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Journal of the Communist Party

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Bill Of Rights Socialism

1. *A life free of exploitation, insecurity, poverty; an end to unemployment, hunger and homelessness.*
2. *An end to racism, national oppression, anti-Semitism, all forms of discrimination, prejudice and bigotry. An end to the unequal status of*



FOR OUR FUTURE



CPUSA



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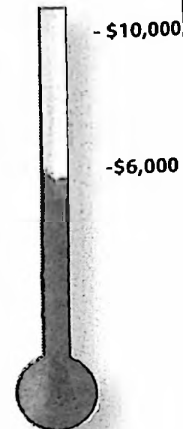
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PA FUND DRIVE

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Political Affairs is going through millennium changes. As we head towards the next century one of our greatest priorities is to seek out more reader contribution in ideas, information, and opinions on the changes we are making in the form and appearance of the magazine. This can come in the form of letters to our editor, comments to any of the bylined authors in care of the magazine, or unsolicited manuscripts. You can address any of the changes, cover suggestions, or give our staff some newsworthy items from your area that might have gone unnoticed. Manuscripts should be around 3000 words; all editing is done in consultation with the author. Photos are welcome. Letters and manuscripts can also be accepted by e-mail (jsims@cpusa.org) or by fax (212-229-1713). They will be returned if a self addressed, stamped envelope is included.



\$10,000 GOAL

In this world of modern technology, there are ever increasing costs for putting out each issue. We have set a goal of \$10,000 for this fund drive, and so far the results have been tremendous. We have raised \$6,000 dollars, and more money is coming in every day. The response to the changes taking place in *PA* has been enthusiastic for the most part – it is very important that you write in and tell us what your opinion is. The more input we have the easier it is to make *PA* a better publication.

The message of the working class must never be silenced. Indeed, it must always be enlarged and adapted to a changing society. This is a part of our commitment to a better world through socialism. Please keep the information and funds coming. Thank you.

-PA Editorial Board

YES, I want to contribute

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What will be the goals of our socialist society?

1. A life free of exploitation, insecurity, poverty; an end to unemployment, hunger and homelessness.
2. An end to racism, national oppression, anti-Semitism, all forms of discrimination, prejudice and bigotry. An end to the unequal status of women.
3. Renewal and extension of democracy; an end

to the rule of corporate America and private ownership of the wealth of our nation. Creation of a truly humane and rationally planned society that will stimulate the fullest flowering of the human personality, creativity and talent.

The advocates and ideologues of capitalism hold that such goals are utopian; that human beings are inherently selfish and evil. Others argue that these goals can be fully realized under capitalism.

We are confident, however, that such goals can be realized, but only through a socialist society.

Why Socialism?

Since its inception capitalism has been fatally flawed. Its inherent laws – to maximize profit on the backs of the working class – give rise to the class struggle.

History is a continuous story of people rising up against those who exploit and oppress them, to demand what's theirs. Our own country's historic beginning was revolutionary. The ideals of justice and equality have inspired peoples for centuries.

Up until the time of Karl Marx, those that advocated socialism were "utopians," that is, motivated by ideals only. It was Marx and his longtime friend and collaborator, Frederick Engels, who uncovered the inner laws of capitalism, where profit comes from and how societies develop. They transformed wishful thinking for socialism into socialism with a scientific, materialist basis.

Communists say that capitalism won't be around forever. Just like previous societies weren't around forever either. Slavery gave rise to feudalism and feudalism to capitalism. So, too, capitalism gives rise to socialism.

Foundations of Socialism

Political power would be in the hands of working people. Socialism starts with nationalization of the main means of production – the plants, factories, agri-business farms and everything necessary to produce what society needs. The large monopoly corporations and banks come under public ownership, that is, under the collec-

The CPUSA Bill of Rights Socialism

<i>Gus Hall</i>	<i>Why</i>
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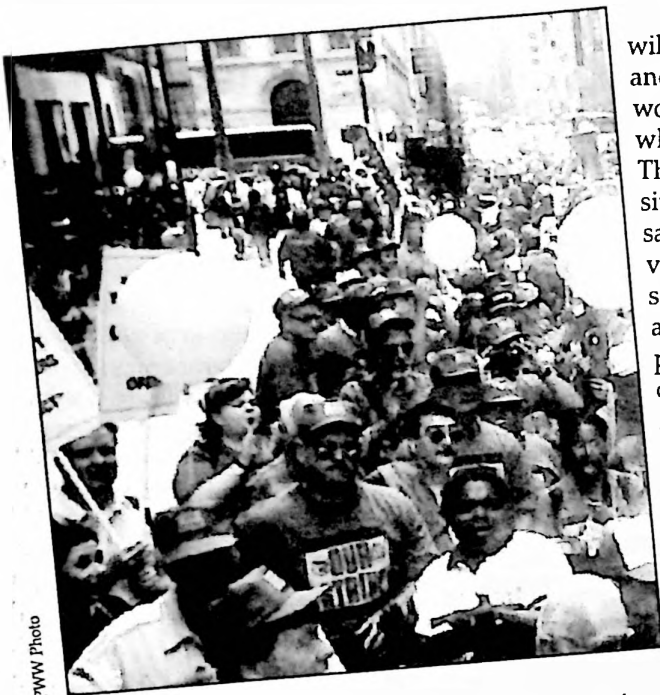
Bill of Rights socialism is uniquely American

AP Photo

We Communists believe that socialism is the very best replacement for a capitalist system that has served its purpose, but no longer meets the needs and requirements of the great majority of our people.

We believe that socialism USA will be built according to the traditions, history, culture and conditions of the United States. Thus, it will be different from any other socialist society in the world. It will be uniquely American.

Gus Hall is national chairman of the Communist Party.



PWW Photo

tive ownership of the entire working class and people, who have the leading role in building socialism.

Socialism also means public ownership of the energy industry and all the natural resources. It eliminates forever the power of the capitalist class to exploit and oppress the majority.

A socialist government draws up plans covering the entire economy. They are drawn up with maximum participation of the people, from the shop level on up. Such plans are achieved because they harmonize the interests of all, because there are no conflicts arising from exploitation of workers and no dog-eat-dog competition.

Production increases much faster than under capitalism, with a planned economy, advancement of science and technology, and the protection and preservation of our environment and natural resources.

A socialist government is based on all-around democracy, starting with economic democracy. The more people participate in running their own economy, the more firmly people's power is established, the more successful a socialist America will be.

Trade unions in a socialist USA

will insure a fair balance between what workers produce and what they receive. They will have decisive power to enforce safety and health provisions, prevent speedup, and guarantee good transportation, working conditions and plant facilities.

Public services – schools, hospitals, utilities, transit, parks, roads – are crumbling under capitalism. And now corporations are "privatizing"

government-run, publicly-owned institutions for private profit.

Under socialism public services and housing will be vastly improved and expanded. They will be broadened in their scope beyond anything dreamed of under capitalism.

The U.S. will become a vast construction site. Homes, schools, hospitals, places of recreation will be built to end shortages, replace substandard infrastructures and public facilities.

Jobs and Education

Full employment will be quickly achieved as production is expanded to satisfy the needs of people. Automation at the service of the working people will lead to both reduced hours of work and higher living standards, with no layoffs. There will be no danger of over-production since production will be planned and people's incomes will increase in line with the rising output of consumer goods and services.

Poverty will be ended quickly with the recovery of the vast resources now wasted in war production, corporate profits and the extravagant lifestyles of the filthy

rich.

All education will be tuition-free. Every person will have access to unlimited medical and health care without charge. These rights will be realized as rapidly as facilities can be built and the personnel trained.

With capitalism gone, crime will also begin to disappear, for it is the vicious profit system that corrupts people and breeds crime.

To Each According to Their Work

Some ask whether guaranteeing basic necessities, free education, low-cost housing and health care will encourage people to avoid working, or doing their best. The principle of socialism is: From each according to his/her ability, to each according to his/her work.

Socialism provides incentives for working better, producing more and higher quality goods, acquiring advanced skills. It does *not* equalize wages. Wages vary according to occupation and efficiency, although everyone is guaranteed a livable wage.

Under capitalism, improvements in skill, organization and technology are rightly feared by the worker, since they threaten jobs. Under socialism, they offer the chance to make the job more interesting and rewarding, as well as to improve living standards.

Socialism provides moral incentives because the fruits of labor benefit all. No person robs others of the profits from their labor; when social goals are adopted by the majority, people will want to work for these goals. Work will seem less a burden, more and more a creative activity, where everyone is his/her neighbor's helper instead of rival.

It is true socialism will nationalize or socialize all large-scale production, property and real estate. But socialism does not abolish all privately-owned business. It does not require nationalization of those

small businesses owned by people who work for themselves and do not hire others to make a profit. Personal property – private homes, automobiles, etc., – will remain just that, personal property.

In highly mechanized U.S. agriculture there will still be a place for the family farmer. But the farm family will be relieved of the pressure of agribusiness monopolies.

There will be rapid abolition of racism and national oppression. Socialism will bring complete equality for all racially and nationally oppressed. There will be no compromise with racism, for there will no longer exist a capitalist class which profits from it. Racism, national oppression, anti-Semitism, sexism, anti-immigrant discrimination and all forms of prejudice and bigotry will be banned by law, with strict measures of enforcement. Affirmative action will be expanded immediately to undo and make up for hundreds of years of the ravages of racism. Full equality will be one of the main priorities of the new society.

War propaganda will be outlawed.

The only privileged sectors will be the children and seniors, who have earned the right to a healthy, happy, secure retirement.

The children will reap all the benefits of socialist child care, free nurseries and schools with the very best facilities and teachers. Children will have wonderful recreational and sports facilities. They will have the option to choose whatever career they wish, and the free education and training to achieve it.

Socialism provides the economic foundation for effective democracy for the masses of people. To carry through the socialist economic and social transformation requires political rule by the working class – a government of, by and for the working people.

Socialism USA

Socialism USA will benefit from the experiences, the mistakes and successes of the countries who built and are building socialism. But mainly it will reflect the distinctive features of U.S. development and environment.

Unique historical advantages, like the unequalled natural resources, fertile soil and perfect weather, coupled with the contributions of generations of working people, enabled U.S. capitalism to achieve higher productive levels and living standards than capitalism in other countries. So, too, the development of socialism here will have some distinct advantages.

1. We have a highly developed industrial society with a highly trained and educated work force.

2. Free from foreign intervention, socialism will not have to divert human and economic resources to defend itself.

3. Socialism USA will avoid the terrible problems of extreme poverty, illiteracy, civil wars, wars of intervention and world wars.

4. Socialism USA will extend democracy to its fullest, taking as its starting point the democratic traditions and institutions of the American people.

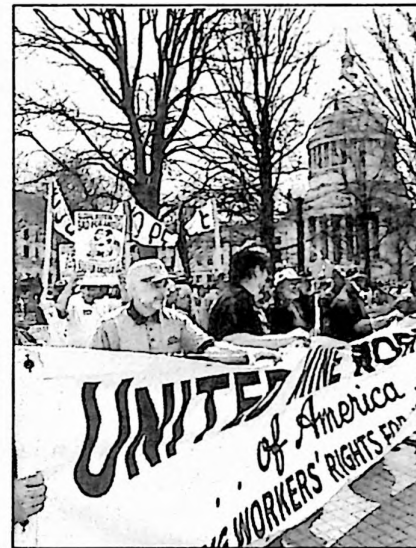
Path to Socialism

We say that it may be possible in the U.S. to bring socialism through peaceful means. Perhaps through the ballot box. One thing is clear, there won't be socialism in the U.S. until the majority of the American people want it.

I like to say that when workers enter the corporate board rooms to take over and the ruling class says: O.K. you're right, we made a mess of things and now you should run it all. Well then there won't be any trouble. But if the ruling class says: Forget it! And call out the army and the police and the national guard,

then that is how revolutions become violent. It starts with the ruling class. Workers and their allies have to defend themselves and to fight for what is rightfully theirs.

We believe and advocate that a socialist society in our country will guarantee all the liberties defined in the Bill of Rights but never fully



realized. These include the right of people to express themselves fully and freely through organizations of their choice and competing candidates who respect and are guided by the concept of building socialism.

Indeed, the freedoms in the Bill of Rights will take on far greater meaning for the great majority, who will now own the meeting halls, press, radio and TV, and will be able to exercise that freedom effectively.

That's why we call ours Bill of Rights Socialism, USA.

Socialism is our vision for America's future. It is a vision we are winning more and more people to because it is logical and really a great replacement for capitalism. And because it is the next inevitable step up the ladder of human civilization. ■



Working-Class Democracy v. Capitalist Democracy

by Joelle Fishman

INTRODUCTION ■

"Do we have a government of, by and for the people?" 54 percent of people asked that question said no in a poll released recently by Hart Research Associates. 60 percent feel disconnected from government especially young people, who said "government should be doing more to help the average person instead of monied special interest groups". After releasing the findings the researchers, who said the numbers represent a historic shift, sat worried and puzzled about what to do.

It's not possible to figure out how to make democracy work without recognizing the class issues involved. The capitalist class has no interest in citizen participation in decision making. Their need is to minimize or stifle the peoples' voice. The working class, on the other hand, is constantly struggling to expand democracy. The right for African Americans to be considered equal human beings, the right to vote, the right to public education, the right to form a union, the right to use one's native language, affirmative action, all were won through great historic movements of the

working class and people in our country.

The idea that capitalism is the highest form of democracy represents a demagogic attempt to stop short interest in socialism and leave an open path for corporate rule. After all, capitalism is based on exploitation and corporate greed.

Life has shown that as capitalism becomes more advanced, the struggle for democracy sharpens. Imperialist globalization of the world economy imposes extreme limits on democracy in our own country and throughout the world. As Gus Hall writes in *Marxism-Leninism: Science for Our Times*, "The counter force to the fascist danger is the fight to preserve, defend and expand all democratic laws, rights, institutions and structures that make up our bourgeois democracy." The Communist Party is an important part of the struggle for democracy. The Communist Party strengthens the day-to-day struggle to expand democratic rights within capitalism, at the same time pointing the way toward socialism as the only way to win and secure full democracy.

If you've ever been in a union

organizing drive, you've probably heard the saying that "democracy stops at the door to your workplace." There aren't many laws that protect the rights of workers to organize and join a union, in the capitalist United States. The government bodies that oversee union campaigns are stacked in favor of the employers. You can be fired for saying anything the boss doesn't like. In fact, you can be fired just because the boss decides he doesn't like you. Yet every day, workers are overcoming tremendous odds. The photograph of the excited, victorious faces of the Cannon textile workers in North Carolina upon hearing that they won the union tells the whole story.

On the other side of the equation are the owners, heavily invested in the capitalist system. They say democracy is the same as capitalism. And fascism is the same as socialism and communism. They don't want any workers getting the least bit interested in what socialism and public ownership is all about. Fascism is a form of terrorist rule by the capitalist class. Socialism is an expansion of democracy by the working

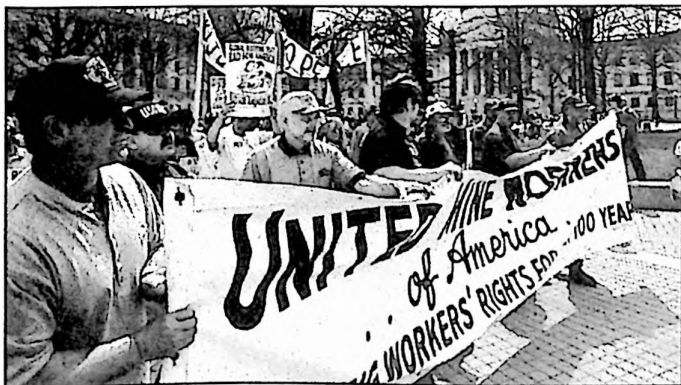
Joelle Fishman is a member of the national board CPUSA.

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class.

Control of the wealth and resources of the world is the major class battle and the major democratic battle at the close of this century. A United Nations report just released states, "The new rules of globalization ... neglect the needs of people that markets cannot meet. The process is concentrating power and marginalizing the poor, both countries and people." If democracy means power to the people, then the concentration of power into a handful of super-rich individuals and corporations constitutes an assault

"Perhaps the most fundamental measure of the decrease in democracy is the dramatic increase in the rate of exploitation, achieved through downsizing, speed-up, subcontracting, use of part-time, casual and temporary labor, and destruction of the environment."



AP Photo



AP Photo

on democracy.

The laws of capitalist economics are in contradiction with expansion of democracy. The fundamental contradiction of capitalism is that production is social, involving many people at work, but the fruit of the workers' labor is privately owned and controlled at the whim of the owners.

In today's advanced, global stage of capitalism, the struggle for democracy has greatly sharpened. Perhaps the most fundamental measure of the decrease in democracy is the dramatic increase in the rate of exploitation, achieved through downsizing, speed-up, subcontracting, use of part-time, casual and temporary labor, and destruction of the environment.

Exploitation is inherently undemocratic. What voice does a worker have when he or she produces the equivalent of daily wages in the first two hours of the workday, but has to continue to work six hours or more to create

profits for the owner? And, what voice does a worker have when the workplace can close overnight? Take the example of Charles B. Wang, the CEO of Computer Associates. Wang makes \$670 million a year, more than 60,000 minimum wage workers combined.

Forbes Magazine reported a couple of weeks ago that the world's 200 richest people are now worth over \$1 trillion. The wealth of the world's richest three families is more than the poorest 48 nations. What voice does the majority have when these richest of the rich buy elections and pay taxes at rates far lower than 30 years ago and far less than they can afford? Connecticut is a prime example because it is the state with the highest per capita income amidst four of the nation's poorest cities. In Connecticut one in five children and their parents go to bed hungry every night. The rich are so wealthy that if the top one percent were to pay taxes at a rate equal to the rest of the population, there would be more than enough money to completely eliminate all child poverty in the state. Yet, the results of a poll showing that most people favored spending for social programs instead of a token tax rebate was suppressed. The suppression of the poll by the corporate media creates the context in which the Connecticut Business and Industry Association sets the legislative agenda. The fact that the legislation that was passed contradicts the wishes of the people must be challenged.

RACISM ■

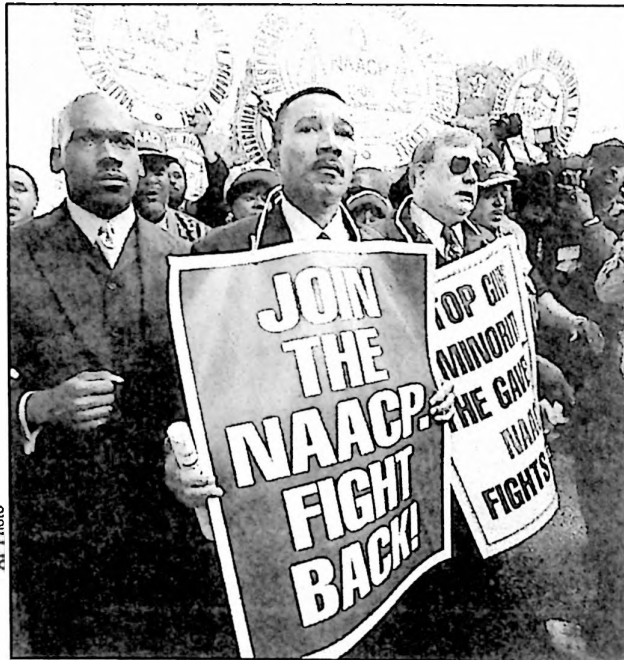
The curtailment of democracy can be measured in the rise of racism, capitalism's most potent weapon for increasing profits and keeping working-class people divided. One of every 14 African American young men is now in prison. In some states, up to 25 per-

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cent of Black males are denied the right to vote because of their past or present encounters with the prison system. Over 60 percent of those on death row are Black men. The alarming rise in hate crimes and fascist organizations shows the anti-democratic, deadly reflection of the New World Order. The attempt to deprive immigrant workers, especially Mexican and Latin American immigrants, of every basic right is reflected in English-only legislation. With the structural crisis and flight of industries from unionized urban areas, plus the elimination of social programs, has come deeper segregation and inequality.

Rather than address the root causes of poverty and violence, the government perpetrates violence. Scores of Black and Latino youth have lost their lives to police bullets and brutality, infringing on the most basic of democratic rights in whole communities.

The Supreme Court weighed in last month on the side of inequality, when they voted to strengthen "state's rights." Some of us will remember during the civil rights movement that "state's rights" which justified the violence of local police, had to be overturned in order to desegregate public schools, lunch counters, water fountains, etc. in the deep South. Today, the reactionary "state's rights" argument aims at abolishing the rights of workers to organize by bringing all states down to the low-wage, non-union level of "right to work" states just when workers, majority African American, at Newport News shipyard in Virginia are striking to end the North/South wage differential. While "state's rights" sounds demo-



Above: NAACP at its recent convention launched a drive to register thousands of new voters.

cratic, at this stage of capitalism it is the opposite, designed to give corporations the license to divide and rule, extorting concessions.

The racist, right-wing appointments to the court system and government bodies by Reagan and Bush have greatly weakened democracy for the multi-racial working class and all women and people of color. Great democratic movements are emerging for civilian control of the police, in defense of affirmative action, rejection of English-only legislation, and for the right to organize a union. Race killings from Oklahoma to Texas to New York have given rise to a mass sentiment for anti-hate crime, anti-hate speech, and anti-bias legislation. This opens the discussion for the need to outlaw racism in the interests of deepening and expanding democracy in our country.

GOVERNMENT AND THE FIGHTBACK ■

Corporations oppose "big government" because they do not want

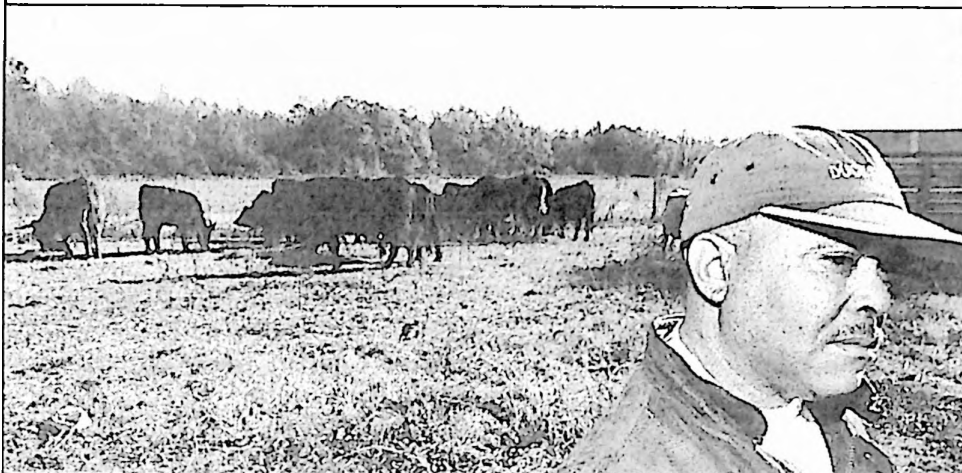
restraints or public oversight, and because they want to expand their private profit markets into the public sector, including public education and social security. The anti-democratic drive for privatization of public services is not limited to the United States. It is a major issue in nearly every capitalist country. To win support for the anti-democratic school vouchers and charter schools, a seemingly democratic argument is put forth that these measures would "provide working-class families with more choice." In fact, the democratic rights of working-class children would be greatly curtailed by placing

public financial resources into private schools which would be available to only a few, and into charter schools which are not regulated and would not include union representation for school workers or public control. New York School Board candidate John Bachtell's loud and clear voice was building multi-racial unity in defense of public education. It was too risky for Giuliani and the corporations to have a Communist on the school board. That is the meaning of his election being undemocratically stolen.

A similar, seemingly democratic argumentation has been put forward in favor of the undemocratic privatization of Social Security that this would allow seniors to "control their own investments." In fact, the democratic rights of retirees are smashed with this Wall Street scheme which would allow private investors to make a killing off money earned by, and belonging to, millions of working people.

Aided by the media and academic institutions, corporate America

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AP Photo

Black farmers have built a nationwide movement protesting discrimination and loss of land.

is continually trying to buy the political agenda. An example is the brutal elimination of welfare and other social programs. Racism and the false promise of plentiful jobs were used to create disunity at the grass roots level.

The real choice was never offered to voters: "Do you want to vote to repeal welfare, or do you want to vote to create decent jobs with child care, health care, education, transportation and support for new mothers so no one has to rely on welfare?" Those of us who petitioned on the streets for the Martinez Public Works Jobs Bill won't have any hesitation in saying that that choice is resoundingly popular.

In his book, *Locked in the Cabinet*, former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich exposes how directly the bankers and the Wall Street crowd determine the allowable alternatives. Job creation and retraining proposals that helped the president get elected were killed in the Oval Office before they were drafted in the name of pleasing Wall Street.

CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY ■

The corruption and sky-high cost of election campaigns has creat-

ed anger, alienation and cynicism among millions of potential voters. The 30 percent national turnout of registered voters for the Congressional elections in 1998 is a clear expression of declining capitalist democracy, and the ongoing struggle for representation. Voter turnout in the U.S. is among the lowest in the world. As capitalist policies polarize society, methods are developed to keep control while maintaining the facade of democracy. This includes control of the media, buying elections, rigging elections laws, and most fundamentally, fixing the rules of the game so no matter who wins election, unless there is a large enough class-conscious peoples movement behind them, they end up having to play along with big business.

Very significant is the growing electoral movement being organized by labor in coalition with clergy and civil rights organizations. An important example was the defeat of a union-busting "paycheck protection" referendum in California which would have severely limited labor's ability to field or support candidates. This anti-democratic referendum was given a slick name to create confusion. At first the referendum was expected to pass by 70 per-

cent of the vote. After an intensive labor education and get out the vote campaign, the referendum was defeated. Then, in the general election, notorious right-wing Republican Governor Pete Wilson was defeated while nationally the fascist-like Newt Gingrich Republicans were delivered a major setback in the Congress.

However, without a strong coalition of labor and community the monopoly-controlled media has played a dangerous role in subverting democracy. An example is the referenda which passed in several states ending affirmative action, shocking voters who thought by the wording they were supporting pro-civil rights legislation.

The campaign for 2000 union activists elected to public office in the year 2000 can open the way for major changes in the political landscape, and dramatically increase representation from the multi-racial, male-female working class with candidates independent of big business.

The monopolization of the media is an important part of this picture. Flipping through station after station, the same limited range of capitalist points of view predominate. Thank goodness for the *Peoples Weekly World* and *Changing America*, which represent two excellent working-class expressions in the media. The watchdog organization Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) just issued a new study exposing public television, whose mandate is to "provide a voice for groups that may otherwise be unheard." Over 75 percent of sources in economic stories were from the corporate world, with only 1.5 percent from labor. Not a single union person appeared in public TV's discussion of corporate mergers and layoffs. In an earlier study, FAIR exposed the nine super-powerful, mostly US-based transnational media corporations that dom-

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inate the world. They conclude, "by any standard of democracy, such a concentration of media power is troubling, if not unacceptable." Foreign policy human rights and democracy are cynically used as code words by defenders of corporate plunder to justify military and economic control of countries around the world.

An argumentation given in favor of NAFTA, GATT, and other trade agreements is to extend democracy and aid poor economies in other countries. In fact, these agreements are wholly for the benefit of transnational corporate profits, at the expense of destruction of the environment, wages and working conditions in all countries concerned. These agreements explicitly rule out democracy. They strip away from people, through their governments, the right of even minimal regulation of the corporations. In addition, billions of taxpayers dollars are used to protect this corporate plunder through military spending. Funding for one F-22 jet fighter (\$188 million) could build 31 new elementary schools.

To justify the bombing of Yugoslavia, Assistant Secretary of State Harold Kohl, chief human rights officer in the U.S., told a conference in New Haven last month

that with "the end of history and the collapse of the Communist empire we thought all was rosy." He cheered the fact that "since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, there has been a remarkable expansion of human freedom ... there has been an increase from 30 to 118 democracies worldwide." For the U.S. State Department a democracy is any country that allows unlimited exploitation by multi-national corporations.

Significantly, the United Nations exhibit on the Rights of the Child (then showing in New Haven City Hall) details that the conditions of children in Eastern Europe including education and child labor have plummeted from best in the world under socialism to among the worst in the world since the return of capitalism.

Kohl's comments fit with those of Madeline Albright that the U.S. is "the indispensable nation" and Thomas L. Friedman that "the emerging global order demands an enforcer. That is America's burden." There is a chilling fascist sound in the air when such pronouncements of foreign policy are aimed at expanding and protecting U.S. corporate markets at the expense of 90 percent of the world's people. The destruction of much of the world

socialist system makes it less important for the imperialist forces to provide the fig leaf of democracy. Those who support the U.S. as a "global enforcer" abroad won't hesitate to apply similar measures to the American people if we get out of line and they think they can get away with it. The reflection of this anti-democratic foreign policy at home is the rise of extremist white supremacist hate organizations which are killing people at random across the country, underscoring the necessity for broad, multi-racial people's unity.

DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS IN U.S. HISTORY ■

The American Revolution of 1776 was "heard round the world" as a symbol of overthrow of colonial authority in favor of governing on the basis of representative bodies. It inspired the French Revolution of 1789. Ho Chi Minh, the revered and courageous Communist leader of Vietnam quoted the Declaration of Independence in affirming of the rights of the Vietnamese people. The goals of the American Revolution were only partially democratic. The colonists exploited and displaced the Native American peoples. The African slave trade was supported. Only white, male property owners were entitled to vote. It took the Civil War to complete the revolution and abolish slavery. The Bill of Rights and other amendments to the Constitution were fought for and won to extend the democratic rights of the original Constitution.

There has been a struggle to preserve and extend democratic rights throughout our country's history. That struggle has been intertwined with the efforts of working people to better their conditions. Public education, the shorter work week, unemployment compensation, Social Security, unionization, civil rights



AP Photo

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were all mass movements which were connected with electoral activity. These were struggles both to improve peoples' lives and to extend democracy which are interdependent on each other.

Throughout this history, the Communist movement made decisive contributions toward class unity that enabled democracy to be expanded. From its birth 80 years ago, the Communist Party USA has been a champion of democracy. This includes major contributions to the struggles to end racism and all forms of discrimination, to win labor rights and representation, and to build support for socialism in our country. The connection between democratic rights and working-class rights was demonstrated during the reactionary McCarthy Period, following the defeat of fascism in World War II. Under cover of "fighting Communism," hundreds were jailed for their beliefs, thousands lost their jobs and millions were frightened into silence. This was an all-out effort to break the back of a strong, united labor movement, stunt the growth of the civil rights movement, and usher in Cold War imperialist foreign policy against working-class interests around the world. The threat from fascism, very real in that period, was turned back by staunch resistance of the Communist Party and other victims and ultimately by the democratic spirit of the American people. But the damage to the working-class movement was deep and is still being overcome.

Labor and people's unity against the ultra-right in the 1998 Congressional elections rejected anti-democratic policies. As global corporations step up their attack on democratic rights in order to achieve more profits, constant vigilance is required.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY ■

The need for a large, strong Communist Party is crucial to the fight for expanded democracy today. A mass Communist Party can present real alternatives and real options based on building working class unity against the fascist threat and the war danger.

The growth of membership and interest in the Communist Party and Young Communist League is a most important aspect of the democratic fight back. It represents, as Karl Marx said in the *Communist Manifesto*, the vision for the future in the struggles of the present.

Many young people say they are joining because they want to be a part of changing the gross inequalities inherent under capitalism. It shows a rejection of anti-Communism and red-baiting favorite tools of capitalism to weaken, disunite and intimidate working class and peoples movements. The election of Communists to public office is another significant expression of deep democratic feelings within our country.

The issue of democracy within the Communist Party is also important. Democracy is not an abstraction. Our performance can be judged by the degree to which we are in

close touch with the working class at the workplace, in the neighborhood or rural area, to the degree that we join together in struggle



Above: The fight for affirmative action is a basic part of the fight for democracy.

for immediate needs and the longer term goal of socialism. The democratic principles of our Party are tied to our ability to collectively participate with and influence the future of working-class power in our country.

GOAL OF WORKING-CLASS DEMOCRACY ■

In a society characterized by class conflict, what does rule of the people mean? In the United States under capitalism, the economic and political institutions most decisive in how we live have no democratic control at all. The corporations are in a position to dictate much of govern-

IDEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION



AP Photo

that basic contradiction. If the people of a particular city do something the multi-national corporations don't like, they can close down operations and leave. That's why the working-class movement needs socialism to fully achieve democracy. And why, to be successful, the fight for democracy must be grounded within the working class.

The working class has interests opposed to that of the capitalist class. For the working class, democracy has to mean working class power including ownership of the economy as well as representation in the political field. That's what socialism is.

Involvement of people is essential to democracy. The capitalist class tries to discourage and prevent meaningful participation by people through their mass organizations. Capitalist ideology is based on individual solutions: "If you don't like things at work, get another job. Or, bankrupt yourself hiring lawyers to sue the boss. But, by all means, don't join with others to form a union!" Capitalist ideology reduces democracy to the simple act of voting. The socialist vision is to encourage people to be part of unions, women's organizations, tenants committees, block watches and for those organizations to have meaningful input into the governmental process. Unlike capitalism, socialism cannot work without this grass roots participation. Democracy within a socialist United States – our vision of Bill of Rights Socialism USA – represents the realization of the dreams and aspirations of millions of Americans. The on-the-street interviews each week on *Changing America* are an indication of the yearning for racial, economic and political equality.

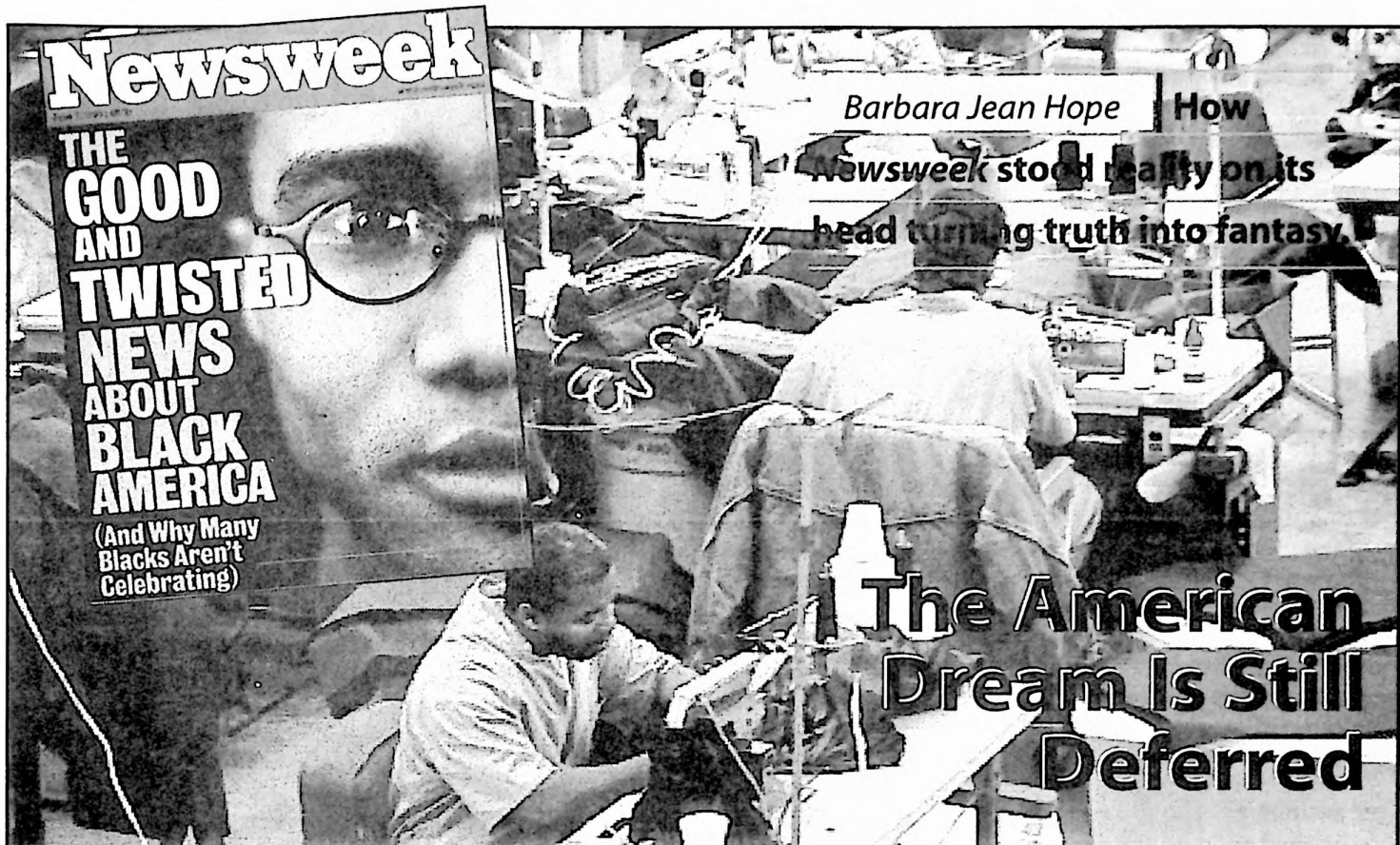
The right to a good job, decent housing, complete health care and equal, quality public education from pre-school through college, the right to use the profits created by work-

ers' labor for the benefit of working families needs, the right to protect the environment, peace and solidarity with working people of all countries these basic democratic goals are the goals of Bill of Rights Socialism USA. People often ask and worry, "in a socialist United States would we lose freedom of speech? Would we lose freedom of the press and freedom of religion? Would there be only one political party?" Our slogan, *Bill of Rights Socialism* provides the answer. We support the freedoms that we have and want to expand them. When the media is owned by working people instead of multi-national corporations it will be much more free and democratic than it is today. The exact form of popular control of social institutions is something that will take shape out of the struggle to achieve socialism. But freedom of speech, religion, press and to organize are American traditions we support and are committed to extend.

Socialism will resolve capitalism's fundamental undemocratic contradiction. In a socialist USA the economic life and natural resources of the country will be owned and controlled of, by and for the people, not greedy corporations. The people will have the opportunity and responsibility to make the decisions about what kind of jobs there will be, what goods and services provided, what environmental safeguards and what health care and other benefits. We will be able to make those decisions according to the needs of the people, not the greed of the capitalists. It is in this context that freedom of speech and press become more meaningful. Under capitalism we have limited freedom to raise objections and organize to influence decisions that are made. Under socialism we will have the freedom to make the decisions, set the priorities and determine how things are done. ■

ment policy, affecting all major social issues. And the constitution and legal system largely forbid the government from interfering with corporate policy.

An approach that is not based on class struggle cannot achieve full democracy because it ignores the fundamental feature of capitalist society that a few people own the country's productive wealth. While there are many good reforms worthy of support, including campaign finance reform and proportional representation, they don't change



Above: Prison factory. Prison labor is a fast-growth industry in the U.S.

AP Photo

For most African Americans, it is still a hard-knock life

There is no need to fight anymore, our ship has come in bearing riches and happiness - or at least that's the spin given to the plight of African Americans by the June 7, 1999 issue of *Newsweek* magazine.

It was a stunning vision of racial equality, manifested in a simple, yet stirring mantra: 'I have a dream.' Though Martin Luther King, Jr.'s cherished utopia has not arrived, it seems considerably less remote than it did in August 1963 when, from the Washington Mall, King challenged America to make his dream come true. African Americans are no longer relegated, as he lamented, to a lonely island of poverty in the midst of plenty. "By a wide array of measures, now is a great time -the best time ever to be Black in America.

Not so fast.

SCHOOLS UNDER ASSAULT ■ King did not just "dream" of a utopia. He fought valiantly for workers and against racism. He was gunned down in Memphis, Tennessee, after having gone there to stand in solidarity with Black sanitation workers and to rally this nation behind their struggle. King was no dreamer. He was a warrior on the side of racial justice, workers' rights

Barbara Jean Hope is a contributor to PA.

to be free of economic oppression, and against the Vietnam War. Have African American workers "made it" in America? One of the most fundamental issues for progress is the education of working-class children. Public schools are under assault from the ultra right. Who in inner cities with large African American populations attends those schools? African American children. School funding is under assault by right-wing governors and other politicians who offer parents a "choice" in regard to privatizing public schools. If allowed to have their way with public funds, these right-wing talking heads for the ruling class will ensure that we will be back where we were earlier in this nation's history when learning to read was a privilege the poor could often not afford. More than 40 percent of all African-American children are born onto a lonely island of poverty. Privatizing public education is designed to keep those children on that island with neither canoe nor paddle.

The media depicts Blacks as being the unachievers in this society, draining the nation of resources. Those who have been deceived by this racist depiction, associating it with the social programs to aid the working class, have voted for and supported politicians who are in the business of rolling back the tide of social gains made by America's working class. The ruling elite influence workers to vote against their own interest by vilifying Black workers. This scapegoating continues as *Newsweek* attempts to give a rosy view of what it means to be Black in America. In 1998, the prison population in the U.S. reached an astounding 1.8 million people locked behind bars. That is the highest rate in any nation in the Western industrialized world. More than 800,000 of those people were African American even though Blacks comprise approximately 15 percent of the entire population.

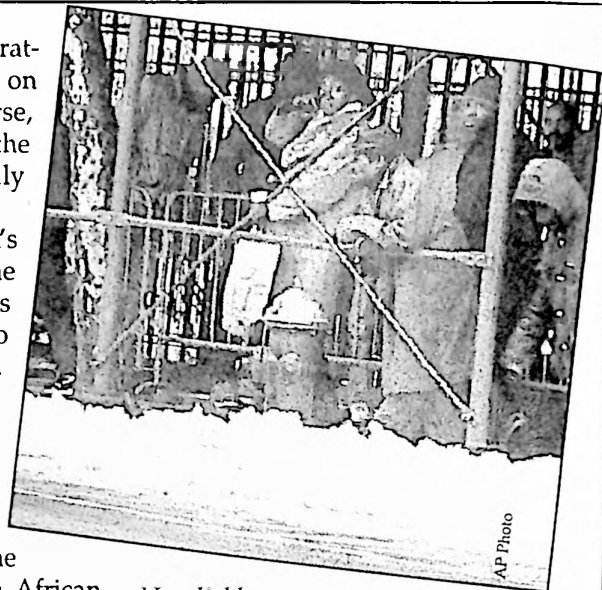
More than half were incarcerated because of the "war on drugs" which has, of course, proven to be a war on the poor and the racially oppressed.

The effects of the CIA's war in Nicaragua against the valiant Sandinistas has indeed trickled down into the inner cities. As the U.S. turned a blind eye to drug running by the Contras and allowed cocaine to be imported into the U.S., the people targeted as a result of the explosion of cocaine on America's streets were African Americans and Latinos. Mandatory sentencing guidelines shoved down judges' throats throughout the U.S. in regard to differentiating between possession of crack cocaine and powdered cocaine has rendered equality before the law a tragically laughable statement.

In 1998, a report by the Death Penalty Information Center released a study showing that African Americans were four times likely to receive a sentence of death through the criminal justice system as white Americans. In Philadelphia alone Judge Albert Sabo, who was allowed to rule on his own biases in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, has sentenced more people to death row than any other sitting judge in the U.S. Sabo sent 29 Black men to death row out of 32 sentenced.

MEDIA BIAS ■ Amnesty International, in a 1997 report, revealed widespread police violence largely aimed at Black men. The cases of Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo sparked protests against such racially aimed violence in New York City and around the U.S. The police violence against Black men continues unabated even as the working class is assured through *Newsweek* magazine and its cohorts that "this is the best time to be Black in America."

According to the 1991 book



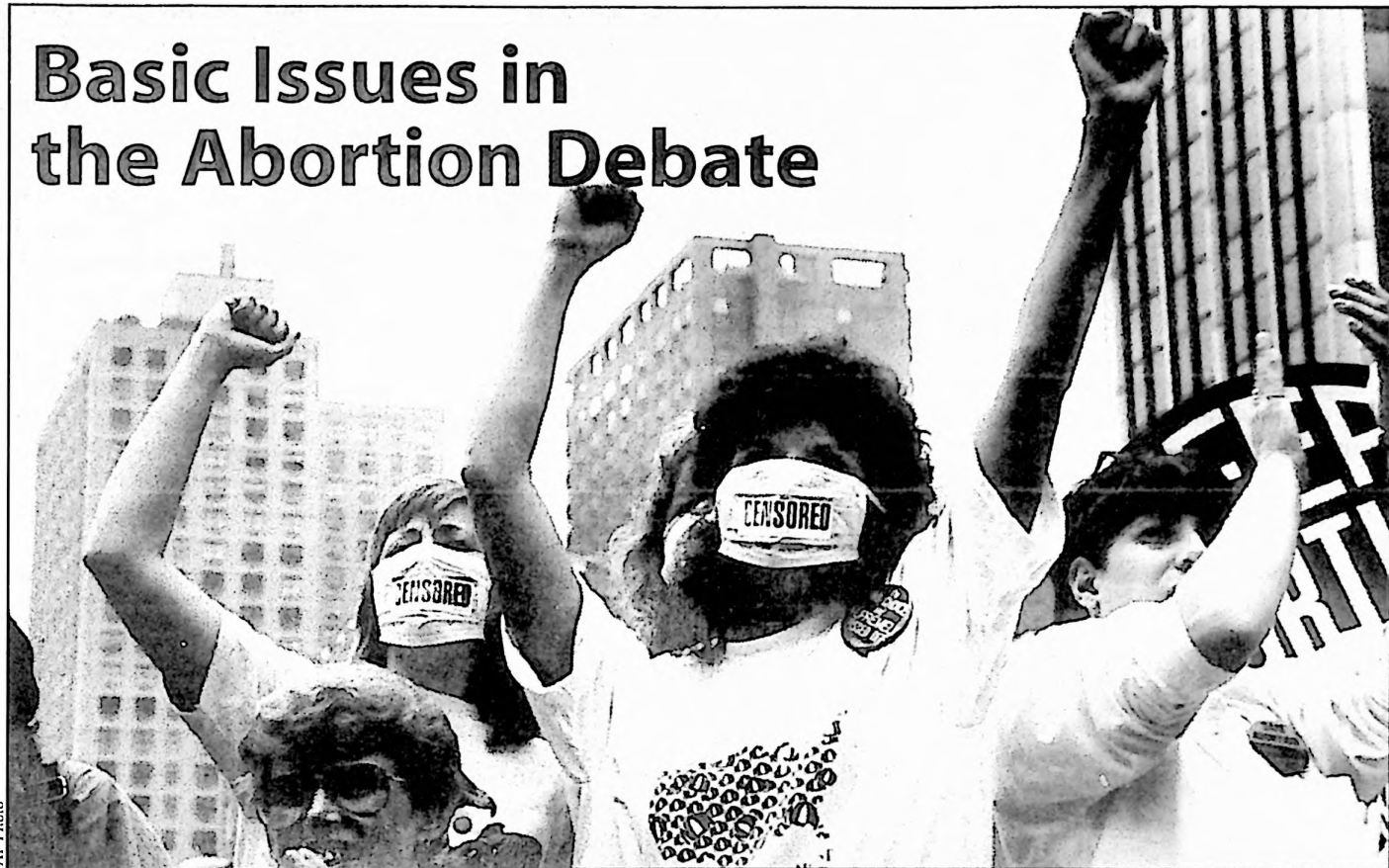
AP Photo

Unreliable

Sources, written by Martin A. Lee and Norman Solomon (Carol Publishing Company), "Popular legends assure us that the American press is committed, above all, to seeking and speaking the truth - no matter who might be offended. This is a familiar pose for a profession that prides itself on being feisty, independent, and unbiased. The story goes that the news media, though flawed, are free to function as fairly neutral guardians of the public trust. Such myths gain acceptance through the press itself. Amidst all the high-sounding goals, we're apt to forget that mass media are corporate enterprises." These enterprises have it in their own interests to deny a voice to struggling workers in the U.S. and worldwide. Funding for mass media as of 1990 was more than they want us to believe, and as a result the story of the struggle of Black workers in this nation, which perseveres against the oppression of the ruling elite, is not being told. Progressives and Communists know better than to buy into U.S. mainstream press propaganda. Blacks are still the targets of great injustice in this nation. To know that and to understand it is the first weapon in fighting back. ■

Basic Issues in the Abortion Debate

AP Photo



She's young, unmarried, working at a marginal job, barely making ends meet – and very much pregnant. She doesn't have the vacation and sick-time perks that would allow for time off. Family leave doesn't apply in her case. Queasy every morning, she is worried how long her boss will tolerate her tardiness. Single and nearly jobless, she's at wit's end.

Don Sloan is assistant editor of PA.

Don Sloan, M.D.

With RU-436 about

to hit the streets, Sloan revisits basic issues in a woman's right to choose.

Her local hospital doesn't do abortions. If she had the bucks, she could go off to the big city somewhere, a clinic, or even a private doctor. No, it has to be here and it has to be now – time is running out. So she gets a name – a nurse, a pharmacist, maybe a retired health care worker. That's if she's in luck. If her luck has run out, she ends up without any name at all and finds herself in some hospital emergency room, bleeding, in shock, in a coma – dead.

A cautionary tale from the '50s? Hardly. Unless living in a major city, women today face the de facto prohibition of abortion entitled by law. The right to a clean, safe procedure is theoretically protected by that law, at least for the time being. In practice, however, it is a right that is becoming more and more difficult to exercise.

Although both the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American Medical Association (AMA) seem to have

sidestepped the real issues of the abortion question, they are on the public record as being officially pro-choice. Early abortion is still ten times safer than childbirth, so from a purely medical standpoint, choice is the position that gives the doctor the greatest latitude to do what is best for the patient— if that is what the patient chooses. But when it gets down to individual cases, there's nothing to stop doctors or hospital administrations from playing politics and branding physicians who do abortions.

Infighting, controversy, and political maneuvering go on within the sterile walls of the medical world perhaps as much as on the floors of the legislature or on the sidewalks in front of abortion clinics. The term "abortionist" still carries with it a heavy weight. We've made it legal, but we haven't yet made it respectable — not quite.

First-trimester abortion, making up almost 90 percent of all procedures, is "minor" surgery in the lexicon of the gynecologist. Despite its nominal status it is still subjected to disproportionately close scrutiny. Several years ago a research study exposed the way various health-care professionals, from doctors to hospital clerks, viewed the procedure. The study compared how intake emergency room services handled women who sought help for what were allegedly complaints or complications following either an abortion or a dilatation and curettage (D&C) (a carbon-copy procedure done for reasons other than to end pregnancy). The results were startling.

With rare exceptions, abortion patients came under greater surveillance than D & C patients. The former underwent more extensive evaluations, including lab testing, x-rays, and (usually unnecessary) additional surgery, often of a major type involving abdominal incisions and even hysterectomy.

The researchers concluded there was an obvious prejudice against



AP Photo

abortion patients and the procedure itself, partly due to ignorance on the part of the staff or out of a regressive attitude which looks down upon patients and their doctors.

In the abortion equation, it is the doctors, still mostly male, who are being stigmatized as the culprits more so than the patients. In states that are waiting for the next test of Roe v Wade, the criminal penalties are aimed at the physicians, with an added wrist-slapping for the patients. As a result anger against them has led to the brutal killing of a physician in Florida and his colleague and the shooting of another in Kansas. Most recently is the sniper murder of a highly respected practitioner in Buffalo, New York, with the killer still at large and the object of a massive manhunt. These are the inevitable outcomes of the policies of past administrations in Washington

which, turning a blind eye to the attitudes and escalating violence of anti-choice forces, inadvertently triggered what was a time bomb waiting to explode.

The seeds of violence have been sown in the semantics of those who purport to oppose killing. But in this case, the pen is as mighty as the sword, as anti-choice rhetoric only serves to further obfuscate the issues. To irresponsibly label an accepted procedure a "murder" of a "child" in defiance of lay and medicine is to castigate those who perform this task as "murderers." In this twisted revision of the terms of

"...we must see the abortion issue clearly — it's not ethics but rights, not religion by science, not maintaining male supremacy but equality for women ..."



AP Photo

debate pro-choice has become pro-abortion. Pro-abortion, anti-life. Anti-choice then becomes pro-life and it filters down to an option between life or abortion, now synonymous for death. And abortion, "a murder by murderers," is performed not for a woman to remove an unwanted pregnancy or embryo but instead on a "kid," an "unborn," "your baby." Names have even been assigned to these entities.

The revaluation of terms goes even further: the procedure is not being done in a hospital or outpatient unit, center, or clinic, but in a "killing chamber," "crematorium," or "vacuum station." Specially-made videos have been produced depicting the movement of the embryo as that of a playful tot, seemingly communicating with its future parents, family, and friends.

The time has come to stop this word play demagoguery. I offer instead four basic truths:

First, that the "abortion" debate is a misnomer; we are not debating abortion, we are debating rights. Rights, not morals; rights, not ethics. Roe v Wade, the law of the United States, is in effect. That is why Pennsylvania's Casey (Casey v Planned Parenthood) decision

requiring a 24-hour delay was nothing more than pure politics. Roe stated that choice is a constitutional right, just like our other basic freedoms. Would any libertarian agree to forcing a day's delay before exercising the freedom of, say, speech? Or a required session and an overnight consultation with a government-appointed counselor before deciding in which church to worship? Or perhaps a compulsory hour-long discussion with the newsstand proprietor on the relative merits of various publications before making a purchase?

Second, life and its inception are considerations for science to solve, not religion. A most cherished American tenet is the separation of church and state. The class action Doe case (Doe v Bolton), after much authoritative testimony, has set a 24-week limit as the time when, as has been taught to gynecologists for generations, the embryo becomes a fetus and independent life is plausible. Speaking of potential children is analogous to an acorn being a potential oak tree or a grape being a potential bottle of fine champagne. Roe and Doe have had their rulings bent, not broken.

Third, that right and that sci-

ence are being denied to a majority group who have been the victims of male dominance since time immemorial - women. Choice is clearly a battle over male supremacy and class domination and control. To deny that abortion is about women and their rights and freedoms is to behave like the ostrich that keeps its head in the sand.

Fourth, the abortion/choice question is but an extension of what health care in America is for women. The U.S. remains the world's only industrialized nation without a universal health care program. It has even become a message of our foreign policy.

The conservative coalition's influence has channeled funding of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the agency responsible for health care in developing countries away from abortion even in those areas where it is legal. Clinton's tacit reversal of that policy has not resulted in substantial changes.

"Permit but discourage" has been proposed as an alternative to choice. Under the Casey and before that the Webster (Webster v Reproductive Health Services) decision, consent and waiting period restrictions are equal to an outright denial for many women, especially the young and the poor. As of now over 80 percent of the counties in the country have no abortion facilities or staff.

Suggesting that women need an additional waiting period flies in the face of common sense. It is as though this very heart-rending decision to abort were made on a whim by a woman on her way downtown to do a little shopping who just happened to pass by her local abortion emporium and decided to stop in and have one. It furthers the stereotype of a female as being muddleheaded, morally infantile, emotionally unstable, and weak. Does anyone really think women have abortions for the same



AP Photo

**The Pentagon
spends more money
in 15 minutes than
what America
allocates to ALL
women's health care
programs annually...**

AP Photo



reasons climbers scale mountains – because they are there? The decision to abort is always a true dilemma – one made between two unpleasant and unwanted alternatives.

No one is pro-abortion. No one is anti-life. No one. I don't think there is anyone doing abortions who hasn't wished at some point that the situations creating the demand for them would just go away, including me. There have been plenty of times when I've wanted to say, "Enough! This is more human tragedy than I want to deal with." But that would require a different world – one without poverty, rape, incest, contraceptive failure, genetic defects, maternal illnesses, unprotected moments of passion, or human fallibility.

In the deprived nations of Africa, Asia and South America, word has gotten around. In the majority of cases, whenever someone appears at the doors of an emergency room with some sort of infection from a botched abortion done in a back alley shop, she is denied treatment that would be life saving, out of fear that the hospital service

will be marked and denied USAID funding. "Don't touch abortion" becomes the rule of the day. More wooden boxes.

The belief seems to be that in the Third World as well as here, denying proper health care for the poor will "make them more responsible" and "motivate" them to seek out proper birth-control methods. This is just more cruel thinking. We keep trying failed policies over and over again. Statistics speak for themselves. Worldwide, a septic abortion kills a woman every two minutes. That only means more and more wooden boxes.

Abortion policy from the right is but a microcosm of what is the state of health care services offered to the poor women of the world today. Here in the U.S. the Pentagon spends more in fifteen minutes than is allocated for women's health care programs in a year. Progressives in the pro-choice movement are trying to get out that message. It is just this year that research centers in the U.S. have been given the go ahead to evaluate RU-486, the French self-administered oral abortion medica-

tion, already widely accepted in Europe. This should not be looked upon as a panacea and the need for surgical terminations will remain. But RU-486 will be a valuable addition to the methods that will give doctors and their patients those alternatives when needed. Each will have its place. It all filters down to the basics – abortion is not the issue, choice is.

The women of America need support, not only for their choice to end an unwanted pregnancy, but for prenatal care, mammographies, PAP tests, and physicians help when needed. Health care is not a privilege. It is a right.

She was young, unmarried, pregnant, alone, and desperate. She ended up in my emergency room, bleeding, in shock, in a coma, and then dead. I've seen it before. I don't want to see it again.

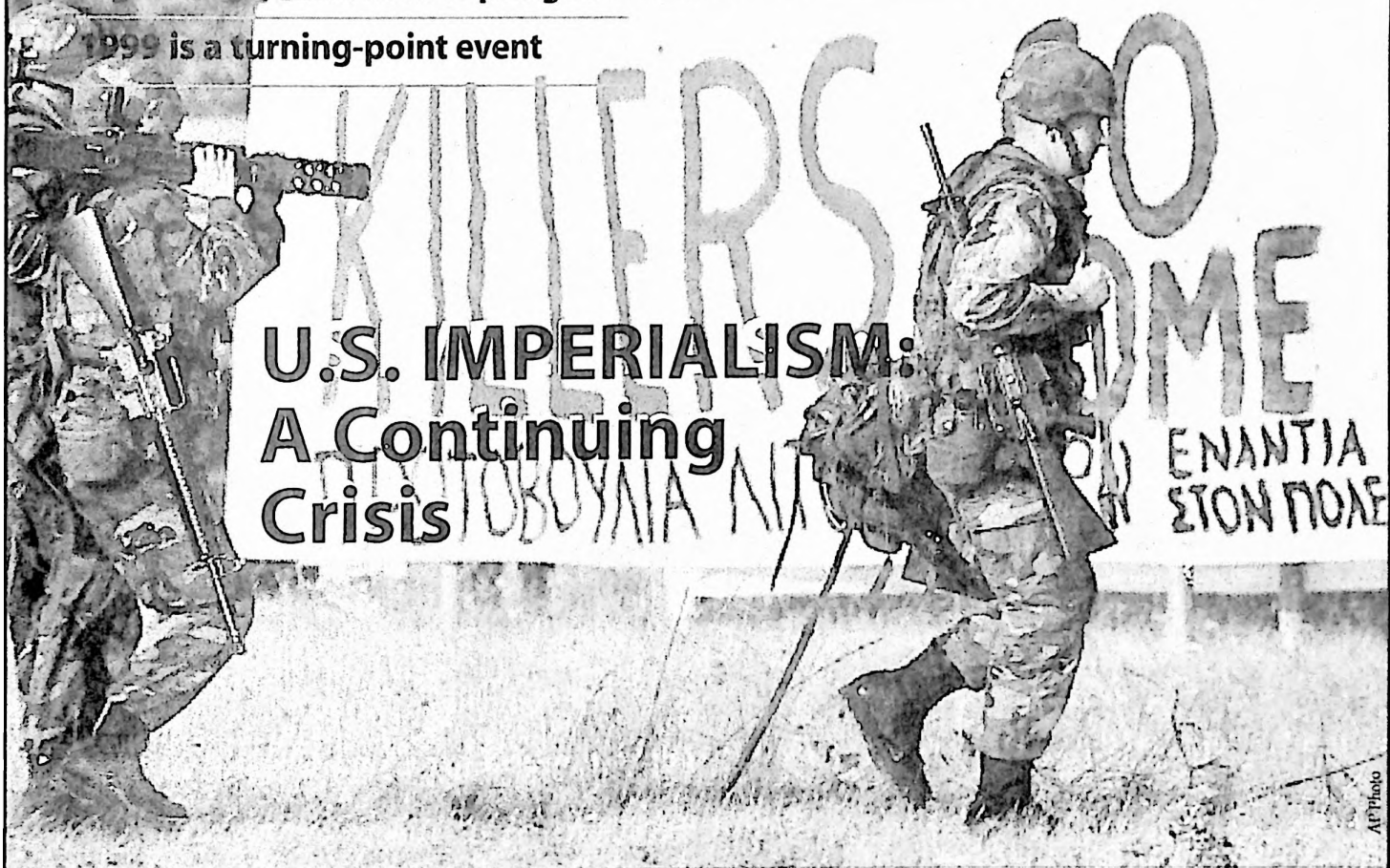
It doesn't have to be that way. If we can learn to see the abortion issue clearly – not ethics but rights, not religion but science, not sexism but equality for women – we can begin to work on the dilemma. ■

Gerald Horne

The bomb-

ing of Yugoslavia in the spring of

1999 is a turning-point event



U.S. IMPERIALISM: A Continuing Crisis

Future historians, as they look back at the waning days of the 20th century, may well see the spring of 1999 as a turning point. For it was then that the U.S.-led NATO forces unleashed a criminal bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in blatant contravention of the United Nations Charter and international law generally.

During this barrage a U.S. bomb destroyed the embassy of Beijing in Belgrade, killing Chinese journalists. The Chinese masses proceeded to protest in large numbers, stoning and picketing the U.S. embassy in Beijing. Illusions that some held in China about their "special relationship" with imperialism may have been shattered.

Simultaneously, the Congressional committee headed by the California Republican, Christopher Cox, released a hyperbolic, fear-mongering report charging that Chinese espionage had targeted U.S. nuclear laboratories, thus leading to a great leap forward for Beijing's military arsenal. Predictably, this sparked a tidal wave of hysterical racism directed against the Asian-American—particularly Chinese-American population, as they were viewed in chauvinist circles as little more than spies for Beijing.

Norman Mineta, a former Congressman and now head of the Asian Pacific Institute for Congressional Studies, was "outraged" that "we are once again being questioned about our loyalty to the United States — first

Gerald Horne is a contributor to Political Affairs.

the campaign fund-raising case and (now) the Los Alamos [nuclear lab] case – and assumed to have ties to our homelands.” He compared the situation to other times of national hysteria against minorities, including the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II (*South China Morning Post*, 12 April 1999).

Congressman Mineta has reason to be concerned for it is apparent that the ultra-right is trying to open a new chapter in Washington-Beijing relations – relations that were bound to be altered after their alliance against Moscow contributed to the dissolution of the USSR. Still, the rapidity of the change in this relationship has been breathtaking in light of President Clinton’s lengthy trip to China in 1998 and the reciprocal visits by the

AP Photo

Chinese President Jiang Zemin later that year and the visit of Premier Zhu Rongli to Washington in the spring of 1999. Despite the talk of a “strategic partnership” between the two nations, U.S. efforts to knock together a tighter military alliance with Japan that includes controversial plans for “theater missile defense” has been widely perceived as aimed at China.

This was the position adopted by the Japanese Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party of Japan, both of which howled in outrage when the parliament in Tokyo adopted the so-called “Japan-U.S. Defense Guidelines.” Japanese and Chinese Communists have improved their once frosty relationship of late and both now agree that recent Tokyo-Washington agree-

ments are pushing Asia to the precipice of an unimaginable conflict. (*Beijing Review*, 18 May 1999)

The U.S. also has begun to produce startling reports charging the Chinese military with developing “lasers, information-warfare capabilities and conventional and

forces. First of all, relations between Russia and China have improved; just as the deterioration of relations between these two giants contributed mightily to the present status of U.S. imperialism, the improvement of relations between the two potentially could help to



Above: Bombed-out remains of Chinese embassy.



Above: PRC embassy staff mourn lost comrades.

nuclear weapons systems.” In November 1998 the Pentagon issued a report nervously citing the missile drills by China in March 1996 in the Taiwan Straits and the

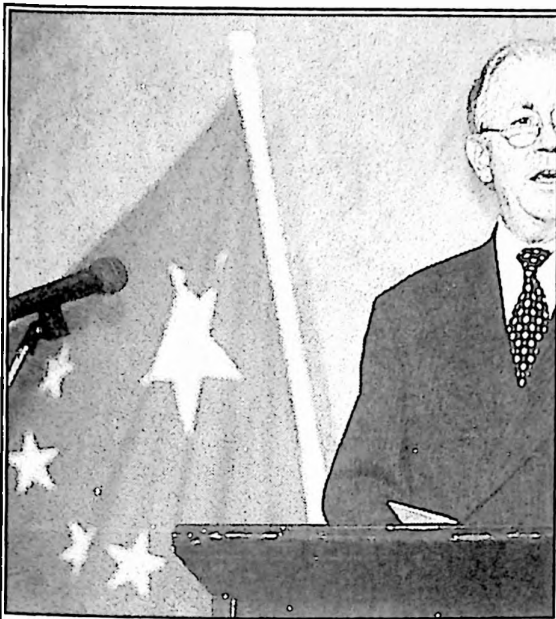
deployment of two U.S. aircraft carriers (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 December 1998). Such hysteria is viewed by some as an attempt by the U.S. to plunge the world into what might be called “Cold War II,” an escalation of a conflict that has raged since October 1917.

The tensions between the U.S. and China have led to a reshuffling of the diplomatic deck with serious import for the global correlation of

unravel this status, although Russia’s pro-imperialist bent makes that unlikely.

When President Jiang Zemin traveled to Moscow in November 1998 for a summit meeting with the Russian leadership, this marked the sixth time that such a meeting had occurred in recent years between the Chinese leader and his Russian counterparts. (*Beijing Review*, 23-29 November 1998) Opposition from Moscow and Beijing is one reason why Washington has tried to circumvent the UN Security Council for it is recognized that Russia and China have been loath to endorse the policies of the U.S. administration that have been directed at Iraq and Yugoslavia of late.

This new Beijing-Moscow relationship already is causing concern in Washington. The U.S. “...may



AP Photo

Jacques Santer, head of European Union in Beijing.

have to think twice in [the] future" before sending aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Straits, as Beijing plans "to install Russian-made Sunburn SS-22 missiles as early as mid-1999 on the first of two Sovremenny-class destroyers it's buying from the Leningrad shipyard. The Sunburn is a very lethal surface-to-surface missile designed by the former Soviet navy to knock out U.S. carrier battle groups. China has agreed to buy 50 of the missiles for the two warships..." (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 December 1998) This is just one of many high-tech military transfers from Russia to China, not to mention a burgeoning bilateral trade relationship in various spheres.

Still, as important as it is, the Russia-China entente is not the only noticeable development in the current period. During the height of the Cold War, the U.S. has happened in the wake of Pakistan's aggression against India in Kashmir. In the midst of this fracas that has led to hundreds of deaths on both sides, high level Indian emissaries were greeted warmly in Beijing; moreover, the Clinton Administration fundamentally endorsed the position of New Delhi. In other words, both the U.S.

and China scrambled to curry favor with India in a stark turnabout from recent history.

Japan also is seeking to win concessions from the U.S. and China and seems reluctant to wholly and unequivocally endorse this newly minted crusade against Beijing. Just as the U.S. itself will have difficulty in mobilizing the ruling class in a wholehearted campaign to destabilize Beijing because of the massive investments by U.S. corporations in China, the Japanese Prime Minister, Keizo Obuchi, is faced with a similar dilemma.

Earlier this year there was the revelation that Hitachi, the Japanese electronics giant, "had exported precision instruments to China that could be used to develop nuclear weapons..." (*Financial Times*, 11 February 1999) The heft of China's economy and the size of its population, which encompasses 20 percent of humanity, makes it difficult for Washington to forge the kind of alliances that prevailed against the former Soviet Union. Even Israel, which has been one of the most reliable allies of U.S. imperialism, has been accused of providing Beijing with secret information on U.S. military technology. Choosing his words carefully, Israel's Ambassador in Washington, Zalman Shoval, denied that his nation had passed on "classified information relating to the Israeli-American joint project concerning the development of the Nautilus laser system," designed to shoot down incoming missiles. (*South China Morning Post*, 19 February 1999)

Similarly, the European Union has been reluctant to sign on to the effort to heighten tensions with China. Leading EU nations like France and Germany were in the forefront of the war against

Yugoslavia, despite staunch internal opposition. Yet in the midst of this war, the EU announced that it was initiating a military wing to be led by current NATO Secretary-General, Javier Solana of Spain. This news was greeted warily in Washington coming as EU-U.S. trade conflicts over barley, beef, genetically modified foods, bananas, privacy guidelines, aerospace, cinema - and much, much more - continued to fester. Now, increasingly, Lockheed Martin, General Electric and other huge Pentagon contractors must worry that they will face the kind of stiff competition that EU's Airbus has provided to Boeing, exasperating the Seattle monopoly.

One of the more significant challenges that the EU has presented to U.S. imperialism has been the "euro," the common European currency. Already, a number of nations have begun to issue bonds denominated in this new currency instead of the dollar. When then president of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, visited Beijing in October 1998, "senior Chinese officials made little secret of their hope that the euro would become strong enough to balance the dominance of the dollar and the yen... Some academics in Beijing add that they hope monetary union could lead to greater political unity so that Europe could become a more reliable diplomatic counterweight to the U.S." (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 1, 1998) This "hope" has been echoed in Cuba, which is also seeking to erode the dominance of the dollar specifically and U.S. imperialism generally.

The difficulty in building an anti-Beijing alliance has not caused U.S. imperialism to relent in its pressure on the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (North Korea). A revised war plan devised by the U.S. and South Korea declares their soldiers will not only repel a supposed incursion from the north but

will push into North Korean territory, capture Pyongyang, demolish its People's Army and destroy the regime of Kim Jong Il. 'When we're done, they will not be able to mount any military activity of any kind,' a U.S. official said at a low-key briefing to journalists in Seoul where the existence of the plan was first revealed. Washington and Seoul will then abolish North Korea as a state and, the official said, 'reorganize' it under South Korean control.... If the new strategy were to be executed, South Korea's 672,000 soldiers would bear the brunt of the conflict on the ground and part of the air operations, but would be backed by the 35,700 [U.S.] troops in South Korea and another 41, 300 stationed in Japan, mostly on the island of [Okinawa]... Targets in North Korea would be attacked by [U.S.] B-1 bombers and B-52 bombers... The war plan envisions the possibility of amphibious assaults by U.S. Marines landing at the narrow waist of North Korea to cut the country in two. (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 December 1998)

Undoubtedly, awareness of this diabolical plan led to recent urgent consultations between DPRK and Chinese officials in Beijing. Yet, one must wonder if U.S. imperialism has learned anything over the past half-century. If Washington could not subdue the DPRK almost fifty years ago and was forced to suffer thousands of casualties in seeking to do so, what makes it think it can accomplish this task today?

Though prating ceaselessly about the alleged "death of socialism," U.S. imperialism continues to harbor macabre dreams of overthrowing those Communist parties that still hold power. Needless to say, Cuba is high on this list.

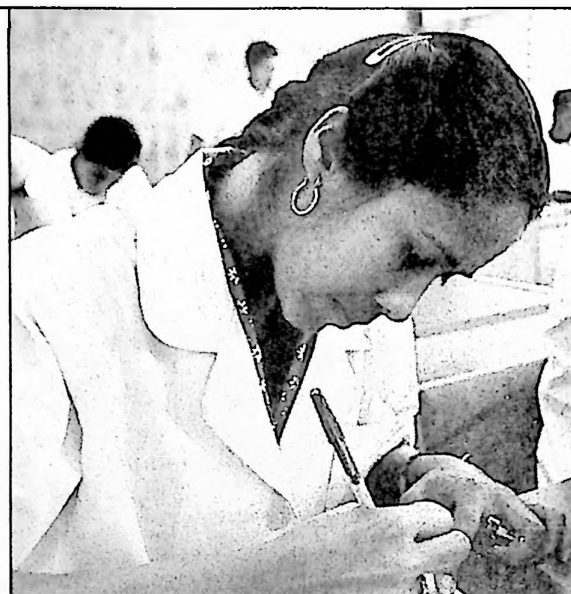
But, again, the international community has been hesitant to follow this scheme. Thus, in the last two decades the United Nations system has undertaken over 1,300 projects in Cuba representing a total financing of over \$300 billion. The fact that these efforts have been primarily in the realms of food, water,

and health has not abated the fury of ultra-right Senator Jesse Helms, who has pointed to this aid as yet another reason why the U.S. should not attend to its long overdue financial obligations to the UN. (*Granma*, 6 December 1998)

Member states of the UN also have chosen not to follow this anti-Cuba policy. High on this list has been Brazil. Months ago Petrobras of Brazil, a sprawling state-owned company, and CUPET of Cuba inked a contract for the exploration and exploitation of oil in Cuban territory. Petrobras is the largest industrial and commercial complex in Brazil and among the world's major international oil companies - fourth in terms of reserves, 1.8 million barrels per day, exceeding those of Britain and France. The loss of reliable deliveries of petroleum was one of the many grievous losses endured by Cuba upon the collapse of the USSR and this contract will help to fill the breach. (*Granma* 22 November 1998)

Cuba's northern neighbor, Canada, also has thumbed its nose at the U.S. embargo in the face of unrelenting pressure from Washington, which has sought to use the illegal and extra-territorial "Helms-Burton" law to penalize Canadian corporations that invest in Cuba. Canadian companies have participated in fields such as petroleum, nickel, and other mining sectors. In 1996 bilateral trade between the two totaled \$680.5 million, which was some \$32 million dollars greater than the previous year; during the first half of 1998 alone, this figure was \$441.8 million. (*Granma*, 8 November 1998)

The European Union is the largest source of visitors, trade, and credits to Cuba. As such, Havana was a major participant in the June 1999 summit between the EU and Caribbean and Latin American



Health care in Cuba is among best in the world despite imperialist embargo.

AP Photo

nations in Brazil, which was designed to increase trade relations between and among these regions, thus further eroding the obsolete "Monroe Doctrine." As noted, Havana has welcomed the euro as a challenger to the dollar. In his speech celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Revolution, Cuban President Fidel Castro was blunt about this: "The dollar and the euro are eyeing each other warily. A promising adversary to the privileged currency has emerged," he declared. Francisco Soberon, president of Cuba's central bank, has announced that using the euro would help the island to simplify trade operations and payments with the EU, as well as reducing exchange risks and even interest rate costs. By prohibiting Cuba from using the dollar in international trade, the illegal U.S. embargo forces Cuban companies to move in and out of third currencies with resulting additional costs and complications. According to Cuban officials, this restriction resulted in currency exchange losses for Cuba of \$260 million in 1998. Use of the euro will, to an extent, alleviate this problem. (*Financial Times*, 7 January 1999)

Sensing the futility of the failed policy of the U.S. embargo, nearly two dozen Senators and three for-

mer Secretaries of State have called on the White House to create a "bipartisan commission" to review U.S. policy toward Havana. Visiting the island in late 1998, Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut called the embargo an "abysmal failure. It has got to stop." (*Los Angeles Times*, 12 December 1998).

Senator Dodd has not been the only visitor to Havana in search of a change in U.S. policy. U.S. wheat farming and agribusiness interests also have expressed frustration at the fact that their world market

"Defending the selfish interests of monopoly capital remains the prime mandate of the U.S. State Department."



Above: A negotiated settlement is still being sought in Colombia's long-term civil war. Below: In Bogota workers protest policies of government.

share is being curtailed by sanctions. During a visit to Cuba Paul Dickerson, vice-president of U.S. Wheat Associates, which represents the export interests of U.S. wheat farmers, said sadly that current U.S. sanctions against Cuba, Iran, and Libya meant that just over 10 percent of the global wheat trade of 98 million tons was "off limits" to U.S. producers, although their market share was still 32 percent.

Echoing these sentiments were Archer Daniels Midland and Continental Grain, both of which contribute mightily to Democratic and Republic candidates alike. (*Financial Times*, 4 December 1998)

No doubt these monopolies are leery of following the path carved out by Boeing. As their market share has steadily eroded in the face of the challenge from the EU's Airbus, they have had to stand idly by and watch as contracts were lost 90 miles offshore. Just recent-

ly yet another consignment of Airbus 320s arrived in Havana. (*Granma*, 6 December 1998)

Yet, despite internal and external pressures, Washington's policy toward not only Cuba but Latin America generally has been sorely lacking. Increasingly, the "war on drugs" has become a threadbare excuse for an augmented U.S. military role in the region. In July 1998 Republican Congressional leaders introduced a \$2.6 billion drug-war proposal, including \$300 million for the construction of a U.S. military base at a yet-to-be-selected site in Latin America. In March 1998 a group of U.S. military instructors initiated specialized training at a new base near Iquitos, Peru as part of a five-year program that is expected to cost \$60 million. The Washington-based Latin American Working Group (LAWG) estimates that an astonishing 56,000 U.S. troops saw service in Latin America in 1997, while grant assistance to the region's militaries and police exceeded \$250 million. U.S. troops operate ground-based radar, fly monitoring missions, provide operations and intelligence support, and train host-nation security forces. In a July 1998 report, LAWG notes that counternarcotics is the rationale used for most U.S. troop deployments and aid, both of which are increasingly being provided under Pentagon programs - like the Joint Combined Exchange Training exercises run by Green Beret and other special forces units - that are exempt from civilian oversight and human rights restrictions. In Mexico, for example, helicopters earmarked for anti-drug missions were used to ferry troops to carry out anti-Zapatista operations in Chiapas and Mexican opposition leaders have demanded an investigation into whether troops sent to the U.S. for anti-drug training are applying the tactics they learned to quell the indigenous uprising. Incidentally, Mexico, after rejecting all U.S. drug assistance between



1993 and 1995, accepted \$75 million in training and equipment from the Pentagon in 1996 and 1997. (*Report on the Americas: NACLA, November-December 1998*)

Colombia has been the scene of a long-standing guerrilla war and, coincidentally, it also has been the place where so-called anti-drug operations by the Pentagon have skyrocketed. In late 1998 in a maneuver spurred by conservative Republicans, Congress more than doubled funding for these operations. Thus, in 1999 this form of "assistance" amounts to \$289 million, compared with \$80 million in 1997 and \$88.6 million in 1998. This funding, unsurprisingly, is also a boon for the military-industrial complex, in that much of the funding is not going for programs to subsidize farmers wishing to move away from growing coca but for the purchase of Blackhawk helicopters, transport and surveillance planes, patrol boats, and the like. This supposed aid for anti-drug efforts is even more curious in light of the fact that the previous Colombian President, Ernesto Samper, was accused of accepting \$6 million in campaign contributions from drug traffickers. (*New York Times, December 1998*) Closer to home, it was also reported that U.S. military figures have been arrested in ever increasing numbers after being caught smuggling marijuana and cocaine into California, making some wonder why the U.S. does not begin the war on drugs with an assault on its own military. (*Los Angeles Times, 13 December 1998*) Indeed, Washington's "war on drugs" is viewed as a thinly disguised "war on left-wing guerrillas" who are perceived as challenging the fundamental interests of monopoly capital.

Colombia is not the only South American nation that Washington is now eyeing nervously. The electoral victory in late 1998 of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez during that nation's presidential race has not been greet-

ed warmly by the State Department, not least because of his own stated warmth toward socialist Cuba. President Castro congratulated the former soldier after his stunning triumph and reprimanded those who had "hounded and slandered" him in the wake of his "valiant visit to Cuba." (*Granma, 13 December 1998*) By his own admission President Chavez is seeking to weld closer ties with Brazil, Colombia and the Caribbean to "counterbalance the power of the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) linking the U.S., Canada and Mexico." As ever, U.S. imperialism is concerned that Latin American nations may break away from the death grip that is now strangling them. Venezuela is of particular concern in that this nation is a major oil exporter and is the site of major interests controlled by the Rockefeller family. (*Financial Times, 9 December 1998*)

The continent that has helped to fuel the growth of U.S. capitalism-Africa-also is straining to escape the brutal clutches of U.S. imperialism. This valiant effort will not be assisted by the "NAFTA for Africa" bill, the "Africa Growth and Opportunity Act", which passed the House of Representatives in 1998, was stalled in the Senate but has been re-introduced this year. Supporters of this bill include a number of transnationals that have not been notorious in their support of Africa, including Chevron, Mobil, Exxon, Bank of America, Texaco, Citicorp, Coca-Cola and K-Mart. This bill would force African nations to open up their economies to further penetration by these corporations, with no concern paid to environmental or labor interests. In fact, International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions including privatization and minimizing the state sector in exchange for meager trade

benefits are at the heart of this legislation.

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., has countered this bill with the introduction of his "Hope for Africa" bill, which calls for debt relief; likewise, his bill will require companies doing business in Africa and wishing to export to the U.S. to adhere to environmental, worker safety, and labor rights standards. These companies will also be required to pay a living wage to employees in Africa (*Focus on the Corporation,*



AP Photo
South Africa's newly-elected
president Thabo Mbeki.

www.essential.org/monitor, 2 February 1999)

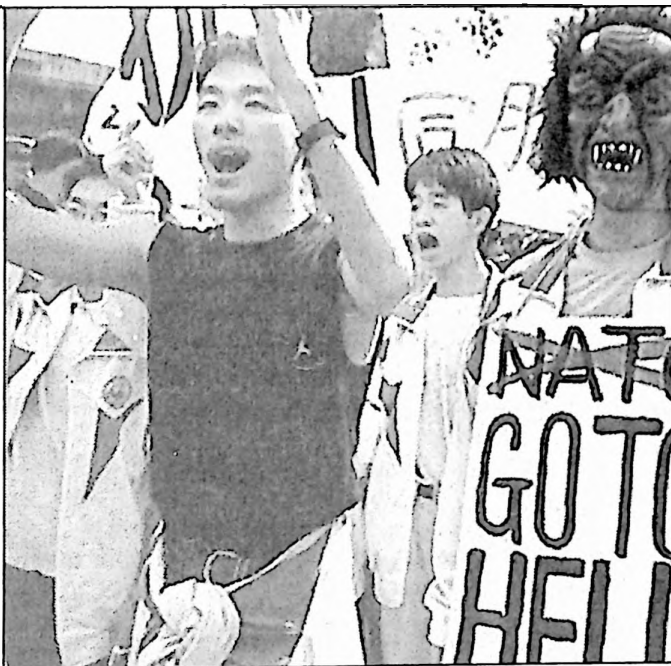
This Jackson bill comes at a particularly propitious moment. The replacement of Nelson Mandela by Thabo Mbeki in a South African election remarkably free of violence and disruption, the impending settlement of raging wars in Congo and Sierra Leone, the recent election in Israel which is expected to lead to a more realistic government there thus easing the crushing military burden on Egypt, all point to brighter days for Africa.

Relations between China and Africa continue to expand. The trade volume in 1989 was less than \$1.2 billion but by 1997 had jumped to \$5.65 billion. Thus, the China Aviation Technological Import and Export Corporation has set up a truck manufacturing plant on the continent and has exported about 300 airplanes to African nations as of 1997. In fact, China has set up more than 200 trade companies and more than 150 trade offices in Africa. By the end of the 1980s alone, China had contracted over 2000 engineering and labor service projects in more than 40 African nations. (*CHINAFRICA, October 1998*).

The international community has come to recognize that the most important antidote barring global depression would be lifting Africa out of the realm of underdevelopment. This has been noted by Jubilee 2000 which has campaigned energetically for massive debt reduction and whose actions forced the G-7 nations at their recent meeting in Cologne to opt for limited debt relief.

In October 1993 the UN, Japan and a number of African nations hosted a major conference on African development; this was followed by an important meeting of the same parties in October 1998 in Tokyo where Japan alone pledged \$781 million for education and health-care in Africa and an ambitious plan was bruited for improving education and health indices on the continent. (*New African, December 1998*) The U.S. was urged to participate fully in this initiative and as the nation that has been a major beneficiary of the plunder of Africa was encouraged to do so; sadly, those expecting further aid from the U.S. to Africa have been sorely disappointed: instead, Africa faces "NAFTA for Africa" bills that seek to heighten the exploitation of the continent.

Worse, Washington has contributed to the increased militarization of a continent already wracked by wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea and a raging internal conflict in Angola. Under what is known as Joint/Combined Exchange Training (JCET) programs, U.S. special forces between 1995 and 1997 alone conducted training sessions in 34 out of 53 African nations. In one instance the Uganda Third Battalion after being trained by U.S. Green Berets



Above: Student's protest of China Embassy bombing in Beijing.

AP Photo

was sent directly into action to quell an internal revolt.

During 1997 pursuant to the "African Crisis Response Initiative" the U.S. conducted three 60-day military training programs in Malawi, Senegal and Uganda - all of which are facing guerrilla insurgencies. (*New African, January 1999*) During the past two years alone elite U.S. special operation troops have traveled to 22 African nations to provide training in reconnaissance, small-unit tactics and counterinsurgency. (*Washington Post, 13 December 1998*)

Though Southern Africa particularly is reeling from AIDS and the continent as a whole endures malnutrition and disease, U.S. imperialism continues to support right-wing militaristic forces whose main mission is to back the narrow interests of transnational corporations.

Defending the selfish interests of monopoly capital remains the prime mandate of the U.S. State Department. Though we were instructed that the bombing of Belgrade was designed for humanitarian reasons, others saw a desire of U.S. imperialism to protect its interest in Caspian Sea oil and extend its hegemony on a continent where U.S. investments remain

huge. Coincidentally world fuel prices jumped dramatically during NATO air raids as fighter planes' frequent sorties disrupted supplies. Similarly, keeping Iraqi oil off the market also has distorted world fuel prices to the benefit of Exxon, Texaco and other oil corporations. (*Financial Times, 8 April 1999*)

The military-industrial complex viewed the war against Yugoslavia as manna from heaven. As one journalist put it, "the conflict in Kosovo eats up equipment that must be replaced...for military contractors, the relevant portion of the Pentagon budget is the money earmarked for weapons-as much as \$53 billion for weapons procurement next year and \$60 billion the following year-compared with \$44 billion last year..." (*New York Times, 19 May 1999*) Moreover, this war was designed to intimidate other small nations contemplating breaking loose from U.S. and Western European hegemony. Both President Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain have warned that NATO's mandate extends far beyond the borders of Europe.

Nevertheless, U.S. imperialism faces ever stiffer challenges from at home and abroad. The war on Yugoslavia, for example, has been touted as a U.S. victory though it worsened relations with China, which then deepened its ties with Russia and India and though it led the EU to hasten the develop of its own military arm, perhaps speeding up the decline of a U.S.-led NATO. For U.S. imperialism, there is no end: the crisis continues and heightens. ■



Night Shift

Phillip
Bonosky

you got to work for a living" he said. "Just say to yourself: 'I'm their slave for eight hours. What they say, I do.' Get it? That'll make everything easier." He added: "Now, you see they got barbed wire around the whole works, right? What'd you figure they got it up there for?"

The boy suggested: "To keep thieves out?"

"Keep thieves out?" The man looked at him. "Ever been to Walla Walla, Sing Sing, or Leavenworth?"

"No," the boy said.

"They got barbed wire up there, too. You think it's to keep thieves out?" He waited. "What'd you say your name was?"

"Davie."

"Davie?"

"I guess not," he said.

"Give the man a cigar!" he announced.

"Look, Bats," the other man, Lou, said, resuming his argument. "There's nothing in the job that makes a man act like that. He's gotta want to. You send him in an ordinary working man, give him a halfass position, and he comes out a sonofabitch. Is that natural? All I said was my back hurt, and he said I could knock off the rest of the night and take the next day off too."

"They get the idea you're faking it. Look, Lou: human beings are born suspicious, nobody trusts nobody. An x-ray can't see if your back's hurting so how's he going to see?"

"Well, he acts like he sees. He sees it ain't hurting."

"No, all he sees is you're trying to get out of work on company pay. But he don't want you to get out of work on company pay."

"But, Bats," Lou said, "it did hurt."

"I know, I know," Bats said. "You don't have to tell me. I hurt my back in '56 and I don't know what it feels like if you have a regular back. How about you?" he asked Davie. "How old are you?"

"Eighteen."

"Eighteen?" How's your back?"

"Okay, I guess."

"You don't get no twinges in the

Richard Simmons
It had begun to drizzle just before 11, and the three of them waited, the last of the labor gang to be given their assignments. They waited on the dust-eaten benches, surrounded by the old, sagging lockers, while above them, over the iron plate that served as the roof, rumbled the ore trains. Old sweat was mixed with the smell of rain. A 50-watt bulb glowed, shook when the train passed. Always the last three left of the gang, they waited in silence for Mr. Mack to come back. They knew too, with a dismal certainty, that the other members of the gang had been assigned jobs for the night inside the furnaces with a roof over their heads. For them, it would be the outside. The cigarette one of them flipped outside the shanty, it didn't seem to have come from anyone in particular, hissed in the rain and expired.

Mr. Mack, called by no other name, had taken the other men off by twos and threes. Now when he reentered the shanty they felt painfully that they were a problem to him. They were the leftovers. Times were when he'd sent one or two of them home again, though usually he found something for them to do.

It was a tired night, even before it began. The sounds of the big fur-

nace, no farther than a hundred yards away, came muffled through the rain. But it was there the huge pulsing force, and muffled though it was, still they felt muscles in their bodies beginning to react, flinching into themselves. That would have to be stopped...

The thinnest of them, the pale one said: "It wasn't just that do you think that was all of it?" He was protesting anxiously, eager to get the agreement of one of the other men, a man who sat with his heavy boot drawn up on the bench, chewing a matchstick. "Because my back hurt?" I didn't say nothing about that"

The man removed his matchstick and spat. "Look, Lou," he said, "you know nobody's going to say nothing the first time. It's the second time they take notice."

"There ain't goin' to be no second time!"

"And the third time, it's" and he shoveled his hands out into the rain.

He turned now to the third one in the shadows, a boy of 18. "What do you think?" he said. "How do you like it so far? Look," he said, tapping the air with his finger, "let me give you some good advice. If you want to make it here or anywhere

middle of the night so you sit up like a hot poker's been stuck up your ass and start to yell so your old lady thinks you're gone crazy?"

Davie grinned. "No," he said.

"You ain't got no old lady, I guess?" Bats asked.

"No," Davie said, grinning a bit more.

"Then," Bats said, "you got nobody but yourself to listen to. The second reason a fellow gets married," he said, "is so he can yell at his wife at night."

"He looked at Davie and added: 'You wanna know the first reason a man gets married?'"

"I guess I know," Davie said. Bats nodded, and turned to Lou.

Lou spit first, then said: "I worked all night once with a rupture. Next day my old lady fixed in a support and I went back to work."

Bats said: "Smile, damn it: Don't you know that old song, 'Smile, smile, smile?'"

Davie shook his head.

Bats said: "Well, that's the idea, anyhow. You don't want me to sing it, do you?" He broke into laughter.

A car crashed overhead and they held their positions until it passed.

"Look," Lou said, with a twinge of desperation "Mr. Mack don't know a thing about it. And it's all right tonight. You know," he added, "I couldn't prove it: the x-ray machines don't show"

"Yeah," Bats said, turning away.

"Look," Lou said, now to Davie, "if you start complaining about your back, you know what he's going to say."

Davie nodded, but said: "You're

free to quit and find an easier job somewhere else."

The two of them nodded. Davie nodded too.

Mr. Mack now came in through the door, bringing with him a gust of cold air. He carried a notebook bound in heavy leather and the pages of which they sometimes see were indexed with the alphabet. In his corduroy coat pocket he had a row of yellow pencils, their sharpened points sticking up in an efficient row. He carried an old-fashioned pocket watch in the palm of his hand; sometimes he checked it against the watch he wore on his wrist held there with a black leather band.

Without glancing at them he opened up his notebook once he was inside the shanty and studied it. Finally he snapped it shut and said: "Well, boys, tonight I'd like to get that damned gravel out of the yard: it's been messing up the number two loading platform for too damned long."

They said nothing. Now he looked at them. "Everybody feeling fine?" He looked at Davie. "How about you, Jocko."

Davie nodded. Without waiting to be looked at the other two nodded also.

"Great," Mr. Mack said, then turned to go out, waving his book. The wave of his book included them all. Slowly they got up and followed him into the night air, flinching slightly from the rain, then quickly squaring their shoulders to meet it.

A bit down the tracks which they followed the furnace glowed,

remote and yet intimate. They passed it by, feeling nevertheless the gust of heat that came from it, and went on to an overhanging loading ledge under which there was a huge pile of half cemented slag, dirt and gravel. Here Mr. Mack stopped and said: "I'll be back in fifteen minutes to see how you're doing." He just nodded toward the pit across the tracks to the edge of the furnace yard. The pit was already partly full with debris.

Once he had left, the three of them stared at the pile without speaking. They had crowded in under the loading ledge to keep out of the rain. Bats picked up a shovel and hit the pile with it. Only a few pebbles were dislodged. Without a word Lou went uptrack and was back in a few minutes with a 20-pound sledgehammer with two handles. He took one handle and Bats took the other, and together, counting, "One, two, three" brought it crashing down on the pile. Sparks flew, so did bits of gravel, and they heard Davie yelp: "Goddamn it, that hit my fingers!"

"Put your goddamn gloves on," Bats said.

Davie was sucking his two middle fingers of his right hand, looking anxiously at them to see if blood had been drawn.

Bats had picked up a shovel and began to shovel the loosened gravel into a wheelbarrow. Lou stood with one hand resting on one of the handles of the sledge hammer, the other handle sticking up and waiting. When the wheelbarrow was full Bats put his shovel down. Both waited. Finally, Davie said: "I guess it's up to me."

He got between the handles of the wheelbarrow, fixed a grip on the handles, stooped slightly and heaved. Nothing moved. He tried again. "You gotta take some of that off," he said.

Bats and Lou lifted the sledgehammer over their heads and Lou counting, "One, two " they landed the hammer on the grunt of "three,"



Richard Stinson

and the gravel scattered in every direction. The released dust inside the pile now rose and made them gasp for breath.

Davie had got the barrow up and was unsteadily weaving it across the yard. He hit the tracks at an angle and the wheelbarrow turned over. He stood there in the rain staring down at the upturned barrow and the mass of gravel and dirt and then came back and picked up the shovel.

Then in the rain he called back: "You take the easy jobs, and leave me the shit!"

When he got back, Lou nudged him over to the hammer.

"Take the easy job," he said.

"You think it'll strain my back?" Davie asked.

"Yeah," Lou said.

Bats was shoveling more gravel into the barrow and Lou hauled it off down the yard hitting the tracks squarely and going over them. Bats took hold of one of the handles, and waited.

Davie said: "I didn't tell you guys. But I got a back condition too." He added: "From football."

"My hernias got hernias," Bats said. Then he added: "Tell you what. I'll trade one of my hernias for your back condition."

Davie took hold of the handle, and tested it. "I only used a 10 pound hammer before," he said.

Bats said: "What you do is divide up this 20 pound hammer so you get half and I get half-10 each."

Davie looked at him suspiciously. "If this is a 20 pound hammer," he said, "how we going to divide it up evenly?"

"Well," Bats said, "maybe not evenly. Look," he said, "I'll take 12 pounds, and leave you eight. Okay? Because of your back," he said.

Davie cried suddenly, angrily: "Look," he said, "just because I said my back hurt, that don't mean I'm saying I'm a cripple! How old are you anyhow," he said resentfully.

Bats snorted, and took hold of the handle and looked at him. Davie

took hold of his. "On three," said Bats.

They got the hammer up but Davie humped out of the way and it crashed back onto the iron floor right in front of them. Lou had returned and with his hands on his hips was watching. His face burning, Davie stood apart, humiliated. Lou finally shrugged and took the other handle and in a moment the sparks flared, the gravel exploded, and they had begun to reload the barrow. To his surprise Dave noted that they stopped when it was only half full. When he looked to check with them they were back at the hammer again.

Coming back from the pit he felt the rain had soaked past his outer coat, his heavy working shirt and penetrated into his winter underwear. It had become a mean rain, a stubborn, monotonous rain that seemed dedicated, spiteful. Mr. Mack was at the loading platform.

"I want it all out by seven," he said, and disappeared again in the rain.

The two of them stared out into the same rain that had swallowed Mr. Mack

and regurgitated Davie. "Did you hear him?" Bats asked Davie. They resumed shoveling and this time the barrow was full.

When Davie came back, he heard Bats say to Lou: "Is there anybody you know who can say 'I want that down by seven,' and they go ahead and it gets done by seven?"

"Yeah," Lou said. "My old lady."

"Your old lady?"

"Yeah, he repeated, then added: "I can say it. But that don't mean she hears me. 'Do that,' I tell her, and she says, 'leave it for the maid.'"

"You gotta maid?" Davie asked.

"Yeah," Lou said. "Me."

"That's why women have it easy in life," Bats said. "They marry you and when you tell 'em to do something, they don't hear you; you tell 'em they ought to go to work in the Mill."

"What'd they say?" Davie wanted to know, interested.

They both looked at him. Lou said: "Get married. You want our experience for nothing?"

They filled his barrow up to the brim.

He could hear Bats shoveling in the darkness, while above them, still in the distance, the tracks throbbed from some moving engine. Hung

high in the furnace works, as if on invisible branches of a dark tree, dim lights burned. In their light he glimpsed parts of tangled tubes and bits of catwalks going up to the top of the furnace. Small bells jingled and there was a heavy, agonized sighing like some big but helpless, and almost played out, giant no longer interested in getting free.

Before them the mass of slag and gravel seemed undiminished. They gazed at it with resentful eyes. Davie stood still and gazed with them. Finally, he said: "I didn't know both of you were married. I though only you, Bats, was married." He

paused for a moment as if pleased to have solved this problem. Then, he said in a still interested voice, "I guess it's nice coming home and finding it there for you every night."

Bats and Lou didn't move.

"Ain't it?" Davie insisted. "Well, ain't it?"

Bats propped the shovel up and took hold of the handle. "What time is it?" he said. Obediently Davie looked at his watch. "2 A.M.," he said.

"And where the hell are you?" he demanded.

Davie began to answer but Bats went on: "And where the hell are

Richard Stinson



Lou and me?" Davie laughed uncomfortably. Then taking heart he said: "When I get married, I'll never work night shift."

Now, Lou came over to him with the deliberate seriousness of a member of delegation, and took him by the shoulder and said, directly into



Davie's flinching eyes; "Day or night," he said, "you get fucked by the company no matter when you sleep!" And going back he took hold of the hammer and Bats

took hold of the other handle and without counting they brought it down on the pile with a tremendous bang and the gravel exploded like a bomb.

An ambulance siren started up suddenly far down in the other part of the Mill, and they stopped to listen to it. Lou said: "By the way," and he looked at Davie to show this included him, "I've seen lots of guys go to the hospital. But," and he waited a moment for effect, "did you ever see anybody come out?"

Bats snorted. Davie looked confused and a bit alarmed.

Lou said: "How's that finger of yours?"

"What?"

"That finger."

"Oh," Davie said, and stripped his glove off to look.

"You ought to go down to the infirmary," Lou said, "and get 'em to put some iodine on, or it might get gangrene. I used to know a guy once, all he did was get scratched by a wire passing by... didn't think a thing of it." He looked at Davie: "He was pushing up daisies in two weeks..."

"When I go home," they suddenly heard Bats say, as if he was

picking up on earlier conversation, "the first thing I do is see if there's coffee on."

He sank his shovel into the pile.

"If it's on, I know she's up; if it ain't on, I know she's still in bed."

"And how about your kids?"

Lou wanted to know.

"If she's still in bed, they get their own breakfast."

"Well, my old lady," Lou said, "has the kid. You know, he's still taking it from her. So don't think there's romance all the time," he added. "Because," and he leaned over to Davie again and pressed the button on his coat, "there ain't."

"You think we're going to get this done tonight?" Davie asked. "If we don't get it done tonight," he went on, "What'll you think Mr. Mack'll say?"

"He'll think of something," Lou said.

Bats moved back along the wall. Every so often a train clattered the heavy iron plates over their heads and while that happened they stopped working and their faces became rigid as masks, only the cheek muscles quivering, as the shudder took them like sticks.

The whole mill had become more distant from where they were the sounds more muted as if the rain soaked them too. He was reluctant to put the first energy needed into lifting the heavy barrow and kept postponing it each time. When he brought it back next time, he stood up against the wall panting and suddenly cried: "I didn't take this job forever," he said, "just to make me some quick dough. Look," he added, explaining to them, "What could I do? Where could I go, me just out of high school and you know nobody's going to let me go to college being who I am. Anyhow, I hate to have to stay in the house and study..."

"You gotta have a education these days," Bats said.

Lou added: "The guys that walk around here with ties and hats, they're college guys, they been to college. They don't know a damn

thing but they got that piece of paper, you know what I mean?"

"You mean that shows they've graduated."

"Yeah, that piece of paper, is why they can tell you and me to go down in the muck and work and we go down in the muck and work."

"Not me."

"Am I seeing right? Are you here working? Well," he added, "a poor excuse for working, but anyhow?"

Offended, Davie said: "How many brains does it take to fill up this wheelbarrow anyhow? It don't take no brains."

Both looked at him silently. Davie said, flushing, "I didn't mean-" They nodded and then resumed working. When they stopped filling it, Davie went to lift the barrow up and couldn't. "Okay, you guys," he said, "take some of it out."

Nat and Lou had gone to the sledgehammer and, each holding one handle, had brought the first strike down on the gravel pile.

"Okay, you guys!" Davie cried.

The hammer was up again over their heads and again it crashed down and the gravel flew and the dust rose in a thick cloud.

Davie began to scoop the gravel out of the barrow with his hands and Lou said to him quietly: "When Mr. Mack comes, he'll want to know why there's so much ready to go and so little that has gone."

Davie threw an agonized glance at the pile in his barrow and again tried to lift it and again gave up. "Damn you guys," he said, "don't you believe in free speech?"

When he got back with his emptied barrow, Bats and Lou were gone. He found them in the locker room opening their lunch buckets. Worn benches ran between two rows of battered lockers, some of which were locked with dial locks. Nobody else had come as yet. Davie pulled down a brown bag from the upper ledge of his locker, which he had opened with some struggle. Then he brought his thermos bottle out and stood there holding it. It was dripping.

"The cork got loose," he announced.

Both Bats and Lou had their standing up beside their lunch buckets. Davie looked at them in dismay, turning the thermos upside down and shaking it; nothing came out. "Damn it," he cried, his voice a mix of anger and despair, "I got to have coffee. I can't work without coffee! It's my only vice, and I gotta have it, I just gotta have it! My mom always sees it's there, and now the cork's got loose!"

He looked at them. "If I don't have coffee I'll quit," he said.

Bats motioned to him with his head. Davie came to him carrying the thermos cup. Slowly Bats half-filled the cup with coffee from his thermos and then Lou filled the rest of it from his.

"Do you mind two different makes of coffee?" he said.

Then they sat silently in the locker room staring beyond their thermos cups which they held to their lips. Suddenly Mr. Mack was there. He stood at the doorway letting in the cold wet air, dressed in a macintosh and holding an umbrella.

"Look, fellas," he said, in a voice that was cordial, verging on the hearty, "the machine in the office run out of coffee. How about one of you guys running over to Sally's Grille. She's got some fresh made for us. I'll give you a pass to get back in."

Nobody stirred. "Look," he said, and showed them the umbrella, "I ain't asking you to go out without no protection."

The umbrella hung in the air. Neither Bats nor Lou had moved. "You won't be docked," he said, looking at their backs.

Davie jumped up and said, eagerly: "I'll get it for you, Mr. Mack."

When he came back he brought three paper cups of coffee along with him and set two of them down on the bench before Bats and Lou and drank from the third. Bats and Lou got up and left the two paper cups of coffee untouched on the bench. "Hey," Davie cried. "Your coffee!"

But they paid no attention.

The second half of the night was long and they worked in silence. Davie felt that when he was gone they talked to each other. But when he showed up again out of the dark, they fell silent.

At one point, soaked now through and through, beginning to cough, he set the barrow down with a bang and announced: "To hell with all this! I'm finished! I wouldn't let a dog go out in that kind of rain and here I am soaked to the skin! Why don't you guys push it next?"

They were shoveling. They loaded the barrow, then knocked more gravel loose. Davie stood against the wall with his hands around his stomach, as if to soothe and ache there. He made no move to start the barrow. Paying no attention to him, the other two kept banging at the pile and the loose gravel spread and accumulated.

When Mr. Mack showed up again, he threw a glance at the filled barrow and the loose pile around it. He made a note in his pad and walked off. Suddenly Davie woke up as if he had actually been asleep.

"What do you think he wrote down in that book of his?" he asked uneasily. "Do you think he's putting down how much we've hauled out of here? I'm just asking. What do you think?" He looked thoughtfully out into the rain. "You think he'd really fire me? I mean, fire me? I never been fired by anybody before! And if he does, does that go on my record? You know what I mean? If I need a job again, what do you think? Does it?" Suddenly he pulled his wallet out and opened it. Snapshots and bits of paper fell out in a stream. Anxiously he counted his money. "Jesus," he said, "I

ain't got enough to see me to payday! I swear to God I had an extra ten here! Where in the hell did it go anyhow? Any you guys see if a ten dropped out of my wallet when I was looking for my Social Security card? I musta lost it, I sure enough couldn't a spend it, could I? After all, the most I ever drink is beer, not dissolved diamonds, how much can beer cost?"

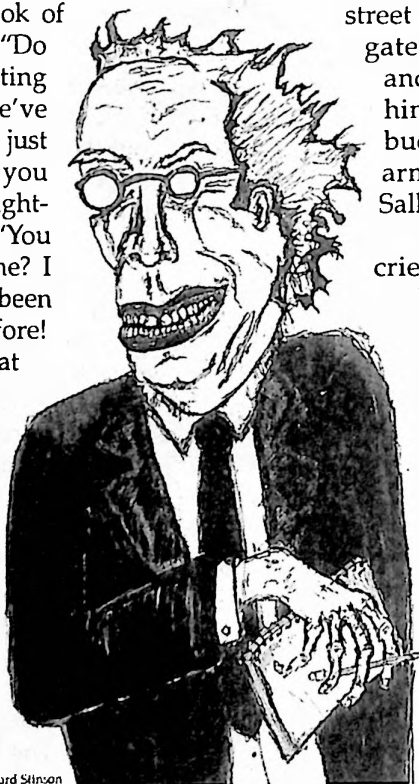
He reexamined his wallet, turned it inside out and then fell to his knees to retrieve the snapshots and bits of paper. Then he stuck his wallet deep into his back pocket and took hold of the barrow and pushed off into the dark.

Dawn came and taking their shovel and hammer with them, Bats and Lou moved off up the track to the tool shanty. When Davie came back from the pit he found them gone. Men were passing by, and he looked now at his watch and say he had 10 minutes to make it to the locker room, dress into his street clothes, and start to the gate. There, passing through a brick building, he hooked his brass check up on his peg and hurried through.

On his way up the street outside the Mill gates, he saw Bats and Lou ahead of him, their lunch buckets under their arms, passing Sally's Bar & Grille.

"Wait, fellas!" he cried, hurrying a little.

He felt they hadn't heard him. Wait up!" he cried, and a little later: "Why the hell don't you fellas wait?" ■



Richard Stinson

M A I L

SUPPORT FOR FUND DRIVE

Comrades,

Enclosed is a donation for your fund drive. Sorry it isn't more, but it is the best I can do. I enjoy PA tremendously. I think you are doing a splendid job. I only wish we could get many times more new readers.

Edwin Spiegel

STEEL WORKER LEADS THE WAY

PA Editorial Board,

What a marvelous magazine you put out and especially with the great improvements!. It keeps your sanity in these bizarre times. Couldn't live without it.

I am sending a small contribution. To think that this "beacon of light" of the left could serve as a guide for the whole world's progressive and left movement while being assembled and printed in the "belly of the beast," as it were. If I ever win the lottery big one, PA gets half.

*F.J. Victorville CA
(formerly at Republic Steel,
South Chicago)*

I enjoy watching the evolutionary process manifesting in *Political Affairs* with each issue introducing a new element.

Leandro Planna

ENCLOSED IS MY BEST

Enclosed is my contribution. Wish you all success to keep *Political Affairs* published.

John Hughes

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK

I am enclosing a check for \$50.00 for PA in response to your letter. I finally figured out it was a fund appeal.

Feel free to just say "To continue and to improve the work of PA please send as large a contribution as possible. You need not be apologetic about asking. Working class people know that publications cost money and are willing to help out when asked. But you need to ask. Hoping this will help.

Michelle Artt

Best wishes for success in fund raising.

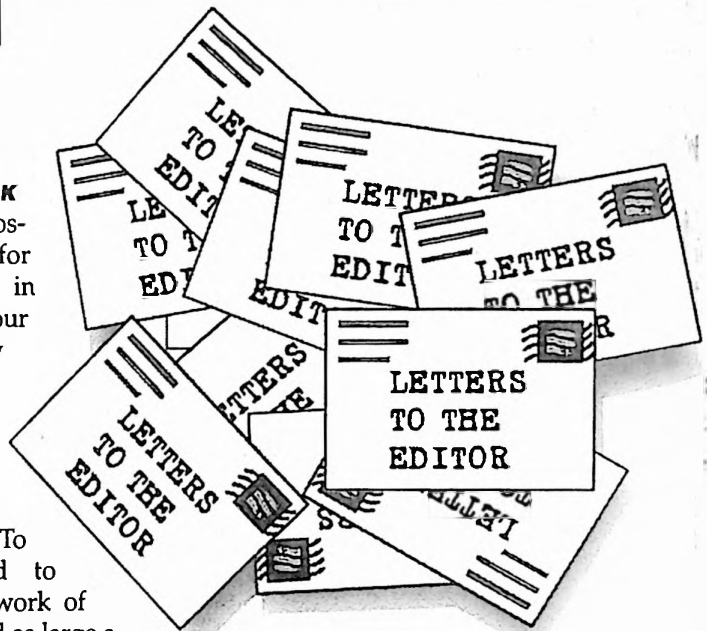
Helen Winter

COMMENTS ON RECENT EVENTS

The following are my thoughts on the amount of injustice in this country and the world based on what I've seen and heard.

My first thought is about the recent destruction of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. How could the CIA mistake it for a Serbian official complex?

And doesn't NATO realize how big China is compared to America? I think the U.S.-led campaign on Yugoslavia is just another way of showing them how NATO is likening itself to the Hitler War Machine of the 1930s and 1940s.



As a former teenager I can remember what respect was and morals were not abused. After hearing about the school massacre in Littleton Colorado, I believe a percentage of today's youth has no morals and respect for others. We need to push the Young Communist League and teach young people about socialism instead of hatred and violence.

John Camella

Dear Friends,

Beautiful new PA. Much success into the future. Loads of good wishes.

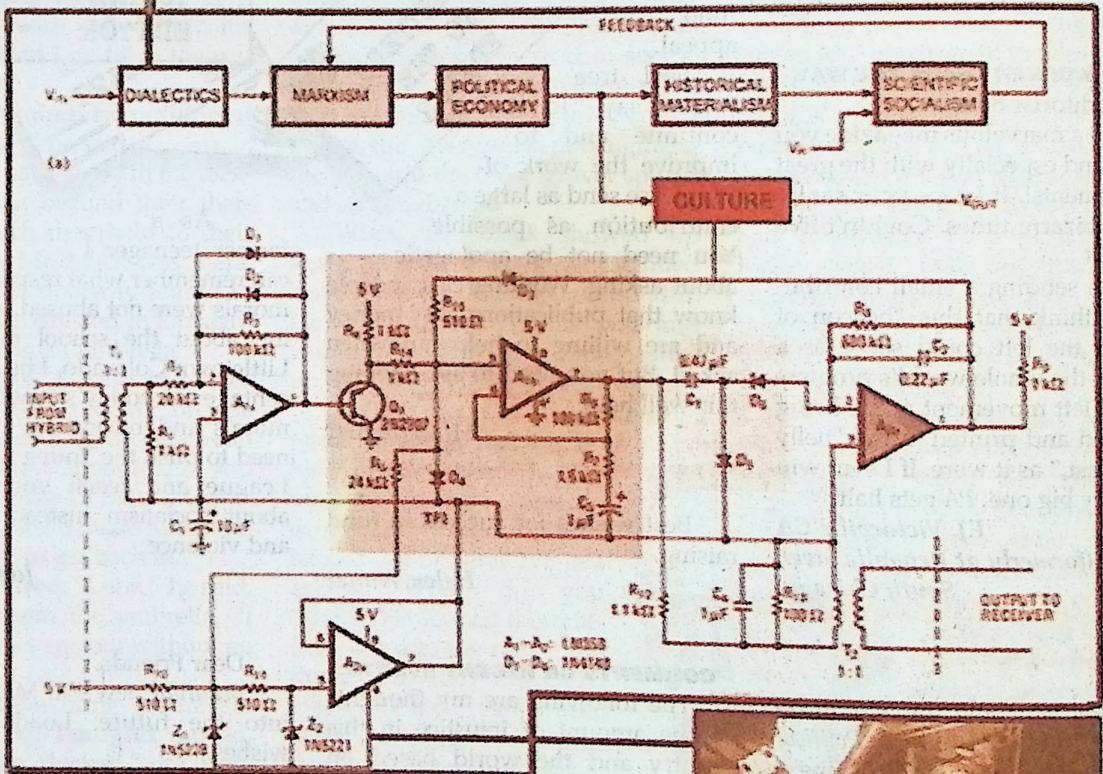
Helen Spiegel

Editor's Note: Keep those letters coming! We want to know what you think: about the world, current events, and ideological, political and cultural issues. Also let us know what you think about PA - how it looks, what it does or doesn't cover and what it needs to do better. We are looking to hear from you.

INPUT



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