

Death or Reason? Check the Numbers

The New York Times www site has a most interesting article today, here.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/13/business/yourmoney/13MILI.html>

This is a remarkable article. While it may have been mythology, the strong American belief that civilians somehow ran the military is now openly overthrown. But things are a little more complex, eh?

For example, in the book "Taliban" it becomes clear that Unocal and Exxon oil officials were all over Central Asia (Uzbekistan, etc) for several years, probably with intense interest at least from 1998 forward. They were directing Special Operations Forces who followed them into the region, and they appear to have been accompanied by mercenary forces led by (well it is always hard to tell when you get to this) but by companies like Brown and Root (Lyndon Johnson's favorite, remember?) which is itself run by the CIA. And all of this is subordinated to the ceaseless workings of the battle for surplus value, and social control, which covertly drives all those who think they are outwitting the system. Who is running who? Well, nobody runs capital, the most fickle social system ever.

Dick Cheney used to be a CEO in Haliburton, and probably still is, so the intertwining gets murky, and then there are many citizens who believe that Cheney was not elected anyway....but surely the material forces of real alienation, estrangement, not occurring in people's minds but taking place first in the material world and then being uncovered, are hot at work.

Some Americans are likely to be a bit perturbed about the continuing revelations that their military is not run by civilians or at least not by the people they thought they voted for, that the mercs are (always) scum--slavers, rapists, drug dealers, etc---and that the outcome of this is that many of the people of the world have good reason to hate the US bosses/govt.

Now, compare this to a couple of related pieces of information:

(1) the recent increase in the Perpetual Oil War budget, a huge leap to nearly 356 billion dollars
(<http://straitstimes.asia1.com.sg/iraq/story/0,1870,148534,00.html>)

(2) If we add the probably very modest estimate of \$100 billion spent on mercenaries and their allies to the total War Budget, then we get a combined total of about \$456 billion,

(3) and compare the federal funds spent on education (about \$49 billion
<http://nces.ed.gov//pubs2002/digest2001/ch2.asp#6>) things get a little clearer.

(4) The US spends more than twice the federal education budget on mercenaries, and nearly ten times the Federal education budget on the promise of War Forever.

The grinding down of the economy, already at work before Sept 11 last, but in hyperspeed everywhere, is going to create considerable misery, world-side. War spending is like tobacco spending, a high form of capitalist development in that the product destroys itself, addicts its user, and invariably creates a demand for more. Yet nothing of value to human beings is created at all. Indeed, at the end of the capital's assembly line, segmenting and diminishing people at every stage, is death.

Still, the grinding down also causes risings up. People will resist, as the dockworkers are now, as the Chicago teachers who are refusing to give the CASE test (see Substance this month) are, and other workers everywhere will have no choice but to resist as well. Will the children of laid off US auto workers really be willing to fight and die for long in order to preserve the rule of Exxon? Surely this is not the highest stage of human development. We can decide to live otherwise---to live beyond capital.

We shall see. But what is needed is, in part, a massive change of mind, reason prevailing over fascism, and that is supposed to be, one would think, something that could be initiated in school. What is it that we, the mass of people in the world, need to know, and how do we need to come to know it, in order to live free, friendly and connected lives, not by magic, but by using the conditions we see in front of us today--- and changing them?