OMNI
CLASS NEWSLETTER #1, 3-5-20.
https://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2020/03/omni-class-newsletter-1-march-5-2020.html
Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology
http://omnicenter.org/donate/

CONTENTS: CLASS NEWSLETTER #1

Class and Class Conflict
Hedges, The Antagonism Between the Rich and the Rest of Us
The Ruling Class Rules
Chomsky, Middle Class or Working Class?
Jim Wallis, God and Class Warfare

The Rich
Dangl, Billionaire Boom
Dick, Classless USA
Sloan, Gated Communities

The Workers and the Poor
Nancy Isenberg, White Poor in US History
David Ranney, Factory Workers
Joe Bageant, Redneck USA
Jim Wallis, Sojourners, Christianity for the Poor

Race and Class
Steven Hahn, Review of Four Books

More Resistance
TEXTS

CLASS and CLASS CONFLICT

Class: The Little Word The Elites Want You To Forget
By Chris Hedges, Truthdig. Reprinted in Popular Resistance.org (3-4-20). Aristotle, Niccolò Machiavelli, Alexis de Tocqueville, Adam Smith and Karl Marx grounded their philosophies in the understanding that there is a natural antagonism between the rich and the rest of us. The interests of the rich are not our interests. The truths of the rich are not our truths. The lives of the rich are not our lives. -more-

"The ruling class does rule." Mronline.org (7-24-19).
Throughout the mid-20th century, discussions and theoretical debates concerning the nature of the capitalist state persisted within Marxist circles. Some names are tightly connected with these events, including Ralph Miliband, Nicos Poulantzas, and Fred Block.

Source

01 December 13 Reader Supported News

Noam Chomsky: America Hates Its Poor
Chris Steele, Zuccotti Park Press
Excerpt: "We don't use the term 'working class' here because it's a taboo term. You're supposed to say 'middle class,' because it helps diminish the understanding that there's a class war going on." READ MORE

God and Class Warfare by Jim Wallis, SojoMail 09.22.11
|Sojourners SojoMail@sojo.net via uark.edu to jbennet
https://sojo.net/articles/god-and-class-warfare
The hot phrase in Washington, D.C., this week is "class warfare."
Paul Ryan, John Boehner, Mitch McConnell, and a host of Republican presidential candidates have attacked President Barack Obama as a class warrior because he has suggested that the wealthiest individuals in the country, along with the largest corporations, should pay what he calls their "fair share" of the costs of both deficit reduction and putting Americans back to work.

Well, let's be clear: There really is a class war going on, and the upper class is winning. As former President Bill Clinton also pointed out this week, 90 percent of income gains in the last decade went to the top 10 percent, and 40 percent of the increased wealth went to the top 1 percent. The middle class has lost ground in the same period. And we can now say that the only growth in this economy seems to be the skyrocketing poverty figures that the Census Bureau released last week. Almost 50 million Americans are now in poverty -- the highest rate in 50 years, including 22 percent of all our children -- in this the richest country in the world. Let's put it another way: The only people doing well in this economy are the people at the very top, some of whose selfish behavior caused this recession in the first place. Only they have "recovered" from the crisis they helped create. The rest of us are still trying to recover. That's a war being waged by Wall Street against Main Street. And Wall Street is winning that war. But when anybody talks about fairness or equity or morality in economics, or when anyone even begins to challenge the greatest inequality since the 1920s, they are quickly accused of engaging in "class warfare." So why is it when the top 1 percent of the country controls 42 percent of the nation's financial wealth -- more than 90 percent of the rest of us -- and the ratio of CEO pay to average workers salaries is 400 to 1, it is NOT class warfare? Yet simply calling for a return of the highest-end tax rates to the 1990s levels IS?

Imagine a bomber pilot cruising high above the clouds, utterly destroying a city below him. After much devastation, a kid with a sling shot hurls a stone at the airplane that is leveling his city and community. The stone pings on the fuselage and the pilot becomes indignant. "These people are engaged in warfare," he exclaims. "Who do they think they are? This kind of behavior will divide people and is just irresponsible!"

Wall Street has been devastating Main Street for some time. And when the politicians -- most of them bought by Wall Street -- say nothing, it's called "responsible economics." But when somebody, anybody, complains about people suffering and that the political deck in official Washington has been stacked in favor of Wall Street, the accusation of class warfare quickly emerges. "Just who do these people think they are," they ask. The truth is that the people screaming about class warfare this week aren't really concerned about the warfare. They're just concerned that their class -- or the class that has bought and paid for their political careers -- continues to win the war.

So where is God in all of this? Is God into class warfare? No, of course not. God really does love us all, sinners and saints alike, rich and poor, mansion dwellers and ghetto residents. But the God of the Bible has a special concern for the poor and is openly suspicious of the rich. And if that is not clear in the Bible, nothing is.

You might say when it comes to economics, God has a bias toward the poor. God's prophets say that nations will be judged by how they treat the poor and vulnerable -- not by how much they lower tax rates for the wealthy. Listen to what the prophets Amos, Micah, Isaiah, and
Jeremiah say about the rich and the poor, about fairness and justice, about inequality and equity. Is there any doubt that if the biblical prophets were saying such things in the House of Representatives or on Fox News today that they, too, would all be accused of class warfare? What about Jesus? Mary, the mother of Jesus, spoke clearly about his coming and his meaning in history when she prophesied about his mission in her famous prayer/song known as the Magnificat. She predicts how the child in her womb will reverse the status quo, saying, "He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty." These are not the words of a humble and charitable service provider, but the language of a social revolutionary who would certainly be charged with class warfare today on conservative talk radio.

Jesus fulfilled his mother's prophesy in his own Nazareth Manifesto -- his first words, in Luke 4 -- by saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor." He clearly should have been more sensitive to the rich who, after all, are job creators, right? How did all the prophets and Jesus miss that essential economic point? In 2008, the wealthiest 400 Americans on average paid only 18 percent of their income in taxes. But they (and their political representatives) continue to angrily push back against the so-called "Buffett Rule," which would require wealthy people to at least pay taxes at rates closer to what their secretaries and other employees do.

"Class warfare might make for good politics, but it makes for rotten economics," Rep. Paul Ryan said on "Fox News Sunday" earlier this week.

But, according to a new report by the International Monetary Fund, Ryan is just wrong. The IMF report says the widening income gap is bad for economic recovery. Growing income inequality actually hinders economic growth, and reducing economic inequality actually helps spur the economy, the report found.

The IMF study concluded that a 10 percent decrease in inequality actually increased the expected economic growth by 50 percent. "Sustainable economic reform," the authors write, "is possible only when its benefits are widely shared."

So the call for economic fairness -- what Paul Ryan decries as "class warfare" -- may not be "rotten economics" at all but, in fact, rather good economics, as well as good morality. Maybe God has a point.


THE RICH
The Billionaire Boom: 82% of Global Wealth Produced Last Year Went to Richest 1% by Ben Dangl – CounterPunch/Transcend Media Service.

25 Jan 2018 – Across the world, poor people’s labor fuels the rising concentration of wealth. “Dangerous, poorly paid work for the many is supporting extreme wealth for the few,” Oxfam explained. “Women are in the worst work, and almost all the super-rich are men.

CONTROL OF LANGUAGE USA
RULERS RULE CLASS REALITY
OWNING
PROPERTY
PROFIT
MONEY
CONTROL OF LANGUAGE
CONTROL OF MEDIA
CONTROL OF EDUCATION
MYTH OF CLASSLESS USA
PROPAGANDA
DIVERSION
OBFUSCATION
MYSTIFICATION
BRIBERY
LOBBYING
LYING
BLURRING
WORKING CLASS
CLASS
Working Class
Class
C........

Myth of Class Extinguished, We’re all in this together. -- D

SAFE IN SUBURBIA (2016)
By Gerry Sloan
We guarantee that nothing untoward will happen here in the precincts of the privileged, no riots or mass demonstrations, no suspicious persons lurking around, envious of your slice of the people's pie, the police forever on your side with lawmakers bought and paid for, any guilt spread thin as Jiffy peanut butter and sweetened with government-subsidized corn syrup.

WORKERS AND THE POOR

NANCY ISENBERG

OFFICIAL BOOK DESCRIPTION:

In her groundbreaking history of the class system in America, extending from colonial times to the present, Nancy Isenberg takes on our comforting myths about equality, uncovering the crucial legacy of the ever-present, always embarrassing—if occasionally entertaining—poor white trash.

The wretched and landless poor have existed from the time of the earliest British colonial settlement. They were alternately known as “waste people,” “offals,” “rubbish,” “lazy lubbers,” and “crackers.” By the 1850s, the downtrodden included so-called “clay eaters” and “sandhillers,” known for prematurely aged children distinguished by their yellowish skin, ragged clothing, and listless minds.
Surveying political rhetoric and policy, popular literature and scientific theories over four hundred years, Isenberg upends assumptions about America’s supposedly class-free society—where liberty and hard work were meant to ensure real social mobility. Poor whites were central to the rise of the Republican Party in the early nineteenth century, and the Civil War itself was fought over class issues nearly as much as it was fought over slavery. Reconstruction pitted poor white trash against newly freed slaves, which factored in the rise of eugenics—a widely popular movement embraced by Theodore Roosevelt that targeted poor whites for sterilization. These poor were at the heart of New Deal reforms and LBJ’s Great Society; they haunt us in reality TV shows like Here Comes Honey Boo Boo and Duck Dynasty. Marginalized as a class, white trash have always been at or near the center of major political debates over the character of the American identity.

We acknowledge racial injustice as an ugly stain on our nation’s history. With Isenberg’s landmark book, we will have to face the truth about the enduring, malevolent nature of class as well.

PRAISE:

“A magisterial study of the unjustly neglected poor whites who have helped to compose the American identity in crucial fashion…breathtaking social history and dazzling cultural analysis at its best.”

—Michael Eric Dyson, author of Holler if You Hear Me and The Black Presidency

"With characteristically deep research and provocative insights, Nancy Isenberg reveals the pivotal role of the white poor in American history…White Trash will change the way we think about our past and present.” —T.J. Stiles, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Custer’s Trials

“A bold, colorful, and necessary book about one of the oldest—and most disturbing—themes in American history.” —Edward L. Ayers, author of The Promise of the New South

“This sweeping and erudite assault on the myth of a classless America illuminates the persistence of ‘waste’ people in American political ideology and popular culture…Nancy Isenberg makes the spirited case that…a feared and despised underclass has been a defining characteristic of America since its earliest settlement.” —Amy Greenberg,

FACTORY WORKERS

Living and Dying on the Factory Floor: From the Outside In and the Inside Out
David Ranney's vivid memoir describes his work experiences between 1976 and 1982 in the factories of southeast Chicago and northwest Indiana. The book opens with a detailed description of what it was like to live and work in one of the heaviest industrial concentrations in the world. The author takes the reader on a walk through the heart of the South Side of Chicago, observing the noise, heavy traffic, the 24-hour restaurants and bars, the rich diversity of people on the streets at all hours of the day and night, and the smell of the highly polluted air.

Factory life includes stints at a machine shop, a shortening factory, a railroad car factory, a structural steel shop, a box factory, a chemical plant, and a paper cup factory. Along the way there is a wildcat strike, an immigration raid, shop-floor actions protesting supervisor abuses, serious injuries, a failed effort to unionize, and a murder. Ranney's emphasis is on race and class relations, working conditions, environmental issues, and broader social issues in the 1970s that impacted the shop floor.

Forty years later, the narrator returns to Chicago's South Side to reveal what happened to the communities, buildings, and the companies that had inhabited them. *Living and Dying on the Factory Floor* concludes with discussions on the nature of work; racism, race, and class; the use of immigration policy for social control; and our ability to create a just society.

**PRAISE**

"David Ranney's is our best account of the New Left's turn to the factory and other workplaces in the seventies. Reading in some parts like a novel, it introduces us to a remarkable cast of working-class characters, while offering a refreshingly critical look at his own experiences. We get compelling views of factory work, including the physical dangers and injuries that came with it, as well as a better understanding of a range of New Left organizing efforts. With the experience of a radical organizer and the insights of a very good social scientist, Ranney writes with particular sensitivity about race relations in the workplace."

—James R. Barrett, author of *History from the Bottom Up & the Inside Out: Ethnicity, Race, and Identity in Working-Class History*

"Apart from its merits as literature—it made me laugh and weep—Dave's account of and reflections upon his experience working in the southeast Chicago/northwest Indiana region is valuable to young activists for at least three reasons: 1) It provides information about the nature and significance of the point of production to a generation that has no more knowledge of what it was like than would a Martian. 2) It offers an example of persistence to a generation that tends to measure commitment in days or weeks rather than years or a lifetime. 3) It shows the possibility of personal transformation, both in those like Dave who set out consciously to change the world and in those he met in the course of his efforts to do so—transformation which is, after all, the whole point."

—Noel Ignatiev, author of *How the Irish Became White*

"David Ranney has produced a riveting memoir of his years working industrial jobs on the southeast side of Chicago. Compellingly written and thought provoking, *Living and Dying on the Factory Floor* brings to life the daily realities of race, class, and gender in an urban community on the brink of joining the rust belt. Ranney pairs vivid depictions of everyday
forms of social struggle with timely reflections on the political implications for contemporary readers. This book will be required reading for the next generation of radicals, particularly those hoping to understand how we arrived at the postindustrial 'gig economy,' and how we dismantle it and construct a truly free society.


**CONTRIBUTORS**

David Ranney is professor emeritus in the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois Chicago. Ranney has also been a factory worker, a labor and community organizer, and an activist academic. He is the author of four books and more than a hundred journal articles, book chapters, and monographs on issues of employment, labor and community organizing, and U.S. trade policy. His two most recent books are *Global Decisions, Local Collisions: Urban Life in the New World Order* and *New World Disorder: The Decline of U.S. Power*. In addition to his writing, he gives lectures on economic policy and politics and also finds time to be an actor and director in a small community theatre.

Joe Bageant.  *"Rainbow Pie: A Redneck Memoir."*

Here's some deep insight into Trump's army of supporters. Joe Bageant ("Deer Hunting with Jesus") died last year but not before leaving us with *"Rainbow Pie: A Redneck Memoir."* The following is from a review of that book. Forwarded by Bob Billig.

With this †Memoir of Redneck America’ I wanted to read something very much off my beaten path. What a surprise to see that it led me squarely into a familiar thicket. *Rainbow Pie* is not a sober memoir, but an indignant requiem for a way of life that has altogether vanished … and that some are trying to rekindle today. Joe Bageant was raised in the 1950s in a rural community in the Shenandoah Valley, West Virginia. Life was frugal and devoted to simple duties and community life. It was embedded in an ancient ecology „that blended labour, money and goods to sustain a modest and satisfactory life for all”. Community and economy seamlessly meshed. Neighbors „banded together to make lard and apple butter, put up feed corn, bale hay, thresh wheat, pick apples and plough snow off roads. One neighbor cut hair; another mended shoes. From birth to grave, you needed neighbors and they needed you.” Money didn’t play a key role in people’s lives. You needed some to make do, but in essence this was „an economy whose currency was the human calorie”.

In the space of a few decades, this „real community of shared labour towards the shared good” has given way to a „synthetic, petroleum-based commodity economy”. Bageant considers the loss of the yeoman agrarian tradition a true American tragedy: „We have been paid back for our disregard of that tradition and the uprooting of its souls in surprising and often chilling ways. Creating an underclass of throwaway laborers, and sub-prime mortgage and credit-card debt slaves has its blowback - in the form of inexplicable heartland school shootings, backwoods and trailer-court meth labs, or Timothy McVeigh’s Murrah Center
bombing in Tulsa.” In Arendt’s terms: the ‘homo faber’ has been degraded to an ‘animal laborans’: “ignorant, under-educated; given to unhealthy vices such as smoking and alcohol; underpaid; semi-literate; misinformed; given to crude entertainments; (...); disposable as a labor force, quick to violent solutions; easily misled; simple-minded in world view; superstitious; and poor in parenting and social skills.”

This cultural sea change wasn’t an accident. Neither was it an invisible hand that led American society into its current predicament. Bageant argues that the creation of a (white) underclass was carefully orchestrated by the country’s economic and political elites. The whole point being the ready availability of a cheap workforce and docile cannon fodder to fight the corpocracy’s wars. To get there they squeezed the farmers and small businessmen in local communities to death, dismantled unions, rigged the tax system to suit their own needs, and carpet-bombed the American psyche with corporate and state-media imagery. The result is an underclass that doesn’t even realize that their country has been looted. The odds to ever make a decent living and gain some respect have been stacked heavily against them.

ON THE GOD’S POLITICS BLOG, SOJOURNERS
+ See what's new on the blog of Jim Wallis and friends

E.g.: Requiem for Republicans by Duane Shank
Earlier this month, former Senator Charles Percy of Illinois passed away. Along with former Sen. Mark Hatfield of Oregon, who died a month ago, they represented the last vestiges of an era of moderate Republicans, for whom what was best for the country was more important than promoting an ideology.

Too Poor to Die? by Duane Shank
Every time I think I've exhausted my outrage capacity, I see something new to refuel it. Forty-six million Americans live in poverty and 22 million are unemployed or have less than full-time employment.

+ Click to continue

SOJOURNERS IN THE NEWS
Jim Wallis, founder of the Christian social justice group Sojourners,

Latest Articles | Sojourners

Isaiah 58 talks about a fast that loosens the bonds of wickedness. It undoes the straps of the heavy yokes that keep people oppressed and let them go free.

Jim Wallis Rebuts False Accusations from Religious Right
Faith in Public Life
Sojourner's Jim Wallis, a member of the Circle and a vocal advocate for a moral budget....

Progressive Evangelical Jim Wallis Agrees Debt Is Moral Issue
The Christian Post
In an interview with The Christian Post, Wallis, CEO of Sojourners, asserted that the Christian anti-poverty coalition, Americans see God in the economy, survey finds
Deseret News
The Post put the survey in a context of the politicians debating what lessons they "should draw from religion to address issues such as the nation’s deficit." For example, the Sojourners evangelical group want a shared sacrifice to help the poor.

CLASS AND RACE in DIVIDED USA

A REVIEW OF 4 BOOKS


MORE RESISTANCE

New! "Can the Working Class Change the World?" by Michael D. Yates

“Spoiler alert: Michael Yates not only answers his question with a resounding ‘Yes,’ but insists that the working class must change the world. What makes this book invaluable, however, is not its grand conclusion but Yates’s clear-eyed, global analysis of capitalism ... and a brilliant delineation of what needs to change in order to radically remake the world.”

—Robin D. G. Kelley, author, Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination

“Blends economics, sociology, and political science with an inspiring call to action. Those who want to understand our world and help change it for the better should read this book—and share it with friends.”

—Paul Le Blanc, author, A Short History of the U.S. Working Class

“Helps us understand what our role is, why we can rise to the challenge, and why we must unite ... against the depredations of capitalism. As Yates shows us, our survival and the survival of an ecosystem that can sustain us depend on it.”

—Kelley Howell, activist and writer

“Focuses upon the need to shed our individuality and put our faith in the collective will and collective efforts, not only of one country’s working class, but also that of the whole world.”

—Chaman Lal, author, Understanding Bhagat Singh
Michael Yates’s passion and respect for the class he came out of delivers a book that is especially accessible without retreating from the complexities and internal contradictions of working class life and organization—a book committed not only to defending workers, but also to building on their potentials to transform society.”

—Sam Gindin, former chief economist, Canadian Auto Workers Union

One of the horrors of the capitalist system is that slave labor, which was central to the formation of capitalism itself, is still fully able to coexist alongside wage labor. But, as Karl Marx pointed out, it is the fact of being paid for one’s work that validates capitalism as a viable socioeconomic structure. Beneath this veil of “free commerce”—where workers are paid only for a portion of their workday, and buyers and sellers in the marketplace face each other as “equals”—lies a foundation of immense inequality. But, Marx argued, because capitalism is the apotheosis of class society, it must be the last class society: it must, therefore, be destroyed. And only the working class, said Marx, is capable of doing that.

In his timely and innovative book, Michael D. Yates asks if the working class can, indeed, change the world. Deftly factoring in such contemporary elements as sharp changes in the rise of identity politics and the nature of work, itself, Yates wonders if there can, in fact, be a thing called the working class. If so, how might it overcome inherent divisions of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, location—to become a cohesive and radical force for change? Forcefully and without illusions, Yates supports his arguments with relevant, clearly explained data, historical examples, and his own personal experiences. This book is a sophisticated and prescient understanding of the working class, and what all of us might do to change the world.

END CLASS NEWSLETTER #1

OMNI Peace Newsletter | OMNI Facebook | OMNI Website

Dick Bennett

(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703