

RICH GIBSON

WHY HAVE SCHOOL?

An Inquiry Through Dialectical Materialism

“Criticism is no passion of the head, it is the head of passion. It is no anatomical knife, it is a weapon. Its object is its enemy, which it will not refute but destroy.”

Karl Marx, *A Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right*

“Having a good school within this capitalist society is like having a reading room in a prison. Not acceptable.”

Statement of students seizing the administration building at the University of California Santa Cruz, November 2009

The core issue of our time is the reality of the promise of endless war and booming inequality met by the potential of mass, activist, class conscious resistance.

We witness an international war of the rich on the poor in which the children of the poor, everywhere, fight and die on behalf of the rich in their homelands.

The core of dialectical materialist analysis insists that things change. But how and toward what end? More: Why?¹

In this context, schools are the centripetal organizing point of de-industrialized North American life, and much of life elsewhere. Evidence: School workers, not industrialized workers, are by far the most unionized people in the USA, more than 3.5 million union members. School unions are growing, if slowly, while industrial unions collapse, evaporate, because, in part, industry evaporates, and because industrial union leaders abandoned the heart of unionism—the contradictory interests of workers and employers.²

In fall 2008, about 74.1 million people were enrolled in American schools and colleges. About 4.6 million people were employed as elementary and secondary school teachers or as college faculty, in full-time equivalents. Other professional, administrative, and support staff at educational institutions totalled 5.2 million. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

Nearly one-half of the youth in high school today will be draft-eligible in the next seven years.

It is in school where, theoretically, mind meets matter. Schools claim to gain and test knowledge in a reasonably free atmosphere. Capitalism, rooted in exploitation, a reality that works best when hidden, overpowers freedom.

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Matter intervenes. Capitalism meets democracy. Capital dominates. the relationship of schools to society where schools are, for the most part, capitalist schools is a reality ignored by liberal and even radical educators, particularly in the field of social studies education.

The education agenda is a class war agenda, and an imperialist war agenda. One begets the other (Gibson & Ross, 2009).

Let us tick off the emerging realities of our times as highlighted by the last election; the results of the many crises of capital contradicted by the promises of democracy. The recent election should not only be studied as how voters chose who would most charmingly oppress the majority of the people from the executive committee of the rich, the government. It should be studied, more importantly, as how an element of capitalist democracy, the spectacle of the election, has speeded the emergence of fascism as a mass popular force; that is:

- the corporate state, the rule of the rich, near complete merger of corporations and government;
- the continuation of the suspension of civil liberties (as with renditions);
- the attacks on whatever free press there is;
- the rise of racism and segregation (in every way, but especially the immigration policies);
- the promotion of the fear of sexuality as a question of pleasure (key to creating the inner slave), and the sharpened commodification of women (Sarah Palin to pole dancers);
- the governmental/corporate attacks on working peoples' wages and benefits (bailouts to merit pay to wage and benefit concessions);
- intensification of imperialist war (sharpening the war in Afghanistan sharpens war on Pakistan which provokes war on Russia, etc, and the US is NOT going to leave Iraq's oil);
- the promotion of nationalism (all class unity) by, among others, the union bosses,
- teaching people the lie that someone else should interpret reality and act for us, when no one is going to save us but us;
- trivializing what is supposed to be the popular will to vile gossip, thus building cynicism—especially the idea that we cannot grasp and change the world, but also debasing whatever may have been left of a national moral sense;
- increased mysticism (is it better to vote for a real religious fanatic or people who fake being religious fanatics?); and
- incessant attacks on radicals (Bill Ayers is not a radical; he is a foundation-seeking liberal now, once he was a liberal with a bomb, but people see him as the epitome of a radical and he is connected to Obama). (Gibson & Ross, 2009; Moore, 1957; Singer, 2002)

Capitalist schooling exists within these social rising circumstances. It's a litany of the emergence of fascism (Gibson, 2000).

Following the election, the demagogue Obama who was wildly backed by post-analytical hysterics like Tom Hayden, Barbara Ehrenrich, and liberal academics as well as dreamy students and sincere but deluded anti-racists, finalized what can only be called the corporate state, not merely the domination of capital over

democracy, but the merger of the two at every level, desperately chasing capital itself. The corporate state deals with its own contradictions—a key one being social control versus profiteering and their interrelationship. Sometimes they merge neatly, other times one must dominate the other, all under beneath the veil of exploitation.

The demagogue, Obama, turned \$12.9 trillion over to the banks, no strings, on the grounds they are too big to fail. Then he bailed out the auto industry to the tune of more than \$400 billion, but Obama effectively killed Chrysler and became the de-facto president of General Motors (\$12.9 trillion for economic recovery. Where is it?, 2009).

Those who seek evidence about what specifically I suggest to do about the rise of corporate state fascism would expect me to ignore the Patriot Act. I write, instead, of a more hopeful future, if a slimmer possibility rooted in the fact that things do indeed change, that we can comprehend and change our world. A revolution, a full overturning, is possible. Not likely soon, but possible. Dialectical materialism is not a crystal ball, but a navigation tool to the past, present, and future.

Now, back to school.

CAPITALIST SCHOOLING IS PART OF THE CAPITALIST STATE.

Al Szymanski (1978) outlined the basic functions of the capitalist state's democracy three decades ago. This is a reminder:

- To guarantee the accumulation of capital and profit maximization and make it legitimate.
- Preserve, form, and temper, capitalist class rule.
- Raise money to fund the state.
- Guarantee and regulate the labor force.
- Facilitate commerce.
- Ensure buying power in the economy.
- Directly and indirectly subsidize private corporations.
- State sanction of self-regulation of corporations.
- Advance the overseas interests of corporations.

Democracy does not dominate capital. Democracy submits, atomizes voters to individuals huddled in ballot booths asking capital's favorite question: What about Me?

We have evidence from the past when the rise of fascism begins to overwhelm the relationship of capitalism and democracy in schools.

The Nazis education project which was riddled with contradictions of mysticism and science, for example, nevertheless followed the broader Nazi effort, to protect capital itself and to extend the empire via preparing citizens for endless war. The educators were "converted into priests (and nuns) of the new creed, which made them responsible...for undertaking to create a militarized society that accepted war as a normal condition of life. (Blackburn, 1984, p. 182)

The demagogue, Obama, then turned to the schools with his Race to the Top (RaTT) project personified by Chicago's education huckster Arne Duncan. The RaTT speeds what was already happening in capital's schools and adds a few factors for spice. The RaTT's predecessor, a bi-partisan project touted by Democrats and Republicans alike called the No Child Left Behind Act had at least these key factors: (1) The development of a regimented national curriculum to promote nationalism; (2) High stakes standardized tests to promote segregation and ignorance through with a pretense of scientific backing; and (3) the militarization of schools in poor and working class areas. RaTT makes the logical extensions:

- Sharpened demands for a national curriculum,
- merit pay based on student test scores,
- attacks on all forms of tenure (made palatable to the public because they know through experience that there is no shortage of incompetents in schools),
- Layoffs, hits on pay and benefits, increases in class size,
- Tuition hikes driving youth out of college with razor-like precision, typically rooted in inherited wealth.
- Some privatization, but hardly only privatization (the corporate state reflects both the unity and contradictions internal to the ruling classes who have different short term views of profitability).
- Calls for national service setting up a syphon for middle class opposition to a draft.
- Intensified moves into cities and schools in crisis, like Detroit, demonstrating the contradictory goals of social control and profiteering.
- Ruthless competition between school districts and states for limited RaTT reward dollars.
- A harsh rule of fear and intimidation sweeping across all of capitalist schooling. (Gibson, 2010)

Fear seems to be the core emotional value in schools today. After a long trip visiting schools in about one-half of California's counties, my colleague and friend Susan Harman (a former principal) and I concluded that fear overwhelms much of educational work. It travels down, from superintendents through principals through education workers to kids and parents. It has many secondary sources (secondary to profiteering and social control) like high stakes exams and constant surveillance. Fear also travels horizontally. It is produced by school workers who believe they have more to fear than they actually do. They give in with no struggle, even before demands are made. As they do, fear accelerates as all conclude that no one can win.

This, then, begins to describe the conflicting material bases of capitalist schooling. Social control meets profits. That, however, is but a small part of the story.

While the central issues of human life—labor (communists—oh my!); reproduction (sex and creativity—pleasure oh no!); the struggle for the truth (nationalism, racism, sexism, tolerance for mysticism, etc.); and freedom (not in *our* school); are commonly illegal to teach in school, they remain an opposing force because schools are not Ford plants. Schools hold out a promise of freedom, inquiry, and creativity that many people take to heart, and it is almost impossible to

successfully impose Ford plant discipline in school. Even so, it is important not to confuse resistance with rule. Schools are not contested terrain unless they are fully disrupted by forms of civil strife, which does happen, as we shall see.³

A Radical Question: Why Have School?

Schools are huge multi-billion dollar markets where profit and loss influences almost everything. Consider the buses, the architects, textbook sales, consultants, the developers for the buildings, the upkeep, the grounds, the sports teams, salaries, etc. Cost is always an issue in school. This is, after all, capitalism (a maneuver drawn from dialectical materialism, abstracting, looking to history—the Church—and locating school in its historical place: capitalist schooling).

The average salary for public school teachers in 2006–07 was \$50,816, about 3 percent higher than in 1996–97, after adjustment for inflation (table 78).

The salaries of public school teachers have generally maintained pace with inflation since 1990–91. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009)

Multiply \$50,816 by the total number of school workers, above. That’s a tidy sum.

These relatively good salaries, in comparison to the crash of industrial wages and jobs, served as a bribe to educators, winning them to conducting the child abuse that is high-stakes exams and regimented curricula, for example. But, as economic break-downs caused by overproduction and war evaporated at least some of the ability to make the pay-off—and as school workers became more and more alienated from each other, their communities and students, through those same processes—the bribes and jobs began to vanish—as we witness today.

The capitalist market necessarily creates pyramid-like inequality, not only in the pocket, but in the mind. Is there a single public school system in the US (or wherever)? Actually, there is not. There are five or six carefully segregated school systems, based mostly on class and race.

The actual image of education in the minds of philanthropic economists is this: “Every worker should learn as many branches of labor as possible so that if...he is thrown out of one branch, he can easily be accommodated in another.” (Marx, 1975, p. 25)

There is a pre-prison school system in Detroit, Michigan or Compton, California; a pre-Walmart system in National City, California; a pre-craft worker system in City Heights, California; a pre-teacher or social worker system in Del Cero, California; a pre-med or pre-law system in Lajolla, California and Birmingham, Michigan; and a completely private school system where rich people send their kids, like George W. Bush or Mitt Romney.⁴

Rich schools teach different realities using different methods from poor schools. In rich schools the outlook is: “This globe is ours; let us see how we can make it act.” In the poorest schools, the outlook is, “Tell me what to do and I will do it.”

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“Public schools” are, in fact, funded by an unjust tax system that forces the working classes to pay for their own mis-education. These are not just schools but, again, capitalist schools. There is little democratic about them.

It is usually easy to track the role of the market in schools by checking the campaign contributors to school board members. The sources of their power are the Men, and Women Behind the Screen, who have very special interests in determining how schools function.

There is, in schools unlike most factories, a tension between elites’ desire for social control and profitability. This can be seen in the contradictions within elite groups about the privatization of schools. Old guards like the Rockefeller Foundation oppose privatization, perhaps because they rightly see they can exert a great deal of control over tax funded schools, while new entrepreneurs like Bill Gates and Eli Broad pour millions into privatization schemes. Who will win? I bet on the old guard.

Battles over the market in schools, as in wage strikes, test boycotts, etc., have been rare in the last thirty years as the consumer economy diverted people, on one hand, and the obvious corruption of union leaders (as we shall see) on the other hand, held people back. Such fights were disappointingly uncommon in schools where, for at least two decades, the work force has overwhelmingly been guided by at least four things: Opportunism. Racism. Sheer ignorance. Cowardice. However, things change.

More answers to why have school:

Skill and ideological training. Under skill training we might list, of course, “the three r’s,” along with music, art, athletics, theater, science, etc. That list comes fast and easy.

But ideological training is another thing. Ideological grooming would include nationalism (the daily salute to the flag, school spirit, etc.) as well as the training in viewpoints established by teaching distinct curricular substance in the segregated schools, using different methods. Beyond nationalism, one clear purpose of most schooling is to make the system of capital natural, almost invisible, and to present it as the highest, last, stage of human development. Further, students must become so stupefied that they see no real contradiction between nationalism and the other central tenet of capitalist thought: individualism. Me!

The upshot of capitalist schooling is that many students, surrounded by the unsystematic, incoherent, mystical worldviews of both the curricula and most teachers, come away learning not to like to learn. Curiosity, a birthright of all children, gets crushed. Parallel to that dubious success, children in exploited areas learn they cannot understand or alter the world. So, people in pacified areas become instruments of their own oppression.

Baby-sitting and warehousing kids. Babysitting is a key role played by capitalist schools. One way to find out, “Why have school,” is to experiment; close them. In our case, teacher strikes serve as a good test subject. In school strikes (no sane union shuts down a football program), the first people to begin to complain are usually merchants around middle schools—who get looted. The second group is the parents of elementary students, quickly followed by their employers. (These realities can help demonstrate to elementary educators their potential power—along with setting up kids’ entire world views).

The baby-sitting role is, again, funded by an unjust tax system and serves as a giant boon to companies that refuse to provide day care for their employees—but are able to duck taxes as well.

Schools fashion hope: Real and false. On one hand it is clear that societies where hope is foreclosed foster the potential of mass uprisings: France in the summer of 1968 is a good example of what can happen; uprisings starting in school and quickly involving the working classes nearly overthrew the government (Singer, 2002).

Real hope might be found in showing kids we can comprehend and change the world, collectively, and teaching them how. Ask, “Why are things as they are?” every day. Or, in demonstrating that we are responsible for our own histories, but not our birthrights. Must we be lambs among wolves? Does what we do matter? False hope might be the typical school hype: Anyone can make it, all you must do is work hard. Trumpery. Inheritance is, more than ever, the key to understanding social mobility, or immobility.

To the contrarians: there is nothing unusual about elites picking off children of the poor, educating them, and turning them back on their birth-communities as a form of more gentle rule. Obama would be one example of such a success. Skanderberg, the Albanian rebel trained by the Turks, would be a failure.

Schools create the next generation of workers, warriors, or war supporters. Automaton or rebels, or something in between, a process with some witting direction. Those workers need to be taught to accept hierarchy, to submit, to misread realities like class war and endorse nationalism (school spirit) or racism (segregated schooling products). They need to accept their lot, to be unable to notice why things are as they are; why some live in abundance while others have no work—when there is plenty of work to do—why drudgery is so much part of most jobs. The core project here: obliterate the possibility of class consciousness.⁵

And what of the school unions that claim to protect educators’ rights from academic freedom to job security and to defend “public” education as well?

Another Tick-List, This Time About The School Unions

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No leader of any major union in the US believes that working people and employers have, in the main, contradictory interests, thus wiping out the main reason most people believe they join unions. The bosses (for that is what they are) of the two education unions (the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO) by far now the largest unions in the USA) openly believe in what former NEA president Bob Chase called “New Unionism,” the unity of labor bosses, government, and corporations, “in the national interest.” There is nothing new about company unionism, however, nor the corporate state.

Both unions are utterly corrupt. There has been a steady stream of AFT and NEA leaders to prison on charges ranging from child molestation to the more common embezzlement. Top NEA and AFT leaders will make nearly \$500,000 a year in 2009 and can live on their expense accounts. While nothing like the difference between finance capitalists and industrial workers, the union bosses enjoy extraordinary privileges while claiming to represent many people who have to live in trailers. The corruption runs deeper, though, as shown below.

The AFT is completely undemocratic and impossible to change without violence. The NEA, not a part of the AFL-CIO, has a somewhat more democratic structure but no one with a grasp of the “rule of the people,” would confuse NEA with democracy.

The school unions draw on a member base that is about 90% white and reflect the racism that such a base inherently creates. Rather than fight to integrate the teaching force, the unions urge more and more “education” classes, adding on expenses for students, meaning those with the least get shaved out with razor sharp precision—by class and race.

The unions, like all US unions, do not unite people, but divide them along lines of job, race, years of tenure, staff and leaders from rank and file, that is, down to the narrowest interest—capital’s favorite question: What about me? Unions typically recreate and mimic the hierarchies of the industry they represent, in our case, school worker versus school worker for petty positions of power that offer high pay and distance from the work place.

Unions mirror their industries. Thus, school unions create hierarchies (that reformers tend to mimic), which resemble the management structures of schools. These structures promote the quasi-religious view that someone else will solve key problems that must, in fact, be resolved by the solidarity and direct action of the rank and file—a group that would include parents and students but, since these are capital’s unions, those people do not pay dues and are excluded. The unions promote a vending machine ideology (“I paid my dues now do for me”) rather than solidarity and direct action, thus making the members reliant on people whose interests are not their own.

Union bosses recognize their opposing interests to the rank and file. They learn a variety of strategies to manipulate people and, “protect the contract.” These maneuvers, like grievance procedures, move workers away from the locus of their power, the work place, to geographically distant spaces where “neutral” arbitrators decide on vital issues. But the unions rarely file cases to arbitration and, nevertheless, lose about 2/3 of the cases they file. Union bosses also divert member action to the ballot box—any place away from the job site—where, in the words of one top NEA organizer, “if voting mattered, they wouldn’t let us do it.” But electoral work keeps member volunteers busy and it reinforces the false notions school workers have about professionalism (professionals set their own hours and wages, they determine the processes of work—teachers typically are called professionals by people asking the workers to buy textbooks for their kids), allowing educators to win hollow “respect,” the chance to dress up and rub elbows with Important People, away from school.

Since the mid-1970’s, union bosses have supported every measure that elites used to regain control of schools which were, in many cases out of control. The NEA and AFT bosses today support curricular regimentation, high stakes racist exams, the militarization of schooling, merit pay, and charter schools (a key new source of dues income).

The AFT organized the decay and ruin of urban education in the US, while the mostly suburban NEA let urban schooling be devastated, failing to recognize the truth of the old union saw, “an injury to one only goes before an injury to all.” That both unions steeped themselves in volumes of forms of racism (racist exams, racist expulsions, racist segregation, etc) should not go unnoticed or excused. Indeed, the teacher work force is an apartheid force, about 90% white.

These are the empire’s unions. Top leaders are fully aware that a significant portion of their sky-high pay is made possible by the empires adventures. NEA and AFT bosses work with a variety of international organizations on behalf of US imperialism. These adventures are frequently deadly as with the AFT’s unwavering support for Israeli Zionism, support for the recent oil wars, and, precisely to the point, work throughout the world with the National Endowment for Democracy, a Central Intelligence Agency front, in wrecking indigenous leftist worker movements. While the AFT has been the spearhead of US imperialism inside the wholly corrupt “labor movement,” NEA has also been deeply involved. There is a long history to this, back to World War I and the AFL’s support for that horrific war. The theory behind it: US workers will do better if foreign workers do worse.

The education unions serve to peddle the wage labor of education workers as a commodity to employers and to guarantee labor peace, as Los Angeles teacher Neil Chertcoff has repeatedly demonstrated. In this context, there is a direct trade off: no strikes or job actions in exchange for guaranteed dues income, the check-off. That is precisely the historical origin of the agency shop. It is also a big reason

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why union bosses obey court injunctions against job actions; threats to the union's bank account, that is, the union staff salaries.

School unions attack the working class as a whole. The most recent example (May 2009) of this was the support the California Teachers Association and the NEA gave to a series of ballot propositions that would have dramatically raised the taxes of poor and working people while leaving corporations and the rich off the hook, again. NEA and CTA combined spent more than \$12.2 million dollars on the campaigns, and lost overwhelmingly. CTA-NEA demonstrated to poor and working families that organized teachers are enemies—yet those same people are educators' most important allies (Gibson, 2002).

Unlike the private sector where less than 10% of the people belong to unions, school workers are the most unionized people in the country. It follows that it is important for change agents to be where the people are. But one must keep one toe in and nine toes out of the unions. It is as important to build outside organizations, like the Rouge Forum, which actually unite people, urge job actions and freedom schooling, which seek to unite people rather than structurally divide them, and which can take a strategic and tactical plan into the unions to fight for justice.

Still, it is not hard to see why there is so much fear in schools. Although most education workers don't have the analysis of why there is no protection on the job, why the union is always telling people to vote but never organizes anything to prepare for job actions, they still recognize their own vulnerability. They know the union is an opposing force, not their friend.⁶

Jean Anyon (1997) famously says,

Doing school reform without doing social and economic reform in communities is like washing the air on one side of a screen door; it just won't work. (p. 182)

Surely this statement nicely sums up a clear relationship of school and society that is routinely denied, both by the disingenuous powerful as well as too-kind people who work in schools. Anyon, however, explodes her own analysis and suggests that the only hope for poor kids' schools is for the rich to give them money.

The role of de-industrialization means that school workers are centripetally positioned in a powerful spot: the place where most people organize their daily lives. Schools do not just teach, but in many cases offer food, medical care, meeting places, etc. Schools produce, presumably, ideas. Perhaps they could be ideas about new and better ways to live. In any case, school workers have incredible potential power. What we do counts more than ever. Since good teaching and organizing are very much alike, school worker potential power is redoubled.

How do educators get the power to teach toward the truth, rather than toward capital's cruel desires? Clearly, one answer is dedication to the kids, parents and community; teaching well every day. The unions must be overcome, in part by transcending the boundaries of unionism and, beyond that, by violating the norms that keep the union bosses in power. Storm the podiums and seize the union offices. Another is in solidarity across lines of class, race, gender, nation; building

close personal ties—tight friendships. And another is direct action on the job, the real battle for control of the work place linked to corresponding freedom schools in the midst of strikes or civil strife.

And this then leads to yet another demonstration of how capitalist democracy, which is a perversion of what people think of as democracy and not democracy, works. In the schools of capitalist democracy, as with any other form of capitalist government, lies the *violence* that is the iron fist inside the velvet glove of the system. That violence can be portrayed as the kind of drill and skill pedagogy that succeeds in making kids learn to not like to learn, or more graphically, it can be seen in truancy laws. If you do not come to school, you or your parents face arrest and fines: cops.

CAPITAL IS THE ALL-DOMINATING POWER OF BOURGEOIS SOCIETY⁷

Let us abstract now, step back and consider the rise of capitalist, or bourgeoisie, democracy, its current reality, and peer into what might be.⁸

Slave-holding Greeks are credited with the invention of democracy, but it's slave-holding American revolutionaries who took the notion to new heights in their battles with British tyranny, a turning point in what most people see as democratic rule.

Howard Zinn, a liberal pacifist who borrowed from Marx but wrote out the concept of revolution, suggested in his popular *People's History of the United States* (2005) that what was truly up was not so much democracy, rule of the people, but the enriching of hegemony, and elites, who used the myth of democracy, first under the Articles of Confederation, then on a lower plane, with the US Constitution, not to empower the people, but to establish the rule of property law, class domination in a somewhat new form, replacing a King with a local not-so chosen few. It was 55 rich men who wrote the Constitution in secret, after all, shifting the Declaration of Independence "Life, liberty and happiness," to "Life, Liberty and Property."⁹

But the abstract idea of democracy still holds a powerful grip on people, left to right and in-between. Let us quickly toss away the idealist abstract pretense of democracy standing by itself.

Here are three telling quotes about Democracy:

Democracy is the name we give the people whenever we need them."
(Marquis de Flers Robert and Arman de Caillavet)

The whole dream of democracy is to raise the proletarian to the level of stupidity attained by the bourgeois. Gustave Flaubert (1821 - 1880)

Under democracy one party always devotes its chief energies to trying to prove that the other party is unfit to rule—and both commonly succeed, and are right." H. L. Mencken (1880 - 1956)¹⁰

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We can see how US democracy deals with popular Hamas, crushes democratically elected regimes it does not like as in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Chile, seeks to murder popular leaders like Castro, creates bogus democratic movements in accompaniment with the CIA as in Kosovo or Poland, promotes democracy in the USSR and calls the KGB leadership “democracy advocates,” restores drug gang warlords in Afghanistan and calls that democracy, invades and Balkanizes Iraq, for oil and regional control while waiving the democratic flag, and props up tyrants like the Saudis all over the world. The US uses the National Endowment for Democracy as a front for the CIA all over the world, and inside the US as well, to destroy indigenous movements that fight for equality.

Internally, US democracy, often with liberals in the lead, fashions the theft of the public treasury in maneuvers like Enron which involved every sector of government, demolishes the environment and gets the citizens to pay for the superfund sites, cheats at the ballot box, as in 2000, how the rich use the sheer power of their money to deceive and exclude people in national elections.

Democracy relies on a tax system that forgives the rich their riches and punishes workers for having to work. Greek democracy and US democracy were stacked on slavery. US democracy is a untrustworthy privilege won through the plunders of vicious imperial violence, part of the buy-off of the population of the empire’s citizens, just as the nationalist loyalty of top union leaders is purchased by the CIA and imperialist war. US abstract democracy sits on the false idea that we are all in this nation together, when we writhe in the midst of class warfare, our side losing for now.

The one place we might expect to see some kind of abstract democracy operating, in the unions, we witness the most grotesque perversions of abstract democracy, as in the American Federation of Teachers or the United Auto Workers unions, both functioning with a caucus system that locks out any dissent whatsoever, a system upheld by the democratic Supreme Court. Union democracy is a myth. The unions, decidedly a part of the system of capital, are reduced to capital’s motive: chase the dues money.

Every big city in the US is polluted with political corruption, from Mayor Kilpatrick’s disgrace in Detroit to Mayor Murphy’s disgrace in San Diego, just as the cities were utterly corrupt 100 years ago, as Lincoln Steffens demonstrated in *Shame of the Cities*, but Steffens (2009) was never able to connect incidents of corruption and the necessary tie of a system of exploitation and buy-offs, so he treated each city’s rot as a fluke, just as Jonathon Kozol continues to do with education reform today, calling for “democracy” (Gibson, 2007). When US anti-war activists in the Vietnam era wanted to organize a vote against the war, they arrogantly forgot about the Vietnamese vote taking place on the battlefield.

Plunkett of Tammany Hall begat Randy “Duke” Cunningham. The current election spectacle is going to cost more than one billion dollars, for TV ads alone. The offer is, now, two demagogues declaring they can out-superstition the other and one war criminal. Such is abstract democracy in the US.

In philosophy, abstract democracy is religion, dialectics without materialism, the dead end of critique, a source of class rule. You suspend your critical thought,

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agree to one Imaginary Friend or another, enter an arena run by self appointed translators for the IF, pay them, accept the hierarchies they created before you arrived, take direction and adopt the rules of the translators for the IF, and since your IF has to expand or collapse, and since there is no way to resolve religious disputes, no way to offer proofs, others become enemies: Rivers of blood!

I do not want to hear about abstract rule of the people. Rather than vote in this system, the best move might be to turn the tables and, instead of buying a politician, get some pals and collectively sell your votes. I dismiss the abstraction of democracy.

CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY

I do want to address capitalist democracy, which Marx described as the best fit for the social system when under expansion. To grasp the relation of capital and democracy we must understand that they are not piled, one on the other, but fully imbued with each other. They developed together in history. It is like a mathematical fraction in which the numerator exists as a full partner with the denominator. But it, capitalism and democracy, is a zipped up relationship that is ignored or denied in civics classes, and which can ebb and flow depending on power relations between classes. We know US democracy can vanish, fast, as in Detroit in 1967 when all laws were suspended and the military invaded the city. Same is true of Canada, with the War Measures Act enforced in 1970.

What, then, is capitalism? It is, first, a system of exploitation, a giant sucking pump of surplus labor, a relentless quest for profits in which those who do not expand, die, as with the US auto industry. Capitalism is born in inequality and violence. Those who own, stole, and the rest, who must work to live, work under an unjust condition that claims to give us a fair day's pay, when in fact that day's pay begins with the violence of being dispossessed and ends with our being paid but a portion of what our labor creates—the source of profit. Over time, production becomes increasingly social, yet the value of that production is looted by those few who hold power and capital. Still, at least in theory, the revolutionary system of capital, which demolished feudalism (then gave it new life in the Taliban) creates a world in which all people could live fairly well, if they shared.

So, capitalism is a system of exploitation in which those who must work to live must vie with each other for jobs, while nation based owners vie with each other for cheap labor, raw materials, and markets, often using militaries made up of workers who are sent off to fight the enemies of their real enemies: the rich at home.

Capitalism is a system rooted in alienation and exploitation: People who must sell their labor to live; that is, the vast majority of people, are drawn together in systems of production which, over time, are more and more socialized (bigger plants, more interconnected forms of exchange, technology, and communication, etc).

However, the people who must work, who form a social class, are set apart from each other in competition for jobs and do not control the process or the product of their work. We see that as school layoffs prompt educators to point at one another,

suggesting someone else should go first, while the curriculum and teaching methods are imposed from the top down. Kids really need more educators, not less, and corporate profits and CEO pay still boom.

While educators have more control over our time than most workers, school workers do not determine how the work will be done, nor do we choose what will be done with the product and don't own the profits gained (whether it is a Pinto of child or a chocolate). The more they engage in this form of exploited work, the difference between them and their employers increases. At the same time, the more workers labor, the more they enrich their rulers, and wreck themselves. Alienation is a loss of self, indifference to others, and a surrender to passivity. Each group forms, in essence, a competing social class, hence Marx says, "history is the history of class struggle." Alienated individuals, though, become increasingly isolated while, simultaneously, they are driven together in ever more distinct, separated, classes.

Alienation and exploitation lead to commodity fetishism: Capitalism is propelled, in part, by the sale of commodities, for a profit (as in surplus value). Over time, both workers and the employer class relate more to things than they do to other people, indeed people begin to measure their worth by commodities, especially the chief commodity, money, which in many instances becomes an item of worship. Businesses no longer focus on making, say, steel for use, but on making money, for profits.

Finance capital begins to dominate industrial investment, or such is the path in the US. People who must sell their labor become commodities themselves, and often view themselves and their own children that way. How much you make determines who you are, who you meet, who you marry, where you travel. You are not what you are, but what you have.

People then begin to see what are really relations between people, as relations between things (every human relationship mainly an economic one), which leads to the connection of commodity fetishism and reification. In discussing the stock market, most economists treat it as if it had a wisdom and life of its own (remember the religion metaphor). In schools, children have been routinely commodified, sold to companies like McGraw-Hill (textbooks) and Coca Cola—and most teachers would agree that this process has accelerated in the last decade. Commodification means that people become things, less human, less connected so Marx argued, "the more you have, the less you are."

Test scores are a good example. No Child Left Behind sets up an appearance of equality, just like the myth of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. The myth is that children enter the testing room as equals, the harder they prepped, the better they will do. The reality is that the more their parents earn, the higher the scores. The more you are concerned about test scores, the less you are learning anything important. The more you are learning, for example, subservience. In school the battle for profits meets the battle for social control.

As with capital, the more you concentrate on test scores, the more stupefied you become. But, the politicians ask, "how else can we measure learning?" while masses of people forget we could just ask the kid.

War, on one hand, and unconcern, on the other, are results of commodity fetishism. Greed, domination and fear are the underlying ethic.

Combined these three processes—exploitation, alienation, and commodity fetishism—forge reification: “All reification is a form of forgetting” (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 230).

The relations of people, disguised as the relations between things, become so habitual that it seems natural. Things people produce govern peoples’ lives. Commodity production and exchange are equated with forces of nature. “Natural laws,” really inventions of people, replace real analytical abilities (as in seeing supply and demand, or scarcity and choice, as the center pieces of economics, rather than seeing economics as the story of the social relations people create over time in their struggle with nature to produce and reproduce knowledge, freedom, and life—or in political science, discussing democracy as if it had nothing to do with social inequality).

Reified history is abolished, capitalism assumed to be the highest attainable stage of human development. Nothing changes. Normalcy in some capitalist countries is really store-bought assent to exploitation—masked as freedom. Test scores are good examples of reification in school. Measuring little but parental income and race, test scores are worshiped uncritically, influencing peoples’ lives far beyond their real value. Real estate salespeople love test scores, churn the market.

Reification hides the system of compulsion and disenfranchisement, a push-pull from the powerful, that mystifies a social system of exploitation so thoroughly that it is able to seriously call itself a centripetal point of freedom, producing a mass neurosis so powerful that it encourages its subjects to steep in two decades of consumerist euphoria while their social superstructure, like schools, their social safety net, like welfare or health services, evaporated underneath them.

Their industrial base vanished as well—a hangover from euphoria, the Golden Calf becoming the Trojan Horse—not wise for a nation promising to wage meat-grinder perpetual wars on the world to have the steel industry owned by outsiders from India, Germany and Japan. One has to worry about what happens when the US population cannot use its PlayStations or get to the mall. They may be the most dangerous people in the history of the world—or real rebels.

These processes of capital give those who own an enormous machine for lying and deceiving.

This background sets up our look at capitalist democracy as the best system for capital as it expands. The capitalist state is an executive committee of the rich, not an autonomous neutral, but their debate forum where they iron out their differences, then allow the vast majority of people to choose which of them will oppress best. The capitalist democracy is also an armed weapon in service to property rights. As the ruled far outnumber the rulers, and since coercion and force alone cannot sustain capitalist production, to pacify areas people must be turned into instruments of their own oppression.

We can see now how the one-person-one vote mythology would appeal both to rulers who seek to divide and conquer, and to individuals isolated by the system of alienation, fooled by the atomizing deception apparatus that promotes

individualism—voting promotes the lowest forms of opportunism, boils down to “what about me?”—and the false notion that a vote can bring fundamental social change.

People hide from one another in voting booths wrongly thinking they are making real public decisions when they really have no control over the processes and products of the system—and most cynically know politicians always lie—yet they vote thinking they are exercising their only public or social power, when in fact they are just setting themselves off from others and the reality is that their real power lies in unity with other workers—at work, their ability to build solidarity to fight to control the value they create. The crux of capitalist democracy is revealed in the fact that nearly no one expects to have a vote on anything significant at work, unless they own the workplace.

Fundamentally powerless student councils are practice areas for future political leaders, councils where all concerned pretend they have influence, when they are mere performers reading blank scripts—sandboxes where the children at play are quickly put back in place should they wander out of bounds.

Others, excluded, (by Jim Crow laws or chicanery) might be disgruntled, while those who don't vote can be attacked for being responsible for the bad choices voters make.

The masses of people are told this is the law, which is alienated law, the will of the ruling class exalted into statutes, a sandbox of property laws overseen by millionaire judges that only incidentally considers people. The mythological rule of law is sheer class rule that shifts as class struggle and largess or bankruptcy meet one another.¹¹

Within this law, as in religion, people deepen their alienation, choose, and pay, others to think and act for them, others who operate behind the habits of hierarchy and the force of arms. When serious differences, collisions of interests, appear between the capitalists of a given nation, they conduct civil war. The base for capitalist law is the same as the capitalist ethic: Profits are good, losses are bad, keep a careful count. Capitalist law is the law of property, ownership, not humanity.

The religion metaphor works well with schooling in the industrialized world. In the abstract, as with abstract democracy, public schools are there for the common good. But they are capitalist schools, above all, while, granted, opposition exists in some ways like it does in a factory. Educators in capitalist schools are somewhat like missionaries for capitalism. Look at the hierarchies: men run the administration (Bishops), and women (Nuns) do the front line work. School workers, who have more freedom than other workers, have a clear choice, be a missionary for the system of capital—or not.

No one ever voted themselves out of what is, at base, a Master/Slave relationship. The Masters will never adopt the ethics of the slaves. The singular path of reason alone will not overcome the system of capital, though reason must be our light and beacon. Our choice today is between community or barbarism.

Marx was correct in seeing that capitalism is a giant worldwide company store, an international war of the rich on the poor, and most importantly that the

dispossessed of the world, probably all of us, have a real interest in overcoming that system and, not replacing it with another form of dictatorship, but with an ethic and reality of reasonable equality.

The logic of the analysis of capitalist democracy leads directly to revolution. There is no other way out. While we should abhor violence, we should not reify it, treat it as if abstract violence stands on a plane similar to abstract democracy, beyond history, social conditions, or the legitimate arts of resistance.

This is true especially now when finance capital in the US, though continuing to expand, is challenged by capital in other nations, like China which has a well motivated, not exhausted, military and needs that oil just as much as the US. Oil moves the military, which in turn is absolutely key to any empire's ability to expand, which is why saving gas will do little or nothing about the perpetual oil wars. US finance capital is hit by the crises we are familiar with: the inflation resulting from the lost war, \$108 a barrel oil, the mortgage, personal debt, and national debt crises the ghastly rise in food and transportation costs, and so on. Yesterday's run on Bear Stearns, a big Wall Street bank bailed out by the government, the capitalist government in service to the rich, may be a harbinger of harsh times coming fast.

It follows that capitalist democracy in the US is rapidly contracting, and fascism emerges. As class antagonism grows, state power becomes an ever more national power over labor. There are no more labor laws of any worth, no civil rights laws, habeas corpus, rights of privacy, free speech (remember, "watch what you say") are gone, through bi-partisan legislative action as well as the courts.

The fight-back to transform the system of capital needs to look carefully at the rise of fascism (merger of the corporate and political elites, suspension of common laws, racism, nationalism, a culture writhing in violence in search of a strong leader—all moving at hyper speed within the national election now). Saying "emergence of fascism," does not mean fascism is arrived, but it does mean that fascism exists for some people in the US now, say a young black man in Detroit or Compton, while it is appearing before the eyes of others—volunteers drafted by the economy in Iraq.

But the left of the US anti-war movement, and the education reform movement, abandoned the critique of capitalist democracy (as in the current March 4, 2010 slogan, "Defend Public Education"), meaning they have no basis for analysis, no ability to develop strategies and tactics across a nation or even in unique communities—because they do not grasp how power works or why it is that the power of people who work lies, not in the voting booth—where odds are the voting machines are owned by their enemies—but at work where they can collectively win control of the processes and products of their work, in communities, or in the military where the working classes are already organized and armed.

At the same time, the left has made a fetish of Abstract Democracy, following the postmodernist coalitions where the notion of class struggle or the word, capitalism, is banished and people are urged to go off in narrow race/nation/sex/language, "autonomous," grouplets taking up their constricted issues, as did the 10,000 people meeting in Atlanta last year, thinking this will somehow lead to real resistance to a ruthless enemy with a long history of rule and

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a centralized command. To quote America's last remaining moral compass, Judge Judy, "it doesn't make sense and it is just not true." It won't work. Judge Judy is a perfect example of the appearance of judiciousness, when it is really the application of the values of the bourgeoisie, and the sale of judiciousness, as the filler between commercials.

Inside the trap of Abstract Democracy, the left has shown it is unable to get its ideas to leap ahead of daily social practice, and absolute necessity if we are to envision a better world and set about creating it.

In order to make a fight, people must trust one another. That means they must meet with each other in integrated groups that recognize that class remains the key issue at hand, of course mediated by questions of race, language, sex, gender, nation.

That, coupled with its ceaseless enchantment with nationalism, is the main reason the US left has had no impact whatsoever on the last seven or more years of imperialist war, even though a million and more people hit the streets in the first week of the Iraq invasion. They evaporated into their semi-autonomous worlds and have not exercised their potential power since. A somewhat similar thing happened to the school reform movement which, other than parts of the Rouge Forum, simply refuses to address the connections of the system of capital, imperialism, the regimentation of school life and the curriculum, oversight through high stakes exams, militarization, and privatization as well (Gibson, Queen, Ross, & Vinson, 2009).

It is fair to say, I think, that the dominant elements of public life in the US are opportunism, racism, nationalism, ignorance, and fear (surely that is true of the professoriate) though we have to recognize that the sheer perseverance of continuing to work, in our case on behalf of kids, has considerable courage built into it—and things do change, as we shall see.

Anyone interested in confronting our conditions today must follow Hegel's dictum: "The truth is in the whole." The whole is capitalism. Some live in capitalist democracies, and most do not, but it is the whole that must always be addressed, like keeping the front sight aligned with the rear sight. Even reforms will not be won without both sights on the target. The failure to create a mass base of class conscious people, which is our life and death high stakes test, remains the Achilles heel of nearly every revolutionary social movement. It follows we need to openly talk about what capitalism is, why class struggle takes place, what can be done, and what a better future might be. We need to answer the pedagogical question: *What do we want people to know, and how do we want them to come to know it?*—inside every action we take.

CONNECTING REASON TO PASSION TO POWER, ORGANIZATION, AND ACTION

An educated man is...one who hears the entire concert being performed around him, all the sounds are within his range, they all blend together in a single harmony which we call culture. And at the same time he himself is

playing one instrument in it, he plays well and makes his contribution to the common wealth, and this common wealth is all as a whole reflected in his consciousness, in his heart. (Lunacharsky, 1981, p. 49)

How is it that those who are aware of the enormous sacrifices that must be made to forge and sustain real social change, a full transformation beyond capital, offer a chance to be whole, creative, caring, either inside this ensnaring social system, or in the process of changing it? Such is the conundrum in schools and out.

We need to connect reason to passion to power, organization, and action.

We need to find ways to allow people to be as fully human, celebratory, as possible, connected, each demonstrating their creativity and connectedness with unfreedom as a commonly understood problem to be solved, because we are lambs among wolves.

It is this condition that can allow us to connect passion to the willingness to sacrifice that fundamental change, or any important social change now, will require to create and sustain. This is not going to be easy. This path beyond reason demands that people sacrifice treasure, sleep, sometimes jobs, certainly time and promotions, maybe jail or life, for the common good. Without that sacrifice, which can be achieved with collective joy, nothing.

We must not promise ourselves a future of material abundance. That will not happen. The ruling classes will destroy their own factories, hospitals, and even the water supply. What can transport us to a world where people can share is the idea that we might have to share misery for a while because, per Marx, ideas can be a material force—and have been.

The Rouge Forum

The ethic-as-material-force that guides work in the Rouge Forum, for example, is equality, not as an abstraction, but a guide (Gibson, Queen, Ross, & Vinson, 2009). Taken from the other direction: it is wrong to exploit.

This brings us to organization, power and action. Surely we can see that justice demands organization. The Rouge Forum has changed the discourse in the education reform movement. Our insistence on the role of capital, on class struggle is best illustrated by Wayne Ross' immortal comment—interrupting a particularly boring opening plenary of the College and University Faculty Association of the National Council for the Social Studies in Anaheim, CA—“Hey, this is a lot of nonsense, We Need To Read Marx and Make Class War.”

We have had a dramatic impact on academic historians, whole language specialists, the critical pedagogy crowd, and the K-12 world as well. The conversation always has to, at worst, worry about us saying, “hey, wait a minute.” We ruptured the habits of daily academic life that only reproduces the system of capital, diminishing all it touches.

The Rouge Forum has brought together people throughout the US, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, Great Britain, and India within an organization that has grasped, for eleven years, that it is possible to have an organization, be friends, and

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be both critical and self-critical. We united parents, kids, school workers, and community organizers.

We predicted both these wars and what became the NCLB as early as 1997 and published much of the initial research on the real impact of NCLB in academic and popular journals. We were among the first to plan ways to fight it. We traveled the US and other nations pointing out the centripetal power of educators in de-industrialized nations, among the last workers who have health benefits or predictable wages.

We have organized and led direct actions in workplaces and communities like the high-stakes test boycotts in Michigan, Florida, New York, and California. We did not just breach discourse and habits, we disrupted the unjust social relations in schools, shutting them down and, in very limited ways, offered youth freedom schooling. We marched on May Day before the massive immigrant May Day marches, and happily joined those huge outpourings of the working class when they took place. Now, with activist groups such as Calcare and others, we participate in a mass testing opt-out campaign, hoping to lead test boycotts to cut the school to war pipelines. We are building a base of thinking activists inside and outside the unions to reject the coming demands for school worker concessions, teaching people how to strike in solidarity—and to supply the Freedom Schools that can show how the future might be.

Today, the ground of the resistance appears to have shifted from test resistance and a focus on curricula or militarism, to battles about layoffs, wage and benefit cuts, tuition hikes, booming class size, etc. At this point, people resist in segments: teachers fight for teacher jobs, students against tuition boosts, support personnel for support jobs—even private sector workers versus public sector workers around the question of taxation. The only proper response is the one we developed here, addressing the whole, the key question being overcoming the system of capital as a whole. Fighting back within its fragmented framework, following the natural lines of the war of all on all economy, simply means we organize our own loss; divided and ruled again.

The Rouge Forum played a pivotal role in the March 4th 2010 Strike and Job Actions to Defend Education From the Ruling Classes, to Transform Education.¹² This movement, initiated by students in the Northern California University of California system, taking the direct action tact of building occupations, teach-ins, demonstrations, etc., drew opportunists and sectarians of all kinds, vampires to blood. We assisted in the building occupations and took on the combined reactionaries, union bosses and a variety of Bolshevik imitators, in meetings, online, and in direct action struggles—urging an analysis of the whole.

From an online debate:

- People can be told that this is capitalism,
- that there is a connection between capitalism and imperialism,
- that the key reasons for the attacks on working people and schools are rooted in those two,
- the education agenda is a class war agenda and an imperialist war agenda,

- that the government is an executive committee and armed weapon of the ruling class and there they work out their differences, allowing us to choose which one of them will oppress us best,
- that the overwhelming majority of union bosses have chosen the other side in what is surely a class struggle and the union hacks gain from the wars and capital by supporting those wars, winning high pay and benefits, and betraying workers, they're a quisling force,
- that we can build a social movement that rejects the barriers US unionism creates, from job category to industry to race and sex and beyond.
The core issue of our time is the reality of endless war and rising inequality met by the potential of mass, active class conscious resistance.

We can fight to rescue education from the ruling classes.¹³

The Rouge Forum has operated loosely. That worked for about eleven years, now with about 4700 people steady on our email lists, our yearly conferences, our publications, our joint work with *Substance News*, *Calcare*, the Whole Language Umbrella, TASH, and Susan Ohanian.¹⁴ We have developed an organizational structure, a Steering Committee, the *Rouge Forum News*, Rouge Forum updates, that not only won the respect of educators, but community people and students. More, people can see where they may fit in, play a leading role, using their own creative abilities in the cause of social equality.

What we do counts now more than ever. We must plan the resistance with care, hopeful that things change, recognizing they do not always change the way we wish.

We are lambs among wolves. Kindness, reason, organization, must prepare to meet those willing to spill—rivers of blood.

Everything negative is in place for a revolutionary transformation of society (distrust of leaders, collapse of moral suasion from the top down, financial crises, lost wars, massive unemployment, booming inequality, imprisonment of only the poor, growing reliance on force to rule, eradication of civil liberties, corruption and gridlock of government at every level, etc.) What is missing is the passion, generalization, organization, and guiding ethic to make that change.¹⁵

In this chapter, I have sought to show that we have the positive aspects of change in embryo, that change can be initiated, if not completed, in social studies classrooms, in schools, that students are likely to take the lead as they have while I write, and—Yes. We can win.

NOTES

¹ Rather than interrupt readers with long renditions about the nature of dialectical materialism, I seek to offer an analysis that relies on the outlook *vis a vis* capitalist schooling—and revolution. For a brief outline of dialectical materialism see Gibson, R. (2004) <http://richgibson.com/diamatoutline.html> And here <http://richgibson.com/scedialectical4.htm>. There is an excellent bibliography at the conclusion of Bertell Ollman's *Dance of the Dialectic* (2003). If pressed for one book, I recommend Ira Gollobin, (1983) *Dialectical Materialism, Its Laws, Categories, and Practice*. It is very hard to

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- find. To see Lenin's advancing view, check *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism*, compared to his *Philosophical Notebooks* on Hegel (Vol. 39 Collected Works).
- ² For a close examination of the wreckage of what was once the leading industrial union in the USA, see "The Torment and Demise of the United Auto Workers Union," (2006) at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2006/gibson.html>
- ³ Liberal post-modernists like Henry A. Giroux repeatedly insist schools represent "contested terrain." Postmodernism, religion with an angry cloak per historian Ernest Breisach in *On the Future of History: The Postmodern Challenge and its Aftermath* (2003), plays with dialects lifted up and away from the material world where the contest may be on, but somebody is on top. See for example, H. Giroux, *Slacking Off Youth* online at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/Giroux/giroux5.html>
- ⁴ On February 12, 2010, Walmart announced a partnership with four Detroit schools, training youth for jobs in their stores. This is a link to the Detroit Free Press announcement. [http://www.freep.com/article/20100211/NEWS01/100211049/Walmart-offers-job-training-via-DPS-Cranbrook Schools, an elite private both Mitt Romney and I attended, has a web site linked here](http://www.freep.com/article/20100211/NEWS01/100211049/Walmart-offers-job-training-via-DPS-Cranbrook-Schools,an-elite-private-both-Mitt-Romney-and-I-attended,has-a-web-site-linked-here) <http://www.cranbrook.edu/>
- ⁵ I credit my many conversations online with Wayne Ross, David Hill, and Glenn Rikowski for fleshing out my thought on this. A good introduction to the latter comes from a joint interview linked here: <http://clogic.eserver.org/4-1/mclaren&rikowski.html> An introduction to Hill is here: <http://clogic.eserver.org/2004/hill.html>
- ⁶ For lengthy examinations of the role of the school unions in specificity, see the Unions section linked to my web page here <http://www.richgibson.com/gibson.htm>
- ⁷ Marx, K. (1858). *Grundrisse*, linked online at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch01.htm#3>
- ⁸ Bertell Ollman in *Dance of the Dialectic*, now online (http://www.nyu.edu/projects/ollman/docs/dd_ch05a.php), argues that Abstraction is the key issue with dialectics while Raya Dunayevskaya argues it is revolution (http://www.newsandletters.org/Raya_Dunayevskaya.htm). I'll side with Dunayevskaya, but appropriate Ollman's thought here.
- ⁹ See: Zinn (2005), pp.77-102.
- ¹⁰ Quotes sourced at <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/856.html>
- ¹¹ For a detailed examination of the rule of property law, see essays in, Ollman (1990).
- ¹² See: <http://defendcapubliceducation.wordpress.com/>
- ¹³ Gibson, R. (February 26, 2010). "The UCSD Occupation: What to Think and Do" for the Rouge Forum. The notion of rescuing education from the ruling classes comes from the Communist Manifesto, Part II linked online here: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm>. This view opposes the liberal call, Defend Public Education, which would in fact only strengthen the capitalist state.
- ¹⁴ See: Substance News (<http://www.substancenews.net/>); Whole Language Umbrella (<http://www.ncte.org/wlu>), TASH (<http://www.tash.org/>), and Susan Ohanian (<http://www.SusanOhanian.org>).
- ¹⁵ Note the convergence of analysis about passion, the key role of morals, ideas, and organization in two apparently very different authors. Georg Lukacs in *Defense of History and Class Consciousness, Tailism and the Dialectic* (2000) Verso Press, p. 67; and Chalmers Johnson in *Revolutionary Change* (1982), Stanford University Press, p. 99.

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