

A Rouge Forum Broadside

"Political democracy is said to be the arena on which the battle of freedom is to be fought; but surely it cannot be freedom in a merely political sense that is meant. Even if we grant that the American has freed himself from the political tyrant, he is still the slave of an economical and moral tyrant." (Henry David Thoreau)

*****How Can We Understand and Effect the Pending Social Crisis?*****

*****Which Fraud is the Real Fraud?*****

Combined, the Democrats and Republicans spent more than \$3 billion on the Y2K election, double what they spent in 1996. Far less than ½ of the potential eligible voters balloted at all. Now the vote is close, nearly a tie. Bush and Gore are in a dog-fight-over what? Surely it is not a battle of principles, as pre and post election practice demonstrates. This is about power.

***This is not a merely a battle about voting rights. Both candidates participated in the massive disenfranchisement of people in the US, people who are convicted felons, disproportionately black because of racist enforcement and courts, people who have done their time but are never allowed to vote again. In Florida this population is more than 200,00. Both candidates worked to strip citizens in Detroit and other cities of their voting rights. Elected school boards were abolished, replaced by deputies of wealth. 3 million voters were disenfranchised. On the other side of the coin, 88% of the new senators are candidates who spent the most money. Corzine of New Jersey spent \$55 million-as a Democrat. 92% of House representatives elected are those who raised and spent the most money. A seat in the House now costs an estimated \$500,000 on average -- quite modest by comparison to the senate seat, now \$4.4 million.

***Voting Rights, democracy, have confronted property rights in the US, and usually lost. That is the reason for the electoral college, bi-cameral legislatures, and elaborate registration procedures. In a capitalist society, the law and government are not neutrals, but weapons of those who hold power, who own property. This national election is no more free from the power of property than a high school student government is free from the power of adults. In each case, it is quite clear that a ruling class holds real power and offers fictional power. If the Bill of Rights were applicable to the work place, all of life would be much different. But it's not.

***The election, which was about nothing substantial at all, did succeed in dividing those who voted along race/sex/nationality/rural/urban lines, reflecting modest divisions within the class that holds power. Simultaneously , however, the electoral fraud was conducted under the banner of bigger fraud: national interest. The clear divide between those who work and those who own, growing wider every day, makes nationalism irrational, unless grunts are needed for an oil war. While the ruling class behaves as it has nothing in common with vast majority of people, it is in the interest of power to pretend that inequality does not exist, and questioning it unpatriotic.

***Surely political emancipation, the right to vote even in a *solely* political arena, was great progress, and as we see the stock market tumble and the military stall, it is clear that the political arena rebounds onto socio-economic life. However, it remains that in work, production, the contradiction of those who must work to live and those who own is unresolved. It cannot be resolved as long as capital rules politics-as

long as property decides the processes and products of work, profits from the labor of people who rightly see the products of their work as alien. The more we work, the more we enrich the profiteers, and fashion our own oppression. What to do?

Educators Are Key in Social Change

Power Goes to Two Poles: Property and People

The political world of electoral voting, candidates, representative government, etc., is connected with the social-economic world, the domination of property and finance over people and their working lives, but the connection is in opposition. One influences the other, but the economic world usually prevails. Let us look at the processes in play in the economic world.

No matter who wins the election, **the gap between the rich and poor will grow** exponentially. See <http://csf.colorado.edu/gimenez/soc.5035/gap.html>

*****The rise of authoritarianism** will follow. In schools, more standardized racist curricula, more high-stakes tests; all of which can be traced back in history to fascist eugenics--and forward into the future in deepened forms of educational apartheid. Beneficiaries of inequality do not want inequality noticed, or considered as a enemy of democracy.

*****Overproduction**, especially in auto where 8 of the 55 major US plants will soon shut for a week due to oversupply, will expand. Housing starts will drop. (NYTimes11/12/00). Stocks and the NASDAQ, a very fragile market, will continue to stumble.

*****The assault on the working class** and all of the concessions it won over the last 50 years, the civilizing forces that brought the 40 hour week, child labor laws, the right to form unions and bargain, social security and welfare; that assault will grow more ruthless as the rate of profit continues to fall. Massive working class debt has partially funded the recent boom. Most working class families now must spend at a rate of 20% in excess of what they earn. (Monthly Review August 2000). The **attack on the black working class** will deepen, a harbinger.

*****Massive unemployment**. Idle time is the main occupation in most of the southern hemisphere. Women and children of color will suffer worst and most. See: Unicef.org/swocOO

*****Imperialist competition**, especially over oil, markets, and cheap labor, will sharpen. The days of US command over the world are ending, just as the cold war ended. Things change. Russia, China, and the European nations are moving to challenge US power, a challenge that will likely end in **war**. The US is already at war in Colombia, Palestine, and Iraq. A key problem is that grunts distrust their officers. The rulers' answer will be more **Nationalism**, more **Racism**.

*****People will fight back**, as they have in Seattle, LA, Detroit--in the schools, on the job, and in the streets. Their resistance will meet **heightened repression**. The rubber bullets and armed personnel carriers that people saw on tv in South Africa are common crowd control methods in the US now--even at football games. Two million people, disproportionately black, are in jail. Coupled with the profitability of prison labor, this caging will rise.

*****More spectacles, more surveillance**. Walk through a casino unnoticed.

*****War, racism, poverty, disease, hunger, ignorance: Barbarism--or social change** to get rid of capitalism--the enemy of democracy--with some joy, hard won along the way.

*****School Workers, educators,** in the US now hold the social position once held by the US industrial working class. **What teachers do now counts** more than ever before.

School workers must see that **an Injury to One Precedes an Injury to All**. We need to:

*****Fight the Racist and Anti-working class high stakes standardized tests.**

*****Demand Books! Supplies! Lower Class Size! And a more just system of taxes.**

*****Demand Open Admissions and Free Tuition in the Universities. But,**

Justice Demands the Organization to Also Swat at Capital

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