

Why Are Things as They Are? It's Class Rule!

The state is nothing but an instrument of oppression of one class by another--no less so in a democratic republic than in a monarchy.

(Friedrich Engels, preface to Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*, 1891)

If we want to oppose this war, and the very real promise of perpetual war, we need a clear strategy. There can be no strategy without an analysis of why things are as they are. Without strategy, tactics dissolve into an endless chase trailing the initiative of those who plan. Our UFPJ's "strategic framework," still has no real analysis of why things are as they are; winds up with a series of disjointed tactics. Worse, some of our tactics, like electoral work, only strengthen our opposition. We do not need to participate in the creation of our own oppression.

Things are as they are because our context is an international war of the rich on the poor, capitalism, intensifying every day. The only thing new (*neo*) about this is the speed, intensity, of that war. Inside the war of the rich on the poor (for profits), we witness inter-imperialist wars, rising inequality, racism, sexism, nationalism, and witless religious irrationalism. In every nation, the government and all its branches is a weapon of class rule, rich over poor. Failing to recognize that reality forges a direct path to death. The government is no potential ally. It's on the other side. The government is not a bridge between classes. It's a weapon of class domination. The only truth coming from the US government is that both parties plan war forever. There is no difference at all between Republicans and Democrats about class rule, or oil.

The crux of class rule today is social and political control of oil. Why? Oil runs the empires' militaries. Without the military, there can be no imperial reach for cheap labor, other raw materials, and markets. Without oil; no military. But the military of every nation is composed of poor and working class youth sent off to fight what are really the enemies of their enemies. As in Vietnam, it is always possible that these youth will turn their guns on the own officers, meaning the military is a key choke point of society. That's why this ruling class avoids a draft. But, on the whole, the military is *THEIR* military, not ours. They're not our troops, but theirs, until the troops behave otherwise. Even so, the military is a key social choke point for organizing.

Another choke point in de-industrialized America is schools where a key product is ideas, ours or theirs. After all, any organizer's task is educational. What do we want people to learn? The crux of the challenge at hand is to build a mass base of class conscious people willing to sacrifice in order to transcend the tyranny of the rule of the many by the few, to reach into a society where all can care for all, where freedom and creativity are unleashed by the forces of reason and equality. This mass base of people must take responsibility for our own actions, recognizing that nobody is going to save poor and working people but us ourselves. We cannot vote our way out of what is really a Master/Slave relationship. In the long run, we need to identify key social choke points, target our organizing, education, and agitation, and make the choke points ungovernable.

As long as capitalism rules, schools will be mainly missions for capitalism. But, as on any job, there will be resistance; school workers teaching for resistance and equality, students rejecting racist high-stakes exams and the militarization of school life. We can count on resistance, but we need a strategy to make sense of it.

The Rouge Forum is a group of students, education workers, parents, and community people dedicated to the struggle for equality and justice. We have a decade of experience leading school struggles like test boycotts and driving military recruiters from campuses. Our publications, ranging from books to short articles and flyers, reflect our deepening experiences. You are welcome to join us.