

Third Saturday Seminar 2009-2010

Humanity at a Crossroads

Session 02

17 October 2009

“Dealing With Dictatorships”

“From Dictatorship to Democracy” by Gene Sharp

Curt Gibby

**ALL Program, Lone Star College - Montgomery, Conroe,
Texas**

**“...we are the leaders we've
been looking for.”**

Grace Lee Boggs

Program for TSS Meeting 17 October 2009

- 9:30 am Introduction & Current Events (30 Minutes +/-) – *Curt Gibby*
- 10:15 am – “**Dealing with Dictatorships**” *Curt Gibby*
- 10:45 10 minute break
- 10:40 am *Curt Gibby* Discussion Continues
- 10:55 am- Closure – Feedback
- 11:00 am Session ends
- **Next Session 21 November 2009**

Disclaimer

The following presentation consists of material from many sources in addition to my own work and experience. I usually try give appropriate attribution for this material, but may have overlooked some. In many cases an Internet link to the source material is provided in order to allow you to better put these excerpts in context.

The inclusion of materials and the facts, opinions and ideas contained within them, does not in any way mean that I personally endorse or disavow any of them in whole or in part; but, that it is of importance to the discussion.

If you have any questions please contact me.

Curt Gibby <gcgconsult@n-star.com>

To Any Members of Law Enforcement

If there are any members of law enforcement here in any sort of official capacity and not in a uniform recognizable as one of law enforcement we ask that you identify yourself or selves, your agency, department or organization and your official reason for being here.

Rest assured that we are engaged in no illegal activity, but we are aware of, value and have faith in our Constitutional rights.

In any case you are welcome to stay and participate as a member or guest of the Third Saturday Seminar. But, if at any time you consider anything you see or hear happening or about to happen is or will be putting any one or all of us in jeopardy of breaking the law as you understand it, we request that you advise us of that situation .

This is consistent with your obligation as a peace officer or agent to protect and serve the people. Anything else will be a betrayal and you will be derelict in your duty. It will result in harm to those you are obligated to protect.

The donuts are free to law enforcement.

Current Events

20 June 2009

Don't*be***Panic***ked!*

Gene Bruce Turns 70

As of today, tuesday, Gene has received 113 Birthday cards and about 8 phone calls. We surpassed the goal of 70! Gene won't be at Third Sat. Seminar this coming Sat. He is attending a college reunion in Abilene, Texas.

How Many?

Thousands march in Washington for gay rights

Invoking Obama's campaign slogan, 'Yes, we can,' activists urge that the president not wait to fulfill his promises.

[1](#) [2](#) [next](#) | [single page](#)



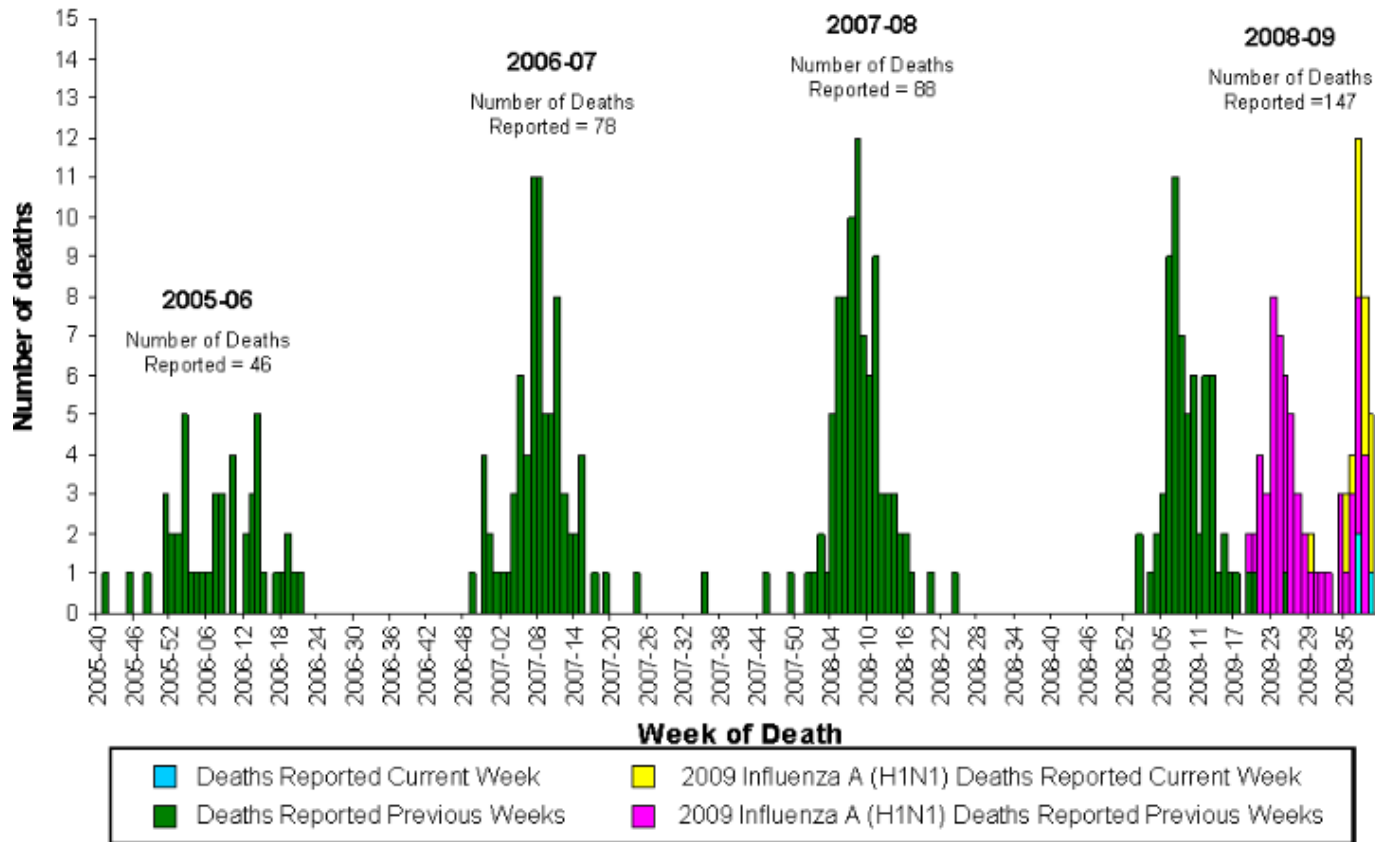
Marchers stop in front of the White House. "Hey, Obama, can't you see? We demand equality," they chanted as they waved rainbow-colored flags. (Jim Lo Scalzo / European Pressphoto Agency / October 11)

By Katherine Skiba
October 12, 2009

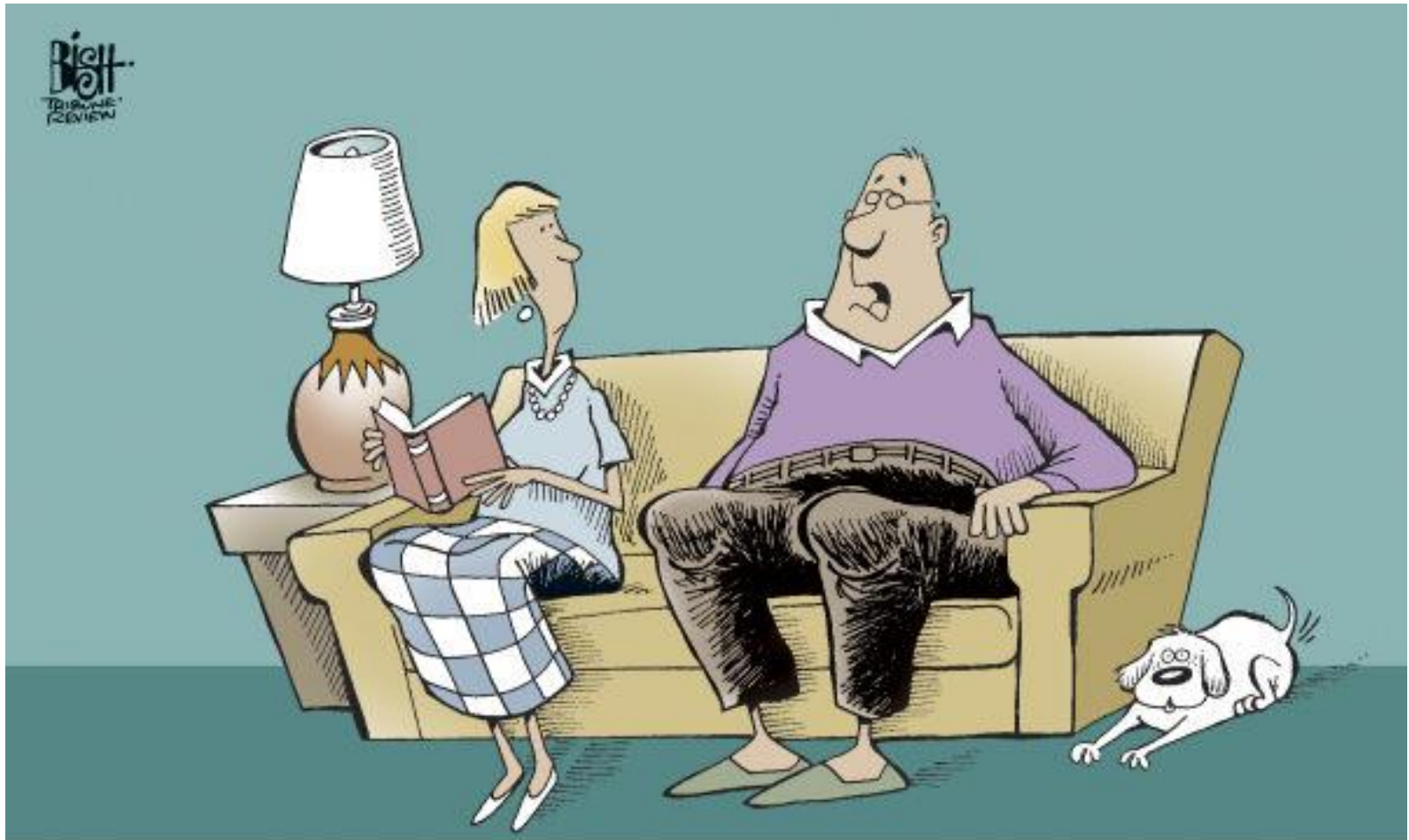
Reporting from Washington - Tens of thousands of gays, lesbians and supporters marched through the nation's capital Sunday in a festive, forceful call for equality, culminating in a boisterous rally at the Capitol.

Los Angeles Times

Number of Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths by Week of Death: 2005-06 season to present



You lie



IF A MAN YELLS "YOU LIE!" IN A ROOM FULL OF POLITICIANS, HOW DO THEY KNOW WHO HE'S TALKING TO?

Why a surge is not a sure thing in Afghanistan

By Richard Engel Chief foreign correspondent NBC News

The situation in Afghanistan, however, is completely different. There is no unified group asking for protection. There is no Afghan Awakening Movement. McChrystal, Petraeus' man on the ground in [Kabul](#), wants Afghans to take up arms with him against the Taliban and other militants, but many Afghans see no reason why they should. Afghans aren't asking for American protection.

The [Taliban](#) and other militant groups are unpopular in Afghanistan, with opinion polls suggesting that the Taliban has support only among six percent of Afghans. But most people here don't feel threatened by the Taliban in their daily lives. There are no bodies in the streets of Kabul. The Taliban mostly attacks international and Afghan security forces. They rarely carry out attacks in markets. If they kill civilians, they deny it. They are actively trying to win hearts and minds.

Why a surge is not a sure thing in Afghanistan

It may offer some badly needed relief, but don't expect a quick fix



Nikola Solic / Reuters

Soldiers from the U.S. Army's Charlie troop, 371 Cavalry, 3rd brigade of 10th Mountain Division based in Fort Drum, New York, patrol in Kherwar district in Logar province on Oct. 4.

 [View related photos](#)

 **Video**



[Launch](#)

 Behind the scenes: reporting from Afghanistan
Oct. 23, 2008: NBC's Richard Engel, Producer Madeleine Haeringer and cameraman Bredun Edwards take you behind-the-scenes of their assignment in

In Afghanistan few common goals

Most American patrols are met with blank stares and silence.

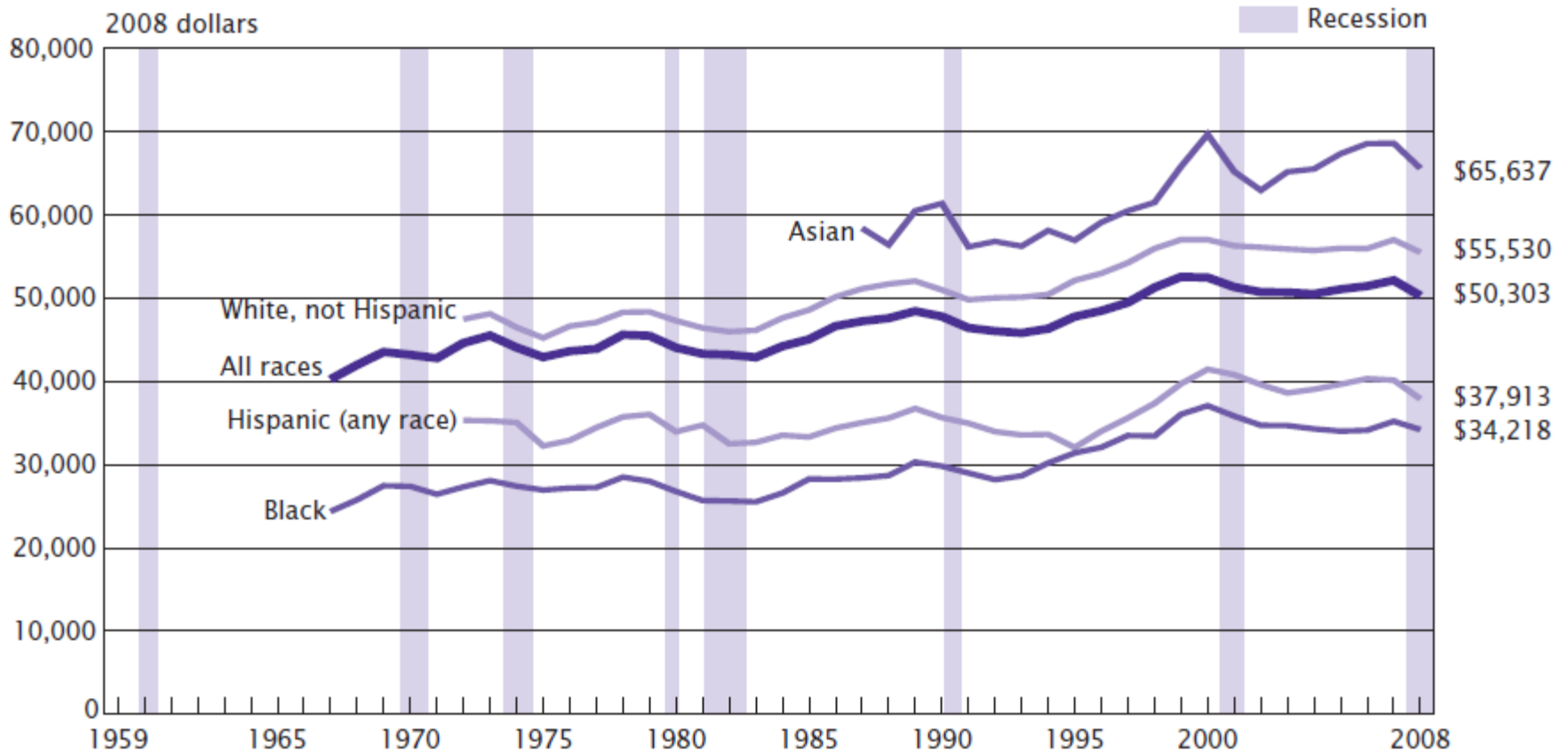
Most Afghans don't have cousins in New Jersey. They don't want to be like Americans.

Afghans want to be left alone. Iraqis love Lionel Richie and Oprah Winfrey. Most Afghans have no idea who they are.

Afghans have a traditional society isolated for centuries by xenophobia, strict religion and the high peaks of the Hindu Kush.

The different dynamic raises the question: How do you protect Afghan people – the core of the U.S. counter-insurgency strategy – if they don't seem to want it as much as we want to give it to them?

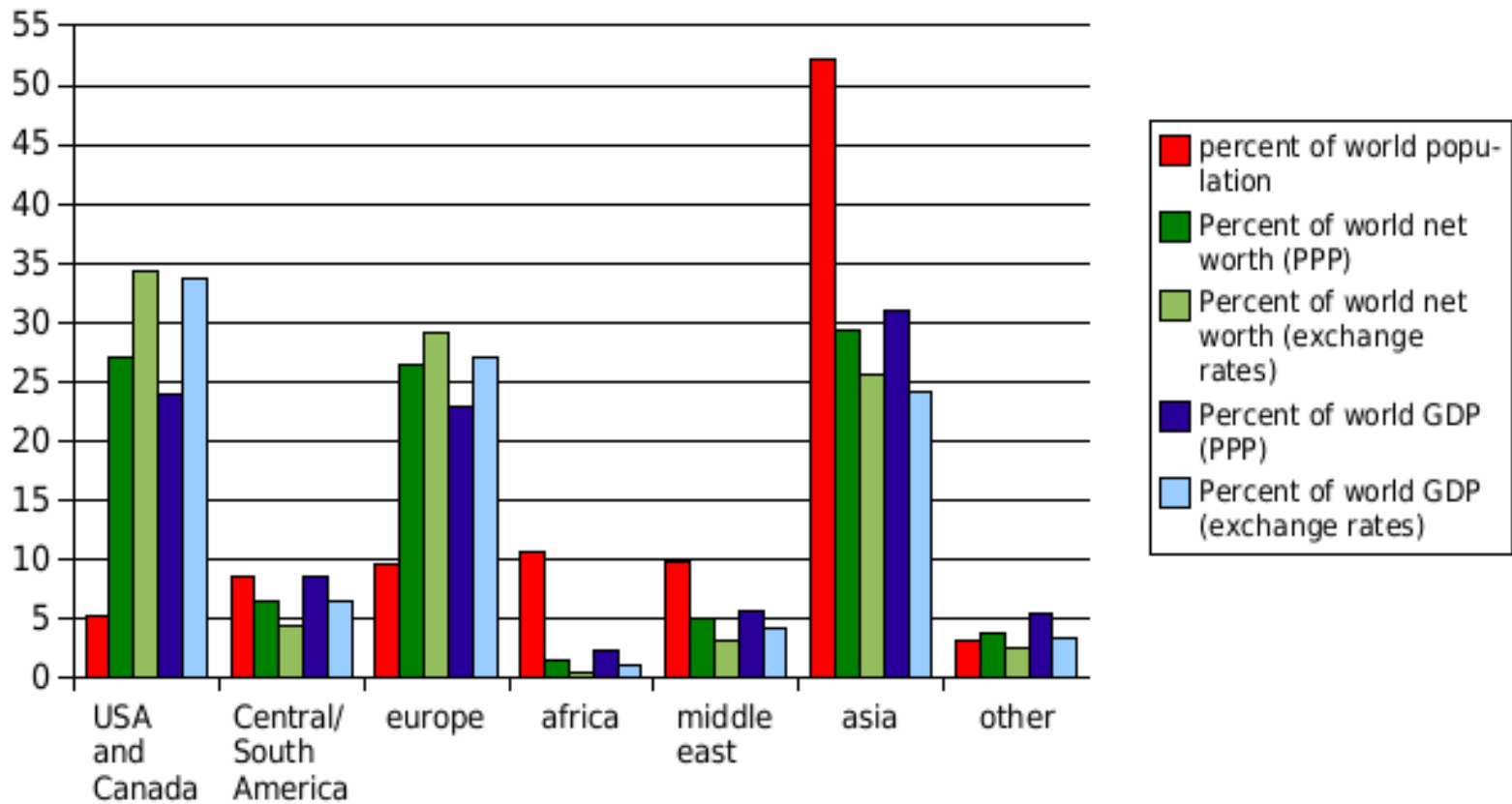
Figure 1.
Real Median Household Income by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1967 to 2008



Note: Median household income data are not available prior to 1967. For information on recessions, see Appendix A.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1968 to 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

World Distribution of Household Wealth, GDP, and Population in the Year 2000



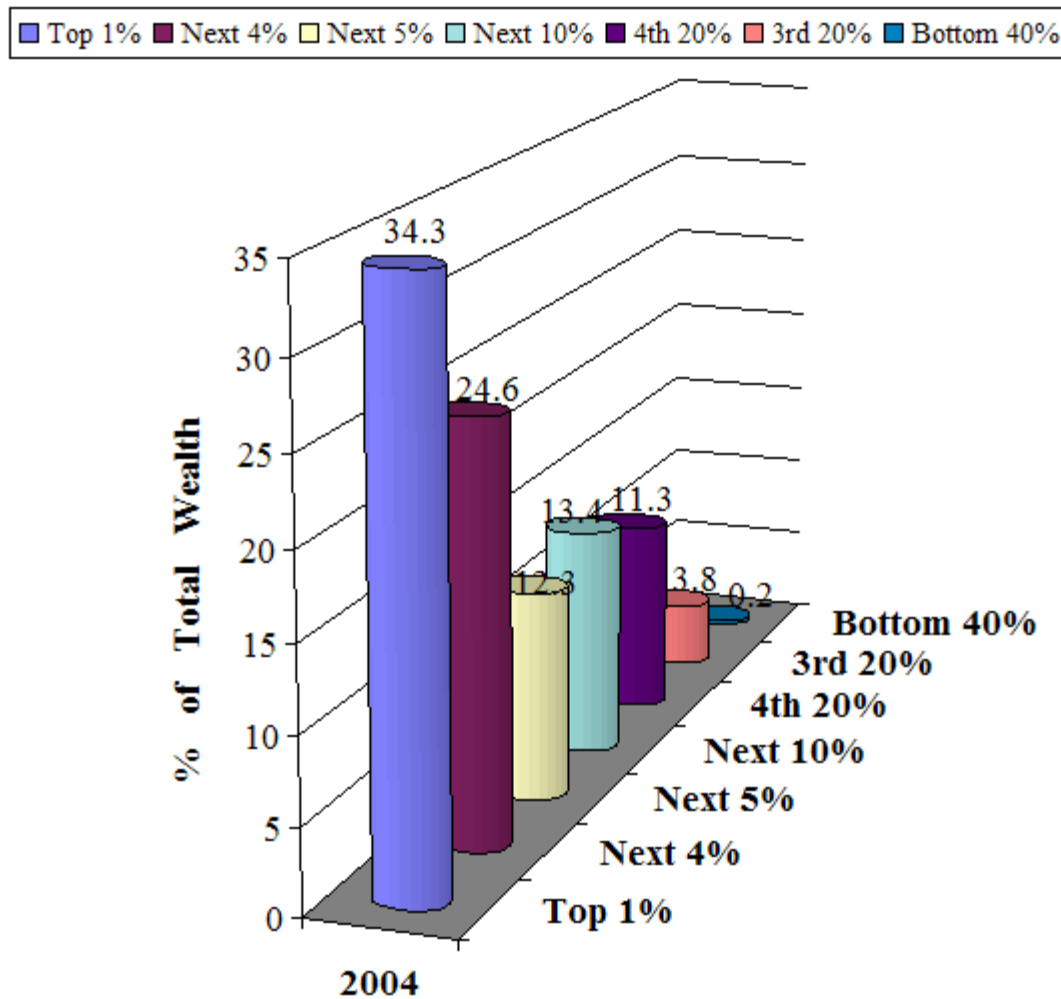
Distribution of Wealth

21st century

At the end of the 20th century, wealth was and still is concentrated among the [G8](#) and Western [industrialized nations](#), along with several [Asian](#) nations. The [OPEC](#) countries are also wealthy. An [Energy Information Administration](#) report stated that [OPEC](#) member nations were projected to earn a net amount of \$1.251 trillion in 2008 from their [oil exports](#), due to the record crude prices.^[10]

A study by the World Institute for Development Economics Research at United Nations University reports that the richest 1% of adults alone owned 40% of global assets in the year 2000, and that the richest 10% of adults accounted for 85% of the world total. The bottom half of the world adult population owned barely 1% of global wealth. Extensive statistics, many indicating the growing world disparity, are included in the available report, press releases, Excel tables and Powerpoint slides.^[11] Moreover, another study found that the richest 2% own more than half of global household [assets](#).^[12] Despite this, the distribution has been changing quite rapidly in the direction of greater concentration of wealth.^[13]

Distribution of Wealth, U.S. Households, 2004



Franken Wins Bipartisan Support For Legislation Reining In KBR's Treatment Of Rape

In 2005, Jamie Leigh Jones was gang-raped by her co-workers while she was working for Halliburton/KBR in Baghdad. She was detained in a shipping container for at least 24 hours without food, water, or a bed, and “warned her that if she left Iraq for medical treatment, she'd be out of a job.” (Jones was not an isolated case.) Jones was prevented from bringing charges in court against KBR because her employment contract stipulated that sexual assault allegations would only be heard in private arbitration.

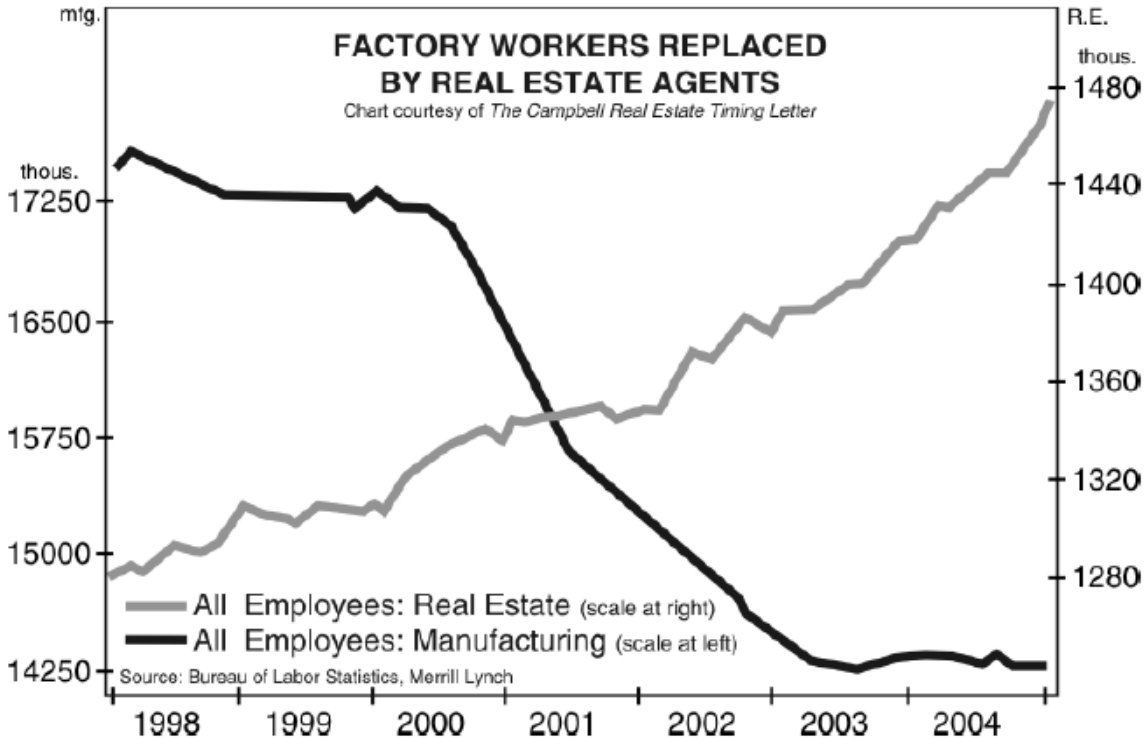
Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) proposed an amendment to the 2010 Defense Appropriations bill that would withhold defense contracts from companies like KBR “if they restrict their employees from taking workplace sexual assault, battery and discrimination cases to court.”

On the Senate floor, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) spoke against the amendment, calling it “a political attack directed at Halliburton.” Franken responded, “This amendment does not single out a single contractor. This amendment would defund any contractor that refuses to give a victim of rape their day in court.”

In the end, Franken won the debate. His amendment passed by a 68-30 vote,

Robert Prechter, Dec 2008

As a result of a lending bias towards the industry, we had an interesting divergence of trends. The declining line here is the number of people employed in United States manufacturing jobs, and the line rising toward the upper right is the number of people employed in the real estate business. Ultimately manufacturing supports everything. You can't have a declining manufacturing sector and a rising consumer sector, at least not for long and particularly when it is fueled by debt, because it tends to lead to a glut. And of course that is the result we have today in housing.



Elliott Wave Theorist

Angry Americans

http://specials.msn.com/A-List/Angry-Americans.aspx?cp-searchtext=Angry Americans&FORM=msnhal



Friday, October 16, 2009



E-mail Print Blog Facebook

Search: Angry Americans

Whether you blame it on unemployment, lost homes, health care scares or other issues, America's psyche is showing signs of wear:

Signs of the times: A key measure of people's confidence surprised experts by falling. And more Americans are calling these hotlines for help.

The recession: It has led to increased violence worldwide, a study found. Some Americans, meanwhile, have become riled up over issues, including:

Washington

***Gun rights:** Sales have surged since President Barack Obama took office. (What's behind that?)

***The latest topic of debate:** Obama's Nobel Peace Prize win.

Health care

***Town Halls:** Meetings to discuss proposed health care reform turned hostile, with a bloody incident, out-of-control crowds and weapons.

***Congress:** Rep. Joe Wilson's shout-out during President Barack Obama's speech incited a backlash, but his outburst had a silver lining.

The economy

***Housing:** Foreclosures, triggered in part by the subprime mortgage crisis, turned homeowners into protesters.

***Bailouts:** Companies' billion-dollar bailouts, courtesy of the American taxpayer, also led to protests. Some executives took bonuses, earning them a public scolding.

Coping: Two emotions usually precede anger. Feeling immobilized and unable to make decisions are warning signs. Having panic attacks? Here's some advice.

Week in Search

- **Search: Rush Limbaugh & the Rams**

Http://www.spaceweather.com

Daily Sun: 13 Oct. 09



The sun is blank--no sunspots. Photo credit: SOHO/MDI

Sunspot number: 0

[What is the sunspot number?](#)

Updated 12 Oct 2009

Spotless Days

Current Stretch: 11 days

2009 total: 223 days (78%)

Since 2004: 734 days

Typical Solar Min: 485 days

[explanation](#) | [more info](#)

Updated 12 Oct 2009

Far side of the Sun:



This [holographic image](#) reveals no sunspots on the far side of the sun. Image credit: SOHO/MDI

NORTHERN LIGHTS: A minor solar wind stream hit Earth's magnetic field on Oct. 11th, sparking green auroras around the Arctic Circle. Aleksander Chernucho photographed the display from Russia's Kola Peninsula not far from the border of Finland:



"I used a [Nikon D700](#) for this 10 second exposure," he says.

More auroras could appear on Oct. 15th when another solar wind stream is expected to reach Earth. Arctic sky watchers should [be alert](#) for green lights in the sky.

Moon Shot?



Today's Buzz

Buzz Updates

My Activity

Science

[» View all Science stories](#)



Nasa's moon shot: LCROSS plume wilts

The Guardian - Submitted: 9 Oct 2009

Nasa disappointed as LCROSS fails to produce the large plume of debris needed to prove water exists on lunar surface
Nasa moon LCROSS strike - as it happened

Nasa's hopes of filming a spectacular crash on the moon were dashed today when satellite and telescope imagery failed to record the enormous plume of rock and dust that scientists had predicted.

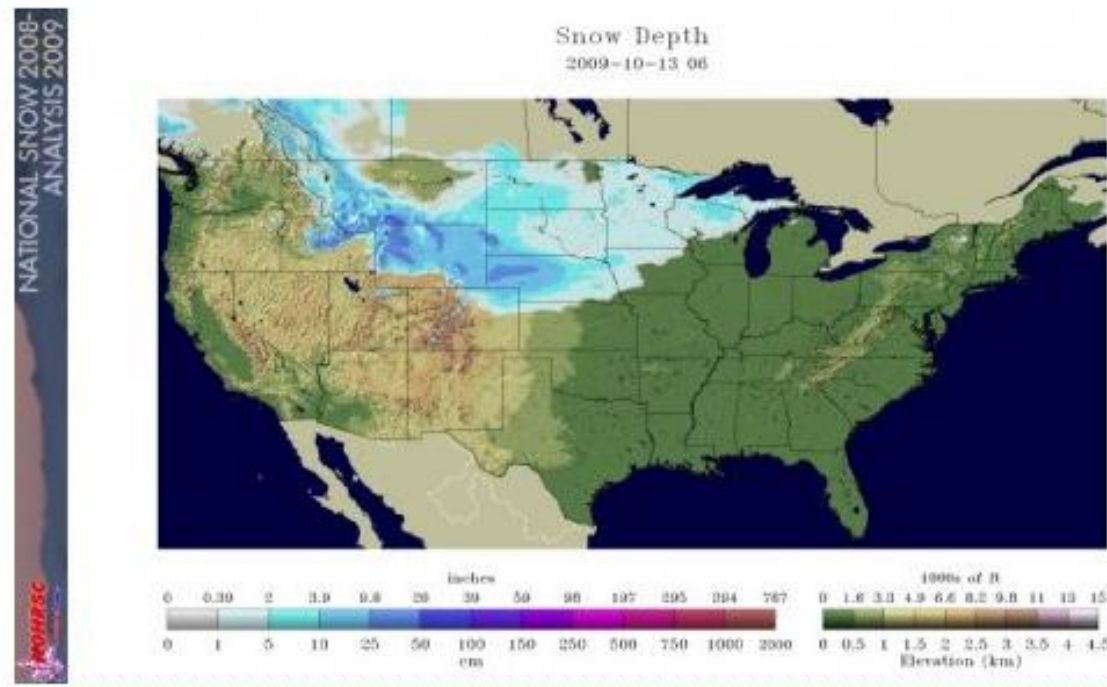
Early Winter

Early start to winter $\approx 20\%$ of USA is covered in snow already

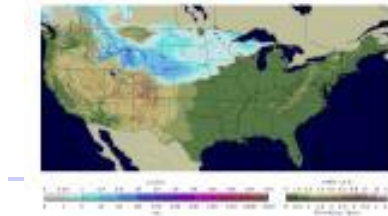
While early autumn snowstorms aren't uncommon in US weather history, they tend to be quick affairs that melt off quickly in a day or two. This however is a bit different in that we have a significant portion of the northern Midwest plains and northern Rockies are snow covered and it is not quickly dissipating, in fact it is increasing. Since October 10th the coverage has increased from 13.2% of the USA covered by snow.

14
10
2009

This map below is from NOAA's NOHRSC National Snow Analysis page.



Snow Depth



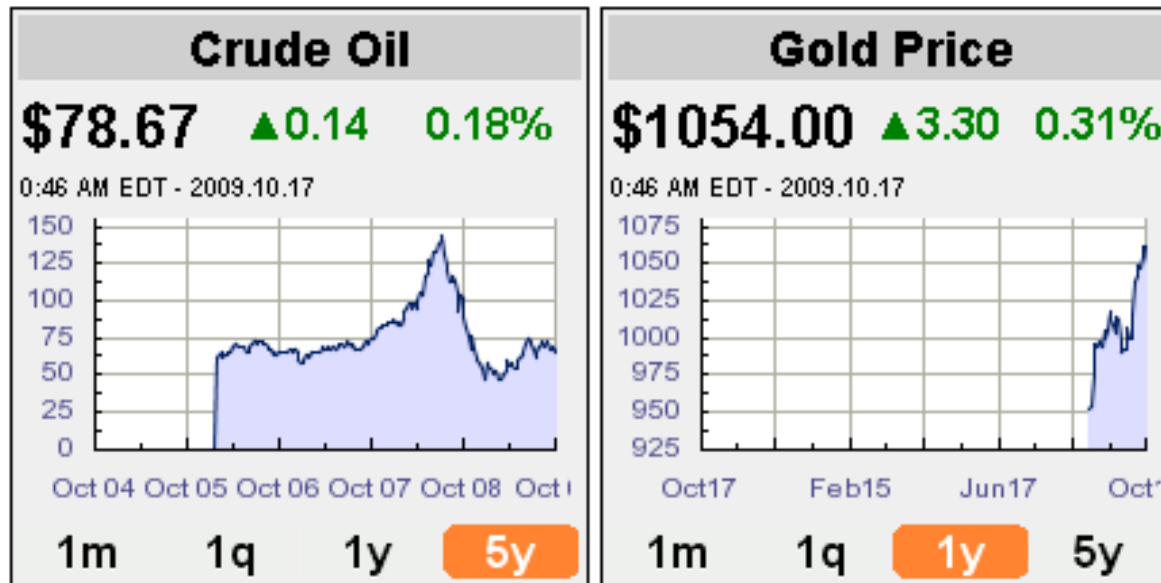
Animate:

Season --- Two
weeks --- One
Day

Crude Oil Price

Crude Oil and Commodity Prices

October, Saturday 17 2009 - 00:46:51



Crude Oil Price by OIL-PRICE.NET ©

Price		Change	Trades	Volume
00:46 - \$ 78.67		▲ 0.14 0.18% ▲	72,293	214,510
Range	Open	52 Wk Range	1 Year Forecast	
76.82 - 78.75	78.67	55.31 - 78.75	\$ 90 / Barrel	

<http://oil-price.net/>

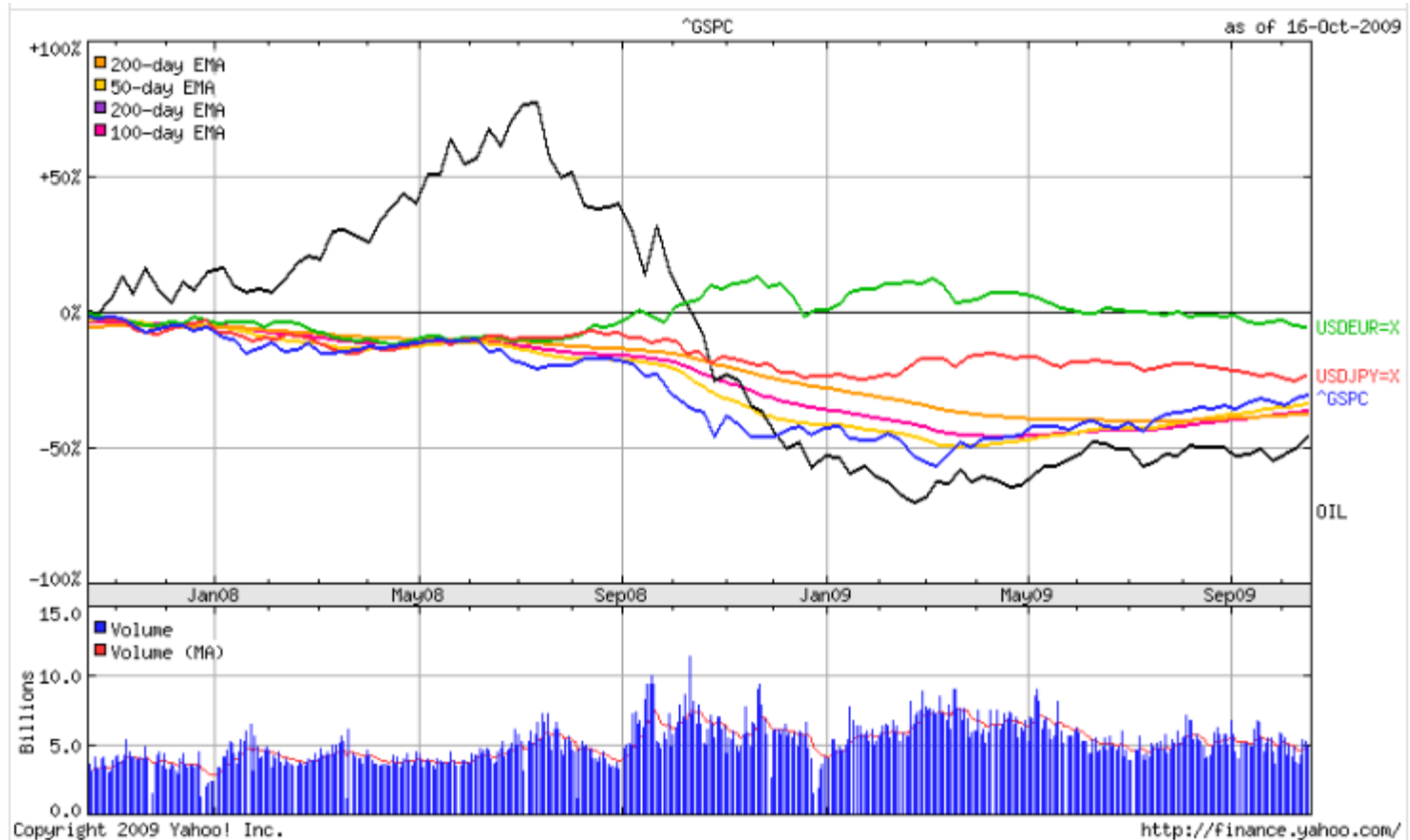
Today's stock market bears about as much resemblance to the real economy as a game of poker or Monopoly or Trivial Pursuit.

Instead of the market indexes, keep tracking employment, wages, and the gross domestic product (GDP). When they return, we will have recovered. Not Before

The stock market may be a game but it is being played with dollars. The rise in stock prices without an increase in productivity or dividends is not an indication of growth but of inflation and instability!

This is the result of an oversupply of money that has been pumped into the pockets of market players and not into the economy.

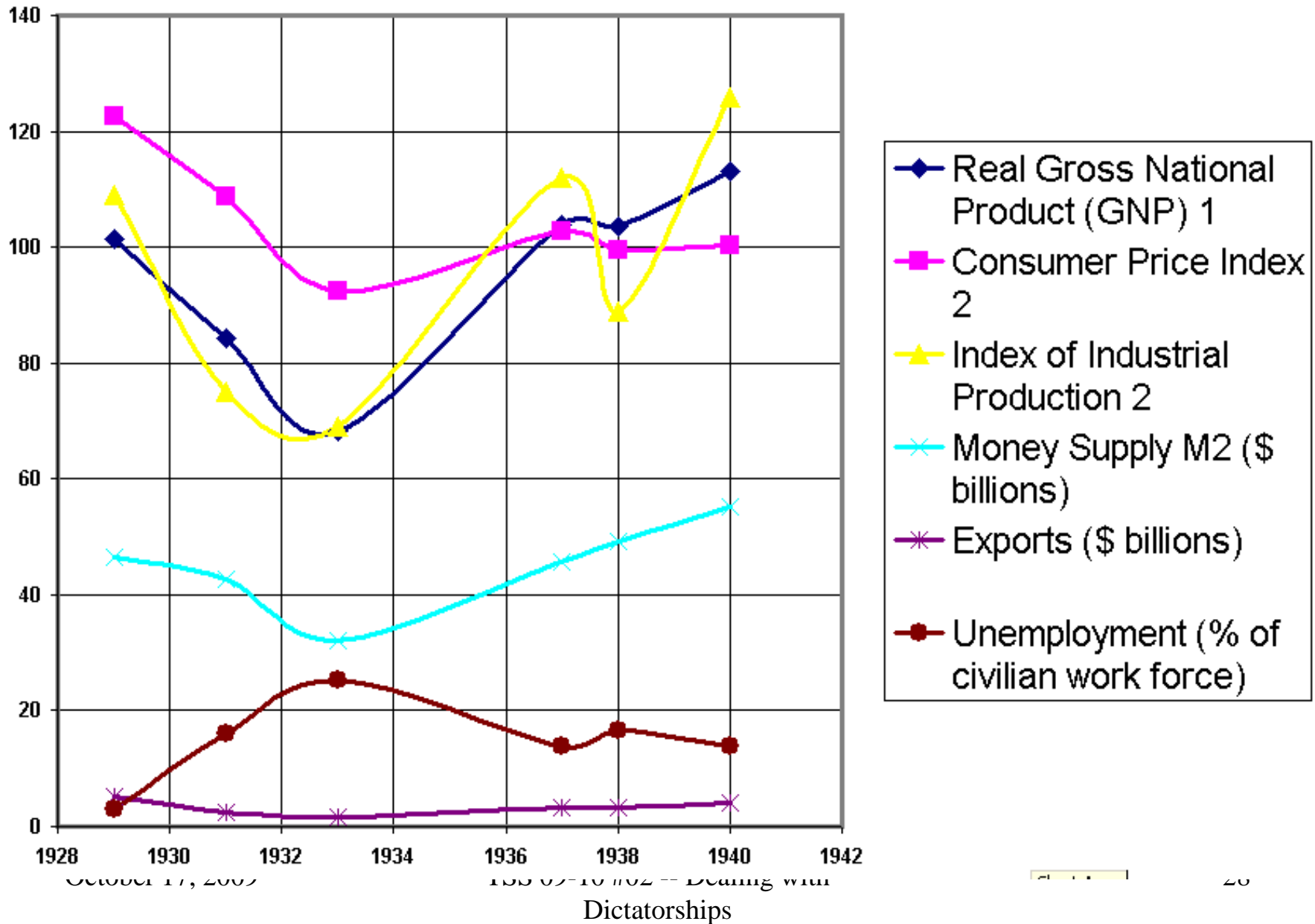
S&P 500 – 2 Year



Index Value:	1,087.68
Trade Time:	Oct 16
Change:	↓ 8.88 (0.81%)
Prev Close:	1,096.56
Open:	1,094.67
Day's Range:	1,081.53 - 1,094.67
52wk Range:	666.79 - 1,096.56

M/A

The Years of the Great Depression



October 17, 2007

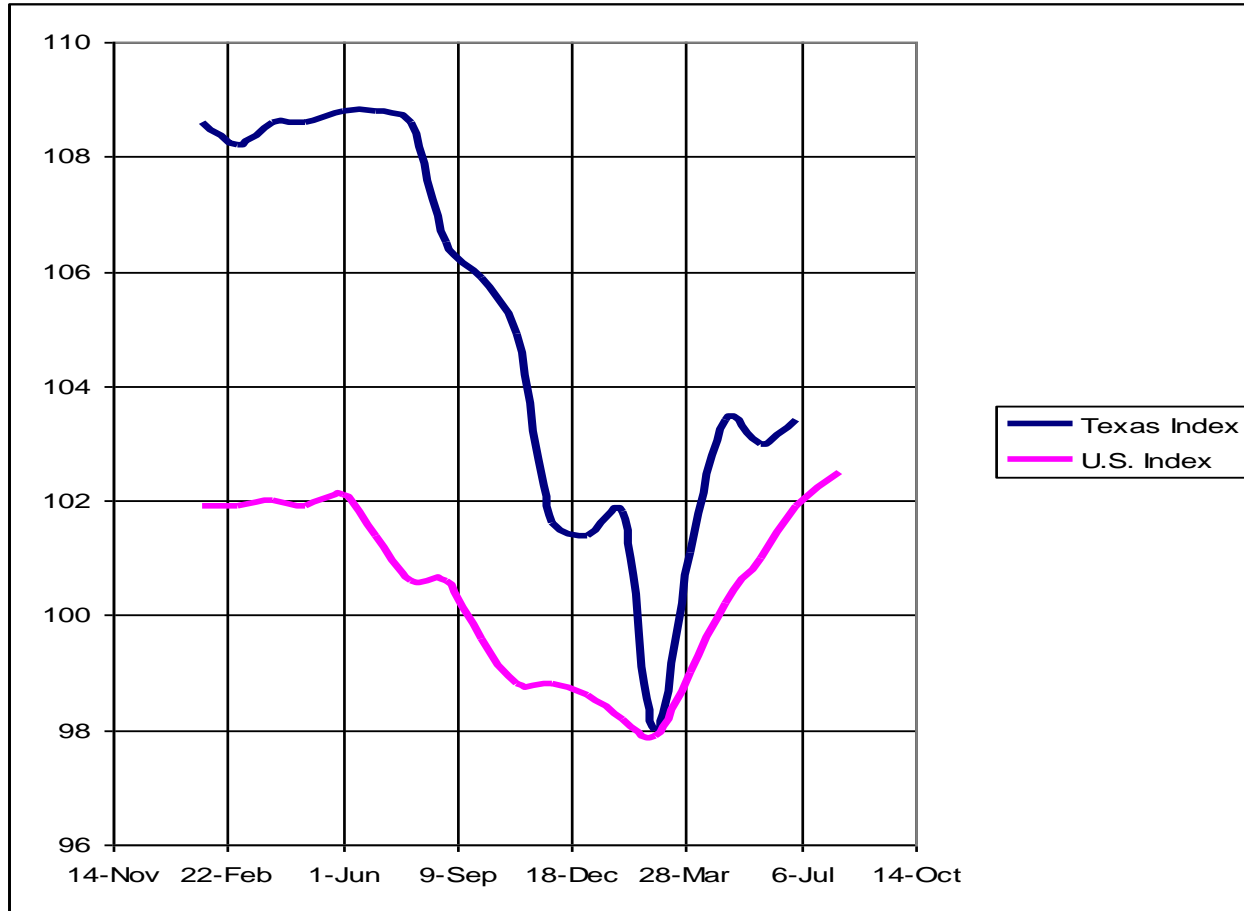
188 02-10-1102 -- Dealing with

Dictatorships

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Texas Leading Economic Indicators



Change from previous year:

The leading indicators for Texas are down 4.6%

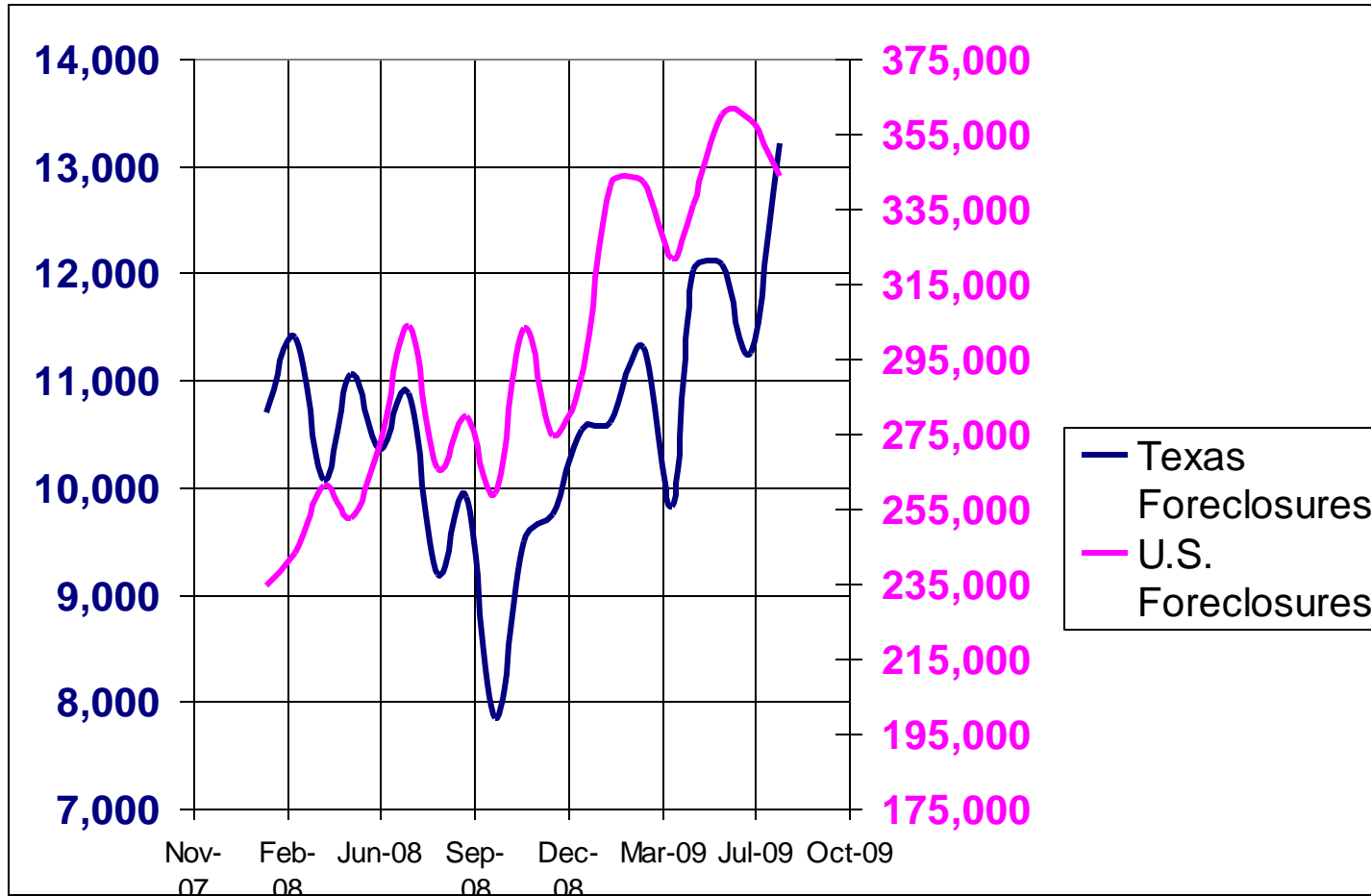
The leading indicators for the U.S. are up 1.9%

<http://www.texasahead.org/economy/tracking/>

October 17, 2009

TSS 09-10 #02 -- Dealing with
Dictatorships

Mortgage Foreclosures

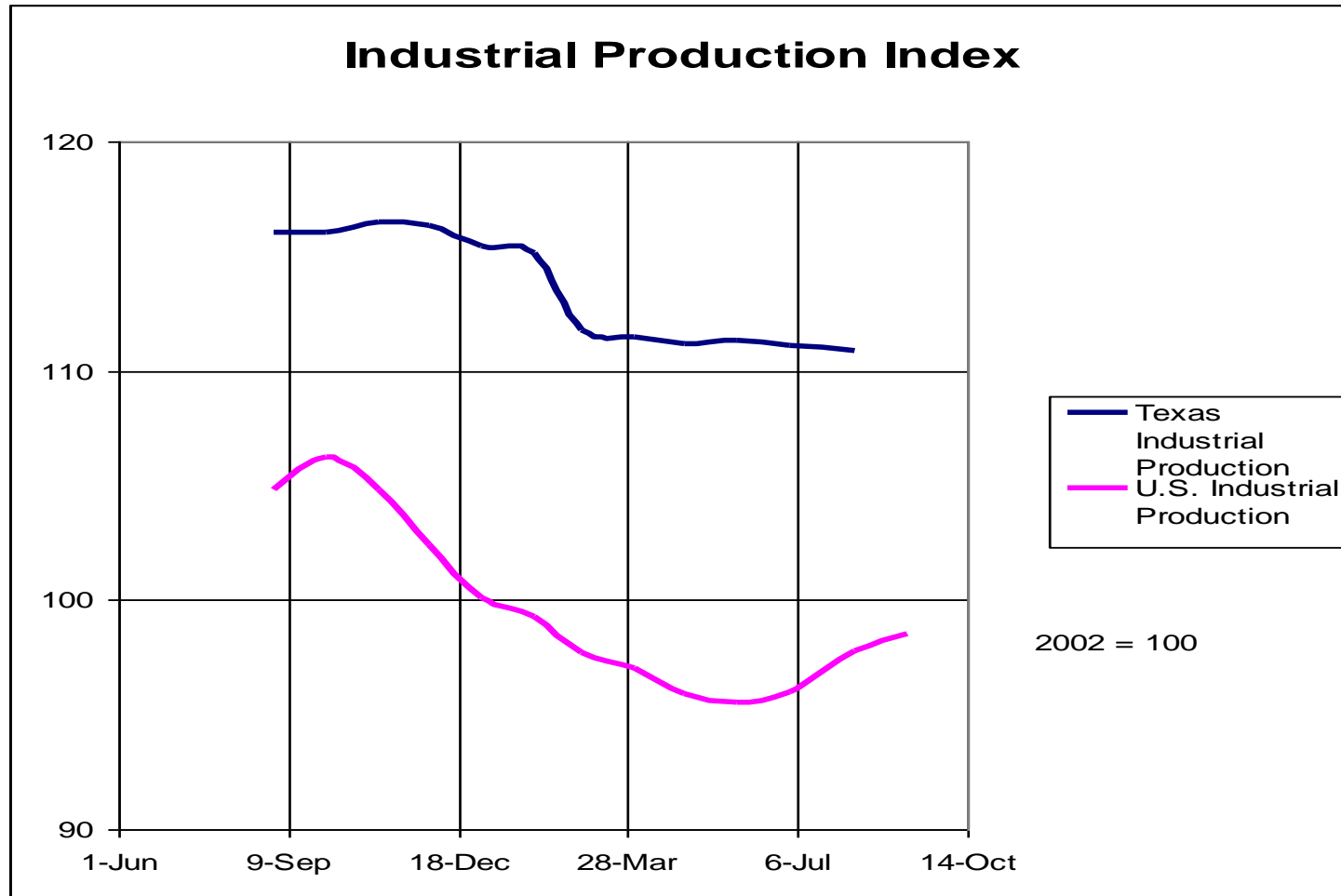


Texas is up 43.8%

U.S. is up 29.2%.

Source: RealtyTrac

Industrial Production Index (Tx)



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

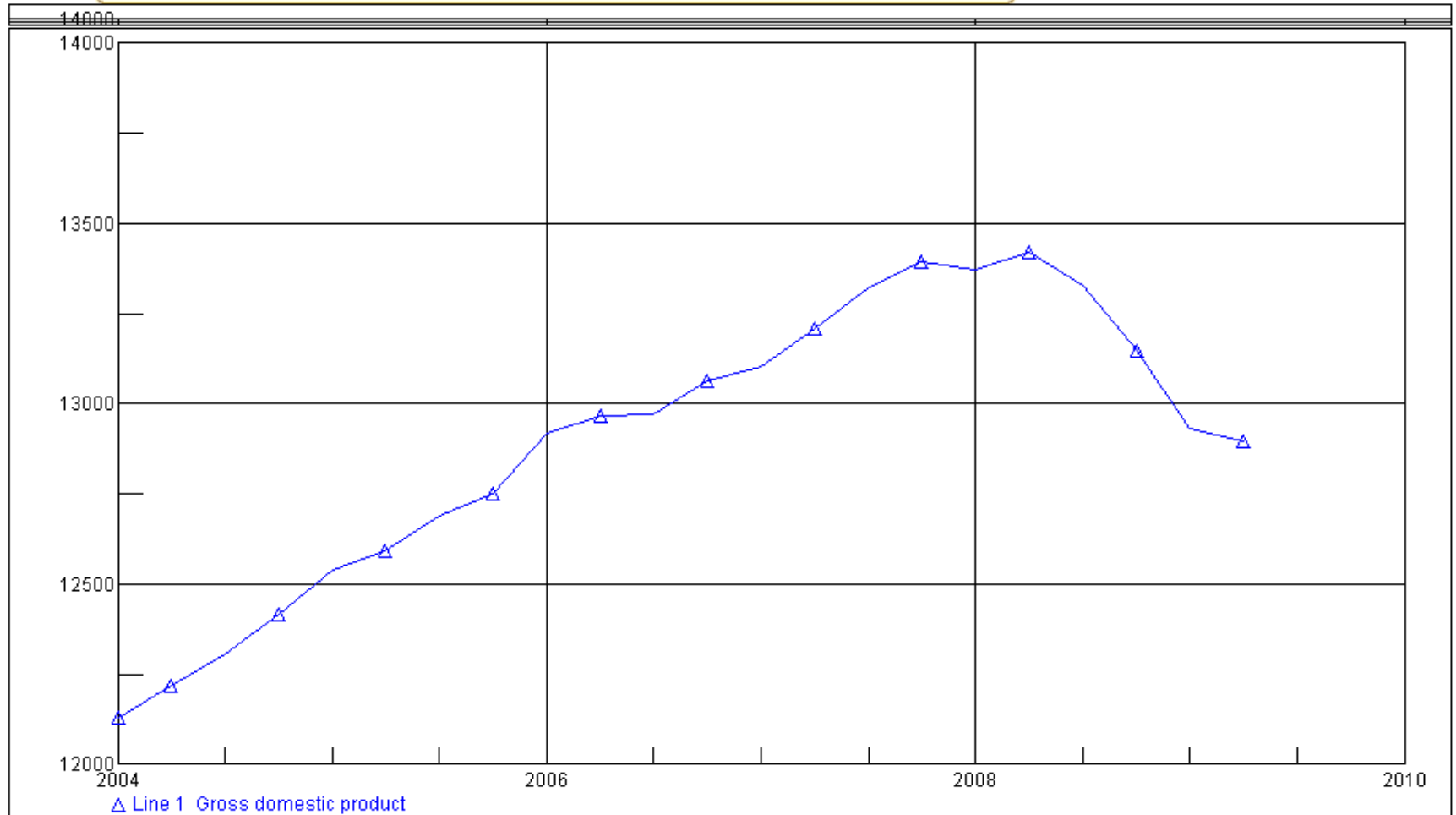
Real Gross Domestic Product, Chained Dollars

Today is: 9/18/2009 Last Revised on August 27, 2009 Next Release Date September 30, 2009

Data Table Options ↑

First Year 2004-A & Q	Last Year 2009-Q	Series: <input type="radio"/> Annual(A) <input checked="" type="radio"/> Quarterly(Q) <input type="radio"/> Monthly(M)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Get all years <input type="button" value="Update"/>
<input type="radio"/> HTML <input checked="" type="radio"/> Locking Stubs		

Tools Options ↓



Third Saturday Seminar 2009-2010

Humanity at a Crossroads

Session 02

17 October 2009

“Dealing with Dictatorships”

“From Dictatorship to Democracy” by Gene Sharp

Curt Gibby

**ALL Program, Lone Star College - Montgomery, Conroe,
Texas**

From Chapter One of "*From Dictatorship to Democracy*"

Since 1980 dictatorships have collapsed before the predominantly nonviolent defiance of people in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Slovenia, Madagascar, Mali, Bolivia, and the Philippines. Nonviolent resistance has furthered the movement toward democratization in Nepal, Zambia, South Korea, Chile, Argentina, Haiti, Brazil, Uruguay, Malawi, Thailand, Bulgaria, Hungary, Zaire, Nigeria, and various parts of the former Soviet Union (playing a significant role in the defeat of the August 1991 attempted hard-line coup d'tat).

In addition, mass political defiance(1) has occurred in China, Burma, and Tibet in recent years. Although those struggles have not brought an end to the ruling dictatorships or occupations, they have exposed the brutal nature of those repressive regimes to the world community and have provided the populations with valuable experience with this form of struggle.

Definition

Definition - Dictatorship: 1. A system of government in which the leader or leaders have complete power. 2. A trap into which people or cultures or societies fall, sometimes willingly, that eventually controls their lives and character, to the benefit of the dictatorial power, as in an addiction or an obligation. (Curt Gibby)

Expand your thinking

Also, think on how what this book has to say applies to other situations in which we find ourselves around the world ...

Grace Lee Boggs on Democracynow.org 9/18/09

Well, what I think is that we are counting too much on mass protests and thinking they are going to influence the administration, and not recognizing sufficiently that we have entered into a period of revolution and counterrevolution, and that it began with the '60s, and that when Jimmy Carter said on July 15th, 1979 that we—when he made his malaise speech, what he was saying, essentially, that we have to begin looking at ourselves. And I think that that created a form of counterrevolution in the form of Ronald Reagan, which was not recognizable because it seemed so sunny, and it only began to happen when, after 9/11, we got the Bush administration.

Grace Lee Boggs, Cont.

Well, first of all, we have to understand that a revolutionary period is also a counterrevolutionary period; that there is a deep unrest, a deep destabilization, that has taken place in the structures of the society; and that this began with the civil rights movement. They began saying that human relations matter more than economic growth. And it came from black people, because the economic growth had been taken so much—taken place so much on their backs. And then it began to embrace women, people from the ecology movement, young people, who also were being threatened, of course, by the Vietnam War. And all these things came together.

I mean, to understand that, I think, is our challenge. And to understand that the Obama administration, because it's so rootless, actually—I mean, because so much talking heads from Harvard University—that it's not able to grasp this. And how you, folks like yourselves in the media, who have to operate so much within a timeframe of seconds—how you are going to convey that, I think, is a huge challenge.

How many types of “dictator”
can you think of?

A note from a friend

Dear Curt,

Thanks for the e-mail. Everyday is a struggle in Iran but we are very optimistic. The opposition is expanding its activities. They are absolutely genius. They stamp slogans such as Death to Dictator on the Iran's paper money. The government had not had a solution for it so far. Political slogans are on the subways, walls, mosques and anywhere they could be. Universities are not silent at all. There is no week without demonstration of anger and opposition in the universities. It is good and the time to remain optimistic. I will come to Houston at the end of March for a four day conference. If a lecture fits your Saturday seminar schedule, it will be an honor.

Thanks,

Mehdi

Mehdi Noorbaksh Ph.D., MBA, MHA

Associate Professor of International Affairs

Coordinator, General Education

FROM
DICTATORSHIP
TO
DEMOCRACY

A Conceptual Framework for Liberation

Gene Sharp

The Albert Einstein Institution

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First Printing, May 2002
Second Printing, June 2003

From Dictatorship to Democracy was originally published in Bangkok in 1993 by the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma in association with Khit Pyaing (*The New Era Journal*). It has since been translated into at least eight other languages and has been published in Serbia, Indonesia, and Thailand, among other countries. This is the second United States printing.

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The Albert Einstein Institution

Mission Statement

The mission of the Albert Einstein Institution is to advance the world-wide study and strategic use of nonviolent action in conflict.

The Institution is committed to:

- defending democratic freedoms and institutions;
- opposing oppression, dictatorship, and genocide; and
- reducing the reliance on violence as an instrument of policy.

This mission is pursued in three ways, by:

- encouraging research and policy studies on the methods of non-violent action and their past use in diverse conflicts;
- sharing the results of this research with the public through publications, conferences, and the media; and
- consulting with groups in conflict about the strategic potential of nonviolent action.

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The "Monkey Master" fable

The "Monkey Master" fable

A Fourteenth Century Chinese parable by Liu-Ji, for example, outlines this neglected understanding of political power quite well:(7)

In the feudal state of Chu an old man survived by keeping monkeys in his service. The people of Chu called him "ju gong" (monkey master).

Each morning, the old man would assemble the monkeys in his courtyard, and order the eldest one to lead the others to the mountains to gather fruits from bushes and trees. It was the rule that each monkey had to give one tenth of his collection to the old man. Those who failed to do so would be ruthlessly flogged. All the monkeys suffered bitterly, but dared not complain.

One day, a small monkey asked the other monkeys: "Did the old man plant all the fruit trees and bushes?" The others said: "No, they grew naturally." The small monkey further asked: "Can't we take the fruits without the old man's permission?" The others replied: "Yes, we all can." The small monkey continued: "Then, why should we depend on the old man; why must we all serve him?"

Before the small monkey was able to finish his statement, all the monkeys suddenly became enlightened and awakened.

The "Monkey Master" fable (Concluded)

On the same night, watching that the old man had fallen asleep, the monkeys tore down all the barricades of the stockade in which they were confined, and destroyed the stockade entirely. They also took the fruits the old man had in storage, brought all with them to the woods, and never returned. The old man finally died of starvation.

Yu-li-zi says, "Some men in the world rule their people by tricks and not by righteous principles. Aren't they just like the monkey master? They are not aware of their muddleheadedness. As soon as their people become enlightened, their tricks no longer work."

dictatorships are dependent on the population

Contrary to popular opinion, even totalitarian dictatorships are dependent on the population and the societies they rule. As the political scientist Karl W. Deutsch noted in 1953:

Totalitarian power is strong only if it does not have to be used too often. If totalitarian power must be used at all times against the entire population, it is unlikely to remain powerful for long. Since totalitarian regimes require more power for dealing with their subjects than do other types of government, such regimes stand in greater need of widespread and dependable compliance habits among their people; more than that they have to be able to count on the active support of at least significant parts of the population in case of need.

From *Dictatorship to Democracy*, Gene Sharp

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Weaknesses of dictatorships

Among the weaknesses of dictatorships are the following:

1. The cooperation of a multitude of people, groups, and institutions needed to operate the system may be restricted or withdrawn.
2. The requirements and effects of the regime's past policies will somewhat limit its present ability to adopt and implement conflicting policies.
3. The system may become routine in its operation, less able to adjust quickly to new situations.
4. Personnel and resources already allocated for existing tasks will not be easily available for new needs.
5. Subordinates fearful of displeasing their superiors may not report accurate or complete information needed by the dictators to make decisions.
6. The ideology may erode, and myths and symbols of the system may become unstable.

7. If a strong ideology is present that influences one's view of reality, firm adherence to it may cause inattention to actual conditions and needs.
8. Deteriorating efficiency and competency of the bureaucracy, or excessive controls and regulations, may make the system's policies and operation ineffective.
9. Internal institutional conflicts and personal rivalries and hostilities may harm, and even disrupt, the operation of the dictatorship.
10. Intellectuals and students may become restless in response to conditions, restrictions, doctrinalism, and repression.
11. The general public may over time become apathetic, skeptical, and even hostile to the regime.

12. Regional, class, cultural, or national differences may become acute.
13. The power hierarchy of the dictatorship is always unstable to some degree, and at times extremely so. Individuals do not only remain in the same position in the ranking, but may rise or fall to other ranks or be removed entirely and replaced by new persons.
14. Sections of the police or military forces may act to achieve their own objectives, even against the will of established dictators, including by coup d'état.
15. If the dictatorship is new, time is required for it to become well established.
16. With so many decisions made by so few people in the dictatorship, mistakes of judgment, policy, and action are likely to occur.
17. If the regime seeks to avoid these dangers and decentralizes controls and decision making, its control over the central levers of power may be further eroded.

Attacking weaknesses of dictatorships

With knowledge of such inherent weaknesses, the democratic opposition can seek to aggravate these "Achilles' heels" deliberately in order to alter the system drastically or to disintegrate it.

The conclusion is then clear: despite the appearances of strength, all dictatorships have weaknesses, internal inefficiencies, personal rivalries, institutional inefficiencies, and conflicts between organizations and departments. These weaknesses, over time, tend to make the regime less effective and more vulnerable to changing conditions and deliberate resistance. Not everything the regime sets out to accomplish will get completed. At times, for example, even Hitler's direct orders were never implemented because those beneath him in the hierarchy refused to carry them out. The dictatorial regime may at times even fall apart quickly, as we have already observed.

This does not mean dictatorships can be destroyed without risks and casualties. Every possible course of action for liberation will involve risks and potential suffering, and will take time to operate. And, of course, no means of action can ensure rapid success in every situation. However, types of struggle that target the dictatorship's identifiable weaknesses have greater chance of success than those that seek to fight the dictatorship where it is clearly strongest. The question is *how* this struggle is to be waged.

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There are three major conclusions to the ideas sketched here:

- Liberation from dictatorships is possible;
- Very careful thought and strategic planning will be required to achieve it; and
- Vigilance, hard work, and disciplined struggle, often at great cost, will be needed.

The oft quoted phrase "Freedom is not free" is true. No outside force is coming to give oppressed people the freedom they so much want. People will have to learn how to take that freedom themselves. Easy it cannot be.

If people can grasp what is required for their own liberation, they can chart courses of action which, through much travail, can eventually bring them their freedom. Then, with diligence they can construct a new democratic order and prepare for its defense. Freedom won by struggle of this type can be durable. It can be maintained by a tenacious people committed to its preservation and enrichment.

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A Real Life Example

Everyday is a struggle in Iran but we are very optimistic. The opposition is expanding its activities. They are absolutely genius. They stamp slogans such as Death to Dictator on the Iran's paper money. The government had not had a solution for it so far. Political slogans are on the subways, walls, mosques and anywhere they could be. Universities are not silent at all. There is no week without demonstration of anger and opposition in the universities. It is good and the time to remain optimistic. I will come to Houston at the end of March for a four day conference. If a lecture fits your Saturday seminar schedule, it will be an honor.

Thanks,

Mehdi

Mehdi Noorbaksh Ph.D., MBA, MHA

Associate Professor of International Affairs

Coordinator, General Education

Greatest Threats

The greatest threats to the US are:

- People who start unnecessary wars.**
- The Politicians who use your money to cover the losses of bankers and brokers.**
- Insurance companies that don't insure, drug companies that push drugs then charge you for the advertising, hospitals and doctors who put money before patients.**
- An American public that won't look out for itself and each other.**

A Parting Thought

Shouldn't Politicians, Bankers and Insurance Executives be forced to register like sex offenders?

Don't panic!

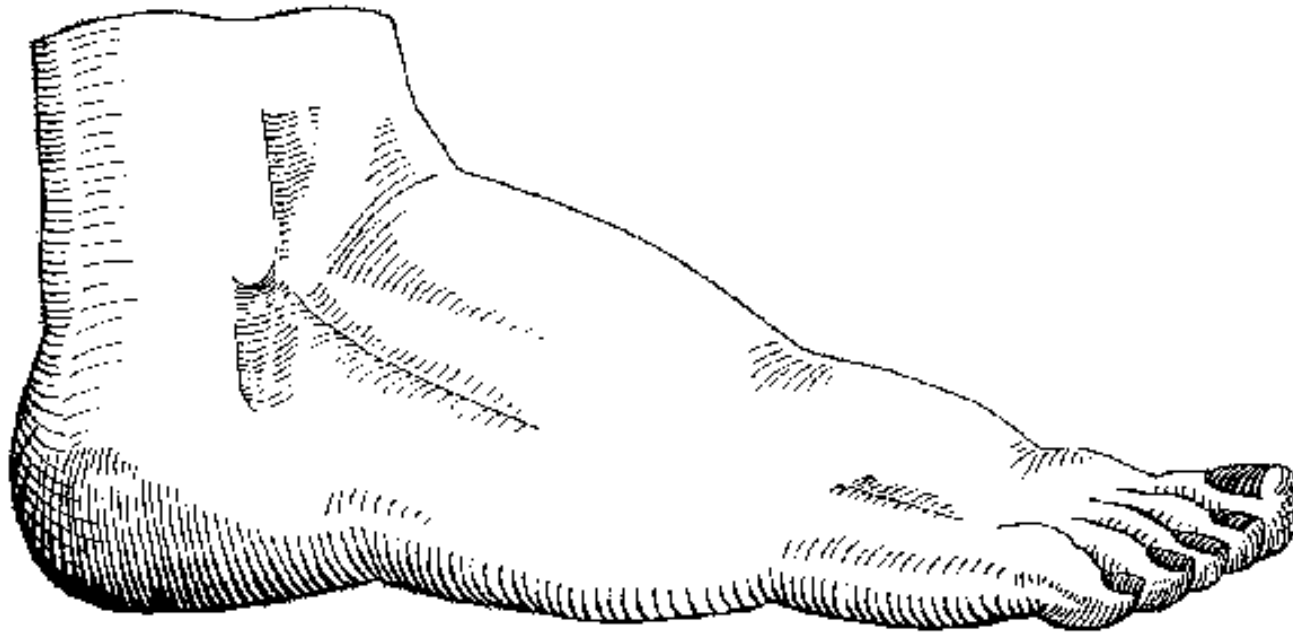
Don't be Panicked!



Seriously

See You 17 October 2009

The Monty Python Foot, a convenient way to end something that would seem to go on for ever accomplishing nothing.... (*See deus ex machina*)



The famous Python Foot can here be seen in its original format in the bottom left corner of "An Allegory of Venus and Cupid" by [Bronzino](#) (~1545)

When Monty Python had no ending for a skit, this foot would appear out of the sky and squash whatever was on screen with a rude noise. Allowing the show to move on.

Enrichment Material

One of life's persistent questions:

“Why do cockroaches roll over before the die?”



Don't be Panicked

Can you take responsibility for yourself and others close to you?

Can you stay calm and assess a changing or changed situation?

Can you tell the difference between fact and fabrication.

Can you delay panicking until the threat has passed?

It all connects

Fear, War, Greed

To much capital in the hands of the few

Too little money in the hands of the consumers.

Credit is not a replacement for disposable income

Oil is a limited resource

Unable to anticipate what looks obvious in retrospect

Trusting of Authority

Lacking critical ability/Education

Etc.

Don't just be a thermometer, Be a thermostat

Jill Carroll

The greater fool theory

The greater fool theory (sometimes the bigger fool theory, also called survivor investing) is the belief held by one who makes a questionable investment, with the assumption that they will be able to sell it later to "a bigger fool"; in other words, buying something not because you believe that it is worth the price, but rather because you believe that you will be able to sell it to someone else for an even better price.^[1]

Wikipedia.org

Getting Warmer?



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We have it in our power...

**"We have it in our
power to begin the
world over again."**

Ronald Reagan quoting Thomas Paine

January 18, 2008 Bill Moyers talks with Harvey J. Kaye

If Nietzsche is right ...

**Would the Übermensch we will create
have the natural ability to get along with
each other?**

**And will “man” (we) be a laughingstock
or a painful embarrassment for the
overman that we create?**

Übermensch

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Oct 15, 1844 – Aug 25, 1900)

The Übermensch (German; English: **Overman, Superman**) is a concept in the Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche posited the Übermensch as a goal for humanity to set for itself in his 1883 book Thus Spoke Zarathustra (German: Also Sprach Zarathustra).

The book's protagonist, Zarathustra, contends that "man is something which ought to be overcome:"

All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood and even go back to the beasts rather than overcome man? What is the ape to man? A laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the overman: a laughingstock or a painful embarrassment...

There is no consensus regarding the precise meaning of the Übermensch, or even the overall importance of the concept in Nietzsche's thought.



For Further Reading

Superhero

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superhero>

Masters of Evil

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masters_of_Evil

Joseph John Campbell (March 26, 1904 – October 30, 1987) was an American mythologist, writer and lecturer, best known for his work in comparative mythology and comparative religion. His work is vast, covering many aspects of the human experience. His philosophy is often summarized by his phrase: **"Follow your bliss."**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Campbell

(Charlie Rose) A conversation (30 minutes) with Malcolm Gladwell, author of "Outliers." [Outliers](#), defined by Gladwell as people who do not fit into our normal understanding of achievement,^[3] *Outliers* deals with exceptional people, especially those who are smart, rich, and successful, and those who operate at the extreme outer edge of what is statistically possible.^[2] In statistics, an **outlier** is an observation that is numerically distant from the rest of the [data](#). (Intro gleaned from Wikipedia.org)

<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/9855>

(Karen Armstrong)"... if you want to make God laugh, tell Him, or Her, your plans. A self-proclaimed "freelance monotheist," Karen Armstrong is now on a mission to bring compassion, the heart of religion, as she sees it, back into modern life. "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you."

<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/03132009/watch.html>

Bill Moyers Interviews Karen Armstrong

http://www.pbs.org/now/transcript/transcript_armstrong.html