LECTURE 18
Class Struggle in the USA
Class Struggle in the USA

I. The Decline of Labor

II. Political Defeat of Labor

III. The Spoils of Victory
I. The Decline of Labor

A. **Breakthrough**

B. The Golden Age

C. Rocky Economy

D. Union Busting
New Deal era

- Great Depression of 1930s
  - Economic collapse
  - Capital disarmed
  - Democratic Party revival

- FDR & the New Deal
  - Public works (WPA etc)
  - Wagner Act (NRLA)
  - Social Security
Working class power

- Union breakthrough
  - Mobilization & strikes
  - Mass unionization
  - CIO
  - Political clout
- Wartime
  - Full employment
  - High profits
- Geography
  - Industrial heartland
  - Big cities
  - California
I. The Decline of Labor

A. Breakthrough
B. The Golden Age
C. Rocky Economy
D. Union Busting
Labor’s Golden Age

- Productivity wage
  - Rising real incomes

- Benefits
  - Retirement
  - Health
  - Unemployment

- Autos & UAW
  - Trendsetters
A better working life

- Unions
  - 1/3 of all workers, 2/3 manufacturing
- On the job protections
  - Seniority, grievances & work rules
- Dignity
  - ‘Semi-skilled worker’
- Low unemployment & job stability
  - Lifetime employment
Rising mass consumption

- Automobiles
- Appliances
- Houses
Era of the ‘Middle Class’

- More equality
  - Progressive income tax
  - Corporate income tax
  - Stock market quiet

- Working Class »
  Middle Class
I. The Decline of Labor

A. Breakthrough
B. The Golden Age
C. • Rocky Economy
D. Union Busting
End of the Golden Age

- Turning point > 1970
  - Falling rate of profit
  - Long slowdown
  - (see lecture 3)

- Deindustrialization
  - Decline of manufacturing
  - Rise of imports
High unemployment

- Four recessions with 7-10% unemployment
- Higher average unemployment
  - 2X Golden Age
- Oversupply of labor
  - Depresses wages
Job insecurity

- Job turnover up > 40%, 1970-1987
- Longer bouts of unemployment
- Hard to find new jobs
- Older workers hit hardest

Stagnant wages

- Real Wages
  - Fell by 12%, 1973-1990
  - Picked up in late 1990s
  - Plateau in 2000s

- Income, too
  - Median family real income 1996 = 1973
One more month/year since 1970

Juliet Schorr, The Overworked American


Michael Ellman in New York

The men and women of the United States work the longest hours in the industrialised world. Average Americans now spend so much time at work that they are putting in another week a year compared to 30 years ago, says a new study published to coincide with the Labour Day holiday last weekend.

In 1960 Mr and Mrs America worked 1,964 hours a year each, now they tell for 1,978 hours, says the report by the International Labour Organisation.

"The rise in the number of hours worked within the US can counter the trend in other industrialised nations where we are seeing declining hours worked," said Lawrence Lessig, the economist who headed the team that drew up Key Indicators Of The Labour Market 2003-2005.

Both Australian, Canadian, Japanese and Mexican workers devoted about 190 hours a year — or 9.5 weeks — (two to their job. By ages, Italians, British and Italians work 135 hours a year (seven working weeks) and Germans do 956 fewer hours, or about 12 weeks.

Of countries categorised as developing or in transition, only South Koreans (160 more hours) and Turks (an extra 108 hours) put in more time than Americans.

"I think it has a lot to do with the American psyche," said Mr Johnson, who describes himself as a workaholic.

"My friend's phone rang three times with work calls. The line between time at work and time not at work is blurred. Years ago we used to check on and check off, but we don't do that any more.

"But mobile phones and computers are not unique to the US. Nor is it an American phenomenon, though it might find its strongest expression there. Americans have a tendency to move quickly from job to job," said Mr Johnson. "We want to progress, to move on to the next level. To do that they're putting in more hours."

"The apparent appetite for overtime is explained by the increasingly blurred line between work and free time."

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I. The Decline of Labor

A. Breakthrough
B. The Golden Age
C. Rocky Economy
D. • Union Busting
De-unionization

Down from 35% in 1955 to under 13% in 2000
Declining militance

- Strikes fall 90% from peak in the 1950s
The economy does its work

- Undermines union base
- Job Shrinkage
  - Old industries
  - Blue-collar work
- Guts industrial heartland
  - Geographic base of unions

Manufacturing Employees
% All non-ag Employees
- 60% drop in ratio

0% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30%

Grandfather Economic Report
http://mwhodges.home.att.net/data - Bureau Labor Stats B-46
Capitallists do theirs...

- Employer offensives
  - Lockouts
  - Contract ‘take backs’
  - Threats of closure
  - Reneging on retirements

Fig. 2. Unfair labor practice charges filed against employers, 1945–2003. Sources: Annual reports of the National Labor Relations Board.
Union free growth

- Expanding sectors
  - Electronics
  - Big Box retail
  - Fast-foods
  - Business services

- Growing regions
  - South
  - Southwest
One bright spot

- Public sector unions
  - Growth after 1970

- Attack on government
  - Budget cuts hit
Class Struggle in the USA

I. The Decline of Labor

II. • Political Defeat of Labor

III. The Spoils of Victory
II. Political Defeat of Labor

A. Against the New Deal
B. Self-Inflicted Wounds
C. Counter-Revolution
D. Neo-Liberalism at Home
Dark side of the 1930s

- Northern capitalists
  - Most hated FDR
  - Ford & American Fascism

- Dixiecrats
  - Conservative, Jim Crow
  - Farm workers left out
Quick counter-attack

- Republican revival
  - FDR dies 1945

- Taft-Hartley Act (1947)
  - Passed over Truman veto
  - Outlawed boycotts, wildcat strikes, solidarity strikes, secondary pickets, etc.
  - Right-to-work laws
    - End of closed shop
  - Strike injunctions
1950s & McCarthyism

- Republicans regain White House
  - Nixon as V-P

- Anti-communist hysteria
  - J. Edgar Hoover
  - Senator Joe McCarthy
  - Union purges of left
Ruling class defeats of 1960s

- Great Society
- Civil Rights
- Students/youth
- Anti-war
- Environmental
Thirst for revenge

- Demonizing the Sixties
  - Fomenting popular backlash

- Think Tanks
  - Generating new policies

- Mass Mobilization
  - Borrowing the Left’s tactics

Kim Phillips-Fine, Invisible Hands
II. Political Defeat of Labor

A. Against the New Deal
B. Self-Inflicted Wounds
C. Counter-Revolution
D. Neo-Liberalism at Home
Movement dead-end

- Expulsion of radicals
  - Out with Communists
- AFL-CIO merger
  - George Meany
- Cold War unionism
  - AFILD
Business unionism

- Undemocratic
- Contract fetish
- Little organizing
- Corruption/Mafia
Race & gender

- White Male Workers
  - Single-income family

- Racial exclusions

- Women’s work

- No farm workers
Labor politics in disarray

- Party patsies
- Worker racism

![Bar chart showing voting percentages for Gore, 2000.](chart.png)
II. Political Defeat of Labor

A. Against the New Deal
B. Self-Inflicted Wounds
C. Counter-Revolution
D. Neo-Liberalism at Home
Political Turn

- Crisis of Democratic Party
  - Assassination of Kennedys
  - Humiliation of Johnson
  - Vietnam War

- Nixon’s triumph
  - White backlash
  - Southern & suburban strategy
  - Fall of Nixon
Outside Washington

- Neo-liberalism begins at home
  - Starts in New York City in 1973

- New Right begins in So Cal
  - From Goldwater to Reagan
Triumph of the Right

- Ronald Reagan
  - Reagan in California
  - Systematic policy shift
  (+ Thatcher in Britain)

- State & Local
  - Tax Revolt
    - Proposition 13 (1978)
  - Starving cities of funds
Three-pronged assault

- Legislative
  - Tax cuts, deregulation, social benefits cuts, etc.

- Executive
  - Appointments, easing regulations, lack of enforcement

- Judicial
  - Supreme Court, ‘liberal judges’, Law & Order
II. Political Defeat of Labor

A. Against the New Deal
B. Self-Inflicted Wounds
C. Counter-Revolution
D. Neo-Liberalism at Home
Neo-liberalism as class struggle

- Defeat labor
  - Bust unions, wages, benefits
- Free up capital ("markets")
  - Contract provisions & state regulations
- Enrich the rich
  - Tax cuts on business, property, etc.
- Reduce state aid to the people
  - But not the military, police, business...

David Harvey, Brief History of Neoliberalism
Union Busting

- Reagan busts PATCO
- Reagan guts NRLB
  - Unions lose protections
Business Deregulation

- Banking & finance
  - See lecture 15
- Telecoms
  - Breakup of AT&T
- Media
  - FCC, Telecomms Act (1996)
- Airlines
  - CAB, FAA

"Now we'll all close our eyes and cover our ears, and the person who took the four hundred and twenty-eight million dollars will put it back."
GOP drafts bill to slash domestic programs

WASHINGTON — With budgets for most federal agencies still in limbo, congressional Republicans are drafting a long-overdue $385 billion spending bill for the current fiscal year that would slash billions of dollars for domestic programs the Senate approved when it was under Democratic control last year.

The bill will now be even easier to cut than President Bush set after the Republicans gained full control of Congress in the November elections. As a result, powerful lawmakers from both parties have battled over how to divide up those dollars among their favorite programs.

Among the potential trade-offs:

- Should the National Institutes of Health get a big boost at the expense of education programs?
- Should the U.S. Customs Service sacrifice the war on drugs for reform in election procedures?
- Should the government scale back public land programs to bolster homeland security?

These and other showdowns were marked by the Senate on Thursday night, which30% was already approved for Bush's signature late that night, a major victory for Bush's agenda. Much of the government running through next year's budget season. The other 11 items, pending with the House, could extend until early next year.

“Basically, what this reflects is a dramatic cut, a deep, deep cut in the funding for education, a deep cut in homeland security, a deep cut for transportation and research, cuts virtually across the board,” said Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D. “We will vote, as strongly as we can, our opposition to these cuts.”

But Daschle allowed the stopgap spending bill to pass by a record vote — raising his ire for the larger battle ahead.

Republican leaders plan to cut the Senate Democratic spending blueprint by about $10 billion, according to House GOP sources. Amy Cline, a spokeswoman for the White House Office of Management and Budget, said Bush had “made clear” his wishes.

“We need to control the rate of growth in government spending,” she said. “The $385 billion limit for domestic programs is in what he feels is acceptable.”

Rep. Ralph Regula, R-Ohio, who oversees labor, health and education spending, said he could live with the Bush limit, but “if we’re not paying attention to what he’s asking for, we’re going to lose our jobs.”

“I think it’s a bit of a no-win situation at this point,” he said. “But we recognize that we want to see the money for the anti-terrorism campaign or a coalition in Iraq. And there will be another 13 annual spending bills to go up for fiscal 2004.”

For those reasons, one analyst suggested, the long-term spending debate over fiscal 2005 may be quickly settled after a burst of partisan rhetoric.

“Our there’s a bit of a no-win situation here,” said Robert Reischauer, president of the nonpartisan Urban Institute and a former congressional budget director. “Of course, significant cuts are bound to happen — what matters is size and scope.”

Republicans will say, “Now that we’re under Republican control — see, fiscal discipline can be brought about.”

And Democrats can say, “Yes, we were under Republican control. They sewage programs that help people.” Both parties are singling out those with whom they were at odds. The big question is how much.

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U.S. ranks in bottom third in spending on schools

NEW YORK — America spends a smaller share of its wealth on schools than two-thirds of the world's most advanced countries, according to a teachers union study released yesterday.

Government spending on U.S. public and private education is from kindergarten through postsecondary education — equalized 5.1 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, followed by Sweden, 7.2 percent; Canada, 7.1 percent; the Netherlands, 6.8 percent; Norway, 6.6 percent; France, 6.5 percent; Austria, 6.4 percent; Belgium, 5.9 percent; and Australia, 5.2 percent.

Among factors contributing to lower U.S. spending, the AFT study said America had the highest pupil-teacher ratio of 18:2, compared with an average of 20:2 among the 15 nations studied.

The United States also had the second largest average elementary enrollments at 352 per school, compared with a pupil average of the 15 countries. Still, the report is unlikely to end debate about whether the United States should be spending more or whether other countries that spend more need to outperform others educationally.

Commenting on the findings, W. Cummings, an expert on interna-
Democrats capitulate

- Bitter losses to Reagan
  - 1984 & 88
  - Rise of DLC

- Clinton wins 1992
  - Clinton & New South
  - Defeat in 1994 (Newt)
  - Republicrats
End of ‘welfare’

- GOP bill (1996)
  - Workfare for mothers

- Looks good in boom
  - Lots of low wage jobs

- No one’s keeping score
Class Struggle in the USA

I. The Decline of Labor

II. Political Defeat of Labor

III. • The Spoils of Victory
III. Spoils of Victory

A. • Across the Great Divide
B. Income Divides
C. Wealth Divides
D. The Poverty of Power
The class pyramid

- Capitalists
  - Industrialists
  - Financiers
  - Landlords
- Managers
- Politicians & high bureaucrats
- Small business
- High-paid workers
- Low-wage workers
- Unemployed
Class struggle

- Capitalists exploit, workers fight back

- Wages v. profits
  > Not fixed
Terms of endearment

- Liberal Creed (since Locke)
  Individual effort +
  Equal opportunity =
  Just desserts

- Classless ideologies
  - Mainstream economics
  - Great American Middle Class
  - ‘Diversity’ Will Solve It

- So is it true?

*This American system of ours....call it Americanism, call it capitalism, call it what you like, gives to each and every one of us a great opportunity if we only seize it with both hands and make the most of it.*

Al Capone
III. The Spoils of Victory

A. Across the Great Divide
B. **Income Divides**
C. Wealth Divides
D. The Poverty of Power
In 1997, the richest 1% earned as much as the poorest 100 million Americans.


In 1977, richest 1% earned as much as the poorest 50 million Americans (after taxes)
Executive sweets

- CEO/worker pay
  - 8/1 in 1950
  - 40/1 in 1980
  - 80/1 in 1990
  - 400/1 in 2001
  - Larry Ellison: 28,000 to 1!

- CEO pay/minimum wage worker's: 821.1
Robert Nardelli, CEO of Home Depot: resigned after 6 years, with a compensation package worth $210M from a company that has suffered a lagging share price and performed poorly compared with Lowes, its closest rival.

The Economist, May 22, 2007

Execs retire with 'eternal wealth'

By David Cay Johnston

Avera's pension package

Pay without performance

The Unfulfilled Promise of Executive Compensation

I'd like you to meet Bradley, our new manager of executive compensation.

Bradley's job is to recommend board how much to pay company executives such as me.

Bradley is totally objective.

That was a world-class observation. So I'll recommend that the company buy a pony.

A strong pony to carry the huge bags of cash I recommend for you.

Good work, Bradley! I'll recommend to the board that you get a huge raise.

GAAAM!!! Stop pretending to have reasons!!! Just steal the stupid money!!!

See what I have to deal with the stupid every day?

Would an extra month of vacation reduce the sting?
Capital v labor shares

- Profits/GDP, 2005: 14.5%
  > highest even recorded in US history.

- Wages/GDP, 2006: 51.8%
  > Lowest ever recorded (77 years of data)
Inequality among workers

- Top 10-20% gain
  - Payoff to technical, professional & managerial labor
- Middle sags

**We Grew Together**

1947 to 1979 - Real Family Income Growth by Quintile and for Top 5%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quintile</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 20% in 1979: up to $7,000</td>
<td>118%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second 20%: $7,000 - $13,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 20%: $13,000 - $20,000</td>
<td>114%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth 20%: $20,000 - $29,100</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 20%: $29,100 and up</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 5%: $47,500 and up</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
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**We Grew Apart**

1979 to 1994 - Real Family Income Growth by Quintile and for Top 1%

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quintile</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 20% up to $17,980</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second 20%: $17,980 - $31,380</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 20%: $31,380 - $47,800</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth 20%: $47,800 - $70,999</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 20%: $70,999 and up</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 1%: $320,000 and up</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bottom Falls Out

Share of Total Public Assistance for All Families, 2002

Working Family $10.1 Billion
Nonworking Family $11.1 Billion

48%
52%

Figure 2. Percent of Poor Families with Children with at Least One Full-Time/Full-Year Worker

Real Dollars

Year


Minimum Wage

Poverty Level
Who’s to blame?

- “Should you blame China or your computer?”

- Or the Schools (Human Capital)?

Just don’t blame the capitalists & class system...
III. The Spoils of Victory

A. Across the Great Divide
B. Income Divides
C. • Wealth Divides
D. The Poverty of Power
If you think that’s bad, you don’t understand class.

& it’s getting worse »
What is wealth?

- Two kinds of wealth
  - Capital assets: stocks, bonds, land
  - Household assets: homes, cars

- Distribution (without houses!!)
  - 1% own 50%
  - 10% own 75%
  - 20% own 80%
  - Top 50% own 98%
  - Bottom 50% own <2%
  - Bottom 20% negative

- What middle class?
  - American who have saved less than $25,000 toward their retirement: 53%
And it’s all earned, right?

**FIGURE III**

Inheritances as a Percent of Net Worth
(married households ages 60-69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share within Network Percentile Range</th>
<th>Bottom 50%</th>
<th>Top 20%</th>
<th>Top 10%</th>
<th>Top 5%</th>
<th>Top 1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculations based on 2004 Survey of Consumer Finances.
De-Taxing the Rich

- Tax cuts
  - Reagan, Bush II
  - Prop 13 & states
- Letting wealth off easy
  - Estate, inheritance, property
  - Popular confusion of

Huge new Bush plan to cut taxes

THE PROPOSAL: Package may double in size, include help for states

By Edmund L. Andrews
New York Times

Washington — President Bush will propose as much as $600 billion in tax cuts and new spending measures over the next 10 years, an economic stimulus package nearly twice as big as even Republican lawmakers had been expecting, administration officials said Friday.

White House officials said the proposed package to include billions of dollars for state governments wrestling with huge budget shortfalls. Bush plans to outline the details in Chicago on Tuesday.

President Bush is to give details of his plan in Chicago on Tuesday.

Nancy Pelosi met with Democrats yesterday to devise a plan, to be released Monday.

DEMOCRATS’ AGENDA: Projects to create jobs, more equitable tax relief

By Edward Epstein
Chronicle Washington Bureau

Washington — The 108th Congress doesn’t open until Tuesday, but House Democrats under their new leader, Rep. Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco, are fighting with President Bush over rival economic stimulus packages that neither side will unveil in detail until next week.

Unspoken by both sides is the recognition that the economy, with the war on terrorism and confrontations with Iraq and North Korea, will be the top political issues for 2003 and perhaps beyond.

By David E. Rosenbaum
New York Times

WASHINGTON — The tax-cut plan offered this week by Republican leaders in the House would be even more favorable to the wealthiest taxpayers than the larger tax cut of 1986 under the Bush plan and 1990 under the Thomas plan, and those with incomes between $40,000 and $75,000 would get an average tax cut this year of $780 under the Bush plan and $712 under the Thomas plan.
Race & Wealth

- Wealth & whiteness
  - Persistent advantage
  - Refusal to recognize

- The color of money
  - African-American & Latino families with zero or negative net worth: 31% & 38%
III. The Spoils of Victory

A. Across the Great Divide
B. Income Divides
C. Wealth Divides
D. •The Poverty of Power
Gross inequality

- 1880s
  - The Gilded Age
- 1920s
  - The Roaring 20s
- Today
  - The worst ever

Worldly Wealth

% of world’s wealthiest 1% and 10% residing in the United States
Persistent poverty

Figure 3.
Number in Poverty and Poverty Rate: 1959 to 2008

Numbers in millions, rates in percent

- Number in poverty
- Poverty rate

- 39.8 million
- 13.2 percent

Note: The data points are placed at the midpoints of the respective years.
No helping hand

Trying to help
Public expenditure on active labour-market programmes as % of GDP, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Britain*</td>
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<td>Australia†</td>
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<td>Canada†</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan†</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States*</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Health, education, and social welfare spending on non-aged, % of GDP, 1987</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No Child Left Behind?

The countries were ranked on:

- material well-being, health and safety, education, family relationships, behaviors and risks, and young people's own sense of well-being.

- Economic inequality, poor levels of public support for families and high incidences of single-parent families are some factors that landed the U.S. and Britain at the bottom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
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UNICEF survey of child well-being in wealthy countries

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Source: Unicef
Heartless in the Homeland

S.F.'s final count finds huge leap in homelessness
Economy, more thorough tally cited as factors in 18% increase

By癞are Letchuk
Chronicle Staff Writer

San Francisco's fourth and last census of the homeless found that the city's poorest population swelled by 18 percent during the past year's economic downturn.
The city found 8,609 homeless people on the streets, in shelters, hospitals and treatment programs during a one-night count in October, compared with 7,625 in October 2002 and 7,376 in October 2000, according to the count released Monday by Mayor Willie Brown's Office on Homelessness.

Part of the explanation for the rise may be a more thorough count than in past years, officials said.

San Francisco is the latest city in the nation to report increasing numbers of homeless people, from New York to Los Angeles, residents and social service providers are noticing more people on the streets and in the shelters.

San Francisco officials believe that a slow economy and出租空置的 units have forced more people outside. Also, they say, the city's generous programs make it a magnet for poor people around the Bay Area and beyond.

"San Francisco is a beacon of hope for a lot of people throughout our region and country," said George Smith, who heads the Mayor's Office on Homelessness.
"Based on what we spend per capita, it's obvious to me why people are coming here."

Some city officials anticipate that the homeless population will decrease next year after Proposition 10 takes effect. The measure, approved by voters Nov. 5, will direct city's measured welfare check to homeless adults from about $300 a month to $95 a month plus shelter and food.

City officials and homeless advocates have wrestled for years with trying to place a number on the homeless population. Estimates have swelled from 4,000 to 13,000.

Although Smith conceded that the one-day count conducted by volunteers every October was flawed because of its internal nature, he said it had found a dramatic 71 percent increase this year in the number of homeless people receiving drug addiction, mental health and job training services.

Newsom gets report to push his Prop. M

In S.F., 169 homeless died in past year

By Rachel Gordon
Chronicle Staff Writer

Homeless people in San Francisco are dying at a rate of nearly one every other day, according to figures released by the city's medical examiner.

The report counted 169 homeless deaths during the fiscal year that ended July 2003, matching the record annual high since the city first started compiling the data in 1987.

Though the report provided no causes of death, past studies by the Department of Public Health have attributed more than 80 percent of the deaths to drug and alcohol abuse.

Superintendent Newman, who requested the report and has largely built his campaign for mayor on a package of changes in homeless policy, set off on the figures as an indictment of the status quo.

"It's time for change," he said Thursday at a Financial District fund raiser for his anti-pampering measure on the Nov. 4 ballot. "How can we defend what's going on in our emergency rooms?"

But homeless advocates who consider Newman's proposals mean spirited and two competitors in the mayor's race, City Treasurer Susan Leal and Supervisor Tom Ammiano, accused Newman of exploiting human tragedy for political gain.

Leal called Newman's use of the medical examiner's report "shameful grandstanding."

"This calls for hands-on leadership and not making this issue about politics," she said. "(Newman) is voting in the interest of his constituents."

Newman said the medical examiner's report shows the "substandard" care for the homeless in the city's emergency rooms.

"It's a tragedy," he said. "And that's an issue of public health and public safety."

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You Get the Rulers You Pay For

- Imperial arrogance
  - American empire unopposed
  - Bush I: The New World Order
  - Bush II: Preemptive Strikes

= Class arrogance
  - Capitalist class unopposed
  - Entitlement & omnipotence