commodity production, puts all economic sectors on a large-scale industrial footing, transforms the whole people into one united working class, maintains the economy's socialist orientation, and raises the living standards of all people, both rural and urban. For Lenin the key task of the revolution during the transition period between capitalism and socialism is successfully to use state capitalism to advance the socialist revolution. Here are his own words: "Can ... the dictatorship of the proletariat be combined with state capitalism? Are they compatible? Of course they are state capitalism is a step forward compared with the small-proprietor ... The whole problem – in theoretical and practical terms – is to find the correct methods of directing the development of capitalism ... into the channels of state capitalism, and to determine how we are to hedge it about with conditions to ensure its transformation into socialism in the near future."

Market mechanisms are compatible, but an unrestricted market is not. That is why Lenin argued for state capitalism. Markets entail the growth of capitalism, and Lenin understood that flourishing capitalism, even if it is state capitalism, is a grave threat to the political supremacy of socialism. Capitalism

tempts the people to engage in profiteering at the expense of social harmony and welfare. Capitalists try to evade state control by bribing communists into bending the rules and looking the other way. That is why, for a socialist-oriented market economy to remain truly socialist, the workers' state must wage a long, determined struggle against bribery and other attempts to evade state control. It must also struggle against market engendered social problems such as the huge and increasing disparity between the living standards of the rich and poor and between the rural and urban populations: environmental degradation; mass unemployment; and the alarming crisis in workplace safety. In his pamphlet "*Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, Lenin famously remarked that the market economy "engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale." This is undoubtedly true; thus, if the benefits of the market are to be gained without destroying socialism, the struggle against corruption and other social problems must be waged on an even more massive scale.

I will end on a note of cautious optimism. In the past the socialist countries were able to hold their own against the imperialist countries in military competition, but never in economic competition. Now that socialism, particularly in China, has learned successfully to use market mechanisms for the development of a truly competitive, world class productive capacity, the imperialist countries are for the first time facing the prospect of losing the global economic competition to socialism. In the recent past – I am thinking of the former Soviet Union and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe – the imperialist countries defeated the socialist countries in economic competition; the bourgeoisie took over the formerly socialist enterprises and turned them to the service of capitalism. Now the imperialist bourgeoisie faces a similar fate. Only this time, socialist enterprises have the opportunity to buy out their capitalist rivals and use these productive forces to advance socialism. This in brief is the most significant implication for developed capitalist countries of the successful development of socialist-oriented market economies by existing working-class led states. □

Capital versus Labor: THE PULLMAN STRIKE SHOWDOWN



Illustration by Jennie Santos

“It has been my life’s desire to unify railroad employees and to eliminate the aristocracy of labor.”

– Eugene Debs after the creation of the American Railway Union.

By Jon Allen

On July 6th, 1894, federal troops marched into the Panhandle railroad yards in Chicago. The soldiers had been ordered to the yards by President Grover Cleveland with orders to evict the hundreds of striking railroad workers interfering with the yard. The ragged strikers, into their second week off the job, didn’t take kindly to the presence of hostile federal troops. With a grim determination they fought attempts to move them and this peaceful strike quickly turned

into a brawl. By the time the clashes with federal troops had ceased, damage to the yard and nearly 700 railcars was estimated to be \$340,000 (nearly \$8 million today). So ended one of the most violent days in one of the defining labor struggles of the late 19th century, the Pullman strike.

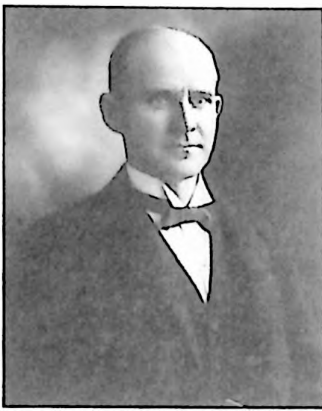
For all of the 19th century, living conditions for most working-class families were absolutely deplorable. Most lived in crumbling tenement buildings grouped together in large urban ghettos. These neighborhoods had poor sanitation, few social services and high crime rates making the quality of life for their working class residents very poor. Workers labored 10 or 12-hour days just to support their families and, unable to afford anything else, were forced to live in these tenement slums.

Living conditions in working-class Pullman, Illinois, were a far cry from conditions found in the tenement ghettos. The

12,000 Pullman residents lived in clean town homes with indoor plumbing, gas and sewer systems. The children went to school free of charge, and the town had its own library. Pullman was attractive with modern architecture, multiple parks and extensive landscaping. Besides a library, the town had a church, shops and various entertainment options. To outside observers the town was a model community vastly better than the dense tenement slums.

The town was the brainchild of welfare capitalist George Pullman, owner of the Pullman Palace Car Company, a railcar manufacturer. Pullman had designs drawn up and had the town built in the 1880’s. He intended to provide housing for the entire workforce of his nearby Pullman factory. The town was seen as highly progressive and was widely admired.

The situation in Pullman differed radically from this perception. The whole town, includ-



△ Eugene V. Debs founded the American Railway Union.

ing housing, stores and even the church was company owned. Alcohol was banned, and despite cheaper rents nearby, Pullman workers were required to live in town. A portion of employees paychecks were in vouchers only redeemable at overpriced company stores. Pullman had a similar monopoly on utilities. A message from the Pullman residents complained that, "Water which Pullman buys from the city [Chicago] at eight cents a thousand gallons he retails to us at 500 percent advance.... Gas which sells at seventy five cents per thousand feet in Hyde Park, just north of us, he sells for \$2.25. When we went to tell him our grievances he said we were all his children." One worker described the situation in Pullman; "We are born in a Pullman house, fed from the Pullman shop, taught in the Pullman school, catechized in the Pullman church, and when we die we shall be buried in the Pullman cemetery and go to the Pullman Hell."

In early 1894, the Pullman company laid off a large percentage of its workforce and cut the salaries of the remaining workers four different times. Each reduction slashed wages 30 to 70 percent. There was no corresponding reduction in rent or company store prices. Records show that workers living in Pullman at the time were over \$70,000 behind in rent (\$1.6 million today).

Several delegations of workers approached George Pullman himself to discuss the crisis, but Pullman ignored the delegations. On June 11th wages were again cut 30 percent, the fifth major pay cut that year. In response, the 6,000 remaining Pullman plant employees struck in protest. The strikers quickly sent word to their union, the newly formed American Railroad Union (ARU), and appealed for its support.

A year earlier, in June of 1883, the

ARU had been formed during a meeting of Chicago railroad workers. Eugene V. Debs, a former railroad fireman and co-founder of the Industrial Workers of the World union, was elected leader of the infant union. Under Debs' leadership, union membership blossomed; by the time of the Pullman strike, hundreds of ARU locales were in 27 states with overall total of 140,000 members.

Despite extensive lobbying by Debs to integrate the union, segregation was approved by a slim majority at the founding meeting. This decision would come to haunt the ARU and lead to be its unraveling.

The ARU was the first industrial union in the United States, meaning anyone within a particular industry regardless of skill level was eligible for membership. Membership was open to whites only. Despite extensive lobbying by Debs to integrate the union, segregation was approved by a slim majority at the founding meeting. This decision would come to haunt the ARU and lead to be its unraveling.

Soon after receiving news of the Pullman strike, the union leadership quickly voted to support the strikers. A boycott of any trains containing Pullman cars was approved, and the strike started as planned on June 26th.

Immediately workers walked off the job in several large Chicago rail yards. Several other sympathy strikes began around the country, slowing train traffic. Soon, the ARU issued a statement demanding that George Pullman agree to arbitration with the Pullman residents. The ARU promised that once this condition was met, everyone would immediately go back to work.

Pullman quickly responded to the ARU claiming he had been forced to cut wages and that he didn't know of anything needing arbitration. Hearing his response, the ARU chose to escalate the action. By June 30th, 125,000 ARU members had struck, effecting 29 different railroads. Due to the popularity of Pullman cars, strikers refused disrupted

the vast majority of trains. Chicago, a key rail hub, was completely shut down by the strikers and rail yards in many other cities were affected to some degree. Train traffic to the west coast ceased and east coast traffic slowed to a crawl.

In response to the railway shutdown, Pullman ordered his cars to be added to federal mail trains the obstruction of which was a federal offense. He also contacted Attorney General Richard Olney, a railroad owner himself, in the hopes of further involving the federal government. The Attorney General agreed using the vandalism of a Chicago rail yard by strikers as an excuse. Olney issued injunctions against the ARU leadership. The injunctions cited the strike leaders in "compelling or inducing by threats, intimidation, persuasion, force or violence, railway employees to refuse or fail to perform their duties."

Pullman also appealed to President Grover Cleveland for federal intervention, claiming the strikers were obstructing federal mail trains and that the injunctions were being ignored by the ARU leadership. On July 3rd, a day after the injunctions were issued, Cleveland ordered federal troops to Chicago. This move was met by fierce protests from the mayor of Chicago, John Hopkins, and pro-labor Illinois governor John Altgeld who opposed the forceful breakup of the strike. Altgeld's support of the Pullman strikers would later cost him his career.

The injunctions inhibited communication between the ARU leadership and the strikers, and as communications broke down the ARU leadership began to lose control of the nationwide strike. With federal pressure mounting, order at the strike spots began to unravel. The strikes had been peaceful up to this point but the appearance of hostile federal troops outraged the strikers further. Peaceful demonstrations escalated into riots as federal soldiers attempted to disperse the crowds of strikers forcefully at the rail yards. The violence reached its peak on July 6th and riots broke out at the Chicago Panhandle yards when federal troops appeared to disperse the crowd. The ensuing melee caused massive property damage. The next day was also exceedingly violent. Following suspected arson at the Columbian exposition in Chicago, soldiers fired into a demonstrating group of strikers nearby killing between four and 30 people.

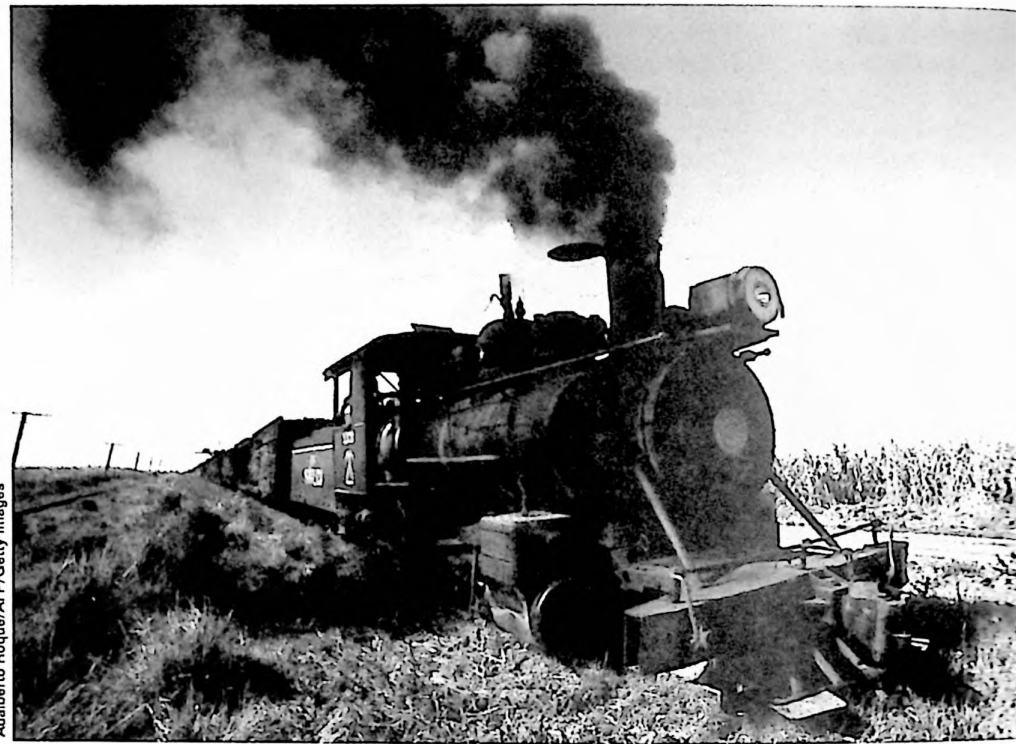
Soon after violence broke out in Chicago,

Debs and other ARU leaders were arrested and charged with contempt of court. A second appeal was made to Pullman for arbitration, but this was refused. Pullman and the railroads brought in black strikebreakers to move the trains and work in the Pullman factory. Federal soldiers protected the African American workers, who felt no loyalty to the ARU. Bending under immense pressure, the strikes began to dissolve; the strikers began returning to work. On August 2nd, the Pullman factory reopened. The next day, the ARU officially declared the strike over.

Soon after the ARU capitulation, Pullman forced his employees to sign pledges stating they would never re-unionize. He also fired large numbers of union leaders and strike organizers. Debs and seven other ARU leaders were convicted of mail obstruction and contempt of court. They all were sent to jail, and in their absence the ARU quickly dissolved.

Much of the mainstream press was unsympathetic to the strike and boycott, some going so far as calling it "the insurrection." A June 31st *Chicago Tribune* headline read, "Debs strikers Begin Work of Destruction, Guns Awe Them Not, Drunken Stockyard Rioters Defy Uncle Sam's Troops, Mobs Invite Death." A July 8th *New York Times* article described Debs as "A law Breaker and an Enemy to the Human Race." Political opinions were also hostile. When Minnesota Senator Davis was asked whether he would support a pro-union bill in Congress affirming the boycott's legality, his caustic response was recorded by the *Brooklyn Eagle*: "[voting for the bill] would be a blow at the security, peace, and rights of millions of people who have never harmed the railroad employees or their associates."

While vocal public support of the Pullman strike was rare, Chicago Mayor John Hopkins and Illinois Governor John Altgeld supported the strikers and vehemently opposed federal involvement. Samuel Gompers, leader of the American Federation of Labor, voiced support for the strikers but concrete action from his union never materialized. James H. Kyle, a Populist Senator from South Dakota and Chairman of the Committee of Education and Labor, introduced a controversial bill affirming the strikers' right to boycott Pullman cars. The strikers also received considerable support from other unions and pro-labor organizations, especially in Chicago. Editorials in a few mainstream papers were also sympa-



Adalberto Roque/AFP/Getty Images

△ The Pullman Strike was a watershed moment in US history.

thetic. This editorial from the *Brooklyn Eagle* is a good example:

Mr. Pullman cries poverty to his starving employees and then retreats to his princely summer mansion on Pullman Island, in the St. Lawrence river... If the present strike is lost to labor it will retard the progress of civilization and reduce the possibilities of labor ever emancipate itself from the thralldom of greed.

The Pullman strike was a watershed event in the history of the labor movement. It showed the power unions held if organized and run effectively and also demonstrated how extensively business interests had infiltrated the press and federal government. The Pullman strike set the stage for the passage of protective labor laws and for successful strike action in the future. Without the Pullman strike, legislation we take for granted like the eight-hour workday, minimum wage and workplace safety standards might not exist.

Debs used six-month jail sentence to read the works of Karl Marx. Combined with his Pullman experience, Marx radicalized his politics. After leaving jail, he became an out-

Without the Pullman strike, legislation we take for granted like the eight-hour workday, minimum wage and workplace safety standards might not exist.

spoken social activist, pacifist and socialist politician for the rest of his life. He eventually founded the American Socialist Party and ran for president five times on a socialist ticket. He died on October 20th, 1926 in Elmhurst, Illinois. □

rodents and ticks, which show associations with climatic variability, include Lyme disease, tick borne encephalitis, and hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (mostly in the American Southwest).

Many diarrheal diseases vary seasonally, suggesting sensitivity to climate. Both floods and droughts increase the risk of diarrheal diseases. Major causes of diarrhea linked to heavy rainfall and contaminated water supplies are: cholera, cryptosporidium, E.coli infection, giardia, shigella, typhoid, and viruses such as hepatitis A. In 2030 the estimated risk of diarrhea will be up to 10 percent higher in some regions than if no climate change occurred.

Extremes of temperature can kill. In many temperate countries, death rates during the winter season are 10-25 percent higher than those in the summer. In July 1995, a heat wave in Chicago caused 514 heat-related deaths and 3,300 emergency hospital admissions.

Most of the excess deaths during times of temperature extreme are in persons with preexisting disease, especially heart and respiratory disease. The very old, the very young, and the frail are most susceptible.

Global climate change will be accompanied by an increased frequency and intensity of heatwaves, as well as warmer summers and milder winters. For example, the annual excess summer-time deaths attributable to climate change, by 2050, is estimated to increase several hundred percent, to between 500-1,000 for New York and 100-250 for Detroit.

The effects of weather disasters (droughts, floods, storms and bushfires) on health are difficult to quantify, because secondary and delayed consequences are poorly reported. It is projected that there will be additional numbers of people killed or injured in coastal and inland floods, and would generally cause a greater rise in related diseases. It is also known that El Niño events influence the annual toll of persons affected by natural disasters. Moreover, in contrast to many other risk factors, climate change and its associated risks are increasing rather than decreasing over time.

Ozone in the Stratosphere and Skin Cancer on Earth

Stratospheric ozone absorbs much of the incoming solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR), especially the biologically more damaging,

shorter-wavelength, UVR. We now know that various industrial halogenated chemicals such as the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs – used in refrigeration, insulation and spray-can propellants) and methyl bromide, while inert at ambient Earth-surface temperatures, react with ozone in the extremely cold polar stratosphere. This destruction of ozone occurs especially in late winter and early spring.

During the 1980's and 1990's at northern mid-latitudes (such as Europe), the average year-round ozone concentration declined by around four percent per decade: over the southern regions of Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and South Africa, the figure approximated 6-7 percent. Estimating the resultant changes in actual ground-level ultraviolet radiation remains technically complex. However, exposures at northern mid-latitudes, for example, are likely to peak around 2020.

Scientists expect the combined effect of recent stratospheric ozone depletion and its continuation over the next 1-2 decades to be (via the accumulation of additional UVB exposure), an increase in skin cancer incidence in fair-skinned populations living at mid to high latitudes. For the US population this would result in a 10 percent increase in skin cancer incidence by around 2050. There may also be increases in cataracts, adverse consequences for human ability to fight infections, and a reduction in the efficacy of certain vaccines.

Ground-level ozone can damage lung tissue, and is especially harmful for those with asthma and other chronic lung diseases. Sunlight and high temperatures, combined with other pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, can cause ground-level ozone to increase. Climate change may increase the concentration of ground-level ozone.

Another pollutant of concern is "particulate matter," also known as particle pollution. Particulate matter is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. When breathed in, these particles can reach the deepest regions of the lungs. Exposure to particle pollution is linked to a variety of significant health problems. Climate change may indirectly affect the concentration of particle pollution in the air by affecting natural sources of these particles such as wildfires and dust from dry soils.

Finally, we have only the slightest under-

standing about how all the interrelated elements of climate change will ultimately affect the health of the world's people. But we do know, as the IPCC has noted, there is relationship between human actions like deforestation, migration and land use, the spread of infectious disease, and global climate change.

Class Consequences

It is increasingly evident that all people will not be equally affected by climate change. Working families, the poor, the elderly and the disabled will be affected the most because they have the fewest resources. The wealthy, and the corporations that have plundered the wealth, will be least affected. In the United States, with a public health system starved by war financing at the federal level and corporate tax breaks at the local level, working people are in great jeopardy by the threats of climate change. In the United States, where perhaps a third of the working poor lack real access to health care, they will be the principle victims of injuries and illnesses resulting from climate change.

Now more than ever we need an efficient national health service to provide high quality health care to all the people – no exceptions, no profits, no insurance companies – just the best health care for all the people. This is how the highest rated health care systems around the world are operated, and this is how we can minimize the adverse health impacts of the climate change we know has started. □

LA CRISIS DEL MERCADO DE LA VIVIENDA Y LA ECONOMÍA: ENTREVISTA CON ART PERLO



◀ Mike Brown en frente a la casa que sus padres construyeron con sus propias manos y en la cual vivieron por 36 años, Octubre 9, 2007 en Orlando, Florida. Brown está en proceso de perder su casa por haberse atrasado en el pago de su hipoteca.

PA: ¿Nos puede describir algunas de las causas básicas de la crisis hipotecaria actual?

AP: Hay dos causas básicas e interrelacionadas: las hipotecas de alto riesgo ("subprime") y la burbuja sin precedente en los precios de inmuebles. Las hipotecas de alto riesgo ocupan todos los titulares. Esa fue una innovación tremenda por parte de la comunidad financiera que permitía a la gente comprar inmuebles que luego no los alcanzaba a pagar. Fue perpetrado esto prometien-

do mensualidades iniciales muy bajas, y luego de un plazo determinado, usualmente de dos años, subiendo las mensualidades. Así es que alguien podía comprar una casa con mensualidades de \$1,200, cantidad que muy apenas alcanzaba pagar, y luego a los dos años disparaban sus mensualidades de noche a la mañana a \$2,000.

La otra causa de la crisis que resulta estrechamente relacionada fue la burbuja en los precios de inmuebles. Se encuentra a gente no solamente atrapada con hipotecas que no alcanza a pagar, pero también que debe cantidades muy superiores al valor real de la casa. Durante los últimos 10 años han subido los gastos de la vivienda un 70 por ciento más rápidamente que la tasa de

inflación, una situación que ha creado 8 billones de dólares en plusvalía virtual. Esto quiere decir que la gente ha pagado mucho más por sus casas que su valor real. Pero al fin en el curso del último año esta burbuja ha caído a tierra. Se aumentan las mensualidades de todas esas hipotecas de alto riesgo y la gente ya no las puede pagar. Las empresas de construcción y contratistas que habían hecho su agosto con los altos precios de inmuebles seguían construyendo casas sin pensar nunca de la mañana, hasta que creció su inventario de casas no vendidas desde algunos 2 millones en 2001 hasta más de 4 millones de viviendas sin venderse hoy día. Con tantas casas sin poderse vender en el mercado de inmuebles no se

podieron sostener sus precios. De repente se encontraba la gente atrapada con deudas hipotecarias inmensas para sus casas. Pueden deber \$300,000 por una casa, pero si tratan de venderla, si es que logran venderla, pueden recibir apenas unos \$200,000 o \$150,000 por esa misma casa. Así que salen debiendo más por la casa que el valor real de la misma.

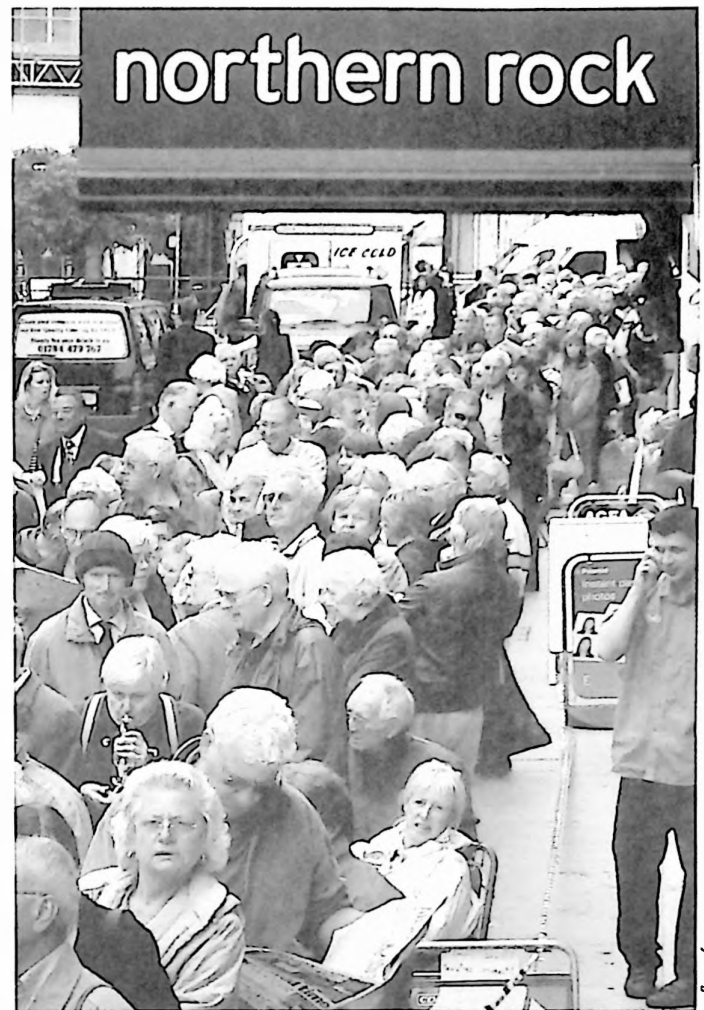
PA: ¿Quiénes son los más afectados por esta crisis?

AP: Los más afectados directamente son, principalmente, las más de 2 millones de familias que han perdido o que van a perder sus hogares, y esta figura muy fácilmente puede llegar a 3 ó 4 millones antes que se resuelva la crisis. Y además los millones que tienen 2 ó 3 trabajos y que sacrifican a su salud, a la educación de sus hijos, y hasta su misma alimentación, todo en el esfuerzo por mantener a sus hogares. También hay por lo menos 100,000 trabajadores que han perdido sus trabajos de construcción, en materiales de construcción y en el mercado financiero e hipotecario, y las pérdidas de trabajos apenas han comenzado. A lo mejor se perderán millones de empleos. Algunos gobiernos estatales y locales ya enfrentan déficits en sus presupuestos por la pérdida inesperada de ingresos por impuestos. También hay aspectos económicos negativos de mayor envergadura, pero ese es un breve resumen de los que se ven afectados de manera más directa.

PA: ¿Cómo evaluaría Ud. la rapidez de la respuesta de Bush a la crisis y al contenido de la misma?

AP: Mi impresión, aunque no he estudiado detenidamente su propuesta, es que él está proponiendo que unos 100,000 o 200,000 dueños de casa sean elegibles para solicitar hipotecas garantizadas por el gobierno. Eso quiere decir que está ofreciendo la posibilidad de una cierta ayuda a solo un diez por ciento de los dueños de casa afectados por esta crisis. La mayor parte de esta ayuda iría para rescatar a los mismos prestamistas que ofrecieron estos malos préstamos en primer

▷ Cientos de personas esperan en línea para remover sus ahorros del banco The Northern Rock en Kingston-Upon-Thames, Inglaterra. La corredera se armó como resultado del apriete de crédito causado por la crisis en el mercado de la vivienda.



Peter Macdiarmid/Gally Images

La gente se encuentra no solamente atrapada con hipotecas que no alcanza a pagar, pero también que estas son por cantidades muy superiores al valor real de la casa.

lugar. A los inversionistas se les va repagar el valor completo de las hipotecas, aunque en el mercado de inmuebles la hipoteca ya no valga más que una fracción de su valor nominal.

PA: ¿Cuales serán algunas soluciones inmediatas para ayudar a la gente a que no pierdan sus hogares?

AP: A nivel nacional, creo que tenemos que reconocer que hay millones de inmuebles que fueron sobrevalorados, y que los dueños de casas ya deben mucho más que el valor real de sus casas, mucho más que lo que pueden repagar. En realidad se trata de billones de dólares de valor, valor que ya se esfumó y que tendrá que darse por perdido. Eso debe resolverse de una manera planeada, organizada, y a costo de los prestamistas y de las instituciones financieras, no los dueños de casas. Eso quiere decir que se deben reducir las hipotecas a un valor realista que el dueño de casa puede alcanzar a pagar. Por ejemplo, si una familia tiene ingresos de \$50,000 anuales, pueden alcanzar a pagar realmente una hipoteca de más o menos \$180,000, con mensualidades de \$1,100. Si una empresa hipotecaria les prestó \$350,000 para comprar una casa sobrevalorada, ya están tratando de pagar más de \$2,200 al mes. Y no alcanzan hacerlo. El banquero hipotecario nunca debió ofrecer



Joe Randle/Cathy Images

△ En Octubre 9, 2007, Diane Goldsborough (I) carga a su hijo John Goldsborough, Jr., mientras observa a Nathan Goldsborough (2nd-D) y a Klaus Goldsborough (D) comprar helado de un camión frente a su casa, en la cual han vivido por el último año en St. Cloud, Florida. Goldsborough y su esposo están en proceso de perder su casa por haberse tardado en el pago de su hipoteca.

esta hipoteca, así que es el banquero quien debe pagar las consecuencias.

Es importante organizar a nivel local, comunitario. En algunas comunidades en distintas partes del país ya están haciendo eso, tanto por organizaciones comunitarias que por gobiernos locales. El primer paso es el de buscar y encontrar a esas familias que están en peligro de perder sus hogares. Deben celebrarse audiencias públicas. Hay que darse cuenta que este es un problema comunitario y no una serie de desastres particulares que cada familia tiene que enfrentar en aislamiento. Se puede negociar con los prestamistas para mejorar los términos de pago, pero esto resulta más eficaz si se hace lo más temprano posible y con el apoyo de un grupo organizado. No hay fórmula universal que sirva en todas las comunidades.

En términos macroeconómicos, parece que la crisis hipotecaria puede transformarse en el gatillo de disparo de una crisis financiera más generalizada y a lo mejor, una recesión económica.

PA: ¿Cómo se relaciona este retrato de crisis que Ud. nos presenta al sistema mismo del capitalismo?

AP: La crisis hipotecaria y la situación económica del país en general ya es casi un ejemplo clásico de lo que Marx calificaba como una crisis de sobreproducción. Dijo Marx,

La razón última de las crisis siempre subyace en la pobreza y en el consumo restringido de las masas, que se opone a la tendencia de la producción capitalista de desarrollar las fuerzas productivas como si su límite fuera el poder de consumo absoluto de la sociedad.

Eso quiere decir que, en su afán por las ganancias los capitalistas expanden su producción casi sin límite, eso, con la mano derecha. Pero con la mano izquierda y también con su afán de ganancias hacen todo lo que puedan para reducir a los trabajadores sus salarios y su poder adquisitivo. Entonces, producen más y más pero los trabajadores no alcanzan a comprar lo que ellos mismos producen.

Desde el 2001 se ha pospuesto una crisis económica llenando la brecha con pura deuda. Las familias trabajadoras se encuentran más y más endogadas, y con el brote de la crisis hipotecaria la gente ya no puede sacar más dinero prestado respaldado por el

valor de sus casas. No solamente tenemos una sobreproducción en el ramo de la vivienda (ya me había referido a las 4 millones de casas sin venderse que la gente ya no alcanza comprar) pero hay un peligro de que los consumidores pueden salir perdiendo entre 400 y 900 mil millones de dólares en poder adquisitivo nada más porque ya no pueden conseguir préstamos respaldados por el valor de sus casas. Y es por eso que hay un peligro real de que caiga la economía en una recesión abrupta que puede prolongarse porque la gente no alcanza a comprar lo que necesita.

No tengo ningún mapa de cómo debe funcionar el socialismo. Pero el socialismo es un sistema racional bajo el cual la gente trabajadora posee y maneja a la economía a su propio beneficio. La meta es cumplir con las necesidades del pueblo, no producir ganancias antes de nada. Y, ¿cómo se aplica eso a la vivienda? Si examinamos más ampliamente la cuestión de la vivienda no es solamente una cuestión de construir cuántas casas a qué precio, pero es también la cuestión de dónde construir esas casas, y bajo qué condiciones. Tiene que ver con todas las cuestiones ecológicas.

Una sociedad socialista se dirigiría a la vivienda de una manera completa. Primero, se pudieran evitar a las "burbujas". Pudiera examinarse las estadísticas demográficas y decir que en el curso de los próximos 20 años vamos a necesitar tantas unidades nuevas y que tendremos que remozar a tantos departamentos. Se construyen viviendas a un ritmo estable, empleándoles a una fuerza estable de trabajadores, y no habrán altibajos tremendos que afectan las vidas de millones de gente. Por el otro lado de la moneda, dirías, "Está bien, aquí vive la gente; acá es donde se planea el desarrollo económico. Y este es nuestro plan para integrar la necesidad de más viviendas con las preocupaciones ecológicas y la eficiencia energética.

El socialismo como sistema no siempre crea respuestas correctas, pero sí crea posibilidades para encontrar respuestas correctas, porque el pueblo, por medio de sus organismos electivos y sus organizaciones de masas, tiene capacidad para planear y determinar sus propias necesidades. □

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