

## Prospects for a New American Standard of Living.

The current financial condition of the U.S. government has been shaped by the immediate past 8 years of the Bush administration's policies as well as the unintended consequences of those policies as they relate to tax cuts, entitlement reform, military spending, and financial deregulation. However, the economic condition of the U.S. is a long-term development related to the changing place of the U.S. in the international economy and to U.S. policy-makers' strategies about this. The demands for dramatic cuts in future public expenditures on pensions and health care *for the national interest* have been heard for 30 years. The protection of these benefits in the past, however, may mislead us about the full scope of what happened before, namely a vastly unequal distribution of the adjustment burden and the gains between the working classes and the professional and business classes. What are the prospects that a new politics of the American Standard of Living will emerge?

**Stephen Amberg** is the Fulbright Professor of American Studies, visiting this year at the Center for the Study of the Americas. His home institution is the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is a political scientist who studies U.S. political development. He has published studies on American political regimes, labor politics, regionalism, and industrial relations in the automobile industry and the garment industry.