

## chapter eleven

# The War on Terrorism and the US Working Class

It seems President Bush fears unions more than terrorists.

—Scott McKinney, letter in the *Athens Banner-Herald*, Oct. 2, 2002.

## Introduction: The Return of Capitalist Crisis and the Deepening of Proletarian Slavery

Politics, like the mind, is the realm of over-determination, where the arithmetic of “killing two birds with one stone” rules. Consequently, it should not be surprising to find that the Bush Administration’s “war on terrorism” has been inspired as much by the collapse of profitability in the US as by the collapse of the World Trade Center towers. This essay will show how the war on terrorism is a *subtle* response to the crisis of neoliberal capitalism that began in 1997. For the economic and social policy inscribed in this “war” is not only a blunt, repressive attack on immigrant worker rights, but it is also extending a “deal” for citizen workers who are perhaps more frightened by the competition of high-tech and call-center workers in Bangalore, India than by the Afghani supporters of Bin Laden’s Caliphate of the Future.

A quick, though dry way of understanding the crisis that opened up for neoliberal capital in 1997 and was inherited by the Bush Administration is through the wage/profit profile of the years before and after that year.

The most salient feature of the U.S. class struggle in the quarter century from 1973 to 1997 was the decline of real wages that laid the foundations for the surprising revival of profitability of US capital in the early 1990s. The average weekly *real* wage (in constant 1982 dollars) in 1973 was \$315 and in 1997 it was \$268. This 15% decline took place with a dismal regularity and, conversely, total corporate profits (both real and nominal) increased dramatically between these two dates. To get a rough estimate of how differently average wages and total profits fared compare the

different rates of increase of their *nominal* (not real) values in two different periods, the Keynesian (1959-1973) and the Neoliberal (1973-1997):

Table 1

	<b>Wage increase</b>	<b>Profit increase</b>
1959-1973	85.00%	115.00%
1973-1997	192.00%	577.00%
1997-2001	15.00%	-10.00%

(Calculated from Tables B-47 and B-91 of *The Economic Report of the President* (2002))

Table 1 simply illustrates a well known fact: in the Keynesian era nominal wages and profits increased at roughly the same rate, but in the Neoliberal period nominal profits increased dramatically in comparison to nominal wages (which actually fell in real terms).

However, a surprising development occurred beginning in 1997: for the first time since the 1960s there were three consecutive years of positive above one percent increases in real wages (1997, 1998, 1999). Not surprisingly, in these years profits begin to fall from \$800 to \$773 billion after more than a decade of uninterrupted profit increases. This initiated a crisis period where *nominal wages increased while profits decreased* which reversed an axiom of the Neoliberal period.

Here in numbers is one of the springs of the ferocious hatred President Clinton provoked in the hearts of Right-wing politicians in the so-called “boom years” of the late 1990s. However firmly Clinton believed in the virtues of neoliberalism, the US economy experienced a three-year period when real wages went up and total profits went down on his watch. Though it was not Clinton’s intention to precipitate a profits crisis, the impeaching Republican senators cried, “This is anathema in a neoliberal economy! Off with Clinton’s head!” They believed Clinton either was an incompetent neoliberal leader who let unemployment get too low or was insincere in his faith in the theological properties of “the market.”

This change in the wage/profit ratio could not last, however, in the continuing dominance of neoliberal policies. So beginning in 2000, amid the collapsing stock markets, the dot.com crash, economic slowdown and a statistically defined recession,

real wage increases began to drop as well and have remained close to zero for the last three years: .3% in 2000, .5% in 2001, and approximately .5% in 2002.

Given this data, does the image of an increasingly triumphant capitalism and an increasingly enslaved proletariat that has been painted by countless critics of neoliberal policies (including myself in an essay entitled "From Capitalist Crisis to Proletarian Slavery" and written in late 1997) still fit (Caffentzis 2001)?<sup>1</sup> My answer is, "Yes and No," for I would describe the present period in slightly different terms as "The Return of Capitalist Crisis and the Deepening of Proletarian Slavery."

The "return of capitalist crisis" part is obvious. The unusual period of real wage growth between 1997 and 1999 merely demonstrated the rigidity of neoliberal capitalism: it cannot allow for a steady increase of real, across-the-board wages without going into crisis. The primary reason for this rigidity lies, paradoxically, in the intense fluidity of capital movement in a neoliberal environment. Capital is normally very sensitive to changes in profit rates, but, given physical, political and class constraints, it often has had to suffer wage increases and profit decreases in silence (though often for its long-term benefit). There are transaction costs in capital's motion that are often so expensive that it becomes unprofitable to move. Indeed, to prevent the destabilization of class relations prompted by rapid capital movements, the Keynesian states of Western Europe and North America and Third World nationalist states from World War II to 1973 often criminalized swift capital movements and legally formalized this stickiness of capital. But the costs of such movement (monetary, legal and political) have been dramatically reduced since 1973 with the implementation of neoliberal policies throughout the world. Consequently, any consistent increase in average real wages and drop in profits can trigger off a capital strike and then an exodus to more propitious climes.

The crash of a variety of bubbles (from the dot.com boom to the Enron-like scams) revealed the underlying fall of profitability in the late 1990s that caused a capital strike and exodus in 2000 and beyond. This is not just an economic crisis in the US, which can be overcome with some interest rate reductions and tax cuts. It is a worldwide ideological and political crisis as well as an economic one. Economically, this crisis in the US matched the profits stagnation in Europe and Japan that amplified the anxiety concerning the viability of the neoliberal project as a capitalist solution to working class demands and struggles.

Ideologically, as the crisis developed, a worldwide anti-neoliberal globalization movement stepped into the role of an opposition to capitalism that previously was

played by the Communist states. The mere existence of such a vocal opposition, whatever the “effectiveness” of its strategies and tactics, was destabilizing. Indeed, as the crisis intensified in the US, the movement even began to take on a statist character.

Although the movement claimed it was “everywhere,” its epicenter became South America and its claims that neoliberalism cannot provide for the reproduction of the bulk of the human race began to be taken seriously as state policy beyond the confines of Havana. Events like the collapse of Argentina’s neoliberal economic policy and the anti-neoliberal political insurrections and electoral victories in Bolivia, Venezuela, and Brazil gave this claim the power of representation on the world stage. The recent failed attempts to extend the neoliberal globalization agenda in the WTO meetings in Cancun in September 2003 and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in November 2003 have been inevitable consequences of this transformation of the movement from the streets into the state houses and conference rooms. What appeared to be a way to overcome the crisis of Keynesianism in the 1970s is now entering a chronic crisis itself at the beginning of the 21st century. The Bush Administration’s job, in the face of Clinton’s failure to hold down wages at the end of his Administration, is to return US capital to profitability and thus effectively reduce wages while dealing with the ideological crisis unleashed by a world-wide demand for an alternative to neoliberalism.

As for “the deepening of slavery” side of my description of this period, the evidence can be seen in the legislation that has been put into place since September 11, 2001. The legal counter-revolution of 1996 that brought the “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity,” “Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility,” and “Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty” Acts has been followed by the “war on terrorism” embodied in the USA-PATRIOT and Homeland Security Acts of 2001 and 2002 respectively.

The war on “terrorism” is often presented as a nodal point for the US foreign policy and civil rights. Less understood is the impact it has on workers’ struggles and the fact that one of its primary domestic aims is to stifle the organizational capacity of the US working class, including its drive to unionization and refuse a future of wage slavery.

The Bush Administration’s use of the USA-PATRIOT Act and the Homeland Security Act proves the point of my description as I will show below.<sup>2</sup>

## The USA-PATRIOT Act and Wage Slavery

We build machines that act like men and we want to produce men who act like machines. Our danger today is not that of becoming slaves, but of becoming automatons.

—Erich Fromm, “Freedom in the Work Situation” in (Harrington and Jacobs 1960: 3).

The Patriot Act, hurriedly passed, almost unanimously in Congress and signed by President Bush six weeks after September 11, 2001, was sold to Congress and the public as a means to repress Al Qaeda and its allies. But the Act is not specifically directed at Al Qaeda members. Far from having a clear objective—as it was the case, e.g., with the legislation of the Cold War that criminalized communism— the Patriot Act’s identification of the “enemy” is extremely vague. Its definition of “terrorist activity” and “terrorist organization” is so broad that it practically criminalizes anyone who is politically involved and travels, communicates, or sends money across national borders for almost any political purposes not sanctioned by the US government.

“Terrorist activity” is defined as any crime involving the use of a “weapon or dangerous device (other than for personal monetary gain),” while “terrorist activity” includes soliciting funds, soliciting membership, and providing material support for a “terrorist organization,” even when the organization has legitimate political and humanitarian aims. What constitutes a “terrorist organization” is even more problematic. In the past, it was the US State Department that decided which organizations were to be considered terrorists, by periodically issuing new lists. But with the passing of the Patriot Act, “terrorist organization” is defined as any group of “two or more individuals, whether organized or not,” engaging in terrorist activities, defined as above.

As for the crimes that can be prosecuted under the Patriot Act, the list is potentially endless. It covers:

...acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws [if they] appear to be intended...to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion [and if they] occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the US.

This definition can easily include picket-line activities occurring in the context of a public demonstration or of a strike outside a factory, an office, or an army base. Moreover, a non-citizen can be deported even if s/he provided material assistance to,

solicited funds for, or solicited membership for an undesignated “terrorist organization” prior to the enactment of the Act.

Considering how “fluid” and contingent is the US government’s classification of its opponents, this retroactive clause is a very provocative step. It clearly intends to put the anti-globalization and union movements on the defensive. Activists now must face new risks when engaging in any transnational networking and support work. More than that, as Nancy Chang, from the Center for Constitutional Rights, has noted, the language of the Patriot Act (no less than that of the Homeland Security Act) can be read by federal law enforcement agencies:

as licensing the investigation of political activists and organization based on their opposition to government policies. It also may be read by prosecutors as licensing the criminalization of legitimate political dissent (Chang 2002).

However, while all activists and workers can be criminalized under the Patriot Act, immigrant workers are most under the fire of the new legislation, as their organizing and the requirements of their daily lives demand that they operate on a transnational level, e.g., through engaging in support work for political organizations in their “home” countries. Indeed, when we look at the use that has already been made of it, we see that behind the “terrorism” rhetoric the Patriot Act appears as nothing less than a new tool to keep class struggle in check in the US, and it is especially designed to control a working class that is becoming increasingly multinational.

The Patriot Act has already been used to raid immigrant neighborhoods, deport or detain an undeclared number of immigrants, especially from Muslim countries, and screen tens of thousands more. Most important, its immediate effect—in the period after September 11—was to freeze the organization drives immigrant workers were leading.

This is not accidental. To fully understand why this type of legislation was adopted, two considerations are in order. First, “September 11” occurred at a time of renewed class struggle and union mobilization which, by the year 2000, was beginning to reverse the tremendous decline in union membership that had occurred in the 1980s (by 1999 union membership had fallen to 13.9 percent from 25 per cent average of the 1970s). Thus, while in the 1980s workers had seemed defenseless against the anti-union attacks launched by corporate power with the support of both the Republican and Democratic parties, by 2000 unionization and a working class offensive was regaining ground. The stability and, in some cases, growth of unionization in the public

sector (from teachers to police officers to welfare workers)—from 36.7 percent in 1983 to 37.5 percent by 2000—has been in part responsible for the resurgence of workers' activism. But the main protagonists of the new class offensive and labor's organizational drive in the 1980s and 1990s have been immigrant workers whose massive entrance in the US workforce—almost 15 million between 1981 and 1998—has radically changed its social and political composition.

For a start, it has affected the rate of unionization, as immigrants are generally more favorable to unions than native-born workers (De Freitas 1993). An example of this preference is the fact that 75 percent of the heavily immigrant Latino population of California voted against the anti-union Proposition 226 in California (which would have required unions to obtain individual permission from their members to spend any of their dues on political campaigns), while only 53.5 percent of voters overall voted against it.

Unions are not revolutionary organizations; however, it is indisputable that in the US unionized workers earn an average of 34 percent more than other workers. "Joining a union raises earnings by 40 percent for [waged] working women, 44 percent for African American workers, and 53 percent for Latino workers" (Collins and Yeskel 2000: 83). Indeed, a sudden reversal of unionization trends and a return to their level in the 1950s (given their impact on wages) would immediately euthanize the profits of US corporations. Thus, the increasing presence of immigrants in the US work force is seen as a mixed blessing by US capital. On the one side, immigrants form the basis of much of the profitability of US industries but, on the other, immigrant workers (both documented and undocumented) bring with them an intense experience of struggle.

It is rare for politically active immigrants from Latin America or any part of Asia or Africa not to have been involved in anti-globalization struggles in their home countries prior to migrating. Very few adults have not participated, for instance, in a strike, or riot or insurrection against World Bank-inspired privatizations and "liberalization" programs or IMF-inspired devaluations. Many have been hounded out of their countries precisely because of their anti-globalization militancy as well as the general impoverishment which structural adjustment has caused. In other words, the immigrant workers who come to the US are not defeated, apathetic people. On the contrary, they are circulating into the "center" of capitalism an enormous experience of struggle from its "periphery" that has been the basis for the revival of trade union militancy and class struggle in the US of the 1990s.

So powerful has been the impulse immigrant workers have given to the struggle in the USA that, by 2000, the AFL-CIO had reversed its century-long hostility to immigrants and taken the unprecedented step of supporting a demand for amnesty for the undocumented, recognizing that they were providing the leadership of its organizing drives (Prashad 2003: 44).

It is not an accident, then, if the Bush Administration's Patriot Act has targeted immigrants, starting with immigrant workers, and stigmatized them as "terrorists." The goal is precisely to interrupt that flow of information, organizational strategies and networking that in recent years—in many cases through the anti-globalization and union organizing movements—has allowed activists to challenge the hegemonic power of multinational corporations, forcing them in many cases to become accountable to their workers through internationally coordinated campaigns (as, e.g., in the anti-sweat-shops campaign).

Thus, the Patriot Act is an important step in the formation of a new phase of *wage slavery* in the US, as was indicated by the 2002 US Supreme Court decision in *Hoffman Plastic Compounds v. National Labor Review Board (NLRB)* that denied the right to back pay remedy to undocumented workers who were illegally fired. This decision has behind it an increasing political identification of immigrants with terrorists (i.e., the ultimate rightless demonic beings in contemporary US jurisprudence).

I use the archaic phrase "wage slavery" in this essay for the same reason that other terms like "sweatshop," "new enclosures," and "multitude," evoking capitalism's past, have been used to refer to major changes in contemporary society.<sup>3</sup> This semantic "going back to the future" signals a rupture between capitalist change and social progress, which conceptually reprieves both the past horrors of capitalism and the past missed opportunities to break from it.

"Wage slavery" is often misunderstood as a rhetorical phrase referring to a time long-ago when workers' wages were pitifully low, the working day was endless and the discipline of work draconian. But these are symptoms of wage slavery not its definition, which more precisely means being a situation where workers are not legally entitled to collectively bargain the cost and conditions of their labor. In other words, unlike in chattel slavery, the wage slave is not the possession of the employer. S/he gets a wage, but s/he cannot collectively negotiate his/her wage by, for example, denying his/her labor with other workers in a strike. In such situations, the wage is effectively determined either by the state or by the employers and it tends to gravitate to the popular image associated with a Victorian Scrooge penny-pinching his helpless

workers to death. Wage slavery was quite common in the nineteenth century in Europe and the US as the political literature of the period attests. In fact, wage slavery only became passé there when the working class became enfranchised and workers had the right to form unions and collectively bargain their wages, hours and conditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But nothing as useful to capitalism as wage slavery remains passé, especially since liberation from it clearly did not constitute a liberation from capitalism, as the history of the US and Europe shows.

I am not alone in re-examining the space between the wage and slavery in order to understand the condition of the workers in neoliberal capitalism. The conceptual territory between chattel slavery and the full enfranchisement and protection of workers' bargaining rights has become the focus of attention since the end of Keynesianism in the 1970s. The "chattel slavery" side of the territory has attracted the most attention, of course (see, e.g., (Bales 2000) on "disposable people"), while prosecutions of violations of anti-slavery conventions (both directly and indirectly) are common in recent years throughout the planet. But the "wage" side of wage slavery has also been the object of attention under the rubric of the deprivation of "workers' rights" and the revival of "sweatshops." For the ideal totalization of a free wage labor regime (as envisioned by the ILO conventions and the more radical of the New Deal legislation) is receding in the US as it is throughout the planet.<sup>4</sup>

The fear that Erich Fromm voiced in 1960 in the epigraph about workers turning into automatons has recently morphed into a fear of the return of wage slavery in the US and worldwide. The condition of immigrants without any collective bargaining rights is rapidly becoming identical to that of many citizens like prisoners, parolees and others on probation, as well as those on workfare. The fear of gaining guaranteed "safety" in an industrialized, bureaucratized society at the price of an alienated and mechanized life that was so pronounced in the 1950s and 1960s is giving way in the 21st century to an older anxiety: a sense of being without any rights to negotiate the basic conditions of one's existence in the midst of a jungle of machines. For being "mechanical" and "the machine" has lost the sense of being planned and orderly and has taken on the pejorative sense of the "savage," i.e., of being unpredictable, cruel and fatal.

Thus, the critique of capitalism has turned from an emphasis on alienation to exploitation and consequently to a revaluation of the framework of wages, profits, class and work.

## The Homeland Security Act: A Subtle Mixture of Neoliberalism and Keynesianism

While the Patriot Act's violation of workers' rights and unionization is implicit, the Homeland Security Act's (HSA) hostility to unionization is quite explicit. Passed on November 25, 2002 for purpose of "prevent(ing) terrorist attacks within the United States" and "reduc(ing) the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism," even before its adoption, the Act was at the center of an acrimonious controversy precisely because of its anti-union provisions. The Act is a direct attack on government employee unions, as it threatens the rights of the 170,000 employees of the newly created Department of Homeland Security (DHS)—resulting from the consolidation of 22 federal agencies—to unionize. (We should remember that Federal Government workers have no freedom to strike and hence are legally restricted in their power to collectively negotiate their wages.)

One of HSA's many anti-union provisions—buried in Title VIII, Subtitle E, section 842—specifies that:

If the President determines that the application of subsections [of the law that involved collective bargaining rights] would have a substantial adverse impact on the ability of the Department to protect homeland security, the President may waive the application of such subsections 10 days after the President has submitted to Congress a written explanation of the reasons for such determination.

In other words, the collective bargaining rights of 43,000 unionized DHS employees must be contingent on a unilateral decision by President Bush! In the debates before the HSA was passed, the Democrats in the Senate demanded that the President be forced either to get approval for such a waiver from the Federal Labor Relations Authority or to declare a state of national emergency before issuing it. But President Bush threatened to veto the law if his right to unilaterally waive the DHS workers' collective bargaining rights was in any way diminished, and that was sufficient to carry the day.

In this case too, the passing of the Act is to be connected with the rising militancy of public sector workers, mentioned above. But what is clearly at work is a broader project aiming to turn back the clock to the pre-Wagner Act, pre-"New Deal" era—to the times, that is, of wage slavery and unlimited employers' power, and, lest we

forget, when labor conflicts were “Big Trouble” which were solved with the Pinkertons’ rifles and occasionally the noose (Lukas 1997).

It is in any case certain that the creation of the DHS has triggered the largest reorganization of the Federal bureaucracy since World War II (the DHS being the third largest Federal Department in terms of employment), and its formation has opened the flood gates for a unprecedented set of administrative decisions both delegitimizing unions in the Federal government and privatizing government services, so that non-unionized corporations, in the future, can become recipients of Federal revenues in a wide variety of areas that civil service rules so far had prevented.

A foreshadowing of this transformation was the removal by the Bush administration, in January 2002, of about a thousand Justice Department lawyers from union jurisdiction. This move was justified with the argument that since a small number of these lawyers were involved in “terrorist” litigation, they all could be involved at one time or another in “terrorism” trials that would require them to be privy to “national security” information. Thus they were all subject to “national security” exemptions that barred unionization. This argument was possible because, after September 11, 2001, “terrorism” became defined as a matter of “war” and “national security,” instead of a matter of “crime.” This means that federal attorneys involved in terrorist cases are now treated as war combatants rather than as court officers responsible for determining who committed a crime. Indeed, after the HSA, “national security” considerations have been extended to the most innocuous activities, from librarians lending books to janitors repairing boilers in government buildings.

An even clearer example of the use of the Homeland Security Act to undermine government employees’ unions has been the fate of the airport baggage screeners. By 2000 baggage screeners working for private contractors had organized themselves, creating local branches of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). But one month after September 11, 2001 Congress decided that screeners had to be federal employees and citizens, a move which expelled from the airports many immigrants workers and eliminated SEIU airport locals, as the new federal employees could not bring along their previous union affiliations. The screeners then tried to organize a federal employees’ union but were blocked by a Presidential decree barring them from unionizing, again in the name of “national security.”

An allied example of how “terrorism” is used to undermine workers’ rights is the plan Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld is promoting, which denies collective bargaining

rights to the Department of Defense's 640,000 workers (44 percent of whom are already unionized). The plan is presently being debated in Congress. But, whatever its fate, it is an important step in the Bush Administration's campaign to privatize government services and staff them with non-unionized workers, an effort that began with the November 2002 decision to open 15 percent of federal jobs, considered "commercial in nature," to competition between federal agencies and private corporations.

Much depends on the success of this operation. Privatization of government services would guarantee that the hundreds of billions of dollars increase in the Federal budget that has taken place since Sept. 11, 2001 would not result in an increase of the predominantly unionized government employment, but would instead consign hiring procedures to private contractors (from cleaning companies to "rent a soldier" operations) heavily relying on non-union labor. This anti-union privatization would be the solution to the Sphinx's riddle posed by the Bush Administration's revival of military Keynesianism that was voiced by Kalecki in the 1940s: how is it possible for the state to invest in social reproduction without strengthening the working class? Of course, the general preference is to invest in "disciplinary" branches like the police and military rather than in housing, medical care or education, but even military spending creates a guaranteed sphere of employment for millions of mechanics, secretaries and janitors. The massive use of non-union private contractors that would at the same time offer "national security" guaranteed jobs for US citizen workers would satisfy the conditions of the problem Bush faces. In effect, the Bush Administration is proposing a subtle mixture of neoliberalism (privatization) and Keynesian deficit spending to get and keep US capital out of a crisis for the near future, which would, at the same time, promise non-union jobs in a hugely expanded and privatized "national security" sector to citizen workers while further driving immigrant workers into illegality and wage slavery.

## Conclusion

September 11, 2001 has been a turning point in the history of the US working class, marking a decisive crisis in the US workers' rights to legally resist exploitation. Through the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Act, a powerful machine has been set in motion intended to undermine unionization and contain working class organizing drives and wage demands, especially in the case of immigrant workers, presently the most militant US workers.

This means that with the rhetoric of the “war on terror” and “national security,” the Bush Administration has offered a barbed deal to the US working class reminiscent of that offered to German workers in the Depression. A select part of the working class, mostly white or native-born, is being promised a future in an economy bloated by US anti-terrorist government procurements that foreign companies (and workers) could not compete for because they would be labeled “national security” contracts (and jobs). Meanwhile, the remaining non-citizen workers must live under the threat of being labeled “terrorists”—should their activism exceed what business can accommodate to—and of being stripped of their rights, at best deported, at worst incarcerated for an indefinite time in a concentration camp like Guantanamo.

Will the “citizen workers” of the US accept this deal and will non-citizen US workers silently suffer their condemnation to “wage slavery”? Their collective choice remains unclear. But what we know is that in the last two years, about one hundred cities and the Oregon State Senate have passed resolutions defending their residents’ civil rights from the threat posed by the Patriot Act, the Homeland Security Act and the related legislation, while organizations like the American Librarians Association have openly urged their members to oppose the provisions of the Patriot Act that applies to them. Moreover, immigrant workers are refusing to become invisible. In the face of enormous intimidation, hundreds of immigrant workers have undertaken a “Freedom Ride” that is taking them across the country, from Los Angeles to Washington, with stops in dozens of towns and cities, to make their case against the provisions of the Patriot Act and similar anti-immigrant legislation. These are small but significant harbingers of the decisive decisions that are to be taken by the US proletarians in the coming year that could lead to the rejection of the Bush Administration’s “war on terrorism” deal.

September 2003

## Notes

1. There is now a standard genre of left wing or liberal descriptions of the “condition of the US working class” in the late 20th and early 21st centuries that reveal different outlines of the same rather dismal picture. Some of the most useful are (Yates 1994), (Wolman and Colamosca 1997), (The Public Health and Labor Institutes 1997), (Collins and Yeskel 2000), and (Prashad 2003).

2. The full title of the Act is: Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act. For a fine discussion of the legal aspects of the Act see, beside Nancy Chang's work, (Cole 2003: 57-69).
3. For a discussion of "sweatshop" see (Prashad 2003: 19-25), for "new enclosures" see (Midnight Notes 1992), for "multitude" see (Hardt and Negri 2000: 102-103). We might be tempted to ask at this juncture, "which of these phrases more adequately characterize the present?" But semantic discussions can have an Alice-in-Wonderland futility about them, unless we, as Alice did, wake up and put them to political test.
4. The identification of the working class with waged labor has been a staple of classical nineteenth-century Marxism as well as the assumption of the ILO after WWI and the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In Marx's revolutionary scenario, capitalism was supposed to have an innate tendency to expand the waged labor market across the planet and set the stage for a unification of the planetary working class that would prove to be capital's undoing—"Workers of the World Unite." For the reformist ILO and the UN, the totalization of the wage would set the stage for a "tame" capitalism that would recognize workers' rights and normalize the class struggle. But this common assumption of both the Marxists and international agencies has been critically undermined by analyses of wage labor in the last generation and by the recognition of the importance of unwaged labor for capitalist production: either in slavery or reproduction (housework). Some recent important works in this reanalysis are (Federici 2004) and (Linebaugh 2002).

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