TELLS THE FACTS AND NAMES THE NAMES

CounterPunch

MARCH 1-15, 2007 ALEXANDER COCKBURN AND JEFFREY ST. CLAIR VOL. 15, NO. 5

Did Wall Street Nail Eliot Spitzer?

By Alexander Cockburn

Powerful people on Wall Street didn't like Gov. Eliot Spitzer, and Wall Street plays dirty. Right after his first press conference, a person who worked for over twenty years in the stock market wrote to me, saying, "The first name that came into my head was Christian Curry. This was a black man that Morgan Stanley set up because he charged them with racial discrimination and was dragging their reputation through the mud. Morgan Stanley, with the knowledge of their inside top lawyers, paid some guy $10,000 to get Curry to become a party to illegally planting racist emails on Morgan Stanley's computers. But then the $10,000 bribe came out and the Manhattan DA's office began investigating Morgan Stanley. It really smelled when the DA dropped the case."

In the Spitzer matter, there's a lot that still smells.

The official story is that it was Spitzer's efforts to break down a $10,000 transfer to an account fronting for Emperors Club that alerted clerks at his Manhattan branch of the North Fork bank. A similar transaction at another bank where Spitzer had an account also supposedly twitched a red flag.

In a requirement originally aimed at drug dealers, all banks have to report in "suspicious activity reports" (SARs) cash transactions of $10,000 and more to the Treasury Department. People not wanting to have their bank snitch to the feds about their transactions routinely keep the sums below the red-light figure, and feds have told the banks to adjust their mandatory snooping to report $8,000-plus sums, or sums that add up to $10,000. In cash purchases of financial instruments at a bank, the trigger sum for a SAR is only $3,000.

Spitzer divided his $10,000 transfer down into smaller units, thus allegedly

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The Role of Schools and of "No Child Left Behind" in a Rotting Imperial System: How Educators Should Resist

By Rich Gibson and E. Wayne Ross

There is a schools-to-war pipeline, which connects the three main things happening in education today: the regulation of what people know and how they come to know it through regimented curricula; the noosing of that process through racist and anti-working class standardized exams; and the militarization of education. These processes are embedded in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law which, despite considerable opposition, remains a bipartisan project supported by Bush and Kennedy alike and, with minor revisions, will probably be renewed soon.

Ross and I have focused on high-stakes exams as a key choke point in schools, now the centripetal organizing point of daily life in de-industrialized U.S. society. We have urged direct action, test boycotts coupled with off-campus freedom schooling, as a means not merely to resist but to offer students a vision of what real education might address, especially the key issues of human life that are illegal in most schools now: love and aesthetics as a form of mutuality and pleasure distinct from fear and exploitation; work and the reality of class struggle; and rational knowledge and freedom, which, we know, cannot be practiced in most schools.

Some reformers have objected to our thesis, urging that we address only the education side of this crisis, that we set aside the critique of capital, war, and imperialism. Some make that case for tactical reasons; others because they truly believe that school reform can be conducted without social and economic strife via lobbying and elections.

We have responded, with Hegel, that "the truth is in the whole", that to take one process apart from another would only recreate inequality, ignorance, and misery in new ways. Today, we witness proof to our thesis rising from reality. The connection of capital, war, and economic crises are manifested in schools, as the penalties set up by the NCLB for test scores are about to collide with stringent school cutbacks. The cuts will intensify the partnership of school and war. At base, youths who arrive in school with no inheritance will be driven by the economy, by NCLB, by high-stakes exams and by the social milieu into the military or to meaningless jobs.

Other honest reformers criticize our call for test boycotts on the grounds that, in our reactionary climate, such actions could lend support to those like Bill Gates who want to privatize public education. While we sympathize with this view, it remains true that there is no single public education system in the U.S.A. and never has been. What we have had, through our history, is perhaps five or six segregated systems, ranging from pre-prison, to pre-Wal-Mart, to pre-craft worker, to pre-social worker, to pre-lawyer and doctor. Then, there is an elite private system where the rich go to school as in Mitt Romney's lovely alma mater, Cranbrook School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where rolling hills, a carefully manicured landscape, swimming pools that appear to be small lakes, hockey rinks, an art colony, museum and an observatory set up the view of those who, unthinkingly perhaps, are schooled to glaze at a globe and think, "This is ours, let us set about seeing how we make it work", quite distinct from the employee mentality, "Tell me what to do and I will do it", imposed by most NCLB schooling.

The fully segregated public school sys-

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triggering a federal probe. But it strains credulity to believe that North Fork's SARs on a well-known client immediately aroused the interest of the government clerk scrutinizing the hundreds of thousands of SARs churning through his computer in the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) watch-post in Long Island. The official version has the IRS man noting Spitzer's name, then passing the information up the food chain to the Justice Department and the U.S. Attorney's office in Manhattan.

Instead of the banks being curious on their own, what if the feds told the banks to report all of Spitzer's wire transfers to them? It seems likely, and if so, we have here in outline a sting operation which raises another pressing question: who exactly put Spitzer in touch with Emperors Club in the first place? Who first steered the feds in Spitzer's direction?

Relevant here are remarks on the evening of Spitzer's resignation, by Ken Langone. The billionaire venture capitalist was a New York Stock Exchange board member whom Spitzer had gone after when he was attorney general. Langone was an ally of Richard Grasso, chairman and CEO of the New York Stock Exchange. Attorney General Spitzer sued Grasso in 2004, seeking repayment most of a $140 million pay package. According to the suit, Grasso, along with former NYSE director Kenneth Langone, misled the NYSE board about the details of his pay package, beyond that of comparable chief executives. Langone later proclaimed he was launching "a holy war" against Spitzer, when the latter ran for governor.

CNBC: "Would you say that you were surprised by this news?"

LANGONE: "Not at all. I had no doubt about his lack of character and integrity. It would only be a matter of time, I didn't think he would do it this soon or the way he did it. But I know for sure he went himself to a post office and bought $2,800 worth of mail orders to send to the hooker."

"In other words, the vindictive billionaire Langone heard about the $2,800 in money orders from a private investigator he or his associates had retained to follow Spitzer."

CNBC: " How do you know that?"

LANGONE: "I know it. I know somebody who was standing in back of him in line ... We all have our own private hells. I hope his private hell is hotter than anybody else's."

In other words, the vindictive billionaire Langone heard about the $2,800 in money orders from a private investigator he or his associates had retained to follow Spitzer. As the Wall Street veteran cited above also remarked, "I know this to be standard operating procedure against Wall Street enemies."

How is this not selective prosecution when the members of law enforcement are trying the case in the media? *Newsday*: "The case was referred last fall to federal prosecutors, who came to believe that Spitzer may have spent tens of thousands of dollars transferring money between accounts to pay for prostitutes, according to a law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the case."

And where are the facts to back up the widely bruited $80,000 figure in disbursements by Spizer for prostitutes? It seems like selective leaking, along with selective prosecution.

Furthermore, how is this a matter for the Department of Justice's Public Integrity office? Spitzer has income of over a million a year. That would put his assets in the tens of millions. It's not as though he couldn't afford to pay for the prostitutes out of his own pocket. And it's also not like he was guarding the location of nuclear subs.

The government's propensity for this type of sting operation can be judged from a story I was recently relayed second hand from one of O.J. Simpson's defense team in his murder trial. During the trial, this lawyer was hanging around his hotel swimming pool on a Sunday when he was off work. He was then approached by two very attractive young women in bikinis who told him what a great swimming stroke he had. The lawyer immediately figured out what was going on. He got the two high-end hookers to confess that they had been put up to this, and that the purpose was to get photographs of him doing unfamily-like things. Who would put such activities past the Bush Justice Department – let alone some rich and vindictive tycoons from Wall Street to pull such a stunt? This is, after all, an administration whose Justice Department has overseen the outrageous framing and subsequent imprisonment of Don Siegelman, former Democratic governor of Alabama, one of the most sinister affairs of the Bush years.

I should state for the record that the member of Simpson's defense team thus resisting entrapment by the beautiful duo was NOT Prof. Alan Dershowitz, former teacher of Spitzer. Amid Spitzer's downfall, Dershowitz wrote eloquently and to the point, particularly in the *Wall Street Journal*, about the hypocrisies which propelled Spitzer's downfall and about the unconvincing account from the government about the origins of its probe into Spitzer's payments. Dershowitz writes:

"The story about how Spitzer's alleged crimes were discovered does not ring true. As a criminal defense lawyer, I have dealt with many money laundering and other bank-related cases. The financial transactions that allegedly gave rise to the federal government's interest in Spitzer do not generally result in a criminal investigation.

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"I strongly suspect that we will learn more about how the feds came to focus on Spitzer's financial transactions. The money laundering statute is so vague and open-ended that it can be used selectively to target political and economic opponents. On this issue, stay tuned. We have not heard the last of it."

Now consider the larger context of Wall Street's apprehensions about Governor Spitzer. Pam Martens outlined them eloquently in the last issue of our newsletter, as she described the motivations big Wall Street players had for pumping money into Barack Obama's campaign:

"In March of 2000, the Nasdaq stock market, hyped with spurious claims for startup tech and dot.com companies, reached a peak of over 5,000. Eight years later, it's trading in the 2,300 range and most of those companies no longer exist. From peak to trough, Nasdaq transferred over $4 trillion from the pockets of small mania-gripped investors to the wealthy and elite market manipulators….

"Mr. Greenspan was the wind beneath the wings of a carefully orchestrated wealth transfer system known as 'pump and dump' on Wall Street. As hundreds of court cases, internal emails, and insider testimony now confirm, this bubble was no naturally occurring phenomenon any more than the Obama bubble is…

"The current housing bubble bust is just a freshly minted version of Wall Street's real estate limited partnership frauds of the 80s, but on a grander scale… Wall Street created an artificial demand for housing (a bubble) by soliciting high interest rate mortgages (subprime) because they could be bundled and quickly resold for big fees to yield-hungry hedge funds and institutions. A major underpinning of this scheme was that Wall Street secured an artificial rating of AAA from rating agencies that were paid by Wall Street to provide the rating. When demand from institutions was saturated, Wall Street kept the scheme going by hiding the debt off its balance sheets and stuffed this long-term product into mom-and-pop money markets, notwithstanding that money markets are required by law to hold only short-term investments. To further perpetuate the bubble as long as possible, Wall Street prevented pricing transparency by keeping the trading off regulated exchanges and used unregulated over-the-counter contracts instead. (All of this required lots of lobbyist hours in Washington.)"

Wall Street has nothing to fear for its subprime frauds from the SEC. The Commission cannot initiate criminal prosecutions. But New York State has the Martin Act, the most powerful criminal enforcement weapon in the country.

According to Brooke Master's biography of Spitzer, quoted by Azi Paybarah in the *New York Observer* last September 12:

"Unlike other applicants, Eric Dinallo [who worked with Spitzer in the Manhattan DA's office and is now the superintendent of the New York State Insurance Department] had actually read the entire text of New York's general business law, known as the Martin Act for its long-forgotten Republican sponsor, Louis M. Martin. Though that 1921 statute was considered weak when it was enacted, Dinallo focused on later amendments that had strengthened the act and given the state attorney general unusually broad power to investigate and crack down on those who commit financial fraud. While the Mahattan DA's Office had been limited to using the Martin Act's criminal side, the law gave the attorney general a whole range of civil powers: he could subpoena documents, haul brokers and investment bankers in for public questioning, and, unlike his federal counterparts, the SEC and the Justice Department, he didn't have to specify up front whether he was going to seek criminal charges or file an easier-to-rove civil case. An equally obscure 1926 court case, *People v. Federated Radio Corp.*, had further strengthened the attorney general's hand by holding that the Martin Act did not require proof that securities sellers made a willful decision to commit misconduct."

"I should state for the record that the member of Simpson's defense team thus resisting entrapment by th beautiful duo was NOT Prof. Alan Dershowitz, former teacher of Spitzer."

Now look at why Wall Street was extremely nervous of what New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, backed by Gov. Spitzer, might have been planning to do with the Martin Act. News reports in January said Cuomo was preparing such suits.

On March 7, 2008, the NAACP and lead counsel Brian Kabateck filed papers seeking to fast-track their federal class-action lawsuit against Washington Mutual, Citi, GMAC, and 15 other mortgage firms who systematically steered African-American borrowers into predatory loans. Some details from the news release as it appeared on PRNewswire:

""The victims in this case had the same credit, the same income and the same qualifications as the lenders' other customers. The only difference was the color of their skin. That's why they were stuck with abusive loans,' said Kabateck, managing partner of Kabateck Brown Kellner, LLP. 'Quickly resolving this case is essential for victims who have ruined credit and who are losing their homes. This isn't just about justice for the victims. This case is about making sure that this kind of discrimination is stamped out for good', said NAACP General Counsel Angela Ciccolo.

"The defendants in this case are CitiMortgage, Suntrust Mortgage, GMAC Rescap, JP Morgan, National City, First Horizon, Ameriquest Mortgage Company, Fremont Investment & Loan, Option One Mortgage Corporation, WMC Mortgage Corporation, Long Beach Mortgage Company, BNC Mortgage, Accredited Home Lenders, Bear Stearns Residential Mortgage Corporation, Encore Credit, First Franklin Financial Corporation, HSBC Finance Corporation and Washington Mutual, Inc.

"This suit is the first to have ever charged so many major mortgage lenders with racial discrimination.

"The suit is supported by a wealth of government and other research: a 2008 study by United for a Fair Economy cites federal data showing people of color are more than three times more likely to have subprime loans: high-cost loans account for 55 per cent" of loans to African Americans, but only 17 per cent of loans to Caucasians. The study estimated losses of between $164 billion and $213 billion for subprime loans taken by people of color during the past eight years. This is

thought to be 'the greatest loss of wealth for people of color in modern U.S. history.'

"A July 2007 report by Freddie Mac (Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation) showed that minority borrowers pay higher annual percentage rates on mortgage loans than non-minorities with equal income and credit risk. For instance, in 2005, African-American borrowers paid an average of 128 basis points more for loans than their white counterparts. In the subprime market, the difference was even greater – 275 basis points more."

As traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange cheered Spitzer's downfall on March 12, guess who rang the closing bell? Lynn Pike, president of Capital One, which owns the North Fork bank. She was celebrating the opening of more than 350 banks in the New York region. Are these 350 now deployed to bag more Democrats?

There are reasons not to be entirely confident of the defense team retained by Spitzer. The former governor has retained three lawyers from the law firm Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. This is, according to one seasoned observer, "one of the dirtiest law firms and a huge part of its income comes from Wall Street. It's known as the place that both the U.S. government and Wall Street hire to cover up big crimes. (Remember the Senate hearings on Iran-Contra; they hired Paul Weiss to do the 'investigation.')"

The way things usually work, according to the well-informed CounterPuncher, is that Paul Weiss is on board to make sure Wall Street's and the government's dirty secrets remain secret. This brings us to other Emperors' Club customers, starting with Clients 1 through 8. Spitzer was Client 9. How many clients were there? The criminal complaint says the FBI tracked 5,000 cell phone calls and email messages. That's got to be a lot more than arranging meetings for 10 clients. How can this not be selective prosecution if only Spitzer is targeted, leaked, and politically destroyed? And, if it turns out that this "firm" only had 10 clients or so, then clearly it's a government sting operation inspired, most likely, by Wall Street.

Just as Paul Weiss is the go-to firm for covering up Wall Street crimes, the Southern District of New York Federal Court is Wall Street's venue of first choice for its crimes and is located close by, in lower Manhattan. Many high profile Wall Street cases that were filed in State court or other federal courts have fought to move their cases to the Southern District. But all federal cases must meet a jurisdictional issue. That typically means where the parties reside or crimes committed. As a business, the Emperors Club was located in New Jersey and Brooklyn. Brooklyn would mean the Eastern District Federal Court but Wall Street doesn't like that one. By keeping us in the dark about the details of the other cases, no one is going to get curious about why this case is being brought in Wall Street's local neighborhood of downtown Manhattan. Also noteworthy is the number of judges in the Southern District involved in authorizing and reauthorizing these wiretaps, per the complaint filing. At least four or five. Why so many lifetime appointees involved in a matter of consensual sex? Were they all Republican appointees?

Wall Street was extremely nervous of what New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, backed by Gov. Spitzer, might have been planning to do with the Martin Act.

The public is pretty much in the dark about the fact that our government is not just wiretapping and email snooping, but it's also going through our mail. Judging from what Langone said about the postal money orders and what the complaint says about the phone calls with Spitzer about the package arriving, it seems Spitzer was mailing his checks and/or postal money orders. So, it seems likely the feds were snooping in his mail. Opening this window to public scrutiny might disclose that millions of pieces of our mail have been opened without good cause.

Final question for which no answer is necessary: how come the DOJ's Public Integrity division never made a move after disclosure that a Washington, D.C., area escort service held the phone number of Dick Cheney's suburban residence before he became vice president? **CP**

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tem is funded by a regressive tax system, again demonstrating the partisan role of capitalist government. Why would those who hold key sectors of power want to abandon a deal where some elements of the working class are paid, not to jail, but miseducate the others? It is true that entrepreneurs like Gates, Eli Broad and others steer toward privatization and profit from it. It is equally true that the market is already deeply embedded in public schools, from textbooks to busses to students encouraged to see themselves as customers. Greater profits, and social control, will be won from that old system which has powerful interests, from the education unions to the Chambers of Commerce behind it. Even so, war-produced economic crises now pound on the school door.

Gov. Schwarzenegger in California has already implemented a summons to slash the school budget by 10 per cent. On March 4, K-12 educators and professors alike received layoff notices. School workers are already pointing at one another, choosing who should go first. This is only the beginning, as the economic debacle will grow worse, not better, as the wars continue and the related inflationary rise comes home.

To predict how fast the economy collapses would require a crystal ball, but it is clear that the failed $3 trillion wars will not end; energy costs will mount; the national, home mortgage, global currency, and personal debt wreckage is pervasive and ongoing; we will have inflation in transportation and food costs (wheat, corn, meat, cheese, etc.).

It is possible that some accelerated form of fascism could emerge in the U.S. and around much of the world as a mass popular movement that could be sustained for some time until those same people came to realize that fascism only deepens, cannot solve, existing problems and, if the emergence of popular fascism is in fact pending, then only those willing to easily offer themselves to the Patriot Act will do much public writing about what to do.

Hope, however, lies in the fact that people will resist because they must resist in order to live. Furthermore, people will resist critically, addressing the crisis as a whole, which is capitalism itself, propped up by thousands of forms of selfishness. People will answer opportunism with a

call for equality. Surely this critique can emanate from schools where ideas, presumably, still have a role.

The NCLB sanctions will kick in all over the nation with a vengeance next year, or even at the end of this school year. Already schools are being closed in droves in wrecked cities like Detroit; teachers laid off by the hundreds. NCLB penalties would, if applied, deepen social inequality, crash test scores, increase dropouts, feed the military, and, of course, mean the loss of school worker jobs. And, as we have seen, those who teach where parental income is low will get hit first, but everyone else will be next.

This does not have to happen. Nor do we have to follow the likely bureaucratic union path of making some noise, then figuring out what concessions to make. The history of the last 30 years and more of whatever there is of a labor movement in the U.S. demonstrates that concessions do not save jobs. Concessions make bosses want more. Look at the remnant of the United Auto Workers union, which did nothing but make concessions as hundreds of thousands of autoworkers lost their jobs. Now the UAW has agreed to a tiered wage system that would pay new workers a fraction of what more senior workers make. "No concessions" underpins the reality that an injury to one only precedes an injury to all and creates the solidarity that can keep personnel from savaging one another in a battle over who deserves a job most.

We should reject, angrily, maneuvers from, for example, the officials at the California American Federation of Teachers (AFT) who want to impose more and more regressive taxes on poor and working people in order to pay for schooling. If there is any tax increase, it should be solely aimed at the rich, inherited wealth, large property holdings, and corporate profits. If we follow the AFT's thinking, we will not only betray the people we need most, poor and working people, but also they will see us, correctly, as an opposition. We should not even consider some kind of balancing tax as suggested by other reformers, meaning a sales tax and a tax on the rich. We want the latter, not the former. Working people are taxed unjustly already.

Why would AFT take such a position? Top officers of both school workers' unions, the three-million-member National Education Association (NEA) and the much smaller but more urban AFT, are mired in a philosophy they call "New Unionism", the unity of business, labor and government in the national interest. This is what some remember as company unionism. Leaders of both unions reject the reason that causes most people to join unions: the contradictory interests of workers and employers.

New Unionism, though, does not just arise from the mists. Top union officials are very well paid, with the president of the NEA, Reg Weaver, earning more than $450,000, with a fine expense account. Surely Weaver can see the connection between his salary and his union's work with the National Endowment for Democracy, a front for U.S. imperialism all over the world.

In schools, as in any real work place, we create value collectively and cannot win control of it alone. We cannot win anything sustainable without parents, without kids, or community people.

New Unionism's rejection of any sense of class struggle – a rejection pervasive in U.S. unionism – extinguishes the memory of activist labor history and, just as bad, the ability to analyze power relations in communities, to find key choke points where resisters can have the greatest impact, and to develop sustainable strategies and tactics. There are very, very few union officials who have ever led a strike and fewer still that have led a strike that won.

Correspondingly, the official New Unionism cannot offer the mass of school workers the chance to be whole, honest, creative, caring – qualities that attract people to the job initially, then which are denied by the system – as New Unionism sets union leaders apart from the rank and file in a dishonest series of self-seeking decisions that reflect capital's war of all on all; don't challenge it. In many cases, it is not dedication to the collective good but the chance to get out of the work place, to dress better, and attend dubiously "important" meetings plus more pay – is what creates New Unionist leaders.

Thousands of school workers will be spinning in the electoral circle in the coming months (AFT already endorsed Clinton); many working on the belief that the ballot box is the only way to stave off the inevitable because the powers of the system, and their local bosses, are overwhelming. That is a mistake.

Economic crisis and failed military adventures by themselves demonstrate that elites are not so powerful but very weak and vulnerable now. Nothing is inevitable about the future. If we stop thinking of the government, the economy, and the arms of that state as "ours", but rather "theirs", it sets up far more possibilities. They still have plenty of money. Oil profits remain higher than ever, for example. And this is still the richest country in the history of the world.

So, how do education workers, the most unionized people in the U.S.A., use their unions' financial resources and,

more importantly, build a movement in which we and our students can unleash our creativity and power in a collective way – a movement that can win not once, but through the long term? By recognizing that educators are located in the place where most people in the U.S. organize their lives today – 49 million children are in schools, half of them draft eligible soon – and by taking control of the value we create. In schools, as in any real work place, we create value collectively and cannot win control of it alone. We cannot win anything sustainable without parents, without kids, or community people.

While we do work within a billion-dollar market that influences every breath of school life, our product is not a Ford, but the hopes of children. We need to pass along real hope, not fictitious hope, meaning we need to help demonstrate in sophisticated ways that, for example, we are not all in this together in one united nation but, in fact, we are in the midst of a ruthless international war of the rich on the poor, and help students locate where they are in that spectrum. When we teach children NCLB's standardized lies, using methods so obscure that children learn not to like to learn (the key achievement of capitalist education today), we demolish their futures and our own.

We need to recognize that a key purpose of capitalist schooling, as important as profits and perhaps more so, is social control, and we need to hand elites all the civil strife that we can.

In pacified areas, people become instruments of their own oppression and indifferent to others. This is especially true in education where - take one example - students in pay-for-performance programs fashion an inner cop to go with the outer one and compete one against one, school against school, in what is truly a life-and-death battle for scores that measure their worth by their parents' wallets.

Things can go otherwise. When the bosses say, "Cutback", we need to say, "Fight back". We can start by opting out of the exams. In most states parents and students have a legal right to walk away from the exams. Teachers have a legal right to inform parents of that option, though the remarkable levels of fear in school, manufactured from the top down, lead many teachers to withhold that vital knowledge.

No concessions. None. On the contrary, we want lower class size in all schools, books, supplies, free time, more pay, better benefits. We are not going to engage in bargaining with a plan to "give back" to bosses but to take right out of their pockets with a more just tax system, aimed at inherited wealth, profits, corporate land. They need to be told that, and to get used to it. Their alternative is turmoil. As France in the uprisings of 1968 demonstrated, educators and students can spark widespread social change. We know that civil strife can put elites into retreat, force concessions from them. What are our possible methods beyond test opt-outs?

We should not be fooled in the current media theme park (the presidential election), in which we will get to choose which person, from the executive committee of the rich, will oppress us best. This is a structural crisis that goes beyond any chance that a "good person from the ruling class" is going to soften the hit. If anything, the billion-dollar election is being used to build nationalism and turn whatever remains of real democracy into capitalist democracy, into a new religion, a hothouse for nationalism, ethnic separation, mysticism, and hollow demagoguery. The empty promises and absence of analysis from all candidates show, once again, real weakness among elites who truly have nothing to offer people but endless wars, bad jobs, and an assault on reason itself.

In some communities like Arcata and San Diego, California, efforts by dedicated activists, many of them Vietnam veterans, to counteract the invasion of military recruiters into schools have been signally successful. Militarization, however, is but one of the encroachments on school life. And the sucking pump from the economy to the military is powerful. Many "volunteers" are in the military to get health benefits.

Test boycotts have gone on rather quietly in communities all over the U.S.: rich communities, poor communities, middle class and rural communities as well. Some public boycotts, as in Michigan against the farcical exam, have been dramatically powerful. However, now the ante is raised, beyond the big tests the demand for a full gutting of the education system is at hand. The collision of the wars, NCLB and the economy is quite real, coming with unanticipated speed.

In the face of layoffs, organized rank-and-file school workers can seize and shut down their schools. Seizing schools is built right into the history of the labor movement, has been done before, and is the best way to strike in education. It is hard to defend a strike perimeter around a high school or middle school. It is easy to go inside, remove the bosses, bring food, and settle in for a long stay, with supporters on the outside prepared to bring food. Bosses are reluctant to attack sit downers, as there is a lot of valuable stuff in schools.

Elementary teachers need to consider the possibility that they are potentially the most powerful people in the school work force. Not only do they set up kids' worldviews and attitudes, they provide the key baby-sitting role that makes school absolutely necessary for so many people. When schools are struck, the first pressure to end the strike comes from merchants around middle schools (who get looted), but the second group is elementary parents.

We need to prepare to offer parents that service, and real education as well, opening Freedom Schools in communities where educators can demonstrate that we can comprehend and change the world. In our own research, we have concrete evidence that teacher-organizers in difficult situations can reclaim kids from the damages of NCLB, restore curiosity and independent critique.

Such strikes are already happening in, for example, Puerto Rico, Greece and Oaxaca, Mexico. They are not products of a dreamy imagination but of the resistance people must foster in order to survive. Our task is to connect reason to passion, passion to power, and power to a critique of what is, what we are doing, and what can be.

There is a real fight ahead. We need to know that and prepare. We do not have to be lambs among wolves. Test boycotts and job actions do not just materialize. Justice demands organization., and that is what we have to do - organize. **CP**

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How the Bell Tolled for Ian Paisley

By Eamonn McCann

At the start of March the Reverend Ian Paisley, a man central to the bloodstained history of Northern Ireland for the last 40 years, announced that he will retire as Northern Ireland's First Minister and confirmed he is also stepping down as leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, which he founded in the 1970s. He will remain as an MP and assembly member. Eamonn McCann gives us an historical sketch of a man long regarded by many as the quintessence of Protestant bigotry. AC / JSC

My first encounter with Ian Paisley came on the stage of Derry Guildhall about 50 years ago. "What's the name of your priest?" he roared into my face. "Bring your priest to me here!" I remember marveling at the notion that I might have a priest of my own.

On the occasion, Paisley had a priest of his own, a Spanish ex-priest to be exact, the star of Paisley's roadshow at that time, who had just delighted the audience/congregation with a lurid account of the ludicrous rituals in which he had foolishly participated until rescued by the Rev. Ian.

About half a dozen of us from St. Columb's College had infiltrated the event, more from adolescent derring-do than and serious interest. We marched onstage at the end, having formulated a cunning plan to expose the spurious Spaniard by demanding he recite the Our Father in Latin. Luckily – I imagine he'd have been word-perfect – Paisley intervened to suggest that we'd been sent by priests who had ducked the challenge of debate themselves. After a few minutes argy-bargy, not terribly threatening, as I recall, we climbed down from the stage and headed for home, congratulating ourselves and agreeing that that had been great crack altogether.

That's one of the things about early-period Paisley, which the political farewells have mostly missed. He was a turn. The recent fraternal chuckling with Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness wasn't entirely new. It was when events began spiraling downward into darkness – a process in which, of course, he himself played a significant role – that the acrid nature of political Paisleyism became the only aspect which mattered.

The Guildhall experience encouraged me a few years later to join a gaggle of Queen's University, Belfast, students who regularly attended Paisley's Sunday night gigs at the Ulster Hall. There wasn't much else to do on a Belfast Sunday during the dictatorship of the Sabbatariat. By now, Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church had expanded, and he'd acquired a warm-up man, the capering Rev. John Wylie – "Wylie by name and wily by nature, for sniffing out the plots of the Pope" – who once sent the packed hall into paroxysms with a merry quip anent the imminence of a new little Paisley: "Now the Romanists can see the Reverend Paisley knows it isn't for stirring your tea with!"

The robust ribaldry sat comfortably enough with Paisley's self-projected image as a blunt-spoken believer in biblical Truths which were being abandoned by renegades drifting toward Rome – just as Unionism was simultaneously being undermined by the modernizing heresies of Ulster Unionist leader Terence O'Neill. The message was perfectly pitched toward the devout among the Protestant poor, who felt their position menaced by the machinations of the Big House Unionists to whom they had given automatic loyalty down the years.

Paisley elbowed his way out from the religious fringe and into the political process in February 1969, just five months after the October 5, 1968, civil rights march in Derry, which is generally taken as the starting point of the Troubles. O'Neill had called a snap election in hopes of winning a majority for a program of mild reform. Paisley stood against him in Bannside, Co. Antrim, as a Protestant Unionist on a "No Surrender" ticket. This was the first time the Ulster Unionists had been challenged in Bannside since 1945.

Paisley mobilized the long-ignored Protestant poor, many of whom still lacked indoor plumbing, and came within a thousand votes of unseating O'Neill. Mary Holland of the *Observer* characterized the result as "the revolt of the bucket-carriers". A year later, O'Neill had been assumed into the House of Lords. Paisley, running for his new Democratic Unionist Party, won the seat easily. He has never been out of elected office since.

Amidst the gathering tension of the time, Paisley's bible-and-thunder rhetoric, no longer good for a laugh, boomed out a warning of wrath to come. From then until the St. Andrews Agreement of 2006 and the restoration of devolved government last May, Paisley's defining role was to conflate religion with politics, to make an identity between defense of the Union and defense of the Reformation settlement. To give an inch to nationalism, then, was to go against God. This perspective was to provide many a thug without a religious thought in his head with a self-validating excuse and instant absolution for killing Catholics. It has been a powerful factor in stiffening Protestant resolve to resist power sharing. It has ceaselessly reinforced the notion that people in the North should, must define their politics solely by reference to the religion they chanced to be born into, rather then to the class they belonged to.

Thus the sense of bewilderment, which greeted Paisley's agreement last May to act as midwife to the power-sharing Executive. Having for a third of a century intervened at every intimation of a softening of attitudes to inject a booster shot of sectarian venom into the body politic, Paisley now espoused a hail-Fenian-well-met relationship with Martin McGuiness and took to proclaiming with uproarious laughter that power sharing is your only man.

The conventional view is that he made this dramatic transition because he'd always wanted to be top of the world, craved to be First Minister of Northern Ireland and had come to understand that sharing office with Sinn Fein was the price he'd have to pay. Or because he wanted history to see him as a man of peace. Or because old age had cooled his ardor. There is probably truth in all these propositions. But the main reason for the shift was more obvious. Working-class Protestants had signaled for some time that they would have no problem sharing power with Catholics as long as their aspiration to "remain British" was satisfied. This approach was articulated through the 1990s by political leaders of Loyalist paramilitarism. It gave rise to one of the most intriguing pictures of the Troubles – of David Ervine and Billy Hutchinson of the UVF's Progressive Unionist Party and Gary McMichael of the UDA's Ulster

Democratic Party, marching shoulder to shoulder with Ulster Unionist David Trimble into the 1998 talks, which Paisley had refused to attend and which were to lead to the Good Friday Agreement, which Paisley pledged immediately to bring down. The Loyalist parties were reflecting feeling in working-class Protestant communities.

The impact of this pressure from below on Paisley's party was seen in the DUP manifesto for the November 2003 Assembly election, which called for an arrangement acceptable to "both communities" rather than, as the party had previously demanded, an arrangement based squarely on the wishes of "the majority". Outright opposition to power sharing was replaced by acceptance of power sharing in return for certainty on the constitutional position. Certainly, the Protestant poor weren't up for war to keep Catholics out.

Meanwhile, it was clear, too, that, if equality between the communities was guaranteed within the Northern State, the vast majority of Catholics would put the aspiration to a united Ireland on the long finger and, anyway, had no stomach for a continuing an increasingly sectarian armed struggle in supposed pursuit of the Republic. It was this pressure, which impelled the Sinn Fein leadership to agree to a power-sharing deal which would leave Northern Ireland within the UK.

This, and not the ageing of leadership on both sides or any other such charming suggestion, is the basis of the DUP-Sinn Fein accord. Now, as back in 1969, the key element has been how working-class people saw their condition and assessed what they'd settle for from the options made available to them. This has been far more important to the trajectory of politics in the North than the manipulative interventions of Blair, Ahern, Clinton, etc. (Hillary Clinton's tales of peace-processing in Belfast are opportunist lies, albeit endorsed by the more abject sections of Irish America.)

As ever, the decisive moves came from the mass of the people. It was the Protestant working class, which did for Paisleyism in the end.

On March 4, Paisley's close friend until recent days, Ivan Foster, Free Presbyterian minister at Kilskeery, Tyrone, recalled his first platform appearance with Paisley, on the same Guildhall stage in Derry half a century ago: "We were being forced by Terence O'Neill and others ... (to put) spiritual activities into the political realm. It was Ian Paisley who constantly quoted Luke, chapter six: 'Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.'"

Paisley is not at all without vanity and, in retirement, will enjoy being well spoken of at last. "He was a man who, in the end, built bridges", suggested one representative eulogist. Of course, he had burnt many of the same bridges himself in the first place.

The people who have replaced him are neither as frightening nor as much fun. Like their Sinn Fein counterparts, they have ditched the ideology, which others killed and died for and which powered them to prominence. Neater, cleaner, more attuned to the times than the old stagers who did the heavy lifting, they just want to run things. New DUP. New Sinn Fein. Same as anywhere, same as ever. **CP**

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