

Tribulations of the Warfare State

By Bernard Bortnick

One of the mainstays of “affluence” in Texas is the production of armaments, particularly in the aircraft industry. Of course, “affluence” means wage slavery, in this instance at a rate of around \$18.00 an hour. But with capitalist politicians, particularly of the Republican variety, clamoring for reductions in federal spending, the Government Accounting Office could put military aircraft on the chopping block, and it seems there is such an inclination.

Governor Rick Perry (R), recently elected for a third term, is torn. As governor, he has lobbied Washington for a \$35 billion contract for Texas-based Vought Aircraft to build aerial tankers, a move that would profit the Triumph Group, Inc., its owner; but as candidate for re-election and darling of the so-called Tea Party movement, Perry’s campaign rhetoric lambasted federal spending. The seeming contradiction caused Dallas economist Bud Weinstein to remark on the “real irony in having a governor that rails against federal spending and doesn’t want to take money from Washington, and yet some parts of our state are heavily dependent on federal spending for their economic health. . . .”

The “real irony,” however, runs far deeper than the self-evident contradiction remarked by Mr. Weinstein. That much deeper irony lies in viewing weapons production as a sign of economic health. One of the governor’s fops rushed to his defense, declaring: “It’s not just throwing money at a problem. . . . It’s actually creating jobs, allowing people to make a livelihood.”

According to Moody’s Analytics, 36,000 aerospace jobs in North Texas are at stake and considered “vital to a healthy middle class.” Under capitalism, workers producing weapons of mass destruction is considered “healthy”! The system’s periodic and murderous imperialist forays are viewed as legitimate activities beneficial to the “health” of American workers, despite the death and destruction that they bring to hundreds of thousands in the name of that long employed euphemism—“defense.”

“Defense” manufacturing in North Texas has risen from slightly over \$5 billion in 2001 to over \$30 billion in 2009. Things looked gloomy after the collapse of the Soviet Union despite the jubilation that event stirred amongst the naïve: for the Warfare State cannot tolerate a world where threats do not abound. Weapons manufacturing fell as General Dynamics’ plant in Fort Worth dwindled from 30,000 workers in 1985 to 11,000 by 1996; but 9/11 saved the day!

Now that the “War on Terror” has conveniently been substituted for the “Red Menace” of the Cold War era, production has grown immensely. Since 2001, a solitary program—the production of versions of the F-35 fighter-bomber—directly employs 9,100 workers and another 25,000 indirectly, according to the Lockheed Martin Corp., with the target of providing both U.S. needs and those of seven foreign countries. If procurement falters profits will tumble, employ-

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Profit Motive Lurks Behind Arizona Immigration Law

By Diane Secor

What is really behind the recent Arizona state immigration law, called S.B. 1070, the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act?

S.B. 1070 mandates that police officers in Arizona must stop any person for questioning if there is a “reasonable suspicion” that this person may have entered the United States illegally. Then if this person fails to produce “proper documentation” to confirm legal status, he or she can immediately be arrested, fined up to \$100, and incarcerated for 20 days for a first offense or 30 days for a second offense. To add insult to injury, the victim must pay the state “restitution” to cover the expense of their own imprisonment.

“Anti-sanctuary cities provisions” of this law specifically outlaw any attempt of cities or counties in Arizona to give alleged undocumented immigrants refuge from state or federal authorities, who are chasing them.

Although, S.B. 1070 increases penalties for those who hire undocumented workers and for those who smuggle them into the country, everybody knows that for decades, American capitalists have made substantial profits off this pool of cheap labor. Fines for violations are generally just chalked up to the cost of doing business. In fact, the profit motive seemed to be behind the campaign for S.B. 1070 in the first place. A broad cross-section of the sectors of the capitalist economy stand to profit enormously from this racket. A related circle of politicians and lobbyists also have their eyes on a share of the loot.

The chief profiteers off S.B. 1070 seem to be the private prison industry. These contractors are part of a larger trend of federal, state, and local governments to “privatize” operations, which traditionally have been the exclusive domain of the state, which functions as a “board of trustees” or the “executive committee” of the capitalist class.

According to an *In These Times* report (June 21), two private prison contractors, the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and Geo Group, were a driving force in Arizona behind S.B. 1070, since this bill would greatly increase the number of alleged undocumented immigrants, who are imprisoned.

Arizona Governor Jan Brewer has been a fierce advocate of S.B. 1070, which she signed into law. Not surprisingly, according to the *Huffington Post* (David A. Love, Aug. 14), Governor Brewer’s deputy chief of staff Paul Sensaman used to be a lobbyist for CCA, and his wife now serves as a CCA lobbyist. A

Brewer “policy adviser” Chuck Coughlin, who was also her campaign chairperson, has a firm called HighGround Public Affairs Consultants, which includes other lobbyists for CCA.

Moreover, CCA, Geo Group, and some of the leading Arizona politicians, who promoted S.B. 1070 were part of a larger campaign, reaching way beyond the state of Arizona. Indeed, CCA, Geo Group, and their outfit have had their fishing hooks in many waters, preparing for additional windfalls.

The June 21 *In These Times* report states that Republican Arizona State Senator Russell Pearce of Mesa was the “primary sponsor” of S.B. 1070. He calls himself an “American soldier,” who defend “liberty” and who protects Americans from those who “harbor, aid and abet, or are somehow connected to terrorist activities,” who he claims have crossed the Mexican border into Arizona. Who are Pearce’s fellow “soldiers” on the “frontline” on this proverbial battle field? According to *In These Times*, Pearce holds an executive position of the Public Safety and Elections Task Force of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). CCA also just happens to be represented on this task force. ALEC is a nationwide organization consisting of over 2,000 Republican and Democratic state legislators and more than 200 private companies and lobbyist groups.

Among the large corporate members are CCA, Geo Group, Sodexo Marriott, which provides food for privately run prisons, the Koch Foundation, Exxon Mobil, Blue Cross and Blue Shield from the insurance industry, Boeing, Wal-Mart and the Rupert Murdoch media conglomerate. This ALEC has 10 task forces, who create “model legislation.” In turn, the member legislators, such as Pearce, take these pieces of “model legislation” and present them to the legislatures of their respective states. This process explains the origins of S.B. 1070. In addition to Pearce, 35 other Arizona legislators are ALEC members. The ALEC Public Safety and Elections Task Force Director Michael Hough explained that all “model legislation” must be approved by both legislators and corporations, who hold ALEC membership. Hough also acknowledged that Pearce obtained the approval of this task force for an immigration bill, which was “virtually identical” to S.B. 1070, which Pearce sponsored in the Arizona legislature.

No doubt that S.B. 1070 is potentially a bonanza for CCA, Geo Group, and the web of correctional contractors and sub-contractors. However, this profiteering

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Letters to
the People
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Energy

In response to the fine article by Jim McHugh in the Autumn issue, I believe I read the same article in the New Yorker magazine concerning strategies for reducing energy usage. I came away from that article with many concerns. Mr. McHugh correctly notes the adverse impact on capitalism if we were to alter our lifestyles. Our economic system seems to blur the distinction between wants and needs. Of course, this works to the advantage of our capitalist system. We become reduced from human beings to disposable consumers. We suffer a fundamental attack on who we are. We are reduced to pawns of business to serve the bottom line. Our need to be more fully human has been obscured by the incessant drumbeat of self interest and isolation. We have become a commodity measured in dollars and cents. I believe a cultural shift is necessary which includes a rational economic system that serves human beings. In response to how we live I recommend two books for reference: *The Timeless Way of Building* by Christopher Alexander and *A Pattern Language* by Alexander and others. Physical environment isn't everything but it does play an important role in our development as human beings who are trustworthy and safe to live with. The word "green" has been so commercialized that it could be almost anything with that marketing spin on it. And so capitalism marches on touting self-interest, wealth, growth and with no interest in our well being.

Donald F. Cuddihee, Sr.

A Need for SLP Knowledge

Since the inception of capitalism, workers have been ripe for socialist revolution, though not necessarily prepared for it. With the effects of globalization, outsourcing, isolation, loss of identity with fellow workers, etc., it would seem that this lack of readiness has never been more true than now. There is a great need for the knowledge and experience of the Socialist Labor Party to be heard and for its presence to be seen and felt out in the world. We have to take every opportunity to teach what we know. If that means going "on line" in a bigger way to reach younger generations, then so be it.

Jill Campbell

'Democracy In Industry'

I saw a video of California economist Richard Wolfe in which he says capitalism is doomed, only war brought the world out of the great depression. (Other capitalist economists have admitted this, including Krugman.) Then he went on to proclaim the solution as "democracy in industry" (my ears perked) . . . a la Silicon Valley garage entrepreneurship. His great thesis ended with less than the echo of a whimper!

John Houser

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off the detention of alleged undocumented workers did not start with Pearce and Arizona's S.B. 1070. For several years, CCA invested millions of dollars in lobbying the U.S. Congress and federal agencies, i.e. the Department of Homeland Security, ICE (Immigrations and Customs Enforcement), Office of the Federal Detention Trustee, Office of Budget Management, and the federal Bureau of Prisons. A glance at CCA's website, <http://www.corrections.com/about/>, shows that this investment has paid off, with contracts with the ICE, Bureau of Prisons, and the U.S. Marshals Service. CCA "partners" include "nearly half of all states and more than a dozen local municipalities."

Likewise, Geo Group has landed ICE and other federal contracts. According to their website, <http://www.thegeogroup.com/offices.asp>, Geo Group is also international in scope, with offices and operations in England, Australia, and South Africa. *In These Times* also confirms that seven ICE prisons are "contract detention facilities," which are actually owned by CCA or Geo Group. The Bureau of Prisons and the U.S. Marshals Service also use private correctional firms to run prisons for undocumented workers, who have been convicted of committing a crime, another convenient arrangement for CCA.

SB 1070 has generally served capitalist interests in a number of ways. The *Huffington Post* article reports that Pearce and his pet project S.B. 1070 have attracted the support of racist groups, such as J.T. Ready's Neo-Nazi National Alliance. Such groups terrorize racial, ethnic, and religious

SB 1070 has generally served capitalist interests in a number of ways. The *Huffington Post* article reports that Pearce and his pet project S.B. 1070 have attracted the support of racist groups, such as J.T. Ready's Neo-Nazi National Alliance. Such groups terrorize racial, ethnic, and religious minorities in this country, as well as anyone who opposes their xenophobic agenda. These terrorist organizations keep the working class divided, hindering the growth of a united classconscious working class. Neo-Nazis tell "Aryan" workers to blame Jews, Muslims, blacks, Mexicans, and other ethnic minorities for unemployment and declining wages and propose laws like S.B. 1070 as a "solution." These dangerous trends escalate during a recession, aka a capitalist economic crisis.

The profit motive of the private prison industry is the most apparent. But a myriad of other capitalist enterprises in various sectors of the economy, some of whom are affiliated with the ALEC, also have a stake in laws like S.B. 1070.

According to another *In These Times* report dated July 27, the Arizona Interfaith Alliance for Worker Justice has documented that a rapid escalation of outright "wage theft" has accompanied S.B. 1070. Undocumented workers were already among the most ruthlessly exploited. Arizona firms, like other U.S.

firms, failed to pay a minimum wage and failed to comply with laws on health and safety standards in the work place.

Of course, these practices generated high profits. With the passage of S.B. 1070, these companies now are widely reported to have the attitude: "Go ahead, try and make me pay you," and undocumented workers are not even paid the meager wages, which they were promised. These employers know that their workers are even more afraid to protest poor conditions and that S.B. 1070 makes these workers more terrified to hear the word: "immigration!" Thus Arizona's S.B.1070 is a prototype, which is spreading like wild fire. More than 20 other state legislatures are considering similar legislation, with the ALEC and deeper economic recessions lighting some of these fires.

As usual under capitalism, scratch the surface of a law like S.B. 1070, and the underlying profit motive is revealed.

... Warfare State

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ment will dwindle and this sector of the capitalist economy will be severely shaken. But there seems to be confidence that production will continue if not increase. The Lockheed program, the Defense Department's largest, is expected to go on for decades with the U.S. planning to buy 2,457 of these jets—a program expected to last until 2035 with a cost of \$382 billion.

One 57 year old wage slave who earned \$18.60, including "benefits," before Lockheed laid him off seven years ago, and who has since been rehired at about \$7 an hour without insurance, lamented the "wasteful stuff" in government spending. What "wasteful stuff" he had in mind is not clear, but presumably not much of it from so-called defense spending. "If you have defense you create jobs...you maintain jobs," he said, possibly oblivious to the huge scandals surrounding military procurement and what "defense" contractors charge the government for such paltry things as nuts and bolts, much less that the very activity of arms production constitutes a massive waste of human and material resources!

Unfortunately, this worker's remarks likely reflect prevalent attitudes that have been cultivated for decades by capitalism's engines of propaganda, including the phony unions that many "defense" workers are disorganized into. Indeed, given the incessant propaganda, it is no wonder that job consciousness has all but destroyed the inclination to class-consciousness within as much as without the so-called union movement.

Although unnamed critics have pointed out that the aircraft being produced are not "necessary for the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq," the prospects of cutting the program are probably doomed in the face of prospective congressional opposition to "unpatriotic" cuts in the profits of the armaments industry. This is not the case when it comes to cuts in the so-called entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid. But these miserable crumbs are only for those workers many of whom cling to the specious reasoning the 57-year-old worker who will soon confront the scant resources of a retiree.