

Prof. James Craven's Views

Zhang Xinning (*PhD Candidate of CASS*): Most people think that distorted financial institutions, disparity between the poor and the rich, together with the high unemployment rate in the US, are the main causes of the resistance. Do you agree with them? What do you think has led to "Occupy Wall Street?"

James Craven(*Tenured Professor from Economics Department of Clark College*): I have been going to the demonstrations and talking at length with people from the various segments represented (Gays; Greens; Anarchists; Union representatives; Unemployed; Students; Feminists; Democrats; Green Party; Homeless; various shades of "Left"; Radical Academics; Hippies; etc). Although wealth and income inequality of the U.S. (Gini coefficient same as China overall at 0.5) is the highest of any "developed" capitalist economy, most of the people in the street were not mentioning or protesting this two years ago. Most did/do not know the numbers or theories behind the inequalities of wealth and income; nor do they know the full implications even in bourgeois theory; but they are reacting at the "meme" (thought virus) level. That is progress in terms of moving from reform of capitalism to wanting to see the end of capitalism and imperialism; but right now there is more of a carnival atmosphere than a climate of unified understanding of and struggle against, capitalism here and US Imperialism abroad and here.

Zhang Xinning: The "Occupy Wall Street" movement seems leaderless, without focused demand. Whom do you think will take the lead of the movement with the spreading of the protest? Will there be a common political aim?

James Craven: Bourgeois culture is by necessity (to create and expand markets and expanded reproduction of capitalism as a system) one of ultra-individualism, greed, selfishness, competition, envy, narcissism, triumphalism, braggadocio, predation and other evils. The people on the "Left" may think they are special and untainted by the bourgeois culture in which they were also raised, but just as a fish in polluted waters will always absorb some toxins in its tissue, so many of the "Left" are infected with the same bourgeois or

petty-bourgeois mentalities they decry. There is so much "single issue-ism" and MY cause is paramount for special notice and concern. That is why my sign that I carry in the demonstrations says: "Liberty [does not equal]"Equal Opportunity to Become an "Oppressor"; Oppose U.S. Imperialism In "Our" Name; (covers all pet issues)". We have in addition to a kind of carnival atmosphere, where the protesters are being so sweet and nice to the police and providing all sorts of nice photos for them to use, they are pushing for particular pet causes (Gay Rights, Environmentalism; Feminism; Tax the Rich; Reform Capitalism; Forgive all student Debt; More Jobs; etc) and you are correct that no real leadership, except what the bourgeois media selects and appoints as "Leaders" of "the movement"[when there are many and some contradicting the others under one umbrella]. So a lot of what is going on is indeed leaderless, mostly reaction to individual situations with individual and rather uncoordinated protests, and lacking in focus, direction, tactics, strategy, knowledge and experience in mass work and building united fronts against Imperialism and proto-fascism.

Zhang Xinning: The basic contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between the expanded reproduction and individualism. Do you think that the current financial crisis and the Occupy Wall Street movement have intensified such contradiction?

James Craven: One of the central contradictions of capitalism is the contradiction between the forms of consciousness and basic values necessary for the expanded reproduction of capitalism (petty bourgeois ultra-individualism, selfishness, greed, need for some form of immortality, crude materialism etc) on the one hand, versus, the increasing socialization and integration of the productive forces of capitalism and the need for some social cohesion and integration on the other hand. The result of this on the "Left" in America and Canada is a form of "single-issueism" (Me. ME. ME, MY cause is paramount) that produces the reality of fragmentation and division of movements that may unite in action on a broad range of common interests, but not see that these "single-issues" (environment, homosexual rights, increased taxes on the rich, rural development, union busting, anti-Iraq and Afghanistan illegal wars, feminism,, globalization etc) all flow from one central source: the fundamental nature, contradictions, dynamics, "logic", imperatives, trajectories, impacts and power structures of di guo zhu yi. According to the secret "Plutonomy Report" from Citibank, the ultra-rich are worried about the fact that in a one-person-one vote system, the top 1% may

have most of the wealth and a good chunk of total income, but they do not have 99% of the potential votes and thus they fear these kinds of reactions as they openly celebrate plutocracy which is inherently anti-democratic no matter anyone's definition of "democracy". So these demonstrations are important in consciousness raising; and they expose more and more people to the notion that capitalism and imperialism are the number one sources of terrorism today and the main threats to the survival of the whole human race. But they need to take more steps and learn more lessons to arrive at higher stages of consciousness than they presently demonstrate (like demonstrating for more "optimum" arrangement of deck chairs on the Titanic). I've been living under "mei di guo zhu yi" as an American Indian for 65 years, studying it and struggling against it for over 40 years, and am a veteran of the U.S. Army 1963-66 where I saw the beast from the inside at levels that most soldiers never get to see. As an American Indian, who has lived and worked on the reserves and reservations of America and Canada, and as a tri-national (U.S. Canadian and Blackfoot) I have also seen mei di guo zhu yi (which I regard as the principal and most dangerous source of state-sponsored terrorism today) with and without "mian zhao" and with and without "tang yi pao dan"; it cannot be "reformed".

Zhang Xinning: "Occupy Wall Street" is spreading through America and other capitalist countries, what do you think it will result in? What kind of influence will have on America capitalist system?

James Craven: As Chairman Mao Zedong warned many times [capitalism survives for a long time under socialism and] socialism may be used to build and restore capitalism [instead of capitalism being used to build and defend the material conditions and foundations of socialism] with the result of the longer-run demise of socialism which has happened in the former USSR and elsewhere. This is why the Chinese youth must be warned, not with slogans but with concrete evidence and reason, that the "di guo zhu yi de mian zhao he tang yi pao dan" represent: not freedom but enslavement; not progress and development but backwardness and reaction; not personal 'liberty', but personal myopia and self-destructive and socially destructive forms of false freedoms and false liberties associated with narcissism, megalomania, selfishness and the mentality of "wei zi gi fu wu"—which will destroy China and the whole world. I am hopeful in the long-run that imperialism is a doomed system;

doomed by the nature and weight of its own internal contradictions and logic. As Bertolt Brecht said: "In the contradiction lies the hope".