



Brodsky, D. (2002). Introduction: Democracy against corporatism in education. *Workplace*, 8, 43-56.

INTRODUCTION:

Democracy Against Corporatism in Education

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Our cluster of essays for this issue of *Workplace* is named after a ground breaking regional conference, "Education for Democracy: Fighting the Corporate Takeover," held at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, 3 March 2001. The cluster combines two sets of contributions. The first set consists of a baker's dozen of papers from the conference. They address panoply of political, social, and economic issues, with a focus on the declining status of academic labor, the ramifications of national and global policy for higher learning, and the measures required to move education in a democratic direction.

The second set, which concludes our cluster, comprises three essays written for other occasions, representing perspectives from both the coasts and mid-continent. They treat graduate teaching assistant (GTA) organizing and campus support campaigns for non-academic workers inside and outside the academy. Raising many of the same broad issues found in the conference papers, they demonstrate the power of labor activism and of labor-academic-community alliances.

While regional variations are still significant factors, the homogenizing pathology of corporate globalization exhibits in broad outline comparable symptoms everywhere on the planet. Thus the kinds of assaults and abuses documented in these essays should be familiar to people in all parts of the country. Likewise, because global corporate aggression has provoked global popular resistance, fightback strategies should be equally familiar to activists in the US and abroad. What follows is an attempt to contextualize the major challenges and opportunities which democratic education and organizing face.

The co-editors of this cluster, Ali Zaidi, David Brodsky, and Patricia Brodsky, would like to thank the editorial collective of *Workplace* for its interest and support, and the contributors for their energy and commitment in making our conference and this cluster a success.

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND THE DOCTRINAL SYSTEM

The corporate takeover and/or destruction of public education, both higher and pre-college, in the US as well as the rest of the globe, is a process that is already well-established and in some cases advanced. While its roots can be traced at least as far back as a century ago, to the first era of business rationalization and regimentation, until about 1990 the corporatization of education was noticed, if at all, mainly by progressive scholars specializing in institutional history. In the last decade, however, corporate aggression has not only accelerated and intensified, it has also pursued an agenda that might aptly be termed a kind of final solution to the public education question. The liquidation of democratic education proposed by neo-liberalism has begun to attract public attention and provoke growing resistance.

Public education belongs to the much broader realm of the public domain, which benefits the vast majority of the population. The public domain has been under escalating assault for over two decades, locally,

nationally, and globally. In the US the media and health care are now controlled by a few mega-corporations, public utilities and social security are under siege, and public education is now squarely in the center of the corporate cross-hairs.

The global offensive launched after the events of September 11—even more government welfare for big business, particularly for military and related industries, and increased punishment of working people, who are being forced to bear the entire cost of the attacks and the economic slump—will only hasten this process. So will the militarization of civilian society (starting with air travel) and the expanded criminalization of dissent. The rapid establishment of a fascist police state is based on the overly broad definition of the newly invented crime of "domestic terrorism," replete with a centralized political police agency (Office of Homeland Security), pressure to suppress free speech, press, and assembly, paid informers, unrestricted surveillance and secret searches of the population (including by the CIA), indefinite detention of legal immigrants, military courts, legalized torture, in short, the end of constitutionally protected civil rights.

Corporate-speak, as embodied e.g. in global trade agreements, prefers the term "service sector" to refer to institutions and activities that belong traditionally to the "public domain," and it's not hard to understand why. "Domain" comes from the Latin, *dominium*, meaning "right of ownership of property," and the public domain signifies the public right to public ownership of public property. *Dominium* is linguistically related to its Latin foundational word, *domus*, or "home" (cf "domestic" and "domicile"), thus implicitly the public domain is where the public makes its home and is at home.

A sector, by contrast, comes from the Latin *secare*, "to cut," and signifies a piece or part of a larger whole that has been divided and separated off. Besides its special mathematical and astronomical meanings, *Webster's Unabridged* notes that "sector" has a specifically military denotation, "any of the districts into which an area is divided for military operations." The public domain, seen from the corporate perspective, is something to separate from the whole and divide up, into private markets, of course. Corporate division of the public domain into private sectors violates the public right to public ownership of public property. It declares public property to be private, that is, it engages in outright theft ("privatization"). Then the public is evicted from the public domain, where it makes its home, that is, it is driven out into homelessness.

The methods used to evict the public from its home, which is redefined as a sector, or military-commercial district, always carry the threat of physical violence and, more often than not, of military, para-military, or police operations. Such practice, all-too-familiar in the Third World, is now being institutionalized in advanced industrialized countries. The history of US labor, of course, provides numerous examples of violent repression of working people and their movements. And massive police violence has become standard operating procedure against the anti-globalization movement today. The theft of the public domain is accomplished through the traditional expedient of occupying coveted territory and resources. The corporate takeover is a war against the public for the traditional purpose of plunder.

Once divided and segregated from one another, artificially created market sectors with their captive consumers and workers become cash cows and draft horses for predatory corporate interests. And a corporate controlled labor and consumer market, like a sweatshop, is analogous to a cattle pen, prison, concentration camp, or occupied territory, where walls topped with razor wire separate artificially demarcated enclosures. Corporate markets are thus the opposite of freedom, the "free market" doctrine being a crude lie necessary to induce the populace into identifying with their captive condition.

Education is a component of the larger doctrinal system, which includes the information and entertainment media and the internet, and is technologically linked to the (tele)communications system. The doctrinal

system is a sub-class of the larger "service sector" targeted for corporate exploitation. Besides its economic dimension, however, the doctrinal system serves an equally and perhaps more important political function. Thought control plays an essential role in realizing elite aims, and along with the media oligopoly education can be harnessed to the goals of psychological warfare, aka propaganda.

For example, propaganda justifying policies of militarization, prisonification, and commercialization is already well established in pre-college schools, where the free speech rights of dissenting students are routinely suppressed. Propaganda and suppression of dissent are likewise established and growing in academia. Free speech and other constitutional rights for employees are virtually unknown in corporate enterprises, which is why the corporate takeover of academia would end academic freedom once and for all.

Propaganda does not necessarily have to be crude, although much of it is, since the "big lie" is the easiest to sell (cf. "free market"). The media and educational institutions can also market ideas in a subtle, complex, and apparently disinterested way, preserving all the forms of impartial discourse, even throwing in a few progressive-sounding catchwords (e.g. "the greatest good for the greatest number," "humanitarian," "community," "civic education"), while skewing the content and substance to support corporate policy. See, for example, reports by corporate education NGOs, such as the American Council on Education, American Association of Universities, National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, Association of Governing Boards [i.e. Trustees], Council of Graduate Schools, Carnegie Endowment, etc. The Kellogg Commission report, "Renewing the Covenant," is a classic of this genre.

KNOWN AND ANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES OF CORPORATIZATION

Which consequences of the corporate takeover of education are already well known?

The corporate model encourages racial, gender, and class inequalities: for students unequal access to higher education, for faculty unequal hiring and retention. Unequal access is promoted by building prisons instead of schools, incarcerating youth instead of educating them. Schools are militarized with junior ROTC programs and turned into prisons with high tech surveillance equipment. (See essays by Michael McCormack and Emiliano Huet-Vaughn.)

Institutional inequality comes in the form of corporate "partnerships," in which corporations set terms and conditions incompatible with the institution's educational mission. When corporations control and/or own research, curriculum, and methods of instruction, they restrict or suppress the basic academic freedom to teach and investigate what and how faculty and students see fit and to share that knowledge publicly (see [essay by Alex Dajkovic](#)).

Corporatization abuses and demoralizes the faculty (see essay by Ray Pierotti), whether through stagnant salaries, understaffing, and increasing workloads, replacement of full-time instructors with super-exploited part-timers in the academic sweatshop (see essays by Stephen Dilks and by Mindy Fiala and Katie Kline), or crude harassment, biased treatment, arbitrary firings, and other corrupt practices. A demoralized faculty takes its toll on students and even staff. The teacher's working conditions are the student's learning conditions.

Like all professionals, academic faculty undergo prolonged rigorous training, long probationary periods in their jobs, and thorough peer review of their performance. Because the corporate takeover deprofessionalizes the faculty, it threatens the integrity and quality of instruction and research; faculty independence, self-government, and standards, and the existence of entire professional disciplines; and the faculty's responsibility to pass on knowledge and skill, and to serve the best interests of their students, the

public, and their profession.

The corporate education agenda is not discipline neutral, as its apologists like to pretend. It targets certain disciplines as "inessential" or "a drain on resources" or "non-self-supporting," allegedly for economic reasons of "unprofitability." But in fact these disciplines are attacked for political reasons, because they generally represent the core values of the public domain, which stand outside and tend to resist attempts at commodification. Thus corporatization threatens above all the arts, humanities, public service oriented social sciences and professional programs, and basic research in the natural sciences. They risk being underfunded and understaffed, degraded and marginalized through reduction to business service programs, or eliminated altogether (see Fred Whitehead's essay).

The corporate model of instruction reduces teaching to assembly-line production and students to products (see Beth Huber's essay). But in order to fool students into believing they are empowered subjects rather than commodified objects, corporate propaganda calls them "consumers" commanding an ever expanding range of choices. In reality corporate campus monopolies restrict all choices, both the most essential, such as course and research content, and the academically marginal but very profitable sector of quotidian shopping, where the campus book-and-variety-supermarket and branded vending machines are analogous to the company store. In addition, monopoly campus franchises are given to corporations that profit by sweatshop labor, usually foreign, and engage in union busting, as well as racist, sexist, homophobic, and other discriminatory practices.

Corporatized distance education is a pretext to replace the individuality of face-to-face learning with machines and a pre-packaged curriculum (see essays by Zuleyma Tang-Martinez and Patricia Brodsky). Once courses are recorded, trained professional faculty can lose ownership and control over them and be replaced by untrained or semi-trained "course managers." Undergraduate students enrolled in virtual courses study in isolation, suffer from depression, and have a high drop-out rate. Standardized curricula and preparation for standardized tests, now being imposed on pre-college institutions, with the possibility of expansion into the college "sector," are controlled by and directly profit corporations in the course packaging and testing businesses. Learning regimented in this manner kills the joy of discovery and insight and smothers the fires of creativity that motivate and sustain teachers and students alike. Dickens' pedagogue, Mr. Gradgrind, after all, represented a system that manufactured dimwits to be employed in the businesses of that era.

The corporate model of decision-making excludes everyone except managers from governance and planning. Democratic shared governance is replaced by the adversarial command model, in which administrators decide and the rest of the institution is supposed to obey. Corporate privatized governance claims to improve efficiency and accountability. But corporations are undemocratic institutions unaccountable to public oversight, thus "accountability" in corporatese is simply a synonym for corporate control. "Efficiency" likewise is a pretext for cheapening education to maximize profit (see essays by Stuart McAninch and David Brodsky).

To sum up, at its current stage of development the corporate agenda in the US pursues short-term profit, proprietary hoarding of knowledge, narrow vocational training, restricted intellectual choices in teaching, learning, and research, command-style administration, and suppression of dissent. It replaces the public domain values of liberal education, critical thinking, and free and open inquiry; public sharing of knowledge and civic engagement; a broad familiarity with and appreciation for diverse cultures, and democratic governance.

Which consequences can we anticipate in the future if the corporate takeover of education is not reversed?

A glimpse at the future of education under corporate rule, extrapolated from current trends and agendas, suggests the following sort of scenario. Education, like other social goods in the former public domain, will be divided into a two-tier system (see Patricia Brodsky's essay). Education for the elite, predominantly occurring in private institutions, will continue to maintain its standards, in order to prepare elite students for positions of social influence and affluence. Education for the great majority, however, the non-elite and the unprivileged, the student body that public institutions were created to serve, will be increasingly limited in duration, scope, and quality. The content and conditions of working and learning will be degraded further. Through a combination of technological and administrative measures, it will be purged of instruments that liberate and empower and instead will be hog-tied to an automated assembly line. This kind of educational system is "futuristic" only in form. Politically, it is a return to the not so distant past, that is, it is regressive and reactionary. As was traditional even fifty years ago, genuine education, above all higher learning, will be restricted to the fortunate few, while everyone else will be subjected to indoctrination serving elite social control (see essay by Zuleyma Tang-Martinez).

Instead of a general population of self-governing citizens possessing a broad range of equal political, social, and economic rights, trained in multiple skills, opened to, curious about, eager for, and critically assessing the whole gamut of intellectual, artistic, social, vocational, and individual experience—including creative and civilized cooperation with other people and peoples for their mutual benefit—the dystopian model currently being proposed and imposed promises to mass-produce beasts of burden content with their blinders and routines, harboring the lowest life expectations, and conditioned into obedience and loyalty to their "managers," "betters," and "benefactors."

In addition, we should not fail to recognize that corporate homogenization, with its recurring mantras of uniformity, harmonization, and alignment, accurately render the concept and practice of Gleichschaltung in the Third Reich. Gleichschaltung was the ideological pretext for purging "discord," under the rubrics, for example, of "racial contagion" as well as "degenerate" art and music. Today, what the ruling right-wing designates as "discord" comes in the form of pluralism (e.g. multi-culturalism) and dissent from mainstream culture and politics. After 9/11 all dissent from right-wing policy, irrespective of its content, is being fed into the ideological meat-grinder and stamped with the standardized label, "terrorism."

For example, a newspaper story in the Kansas City area warns that local governments "may play the terrorist card in their battle with telecommunications companies over how cities regulate and charge for the use of rights-of-way" (Rob Roberts, "Cities battle to maintain control of rights-of-way," *Northeast Johnson County Sun*[KS] (31 Oct. 2001): 1). That is, any democratic opposition to megacorporate privilege and bullying is ipso facto "terrorist."

For specific application of Gleichschaltung to the University of Missouri, Kansas City, see my essay, "Brain Wash': a Review Article," in *The Faculty Advocate* (October 2001), <http://iml.umkc.edu/aaup/facadv5.htm>. "Brain Wash", which deals with revelations that surfaced in an investigative report published after our conference, documents an outstanding example of the crudeness of the corporate assault in the Kansas City region (also see "UMKC master plan" below and *The Faculty Advocate* online, Vol. 1, No. 2 and subsequent issues, <http://iml.umkc.edu/aaup/>).

Thus the long-term and overriding goal of the corporate takeover of public education is to guide and/or stampede contemporary society into regressive channels, back to earlier eras of mass ignorance, illiteracy, and abjection. Mass intellectual helplessness reinforces the imposition of recently disinterred 19th century labor conditions, where living wages, the eight-hour day, safety and health protections, job security, etc. are unknown and, more important, undreamed of. For example, a report on the evisceration of public education in Argentina and Uruguay, whose governments enthusiastically implemented IMF structural adjustment policy guidelines, documents sinking educational levels and literacy rates among the betrayed populations of these countries (see essay by Frank Neff). The conditions under which they work and live

are comparably degraded (see, for example, "Middle classes cry for Argentina as economy unravels", <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/portside/message/1689>).

Illiteracy rates in the US have been reported as high as 25%, and corporatized education, media, and culture will only push this figure higher. Political illiteracy is as important as the inability to read. To take only one example, the large number of Americans who are willing to give up their freedoms for false promises of security reflects their ignorance of constitutional rights, whose last vestiges have been shredded by domestic anti-terrorism laws. They haven't a clue as to what has been stolen from them. Widespread ignorance of the Bill of Rights was documented in surveys taken only a few months before 9/11 (see Nat Hentoff, "'Why Should We Care? It's Only the Constitution'," *The Progressive* 65:12 [December 2001]: 24-27. The quote is from a Congressman after passage of the "USA Patriot Act").

That these rights were routinely violated before 9/11, particularly in the case of working people, poor people, people of color, and progressives, does not justify widespread ignorance. Basic political literacy would also be served by teaching and publicizing, for starters, knowledge of political economy and of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which includes social and economic rights omitted from the US Constitution. The corporate doctrinal system, of course, has no intention of promoting or even, eventually, of permitting the wide distribution of such knowledge, since it would benefit the vast majority of the people. Thus it falls to progressive educators to take up this task, among many others.

CONDITIONS FOR RESISTANCE AND FIGHTBACK

The short-term prognosis for public education and for labor is not an optimistic one. Nevertheless, the full realization of regressive elite fantasies is not yet a foregone conclusion. Some potential sources of resistance are the changing class composition of academic labor, public disenchantment with corporate behavior, and geographical regions with unexpected activism.

Many academics are now or aspire to become privileged members of the socio-economic elite. However, the shrinking demographics of full-time tenured faculty employment vitiates the American dream for a new generation, as it has done already for the nearly 50% of faculty holding contingent positions without job security, benefits, or a living wage. The current contingent workforce and the majority of new additions to the ranks of the tenure-line faculty all face a future devoid of social advancement, economic comfort, and personal and professional fulfillment. The continuing expansion of contingent labor overburdens the formerly privileged and now shrinking cohort of tenured faculty, weakens their tenure protection, and threatens everyone's academic freedom. Academics are becoming declassed and entering the ranks of the proletariat.

In addition, the public is losing confidence in corporatized and compromised public higher education as it blatantly abandons its mission to serve all citizens. Class, race, and gender barriers have been reerected by raising tuition, reducing financial aid, and eliminating affirmative action (which helped overcome gender as well as racial inequities). In addition, universities have expanded their real estate holdings by demolishing nearby neighborhoods, typically those occupied by working people and people of color (e.g. Columbia University in New York, the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia). But middle class mixed race neighborhoods are also being targeted, as in Kansas City.

For example, an uprising by the neighborhood association south of the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) temporarily stopped plans to raze a half square mile of moderately priced homes, allegedly to build parking lots and soccer fields. Knowing the usual motives of universities in the real estate business, we can remain skeptical of UMKC's public explanations. University real estate holdings today are used typically to raise revenue and rarely for educational purposes.

Growing forces like victimized faculty and community members can open up opportunities for organizing. The majority of academics now trapped in inferior dead-end jobs and the minority of tenured faculty whose privileges are shrinking have the potential to join a common fight for a decent future. At present this fight has the support of a small but significant number of progressive tenured faculty willing to actually exercise their academic freedom, in dissenting from, criticizing, and fighting the corporate takeover. Many part-time faculty, who live as marginally as any of the working poor, should have little trouble finding common ground between self-interest, working class solidarity, and educated concern for others. And coalitions with the public are possible on the basis of defending neighborhoods and the quality and accessibility of public education. Faculty union organizing, of course, can promote outreach to already organized academic and non-academic labor (see William Vaughn's essay). And there are many examples of successful campus-non-academic labor alliances, including several documented in this cluster (see essays by Corey Dolgon and Ellen Starbird).

UNEXPECTED PROGRESSIVE RESISTANCE IN CONSERVATIVE REGIONS

Another ground for cautious optimism is the fact that resistance to the corporate takeover is occurring even where education historically has not been a high priority on the civic agenda. Thus it is taking place not only in traditionally activist locales, such as the coasts and the Great Lakes, but also in the interior expanses designated by Chambers of Commerce as the "Heartland."

The greater Kansas City region, for example, with a population of about two million, has a fair concentration of higher education institutions. There are two major research universities, the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) and the University of Kansas (KU), with its main campus in Lawrence (an hour by freeway from KC) and its Medical School in Kansas City, Kansas. In addition, the region has five smaller universities, six colleges, and seven community colleges.

As the corporate juggernaut began flattening institutions and people on the prairie, some of its human sacrifices began to organize local self-help groups. Various networks came together in November 2000 to consider holding a regional conference with the title, "Education for Democracy: Fighting the Corporate Takeover." In a get-acquainted meeting sponsored by the recently revived AAUP chapter at UMKC, a dozen speakers made short presentations, which laid the groundwork for their papers at the conference.

Our conference subtitle partially owed its inspiration to an earlier regional conference on agribusiness, "Fighting the Corporation on the Prairie," in which some of us had participated. The subtitle flouted our region's conservative environment (cf. Kansas' Bob Dole and Missouri's John Ashcroft). It also dispensed with protective coloring and the customary genteel abstractions, circumlocutions, and accommodations of permissible academic discourse. True, its non-euphemized militancy discouraged some invited presenters from participating and caused mild discomfort to several of the eventual panelists. But it did open a space where the entire range of progressive opinion (no amputated left wing) could be expressed freely, effectively, and truthfully, by panelists and audience alike. Not everyone shared the same understanding of corporatization or regarded it as the root of the problem, but all addressed it to one degree or another.

Given this region's right-wing reputation today, it may be hard to imagine that a century ago it boasted a massive populist movement and the biggest circulation socialist newspaper in the world, *The Appeal to Reason*. Unsurprisingly, its progressive past was known to almost half the people who agreed to speak out. The participation of progressive labor educators, academic and non-academic labor activists, and labor-friendly elected officials in the Missouri and Kansas legislatures reinforced the conference's non-accommodationist position. And the recent emergence of youth organizers in the region helped revive progressive activity in the community and on high school, community college, college, and university campuses, which were starting to come together for major coalition events. While the prime motive for

faculty and labor participation was to combat administrative outrages in the academy, renewed youth and student activism not only lifted the flagging spirits of old campaigners but also played a vital organizational and intellectual role that contributed to the conference's success.

Twenty-six speakers participated in the conference: faculty and students from six institutions of higher education in Missouri and Kansas, union members, community activists, and state legislators. Total attendance was 130. One presenter flew back from Mexico in order to participate, and an attendee came all the way from Nevada. Audience participation in discussions was intensive, informative, and practical.

In addition, the conference attracted 39 regional, national, and international cosponsors from professional, student, labor, and community groups. Many of them also generously supported the undertaking by donating time, money, and publicity. Free lunches were served by the Kansas City and Lawrence chapters of Food Not Bombs. Unsolicited donations for part-time faculty organizing came from faculty organizations in California and New Jersey. The conference announcement and program were posted on at least a half dozen websites and elicited discussions on some of them. Media coverage was better than anticipated, and conference organizers were interviewed by nine media outlets.

SUMMARIES OF THE PAPERS

The conference program prominently foregrounded the faculty as a workforce and academic labor as a class undergoing increasing degradation. The panels generally moved from local to broader perspectives and from the identification and analysis of problems to solutions via labor organizing of the faculty.

Since only half the conference presentations are represented in this cluster, the grouping of papers has been changed. The first group of four papers traces the impact of broad social issues on education. The second group of seven discusses the degradation of the workforce in humanistic, scientific, and professional disciplines at specific institutions. And the third group of two addresses the issue of governance and outlines democratic strategies and visions for higher education.

The final panel of our conference argued that labor unions are one of the most effective ways to confront corporatization. Since formal papers did not materialize, in their place the editors of this cluster have chosen a group of three essays, one from each coast and one from the midwest, which deal directly with labor organizing.

The first group of four papers, "Education and Society: Global Perspectives," opens with Frank Neff's "Potential Consequences of International Trade Agreements for Higher Education." World Bank, IMF, and WTO policies demanding downsizing and privatization of the public domain claim the force of global law which overrides national and local legislation, that is, the will of the people. Through commodifying education as "trade in services," private education companies are authorized to drive public institutions out of business. Governments which choke off funding help condemn public institutions to death. Neff provides copious illustrations for his arguments.

Alex Dajkovic explains in "The Political Economy of American Science" how US science policy since World War 2, through the expedient of "technology transfer," intellectual property rights (patents), and other public subsidies of the private sector, authorizes the expropriation of publicly funded scientific research results by corporations for private profit. The major capital investment costs of basic research are borne by the public, while private business skims off the cream in profits. Examples from biotechnology and medical research are mustered to illustrate the workings of the corporatized research system.

Michael McCormack, analyzing the California model in "Education not Incarceration," describes how

youth are criminalized and incarcerated instead of being educated. Withholding of educational opportunity reinforces the police occupation of neighborhoods of color to provide a steady supply of young prison material. As a captive workforce prisoners perform what is essentially slave labor, and in a variety of ways their imprisonment generates huge profits for the burgeoning prison-industrial complex. McCormack recommends community organizing as the most effective way to change policy.

Emiliano Huet-Vaughn's "Some Comments on Militarism and Miseducation" demonstrates the ways in which the education of youth is replaced by its militarization. He focuses on the colonization of high schools by a military recruiting program called the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. Militarization occurs both in the form of extra-curricular weapons training and indoctrination in the classroom, including a falsified official version of US history. Public schools thus collude with the military (while subsidizing its costs) in channeling their graduates away from higher education into the armed services.

It is poor and working class students and youth, predominantly those of color, who are tracked away from higher education and civilian jobs into prison or the armed services. Police terrorism in occupied neighborhoods and mass incarceration are the domestic equivalent of foreign military conquest and occupation. From a corporate policy perspective, this group of papers confirms the New World Order's plan to maximize corporate profits and power by reducing the size of the educated population (and thus potential critical thinking and dissent). At the same time it channels surplus uneducated lives into low paid and often slave labor as well as into growing military and police forces that coerce obedience to the corporate order through violence. But even the scientific elite of the academy function mainly as cash cows milked for private gain. The origin of the US science funding system in the service of wartime objectives confirms contemporary capitalist tendencies to reduce social and economic activity to profiteering and warmongering.

Of the seven essays in the group, "Degrading the Workforce," four concern full-time faculty and three part-time. The essays about full-time faculty document specific problems at four campuses, two in the University of Missouri system and two University of Kansas sites. The local problems raised here all reflect national trends. Degradation of working conditions for full-time faculty harms the quality of instruction and research, and sometimes results in outright liquidation of entire disciplines. (Recent examples are the termination of the Foreign Language Department at Drake University in Des Moines, and of the graduate Classics program at Loyola University in Chicago.)

Zuleyma Tang-Martinez argues in "Higher Education and the Corporate Paradigm: the Students are the Losers," that as a consequence of corporate assaults on the faculty, the ultimate victims are the students. Their education is damaged by the profit motive in teaching, threats to tenure, and distance education. Her points are illustrated by the administrative impairment of science teaching and research at the University of Missouri, St. Louis.

Patricia Brodsky documents in "Shrunken Heads: The Humanities under the Corporate Model" how students were cheated by a lucrative distance education scheme at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Fraudulent, substandard beginning language courses offered on computer taught students next to nothing and left them unable to cope with the next level of language instruction. These very popular because undemanding courses could have driven the Department of Foreign Languages out of business, which may have been the original intent of the administration. The fraudulent courses were closed down only after a five-year fight by the Department. This report aptly illustrates David Noble's warning that distance education is a Trojan Horse menacing all of higher education.

Ray Pierotti's "The Morale of Faculty, Students, and Staff under a Corporate Model: The Case of the University of Kansas" surveys the damage done by a new corporate administration at University of

Kansas, Lawrence. It demoralized and drove away faculty, students, and staff, primarily through maltreatment of racial minorities and women on the faculty. The exclusive campus franchise granted to Coca Cola, worth millions of dollars, gains for the university only a few hundred thousand for the Chancellor's discretionary fund. Not coincidentally, the Coca-Cola Corporation itself was involved in a discrimination lawsuit filed by its minority employees. The goal of improving the university's national ranking, which allegedly justified these "sacrifices," has receded farther out of reach. Corporatization in this case is regarded as the source of administrative incompetence.

Fred Whitehead records in "'Reallocation' at the University of Kansas School of Medicine: a Pathological Case History" the devastation of the humanist and social dimensions of medical education and research at KU Medical Center. Using material from his own case, he illustrates the corporate reduction of educational criteria to commercial utility, under the same administration which is wrecking the Lawrence campus. The successful medical humanities programs Whitehead developed in the course of 22 years were casually terminated by the new administration. So was the social mission of the Department of Family Medicine, in which his programs were housed, to serve the people of the state, particularly the poor and the uninsured. KU Hospital, a publicly funded facility, was privatized and many of its services outsourced. The bitter pill was sharpened by the (formerly) humanist and progressive credentials of the new Chancellor of the University, Robert Hemenway, author of a pioneering biography of the African American writer, Zora Neale Hurston. Whitehead concludes that corporate policies guarantee that KU will never rise above mediocrity.

The three essays on part-time faculty at UMKC, all by members of the English Department, support a long-term organizing project which at that time had recently begun to coalesce. Contingent faculty are the most exploited teachers in the academy, with poor pay and working conditions and usually no benefits or job security. Of this group part-timers toiling in humanities disciplines tend to be more numerous and more severely exploited than others. A study by the Coalition on the Academic Workforce shows that contingent faculty and GTAs together teach 75 percent of introductory English courses and 72 percent of introductory foreign language courses. And the pay of contingent faculty in the humanities at UMKC ranks them in the lowest category nationwide among research universities. Thus the UMKC upper administration, which controls funding for all programs, wins the "Wooden Nickel" award hands down.

In the first essay, "Building a Foundation for Academic Excellence: Towards a Blueprint for the Professional Treatment of Disempowered Part-Time Faculty," Stephen Dilks argues that part-time faculty are wrongly viewed as transient labor lacking commitment to the institutions where they teach. At UMKC some have been teaching as long as senior full-time faculty and have long institutional memories. They are dedicated teachers, expert at pedagogy, and familiar with local conditions. They help new students adjust to the university and mentor GTAs and new tenure-line faculty. And they even serve on committees. The solution to ending abuse of contingent faculty is to reverse the unprofessionalism of institutional policies and treat part-timers as the professionals they already are.

Beth Huber in "Homogenizing the Curriculum: Manufacturing the Standardized Student" addresses the corporate imposition of narrow vocational training in composition courses, which supplants the critical thinking and preparation for citizenship once taught there. She also criticizes corporate culture: its imperative of competition, amorality, pecking order, absentee decision-making, exclusion of altruistic goals, dehumanization through commodification, preference for quantity over quality, blindered definition of knowledge, and harm to academic freedom. The corporate reliance on part-time employees encourages the standardization of teachers, students, and the curriculum, all of which are regarded as interchangeable parts.

Mindy Fiala and Katie Kline discuss the realities of part-time labor and recount the first actions undertaken by the new Part Time Faculty Association (PTFA) in "Titles, Terms, and Meaning: The

Exploitation of Part-Time Faculty and What One Group is Doing About It." While the term "adjunct," suggesting "inessential," is demeaning, and "part-time" implies weekly hours under 40, in fact, Fiala teaches core courses and her 15 hours per semester teaching load, requiring 42 hours work per week, is not a part-time job. In addition, part-timers often do unpaid research, publish, and serve on committees. A recent policy shift among some corporations has improved part-timer pay, benefits, and status, reforms which the authors suggest universities should consider adopting. [Such improvements can be credited, however, not to enlightened corporate self-interest but to labor organizing, such as the Teamsters' decisive 1997 victory over UPS, which stressed part-timer demands and won 67% public support.--Ed.]

Part-timer organizing began in fall 2000 in the UMKC English Department. The standard "contract" is currently \$1800 per 3 hour course without benefits or job security. Initial demands were \$4000 per course (the Modern Language Association recommends \$4500), a cost of living increase, 9 month contracts after a year of continuous service, and partial benefits. When strong faculty support did not overcome administrative stalling, the PTFA was formed in winter 2001. Meetings with the new Dean and Provost have been sympathetic but inconclusive. However, the Chancellor's strategy is to divide part-time and full-time faculty, most recently by making them compete for the same shrinking funding pool. Nevertheless, part-timers have continued to press their demands by raising their visibility.

To update the PTFA campaign, several weeks after participating in the "Education for Democracy" conference the PTFA held a two-day rally on campus. There was TV coverage, the students were supportive, and the Chancellor received many e-mails. A welcome innovation at the rallies was an extended "read in," where full- and part-time English department faculty and grad students performed their favorite literary works. The read-in complemented labor speeches and songs and showcased the humanities in an otherwise apathetic and hostile environment. At Campus Equity Week rallies in October 2001 the read-ins broadened to include Foreign Language Department faculty performing poetry from six languages and cultures. In this region the sound of foreign poetry read in public is a rather exotic phenomenon. Thus the most exploited part-time faculty are fighting on two fronts, to improve their wages and working conditions and to defend their disciplines from extermination.

The last group of conference papers, "Developing Democratic Governance and Vision," takes up the problem of who runs the university, the broader social context of governance, and strategies to democratize higher education.

Stuart McAninch's "The Struggle for Faculty Governance: its Ethical, Social, and Pedagogical Significance" stresses that the faculty need to develop a positive ethical, social, and pedagogical agenda to demonstrate why the public has a stake in the faculty's fight for university governance, autonomy in the classroom, and professional status. The relation between faculty and students is not a corporate one: students are not customers and faculty are not service deliverers. Nor should academic programs developed by faculty for students "be shaped by market research, customer feedback, managerial directive, or competition with other institutions." Instead, that relationship consists in shared "rigorous and knowledgeable inquiry into issues that genuinely concern community," including "the nature of a democratic society and democratic social relations." Faculty should work from the ground up to create a learning community on campus, as well as helping analyze and offer solutions to the problems of metropolitan communities.

David Brodsky points out in "Democratic vs. Corporate Governance" that corporate university governance is now universal and destructive: of standards, disciplines, faculty service obligations, and academic freedom. In the past decision-making was based on collegiality, the principle of shared governance, and delegation of responsibility. However, the corporate command model—the antithesis of democracy—has produced a new class or caste of career academic managers and the faculty are expected to carry out their orders. Democratic governance, by contrast, is based on the principle that "decision-making power

resides in all individuals affected by a decision." While governance is an example of process, democracy is also about outcomes, such as universal education, one of the human rights enumerated in the UN Universal Declaration. An effective way to restore democratic governance and outcomes is through the organizing and activism of broad-based grass-roots coalitions of faculty, students, staff, and community organizations.

The concluding group of papers, "Labor Activism on and off Campus and Labor-Academic-Community Alliances," provides a fitting culmination for our cluster. A revived labor movement within and outside academia and alliances leaping barriers that separate progressive constituencies are the key to building an effective movement for a genuinely democratic society.

Corey Dolgon, in "Places of Change: Colleges, Communities, and the Logic of Struggle," describes the growth of campus and community activism in Southampton, Long Island, from small separate groups engaged in sporadic actions to large effective coalitions supporting sustained activism. The early and small Coalition for Justice, where campus, community, and labor activists worked together to reverse the outsourcing of custodial jobs at Southampton College, gave rise to a number of later campaigns focused on the issue of racism and discrimination on and off campus. The maturing of the local progressive movement was evident in the multi-racial nature of subsequent coalitions, in which low wage African-Americans, Native-Americans, and Latinos supported one another's struggles. The growth of progressive activism has moved public discourse from complacent corporate and elite rule to a position which debates and challenges the expansion of the affluent at the expense of the growing low-wage population.

William Vaughn in "Learning and Labor" chronicles the inception, growth, and successes of a student-initiated campaign to unionize the graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Student organizers and activists faced many obstacles, such as administrative intransigence, conservative state politics, student apathy, and the false designation of GTAs as apprentices instead of workers. By "learning to be labor" student organizers freed themselves to critically assess their own condition as cheap workers generating millions in revenue for the university, as well as the shortcomings of officially sponsored student organizations and official reports proposing to "reform" graduate education. Like the part-time faculty at UMKC, many union activists had to defend their interests as workers and the existence of their professional disciplines. The corporatized academic labor market places graduate students between a rock and a hard place: abundant bad jobs for students and a jobless future after they earn their degree. Although the Graduate Employee Organization has yet to gain formal recognition, Vaughn values the years he spent organizing and is confident that the union will meet with eventual success.

Ellen Starbird's "The Saga of the Neptune Jade: Free Speech at Laney College" narrates the story of a series of great (though partial) victories for labor and for academic freedom. In 1995 five hundred dock workers were fired in Liverpool, and coincidentally Starbird introduced a course in computers and organizing on the internet in the Laney College Labor Studies Department in Oakland, California. One of her students taught the Liverpool dock workers internet organizing techniques. They were put to good use two years later to prevent the unloading of scab cargo on the Neptune Jade at four unionized ports in North America and Japan. The multi-national Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), which has a contract with the International Longshore Workers Union, filed SLAPP suits demanding enormous punitive damages against workers, students, and citizens who participated in the community picket line, and, in a McCarthyite maneuver, demanded the names and political affiliations of all who were involved. Proactive student organizing at Laney College combined with community support pressured the judges to deny PMA most of its demands and the company eventually dropped all remaining charges. While the port of Liverpool is no longer unionized, the lesson Starbird draws is that activist intervention and international community-labor solidarity are capable of overcoming truly formidable odds.

NETWORKING AND FACULTY UNIONS

Our conference proposed as effective strategies against the corporate takeover public employee organizing and the construction of a regional Education for Democracy network.

Since the conference the Education for Democracy Network, which it engendered, has grown to over 125 regional and national members. It has co-sponsored events, arranged for the publication of this cluster of essays in *Workplace*, and kept Network members informed of activities and news.

Public employee organizing in the Kansas City region, which straddles two states, is affected by different laws and conditions. Kansas is a right-to-work state: employees do not have to join a union that represents their workplace, but they can still enjoy any benefits the union wins. At the same time Kansas law authorizes public employee collective bargaining. Missouri is not a right-to-work state, but its law doesn't authorize public employee unions. Full-time faculty at community colleges in Kansas have bargaining units. At our conference they were represented by a number of participants, co-sponsors, and attendees in the Kansas City Kansas Community College Faculty Association. GTAs have been organized at KU Lawrence for six years. On the Missouri side, there are two Kansas City public employee unions, representing public school teachers and city firefighters. In spite of the absence of legal authorization, they organized, won recognition, and continue to bargain collectively because of the sheer rank and file strength of their locals. Unionization based on rank and file strength is thus an alternative model to the traditional legal authorization approach. The latter is being abandoned, anyway, because labor laws today are grossly biased in favor of the employer.

A major obstacle that students, faculty, and workers face within and outside the academy is the erosion or outright suppression of basic constitutional rights, such as free speech, assembly, association, and public airing of grievances, not to mention the right to unionize, which is guaranteed *inter alia* in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Social Charter. Recently passed anti-terrorism legislation is merely the culmination of a process at least several decades long of corporate and right wing erosion of popular entitlements.

What are some of the other obstacles standing in the way of faculty unionization? GTAs must overcome the self-serving administrative and governmental contention that work done by students is not paid labor, thereby disqualifying them from unionizing to advance and protect their interests. Contingent faculty must overcome their justifiable fear of lost employment if they are to organize successfully, and tenured faculty must provide strong support from their position of greater job security. Full-time faculty, for their part, must abandon the idea that professionalism and unionization are incompatible values. That shibboleth has been discarded by other professional groups.

Registered nurses, for example, receive professional education, are licensed, and incur legal responsibilities to their patients. Former professional societies, like the California Nurses Association, have transformed themselves into very successful and powerful labor unions. Nurses' unions argue that professional working conditions reestablished through collective bargaining not only serve their self-interest but, more importantly, maintain health care standards and protect patients from administrative abuse. A strong analogous argument for faculty unionization would be that it empowers them to meet their responsibilities to professional standards, students, and the public and to protect the campus community and the public from abuse by corporatized administrations.

Our conference also boosted faculty and student activism in the region. The moribund AAUP chapter at KU Lawrence is being revived, and its new President is Ray Pierotti, a presenter at the conference. At UMKC progressive student activity on campus is at its highest level in history. One group, the TEA

(Teaching Educational Activism) Society, coordinated with the conference its week-long boycott of Sodexo-Marriott Corporation, which owns the food monopoly, and the local Labor Party website ran an article by one of the student organizers. The TEA Society has gone on to hold peace rallies and teach-ins after the attacks on September 11. The Education for Democracy Network has co-sponsored with the AAUP chapter and student groups three teach-ins at UMKC on Islam, Afghan culture, and war propaganda, and more are planned for the future. As a spin-off from campus activism UMKC faculty and students are also leading and attending teach-ins in the community. An expose in an alternative newspaper of a UMKC master plan named "The Blueprint", whose aim is to co-opt the faculty into destroying their university in order to save it, did wonders to dampen self-destructive impulses and strengthen faculty resistance (see the AAUP chapter newsletter, *The Faculty Advocate* online for details, <http://iml.umkc.edu/aaup/>). Campus Equity Week activities in the US and Canada, publicizing the situation of part-time faculty and supporting part-timer demands, included two successful rallies at UMKC. Publication of conference papers and sessions in the *The Faculty Advocate* likewise is helping educate the campus community and recruit new members to the AAUP and the Education for Democracy Network. Last but not least, the appearance of these conference presentations in *Workplace* brings the news of activism in unlikely places to a wider audience, with the potential for strengthening a solidarity network between regions.

As the endless terrorist war against terrorism expands into the indeterminate future, violations of civil liberties escalate, and right-wing corporatism exploits the situation to further plunder the public domain and impoverish working people, grass-roots organizing to defend public property, education included, may begin to exercise greater appeal for the growing number of victims corporate policies will claim. If progressive fightback can arise in a conservative region, it surely can mount effective pressure where a concentration of left-of-center populations, numerous institutions of higher education, and faculty unions are to be found, along with a living tradition of progressive thought and activism. As discontent, activism, and resistance to the corporate takeover spread, we may be able to take back the public domain, which belongs to all the people, and set it on a course of further democratization.

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