

WHAT BUSH'S WAR WILL COST YOU

David Eisenhower and Allx Burack

political **A**ffairs

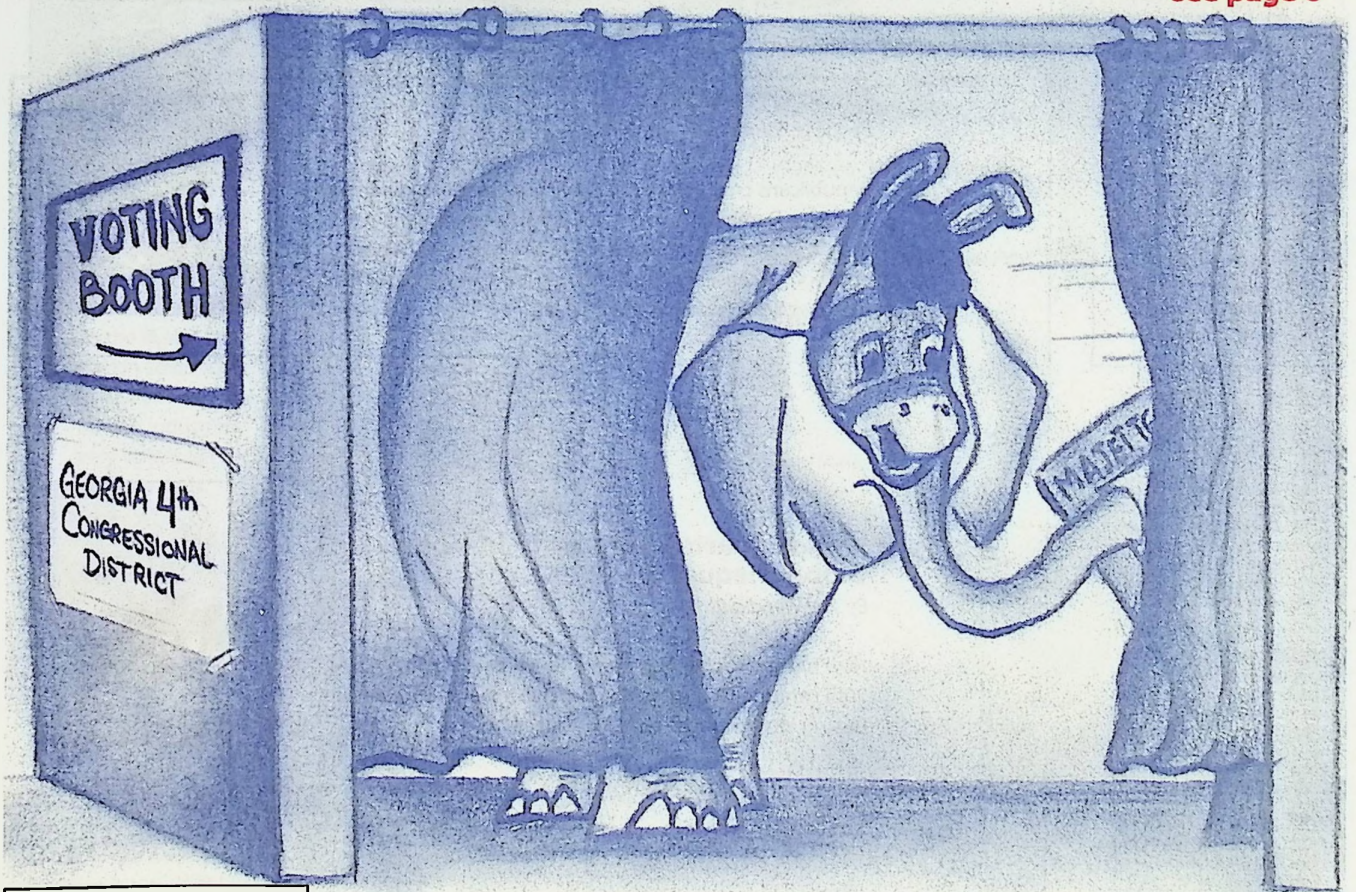
Journal of Marxist Thought
www.politicalaffairs.net

FEBRUARY 2003

\$2.50

DUMBO and the DIXIECRATS

see page 8



UNCLE TOM'S CHILDREN, *Debbie Dol* • CROSS OVER GEORGIA, *Jeelle Fishman*
WORLDS APART, *Joel Wendland* • THE BLACK FAMILY, *Ed McManey*

2003

february

ATTENTION LIBRARIES:

Volume 81, no. 9-10, September-October 2002, no. 11, November 2002, and no. 12, December 2002 were incorrectly numbered. The correct numbering is as follows: September-October 2002 is 9, November 2002 is 10, and December 2002 is 11.

Editorial Collective

EDITOR: *Joe Sims*
MANAGING EDITOR: *Joel Wendland*
ASSISTANT EDITOR: *Don Sloan*
COPY EDITORS: *Gary Grass, Jane Gordon, Babette Grunow, Brandi Kishner, Matt Parker, Anne Wood, Peter Zerner*
DESIGN/LAYOUT: *Cindy Hernandez*

DEPARTMENTS:
Book Reviews: *Thomas Riggins*
Economics: *David Eisenhower*
Health: *Phil Benjamin*
Labor: *Bruce Bostick, Denise Winebrenner*
Poetry: *Chris Butters*
Science: *Prasad Venugopal*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Phillip Bonosky, Gary Dotterman, Lewis E. Gordon, Gerald Horne, Wally Kaufman, Norman Markowitz, Erwin Marquit, Scott Marshall, Dee Myles, James West, Karen Talbot, Ken Knies

Political Affairs is a publication of the Communist Party USA.

In this issue:

6 Uncle Tom's Children

By *Debbie Bell*

From the days of Booker T. Washington, ruling-class policy has been to exercise influence through a scattering of select and carefully placed flunkys. However, today's Republican strategy is to turn the opportunity of a few individuals into a trend. Can they succeed?



8 Cross Over Dixie

By *Joelle Fishman*

Republicans crossed over in heavy numbers and joined conservative Democratic voters in Georgia's open primary to defeat progressive incumbent Cynthia McKinney. A new coalition of conservative Christians, Jews, Hindus and middle-class Blacks was born. Will it last?

cover



11 Worlds Apart: An Essay on the Sources of Global Inequality

By *Joel Wendland*

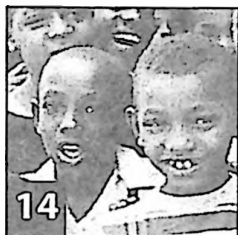
How has the capitalist system preserved racism in the late 20th century? Do white workers have a material interest in buying into the racist system?



14 Who is Going to Save the Children?

By Ed McKinney

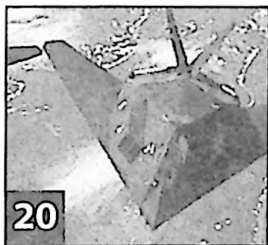
African American youth face a crisis of survival. They are subjected to racist discrimination in the criminal justice system, in public education and experience higher rates of poverty than the general population.



20 The Wages of War

By David Eisenhower and Alix Burack

As the Bush administration shifts billions to war and military-related industries, very little is left for human needs.



Departments:

Letters

4 Reader's Recollections

Editorial

5 Lott Looks Back

Commentary

18 Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.: A Centennial

By Norman Markowitz



4 Marxist IQ

Book Reviews

28 Freedom: A Photographic History of the African American Struggle

Reviewed by Rosita Johnson



Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past

Reviewed by Clara West



Poetry

31 Global Inequalities If the Drum is a Woman

By Jayne Cortez



Political Affairs (ISSN 0032 3128) is published monthly except for combined September/October, by Political Affairs Publishers, Inc. 235 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10011 [This address is for all correspondence.] Phone: 212-989-4994, ext. 222
Subscription Rate: \$22 for one year (Individuals) \$44 for one year (Institutions); foreign subscriptions: Canada and Mexico \$20 a year; all others on request; single issues, \$2.50.

Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send changes of address to: Political Affairs, 235 W. 23rd St. NY, NY 10011



Reston, Virginia Recollections

All of the articles in the current issue of *PA* on education are superb and timely, including Tim Wheeler's. Public education, from Head Start through graduate schools, is under unprecedented attack by the ruling class and needs all of the support that can be mustered.

The article by Norman Markowitz on the victories of the CPUSA during the 1930s reminded me of a conversation with Carl Winter about 20 years ago in which Carl reminisced about his role in starting the Unemployed Councils and their role in the various successful political campaigns of the time including the base of the Workers Alliance, the union of the WPA workers.

I told Carl of the role of my parents in organizing the Unemployed Council in Berkley a suburb of Detroit, and the defense of the Council's meeting hall against an armed attack by the local post of the American Legion, whose leadership had been assumed by the Ku Klux Klan. My father, who had been president of the local, Catholic parish, organized the local

Catholics who brought their shotguns and rifles to resist the Klan's attack.

Few people are aware of how powerful the Klan was in the '20s and '30s. It dominated the Democratic Party conventions in 1920 and 1924 and county and community police forces in both the South and Midwest. With the northern migration of both Blacks and whites during the first half of the 20th century, it moved its national headquarters to Indianapolis. Only the African American churches, the NAACP and the CPUSA effectively fought the Klan. Even the Catholic Church managed to accommodate. Although Frederick Lewis Allen, in his history *Only Yesterday*, did an excellent job of describing the commercial aspects of the Klan, historians have generally neglected the subject. Perhaps Trent Lott's recent comments will awaken some interest.

In solidarity,
Terrance Carroll

Check Out Your MARXIST I.Q.

This special quiz on the "National Question" gives Lenin's answers to questions of theory regarding the proper response of socialists to specific situations regarding oppressed nationalities

and peoples. How should we apply these answers to today's world with respect to, for example, the Kurdish struggle, racism and national oppression in the US, the struggle in Chechnya, the Basque struggle, etc.? Lenin says we must ("if we do not want to betray socialism") support every revolt by oppressed nationalities or peoples against "our chief enemy." There is only one exception. So now we ask:

1.) Who is our chief enemy?

- [a] the financial capitalists
- [b] the bourgeoisie of all the capitalist states
- [c] the bourgeoisie of the big states
- [d] the European and American bourgeoisie.

2.) What is the exception?

The revolt must not be led by

- [a] a reactionary class
- [b] unorganized adventurers
- [c] groups motivated by religious or idealistic illusions
- [d] terrorists.

3.) In the US and other countries various nationalities demand cultural autonomy. Many would like to have their own schools set up emphasizing their unique national identities. This idea, from the point of view of Leninism is

- [a] a progressive demand
- [b] a utopian demand
- [c] a reactionary demand
- [d] a chauvinist demand.

4.) Some states are made up of several different nationalities. The best type of state structure for Leninists to support is

- [a] the centralized state
- [b] the federal state

- [c] the decentralized state
- [d] national independence.

5.) According to Lenin, the categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it must be examined

- [a] within definite class limits
- [b] in the light of Marx and Engels works on the question
- [c] within definite historical limits
- [d] from the point of view of the struggle against revisionism.

See answers on page 25

LOTT Looks Back

Why do the well-deserved attacks on Senator Trent Lott of Mississippi seem to hide more than they reveal about racism in the US? Does Lott's apparent continued support for racist segregation, as indicated by his remarks about Strom Thurmond, single him out as unusual?

To answer these questions it is important to put Southern politics in a larger picture. Lott was the political protégé of the South Carolina segregationist Thurmond. He was raised knowing that in order to win white votes in places like Mississippi, one had to be a segregationist. In the 1990s, as Southern Republicans moved into that party's leadership, hiding one's segregationist views in the closet was the trend. But it was people like Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms who founded the Southern wing of the Republican Party, as they grew increasingly dissatisfied with the Democratic Party's positions on civil rights and as the ultra-right views of Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan came to dominate the party's ideological positions. The Trent Lotts, John Ashcrofts, Thad Cochrans (Mississippi's other Republican Senator) Tom DeLays, Newt Gingrichs simply took their places.

PA spoke with a veteran civil rights activist and Mississippi native about the issue. He said: "You couldn't be a successful politician in Mississippi unless the white people of Mississippi thought you were a segregationist." That was the reason they embraced Trent Lott. "To be fair," he quipped, "it is also necessary to talk about Thad Cochran."

Remarking on the well-publicized link between Lott and the Council of Conservative Citizens, the descendant of the white supremacist White Citizen's Council, the civil rights activist said "Lott was a member and for a time their poster-boy. He helped with recruitment." But Cochran was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, an organization that celebrates the Confederacy's fight to preserve slavery.

Both organizations fought tooth-and-nail in several states to preserve the Confederate flag as state symbols. Cochran's state is the only one to have successfully kept it (South Carolina amended its flag to include a much smaller version of the Confederate symbol). In the big picture of white conservative Southern politics he remarked, "I see no break in the pattern of racism."

But flag fights and nostalgic white supremacy organizations also don't tell the whole story. The story is still about institutional racism and segregation. In a speech in 1994, as he stepped into the leadership of the Republican Party in the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich provided insight into the new segregationism that his party wanted to cultivate.

Gingrich described his district as a place that "will do well" because it "is entrepreneurial" has "weak unions" and "a strong work ethic." Gingrich contrasted this image of his white district with neighboring Atlanta neighborhoods that were 70 percent Black. He mused in his segregation code:



Credit: White House Photo

Trent Lott with close friend George Bush (left).

What people worry about is the bus line gradually destroying one apartment complex after another, bringing people out for public housing who have no middle-class values and whose kids as they become teenagers often are the center of robbery.

Gingrich certainly isn't unusual either. Tom DeLay similarly represents an upscale suburban area and fosters racist views that support continued segregation. John Ashcroft as governor of Missouri opposed efforts to desegregate its cities. As Senator, he brought billions into those mostly white and anti-union regions that gave him support. His support for racially biased federal subsidies is only highlighted by his pandering to white supremacists in the pages of a pro-slavery magazine.

The point is that Lott is a symptom, not the disease that is the ultra-right's racist agenda. His removal was a great victory for democratic-minded people, but let's not be fooled into thinking that that is as far as we have to go. ■

UNCLE TOM'S Children

By Debbie Bell

Is there a plan to recruit African Americans to the conservative right? What kind of strategy might be employed to make this a reality? What is the influence Black conservatives have over the African American community generally?

Several high profile African Americans have chosen to do the bidding of the "New Republican Party" to undermine or interfere in the growth and progress of [Black communities] as well as the independence of many developing countries. Black nations and Black Americans warmly embrace these emissaries of the Bush administration. There is a perception that people who look like "me" will have our best interests at heart.

In the past the Republican Party was almost invisible in the Black community. Their percentage of votes barely hovered around 7 percent in any given election. The "New Republican Party" with its more conservative ideology has developed a plan to chisel away at the traditionally overwhelming Democratic vote that is cast by African American voters.



US Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice.

Republicans are aggressively profiling talented Black politicians. Is this tactic reaping gains in the historically progressive Black voting population?

Nationally, two of the most high-profile appointed Republicans, Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, have had an impact on the lives of all Americans and most of the world's peoples. Both Powell and Rice are attractive, articulate and well-educated but have limited ties to the organized Black community. Other Black political figures and organizations share similar goals and origins.

Colin Powell

Powell was appointed as the charismatic continent-hopping spokesperson for the global hegemony policies of the Bush administration. He has traveled extensively to Mali, Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe to do the bidding of US and international financial institutions. His message was to offer awards of substantial Western trade and investments if these countries

"democratize" and reconfigure their domestic and foreign policies to be "accountable" to Bush administration criteria.

In 2002, Powell systematically strong-armed the UN, delegation after delegation and nation by nation, to garner their support for Bush's natural-resource-and-oil-grabbing adventurist war campaign against Iraq.

Condoleezza Rice

Like Powell, Rice has a high-profile position in the Bush administration.

According to *Business Week* mag-

Debbie Bell is chair of the African American Equality Commission of the CPUSA.



Credit: US House of Representatives

J.C. Watts (center) surrounded by fellow Republicans.

azine, she is considered the key political strategist in the campaign against terrorism. Rice is credited with creating the strategy the Bush administration implemented during the Israel/Palestine negotiations. Bush's Kyoto policy and his posture towards China is attributed to her as well.

One of Rice's most infamous administrative acts was to try to derail the UN World Conference against Racism. She publicly opposed calls for Colin Powell to head the US delegation and then masterminded a heavily censored report that eliminated all references to racism in the US.

Rice, who is fluent in Russian and considered uncompromising, negotiated with Russia over their missile defense policies. She advises the Bush administration to take an aggressive stance against Iraq and Saddam Hussein.

Julius Caesar Watts (J.C.)

The highest ranking elected Republican official was J. C. Watts, Congressperson from Oklahoma. Watts retired at the end of the 2002 Congress. He, like Powell and Rice, is considered articulate and very conservative. In his two terms in Congress he shunned the Congressional Black Caucus.

While criticizing Black elected representatives publicly, he ignored the racism of white representatives. He adamantly opposes affirmative action, but at the same time he wants diversity in the Republican Party. In this light, he spent a great deal of his time in Washington trying to communicate Republican values to people of color. He courted the presidents of historically Black colleges to impart to them Republican values and introduce them to the "color blind" (i.e., the illusion that the field is equal and people of color have the same opportunities as whites) position he has adopted.

Alan Keyes

The Declaration Foundation, Restoring America, is the well-funded propaganda vehicle that Alan Keyes directs to propagate conservative ideology aimed at African Americans. The organization dishonestly claims that they are non-partisan and not affiliated with the Republican Party. During his national campaign for President of the US, his issues were indistinguishable from the organized conservative right: pro-life, free trade and tax cuts for the rich. He, like Watts, is adamantly opposed to affirmative action.

Black Alliance for Educational Options, BAEO

Millions of taxpayer dollars have been granted to the BAEO. This organization uses a slick, well-funded media campaign to convince Black parents to support vouchers and privatization of public schools. Additionally the ultra-right Bradley and Walton Foundations have given millions of dollars to fund BAEO. BAEO's ample funding permits them to use direct-mail as well as the mass media (TV, radio, newspapers and the internet) to create Black "grassroots movements" and to rally public support for private schools. Their proselytizing is directed at economically disadvantaged parents and communities.

The organization's Board of Directors is dominated by Republicans; thus it is not difficult to understand their enthusiasm and promotion of the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

History is replete with examples of individuals who became Uncle Toms, turncoats and opportunists and consciously worked against the general welfare of the Black community. History also tells us that the community, their organizations and individuals have organized vigorously to resist and turn the tide. ■



Credit: University of Texas

Alan Keyes.

Cross Over Dixie

How the Religious Right and Confederate Crossover Voters Defeated Cynthia McKinney

By Joelle Fishman

The defeat of Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney in Georgia's 4th Congressional district (along with Earl Hilliard in Alabama's 7th) should sound an alarm about the right-wing assault against the Black vote and the campaign to weaken, split and then destroy progressive representation. What happened in Georgia's 4th district in the August 2002 primary is a textbook case of ultra-right divisive tactics that subvert democracy. In her concession speech McKinney spoke eloquently about some reasons for the strong opposition to her candidacy:

I am hopeful because we are all here for a cause much, much greater than ourselves.... Somewhere tonight, men in powerful positions are taking the first steps toward sending our country into war. Somewhere tonight, powerful interests are working to silence those that are a threat to their power. Every day in Congress I kept those images in mind. Images of real people with real problems. And real abuses of real power.

She went on to say that the Republicans wanted to defeat her more than the Democrats wanted to keep her. She said:

It has been stated that during wartime, the first casualty is truth. I feel this to be extremely relevant post-September 11. Our nation has been strangled by fear, tangled in deception and ensnared by duplicity.

McKinney was opposed by African American judge Denise Majette, a graduate of Yale University and Duke Law School. A Republican until her candidacy in 2002, she has close ties with the pharmaceutical industry and publicly stated that she voted for Alan Keyes in the 2000 Republican presidential primary.

Crossing Party Lines

Majette's large victory in this primary contest resulted from several factors. The largest single factor was the Republican crossover vote. The crossover vote has been downplayed in the media in favor of emphasizing defection of Jewish voters, low turnout by traditional McKinney supporters and the vote by Black professionals for Majette. All these factors warrant attention, but to understand the election, it is necessary first to analyze the crossover vote.

The McKinney campaign emphasizes that it won the majority of Democratic voters. In the 2000



Credit: US House of Reps.

Cynthia McKinney came under attack from the right for views opposing Bush's endless wars.

Democratic primary 54,861 ballots were cast overall. In the 2002 Democratic primary 116,544 ballots were cast, a 100 percent increase. In addition, notwithstanding the doubling of the Democratic ballots, only 6886 Republican ballots were cast. If all the voters casting ballots were Democrats, it would mean that Democrats voted nearly 17 times more often than Republicans, which is highly unlikely. This points to a Republican crossover vote.

Based on evidence of crossover votes, the McKinney campaign disputed the results of the election. The campaign stated:

Republicans do not have the right to determine the outcome of a Democratic primary. Therefore, the outcome of this election is not only a travesty of justice and a perversion of the democratic process, but stands alongside the Florida 2000 debacle as just as illegitimate.

Following the election, State Representative Tyrone Brooks of Atlanta, Rev. Joseph Lowery of the Georgia Coalition for the People's

Joelle Fishman is chair of the Political and Legislative Action Commission of the CPUSA.

Agenda and Martin Luther King III introduced legislation to end crossover voting. Five voters in McKinney's district have filed a lawsuit in US District Court under the Voting Rights Act and the Constitution for equitable relief, challenging the legality of the crossover vote.

The attempt to break alliances between Jewish and African American voters is not unique to this campaign.

What were the reasons for such Republican attention to Georgia's 4th Congressional district? They focused on McKinney because of her strong role in Congress. In her capacity on the Armed Services and International Relations Committees and International Operations and Human Rights Subcommittee, McKinney did not shy away from controversial issues. She was outspoken against excessive military spending, for environmental sustainability, for trade relations with African countries and international trade politics consistent with American values and laws. She opposed trade in blood diamonds in Africa by multinational corporations including Barrick Gold, of which former President Bush was an advisor. McKinney was among the first in Congress to call for a thorough investigation into the events surrounding the September 11 terrorist attack. She opposed the war on Iraq. She spoke out against civil rights violations at the Lockheed Martin

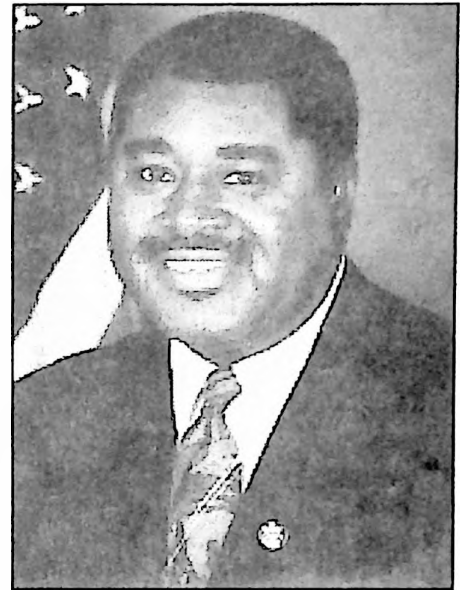
plant in Marietta, GA. And she emphasized the issue of increasing resources for voting rights in the underserved majority Black precincts of the 4th district.

McKinney had a perfect labor voting record during her tenure, for which the labor movement, including local unions representing all of the major international unions, backed her solidly. A coalition of 50 progressive organizations rallied for McKinney before election day. Additionally, McKinney was endorsed by the National Political Women's Caucus, NOW-PAC, the National Abortion Rights Action League, the League of Conservation Voters and Jesse Jackson, Sr. Breaking with his stance of not supporting Democrats, Ralph Nader praised McKinney for her 100 percent voting record on issues of concern to Public Citizen, emphasizing that she withstood pressure from the largest financial institutions. McKinney also boasted a 70 percent approval rating among Black constituents in a June poll.

Money in Politics

The issue of campaign finances played a large role in the outcome of the election. Majette outraised McKinney by a 2-to-1 margin. Majette received \$1.3 million late in the campaign, largely from corporate donors, banks, medical professionals, Loose Group (a Republican PAC) and pro-Israel political action committees outside the district. She also received contributions from Georgia's Democratic US Senator Zell Miller. Another source of funding for Majette were Democratic and Republican immigrants from India living in New York and other states, who contributed \$35,000. They complained that McKinney has "loyalties with Arab and Pakistani causes" and they objected to her "remarks on religious tensions in the Indian state of Gujarat earlier this year." All told, Majette outspent McKinney by an unprecedented \$500,000.

McKinney's contributions were largely from labor unions. She was attacked for accepting contributions from Arab Americans, who were viewed by McKinney's opponents as threatening to American politics. "This painting of Arab-American donors and political participants as being terrorists in disguise is a gar-



US House of Reps.

Conservatives attacked Rep. Earl Hilliard for his defense of Palestine's right to self-determination.

ish and grotesque caricature," warned James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute in Washington DC.

The Media

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and the national media influenced the election by highlighting divisions and distorting McKinney's record. The *Atlanta Journal* made the issue national with a syndicated column by Cynthia Tucker in July, following the defeat of Earl Hilliard in Alabama's 7th District. After railing against Hilliard and McKinney's opposition to Israel's foreign policy, she concluded:

All in all, McKinney, like Hilliard, has shown herself to be on the political fringe, well outside the congressional mainstream, and incapable of aiding any cause,

whether an independent Palestine or her own Congressional district.

This was followed up by a number of opinion pieces, including one by an editor at the paper, Jay Bookman, who said it is "past time for her to go."

McKinney opponents used e-mail, including the first use of spam e-mail with the sender identity masked. A site named *goodbyecynthia.com* helped unite McKinney's Republican and Democratic opposition around the slogan ABC (anybody but Cynthia). This effort raised \$7000, sent 30,000 pieces of mail and conducted a phone tree to 15,000 to 20,000 voters. It was organized by Mark Davis, a Republican political database specialist in Duluth.

Middle East

From the start of this election cycle, McKinney was targeted as "unfriendly to Israel." Right-wing Zionist groups raised significant funds. "This shows that there is a price to pay for taking a position that is out of step with the views of most Americans," said Morris Amity, founder of the Washington Political Action Committee, a pro-Israel group and former executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. AIPAC chose

Atlanta as the location for their national summit in October.

Israel Now and Forever targeted "the 23 anti-Israel members of Congress," which included Hilliard, McKinney and all those who voted no on a resolution of support for Israel.

Jews for Peace organizations in Atlanta and national organizations, including *Tikkun Magazine*, rallied to McKinney and supported her positions on Middle East issues. Rabbi Michael Lerner exclaimed,

For lawmakers feeling pressure to bow to AIPAC, the McKinney race would be a bellwether for feeling safe to raise criticisms of Israel. Pro-Sharon forces have targeted this African American Democrat for defeat due to her strong stance in favor of both Israel and Palestine.

Black-Jewish Relations

Joshua Ruebner, executive director of Jews for Peace in Palestine and Israel warned,

This is a dangerous dynamic. Jews are the ones who started picking off African American politicians because of their views on the Middle East, and that was undue meddling. It is doing irreparable harm to relations with African Americans.

Texas Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, speaking of the flow of money to Majette from right-wing Zionist PACs, said,

I definitely have some feelings about any outside group exerting this kind of influence in a race, and I've been receiving angry calls from Black voters all day, saying

they should rally against Jewish candidates ... To have non-African Americans from around the country putting millions into a race to unseat one of our leaders for expressing her right of free speech is definitely a problem.

The right-wing is building their coalition across party lines.

Rev. Jesse Jackson called upon Democrats to "preserve the coalition between Blacks and Jews because they support much of the liberal agenda and are crucial to many Democratic candidates." Pointing out that pro-Israel efforts to defeat incumbents have only targeted Black elected officials, he said, "It seems AIPAC's position now does not place a great premium on that coalition." The *Washington Post* warned, "Any increase in tensions between Jewish and African American voters could damage Democratic hopes of taking back the House and keeping control of the Senate." The anti-McKinney campaign made use of Israeli policy to erode Jewish support. The attempts to break alliances between Jewish and African American voters is not unique to this campaign and are related to attempts to push Jewish and African American voters toward the Republican Party. Therefore, overemphasis on the defection of Jewish supporters should be recognized as an attempt to inflame ethnic divisions in the interests of the right-wing and to promote charges of Black anti-Semitism and Jewish racism.

The Meaning of the Results

The results of the primary opened a debate within the African American community. Some are using the election to downplay the need for struggle to achieve equal-



Johns Hopkins University

Ralph Nader supported McKinney's re-election because of her strong progressive record.

◇ (continued on page 24)

WORLDS APART

An Essay on the Sources of Global Inequality

By Joel Wendland



Slave labor was the basis of American economic development in the 19th century.

Globalization wasn't invented by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. Globalization was invented when European capitalists first undertook the project of moving capital and labor to other parts of the world, under the legal protection of private property rights (and armies), in order to produce more capital. To increase profits, capitalists dramatically expanded the African slave trade, forever altering the history of that continent. They insisted on the removal or genocide of indigenous populations in the Western Hemisphere. Capitalists provoked wars for territorial conquest, access to natural resources, and for labor.

In doing so, they made one crucial invention that would set the emerging working class upon a new course – race.

The Invention and Uses of Race

In North America, the invention of race took a particular form. In the 17th century, tobacco became the economic base of the Virginia colony. Tobacco was a labor-intensive product, and growers sought ways to increase the number of workers and reduce the costs of labor. Race did not determine one's status as a worker. Intense exploitation drove workers of different nationalities and skin colors together against their oppressors. The first large-scale revolt by Americans was conducted by a multi-national

working class in Virginia in 1676. Their victory (including the capture of the seat of colonial authority) was short-lived, however, as the British imperial army proved too powerful.

To counter future threats from workers, colonial authorities devised a system of dividing them. An ideological system that had long justified genocide and enslavement against the Irish, American Indians and Africans now fueled a new racist project. In order to preserve their control of the colonies, British elites developed a system that provided benefits for whites in the colonies. Access to greater opportunities for political power and economic resources was restricted to

500,000 slaves struck against the plantation slave system, decisively undermining the ability of the Confederacy to fight.

Joel Wendland is managing editor of Political Affairs.

Capitalists provoked wars for territorial conquest and access to natural resources and people for labor.

whites. For Blacks, living in America meant a rigid system of enslavement and control. For American Indians – removal and genocide.

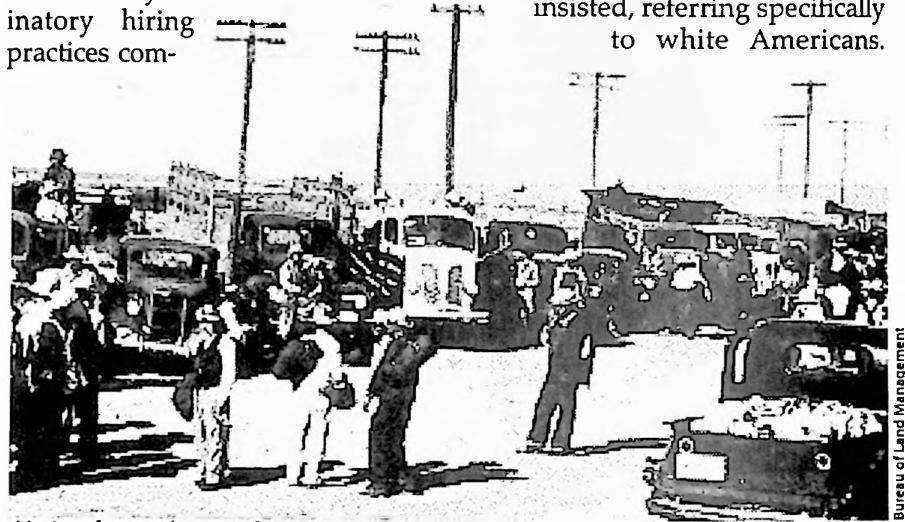
This global project underwent a qualitative change during the industrial period when racism shifted from a way to keep power to a means of generating a bigger profit margin. In 1870 in Massachusetts, a shoe factory owner discovered that by replacing his mostly Irish workers (on strike for better wages) with Chinese workers (recent migrants from California), he could use racism to save some \$40,000 a year in labor costs. He encouraged other



Thousands of Chinese immigrants helped build America's railroads.

factory owners to turn to "Chinese labor" as a source of extra profits.

Capitalists poured into the Southwest in the years following the annexation of Northern Mexico. By the end of the 19th century, mining companies employed thousands of Mexican and Mexican American workers. Employers soon learned they could attract thousands of workers from Mexico, and racism allowed them to pay these workers less for the same work Anglos performed. A system of discriminatory hiring practices com-



Mexican farmworkers wait for transportation to a job site.

bined with segregated housing and education divided workers and provided mining corporations with hundreds of millions in profits. The Phelps-Dodge mining corporation even sought to export racist wage discrimination practices to its operations in Mexico. This policy led to organizing drives among Mexican workers that helped spark the Mexican revolution.

During the Civil War, as W. E. B. Du Bois pointed out in his book *Black Reconstruction*, 500,000 African American slaves struck against the plantation slave system, decisively undermining the ability of the Confederacy to fight. After the war, African Americans sought to rebuild the South with new social relations. To counter this democratic trend, reinstalled plantation owners brought Chinese workers to

Tennessee and Filipino workers to Louisiana. As historian Ronald Takaki says in his book *A Different Mirror*, they were brought as "models" for Black workers who refused to submit to the old plantation system.

The Temptation of Whiteness

Some white workers came to view their skin as a political and economic asset. "American labor should be for Americans," they insisted, referring specifically to white Americans.

Other white workers came to realize that there was a cost to white identity. Capitalists were never loyal white supremacists, and used racial divisions against white workers as well. In the 1920s, some white workers led a violent campaign against Black railroad workers to expel them from railroad jobs that whites claimed were "white" jobs. After succeeding, they were forced to make concessions on wages, hours and benefits to keep those jobs racially exclusive. To maintain the illusion of white supremacy, some white workers stopped the struggle to end their own exploitation.

Though capitalist globalization helped to invent race and racism and intensified exploitation and oppression, it had also created a multi-national and multi-ethnic working class out of which a pow-

erful movement for liberation grew. Like the first rebellion in the colonial period, the Great Depression era was a time when this revolutionary potential came into full view. Workers got together and built multi-national organizations, unions, political parties and civic groups. From the 1930s into the 1960s, African American, Latino and Asian American workers used their unions to fight economic exploitation, to gain a political voice in their communities, fight male supremacy and get better access to education, health care and other facilities. They also used it to overturn wage discrimination, social segregation and discriminatory hiring and training practices. When white workers joined these struggles, they found their own lives and political and economic power enhanced.

Alongside this dramatic social progress, a separate, dangerous development was also at work. Unity against exploitation proved to be too much for capitalists to take. Racism had become not just a source of extra profits, but the main source of profit. Because the Communist Party cultivated this unity, the capitalists launched an attack against it. While imprisoning or marginalizing tens of thousands of party members, some capitalists made concessions in the area of civil rights in order to preempt leftist influence in communities of color, according to Gerald Horne in *From the Barrel of a Gun*. Soon, some capitalists used patronage and privilege to divide communities of color and to reforge the old system of segregation in new forms. Though Jim Crow as a set of legal codes was dead or dying by 1970, the practice of segregation and divisiveness was in full swing.

After World War II, social democratic policies provided enormous benefits to working Americans. Among these were the GI Bill, low-interest housing loans, con-

struction of transportation systems, health care facilities and more public universities. But, as George Lipsitz shows in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, many of these benefits were directed at white people. Segregation and discrimination in military service excluded thousands of deserving African American veterans from GI Bill benefits. Education discrimination excluded thousands more from attending college. Housing discrimination enforced by real estate companies and government bureaucrats excluded tens of thousands of people of color from home ownership. Racially exclusive suburbs and government subsidization of development in suburban areas redirected billions of dollars away from communities of color to nearly all-white communities. Home ownership and access to higher education meant that some white people could both benefit in the short term and pass on better living standards to their children. By the 1990s, millions of white families had moved away from cities like Detroit, Chicago and Philadelphia, taking political influence and billions in tax dollars with them.

Race and Capital

Jobs also began to move away from the cities. Employers took advantage of the suburban boom and wanted access to government dollars. They saw government handouts as a way to increase profit margins. Other employers looked elsewhere for more profits. In the South, the right had used racist divisiveness successfully to prevent strong unionization efforts and had led the drive to make the South a



Carlos Salinas of Mexico, George H. W. Bush, and Brian Mulroney of Canada initial the North American Free Trade Agreement.

“right-to-work” (for less) region. Because unions are the only way working people raise their standards of living, employers saw the South as a major source of cheap, non-union labor. And this fact, as Victor Perlo shows in *The Economics of Racism, II*, was closely linked to the history of entrenched institutionalized racism. One can still see the effects of this history on the South. The same job as an entry-level warehouse worker in Gary, Indiana, pays \$5.00 per hour more than in Atlanta, Georgia.

Harkening back to the tactics of the Massachusetts shoe factory owner and the Phelps-Dodge Company, some corporations looked overseas to cut labor costs. Corporations, such as General Motors, Nike and The Gap, used US government subsidies to move operations overseas where lower paid workforces and weaker trade union movements generated big incomes. When unions became active, the corporations influenced governments to squash them. If workers organized and demanded better wages, companies would often simply threaten to withdraw their resources to find better profit margins elsewhere. Corporations relied on the mistaken belief that the working people in some countries benefited from their presence. Global corporations actually held

◆ (continued on page 26)

WHO is going to SAVE the

By Ed McKinney

The future of the African American community lies with its children, who need an environment that allows them to grow to their maximum potential, physically, socially and emotionally. The current state of African

American families is cause for alarm. In proportion to population, African American families lack adequate access to the profit-oriented health care system, experience greater rates of unemployment and underemployment without much of a social safety net, and are denied equal treatment in the education system. Black youth in particular are warehoused in prisons, jails and youth detention centers.

Crime and Delinquency

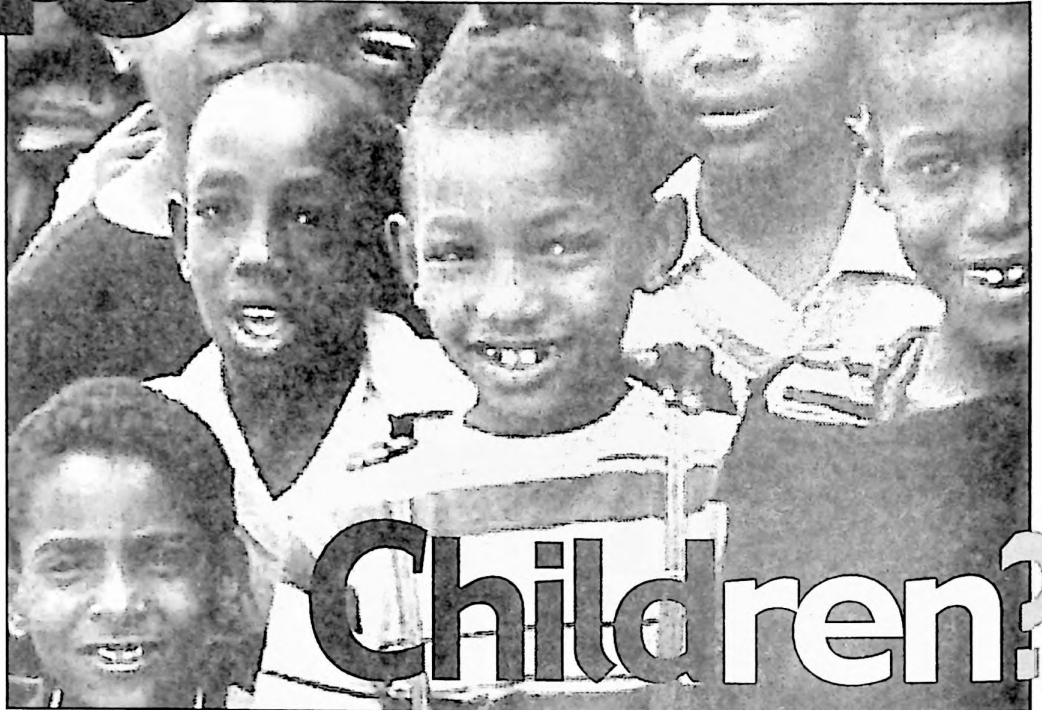
Although African Americans comprise only about one-third of the youth population in Ohio's Cuyahoga County, 75 percent of the youth committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services facilities, and 66 percent committed to the county's Juvenile Detention Center are Black. Nationally, African American youth are more than twice as likely as white youth

to have their delinquency cases result in placement outside of their homes. This is part of the process of breaking up African American families. Once in the criminal justice system, many of these children will be linked to it permanently. The juvenile system is not known for rehabilitation but as a temporary warehouse for troubled youth, especially African Americans.

Prisons, jails and detention centers are part of a growing industry. From 1985 to 1996 the total expenditures for state prison facilities grew from \$13 billion to over \$27 billion, helping to give the US the highest imprisonment rate on the planet. Consider the statistics in two of our largest states. The prison population in Texas has increased by 500 percent over the past 25 years. In the next five years, California will send more than 5000 youths to adult prisons. African Americans will be over-represented in this group.

Black men disproportionately encounter the criminal justice system. In Florida, where most Blacks are convinced that they have been disenfranchised, more than 20 percent of Black males are banned from voting because of felony convictions. These statistics are similar in Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Virginia. Nationally seven percent of Black males are in prison, compared to one percent of white males. The figures are even more alarming for the 20-29 age group, when starting families and careers is typical. In 1998, 32 percent of Black men between 20-29 were in jail, prison on probation or parole, as compared to 12 percent for Hispanics and 6 percent for whites.

Women have also been incarcerated at growing rates. Since 1980, the female incarceration rate has increased by 240 percent. Since 1990, the number of females convicted of felonies has grown at more than two



Ed McKinney is a contributor to Political Affairs.

times the rate of other defendants. Women under supervision by justice agencies were mothers of an estimated 1.5 million minor children. Six percent of women entering prison are pregnant, yet, as the Ohio

African American males are tracked to become inmates just as other children are tracked to become doctors, lawyers, accountants, or skilled-trades workers.

Department of Corrections reports, its prison nursery is only able to serve less than 20 percent of children born to imprisoned mothers.

Who are these women? The most common inmate profile is a 29-year-old woman who committed a non-violent property or drug-related offense. She is more likely to come from a poor environment that offers few opportunities for success. The streets from which she has come are full of violence, substance abuse and hopelessness. Poor and minority women disproportionately represent the female prison population; therefore, she is likely to be African American or Hispanic than Caucasian. A major cause for these increases is mandatory sentencing

laws for drug offenses. In Florida, African American women with drug-related offenses were more than nine times more likely to be sentenced as habitual offenders than white women.

The worst part of the increase in the number of incarcerated women is the plight of children without their mothers. During their mothers' imprisonment, children usually live with a relative likely to be struggling for economic survival. An overwhelming number enter the foster care system, which, especially for African American children, is known for shifting them from home to home, creating very unstable family environments. Foster children face tremendous emotional and behavioral difficulties due to traumatic family separation. The child's sense of worth and personal identity suffers greatly. Feelings of abandonment, isolation, anger and shame are common. Some of these children do not have outlets for these feelings, and cries for help can be manifested in self-destructive ways. Exacerbating the problem is the little practical social and emotional support given to caretakers.

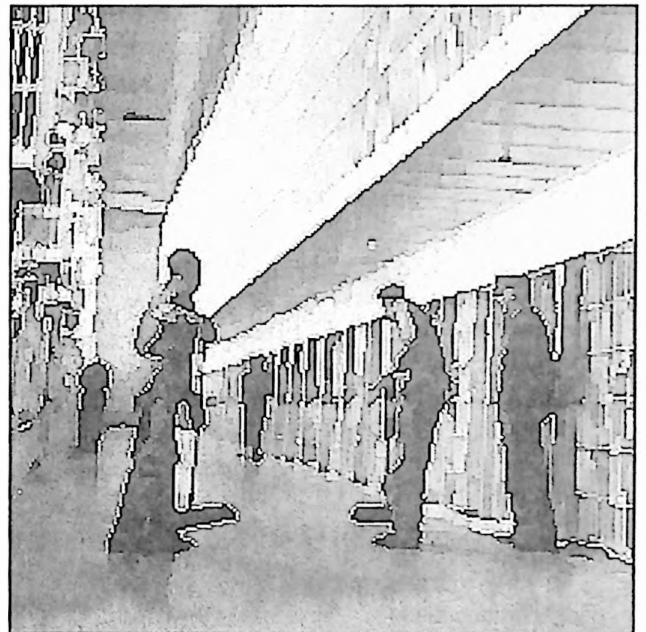
Socio-economic Status

Over one-half of low-income African American families are experiencing serious economic hardships: lack of a living wage and adequate health insurance coverage, and dilapidated housing. Millions of African American children are caught up in these conditions.

Black Americans have made significant gains in income over the past 25 years. But an income and wealth gap between whites and Blacks remains. The median income

of white families is 65 percent more than that of Blacks. Even more telling is the wealth factor. The median net worth of all Black families is \$4,418 compared to \$45,740 for white families. There is a major difference between income and wealth, as wealth provides collateral for purchasing a home and sending kids to college. Wealth also has a huge effect on public schools as property values often determine funding.

Closely associated with the inequity of income and wealth is the impact of the "new economy" on the working class. In recent times, the economy has moved from man-



The prison-industrial complex booms while unemployment grows.

ufacturing to service, using high-tech tools that require high-tech skills. Many industries, especially the "heavy" ones, are gone. New technical service sector jobs are moving to industrial parks in suburban America. According to William Julius Wilson,

the most dramatic increases in ghetto poverty occurred between 1970 and 1980, and they were mostly confined to the large industrial metropolises of the

Northeast and Midwest regions that experienced massive industrial restructuring and loss of blue-collar jobs during that decade.

Cities saw a massive loss of blue-collar jobs that had devastating effects on the social organization of



As basic industry moved out of urban centers, African Americans and Latinos found higher-paid union jobs in manufacturing harder to find.

the inner-city neighborhoods. The exodus of larger industries also triggered the demise of smaller stores, banks and other businesses. Black Americans living in these neighborhoods have less access to employment, especially as transportation to suburban locations have become more difficult.

During the last 25 years, child poverty has become increasingly concentrated in urban areas, especially where African Americans and Latinos live. Nearly six million children live in families that earn less than \$6500 a year. One in three African American and Hispanic children lives in a family with an income below the federal poverty level. And children under the age of six living with single mothers are five times more likely to be poor than children whose parents are married. According to the Children's Defense Fund, the gap between rich children and poor children is the widest it has been in the 52 years since income statistics have been collected. Poor children are twice as likely to be poor as adults. As

with other indicators, African American children are represented disproportionately among the poor.

Welfare Reform

In considering the problems and concerns facing African American children, welfare reform has to be addressed. Because of historic institutional racism, including in the educational system and the work place, a significant number of African American children have had to rely on this safety net as a source of income assistance and medical insurance.

Studies have shown repeatedly that younger, low-income adults, particularly African Americans, rarely have access to health insurance. The National Survey of America's Families has shown

that 25 percent of poor children are uninsured. The proportion of uninsured children varies significantly by race and ethnicity. It is not surprising that African American and Hispanic children, who are likely to be poor, are also most likely to be uninsured. More than 75 percent of these uninsured children were in families who fell below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

In the case of health care access, African American families are in jeopardy. Of the more than 50 million Americans who receive inadequate medical service because they live in areas with high rates of health problems and few providers, approximately 12 million are children. There are only enough community-sup-

ported clinics in those areas to reach about 25 percent of the underserved population. African American children are disproportionately represented in these numbers.

In 1996 President Clinton signed welfare reform into law. Although welfare is a general term, Clinton focused on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Enacted as part of the Social Security Act of 1935 as Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), the program was a safety net for poor families, especially children. The original intent of the program was similar to an earlier program known as Mothers' Pension, to provide assistance for women to stay home and be good mothers. Prior to the mid-1960s, there were no work requirements or incentives attached to the program. Social welfare policy scholars have pointed out that work requirements were considered only in the 1960s following a rise in the number of African American women eligible for the program.

The key elements of the welfare reform legislation eliminated entitlements, demanded strict work requirements and set limits on the number of years a family can receive benefits. Funding would come from federal block grants that provided for more spending discretion. So, instead of confronting the real issues facing families such as poverty and the crisis in the low-wage labor market, politicians decided to punish poor families and children.

The politicians are telling us that welfare reform has been successful. The welfare rolls have been cut in half. They aren't saying what



A study of the treatment of young African American males in public schools, by Ann Ferguson.

has happened to the families who left the welfare rolls. Research overwhelmingly indicates that the majority of those leaving welfare rolls have another destination – poverty. So, somewhere out there, the vast majority of African American children continue to live in poverty with lack of access to adequate health care, nutrition, housing and daycare. Parents now have low-wage poverty-level jobs, and their struggles continue without any kind of a safety net. Also, the National Survey of Families pointed out that “among low-income children, 16 percent of African American children were uninsured.”

Losing health care coverage, especially Medicaid, can be a problem for children as their parents move from welfare to work. Federal law guarantees eligibility for Medicaid coverage up to 12 months, and some states allow for even longer. Of the children whose families leave welfare, approximately 75 percent are still on Medicaid and about 20 percent lack health insurance six

The median net worth of all Black families is \$4,418 compared to \$45,740 for white families.

months later. But, for children whose families have been off welfare rolls for a year or more, less than half have Medicaid coverage and almost 33 percent are uninsured. The Urban Institute says, “Children with parents working

full-time were more likely to lack insurance coverage than those with parents working part-time or not at all.”

Public Education

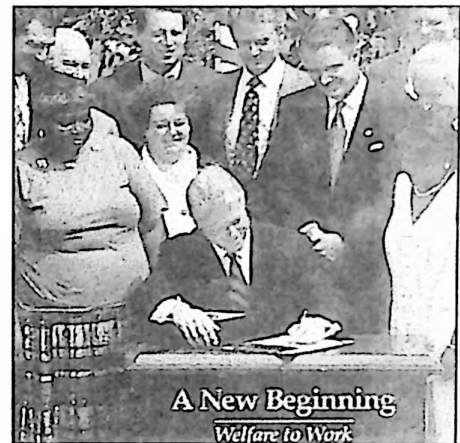
Historically, public education has been a key part of the life of African Americans, politically, socially and economically. Public education has been under attack since the early 1990s, threatening the already limited opportunities that exist for African American children.

There are a number of issues that complicate the debate over public education. One major issue is the complex matter of funding. Research shows that public school systems serving African American youth are poorly financed. Furthermore, school facilities are rapidly deteriorating, bright young educators and administrators are leaving the system, and there is a serious lack of educational resources. Financing urban public education, including a safe physical space, continues to be a major concern. Without a quality education, African American children and youth will be shut out of job markets, even the low-income job market, increasing the risk of exposure to the criminal justice system.

Another issue confronting public education is what has become known as school choice, or what some call “marketplace education.” The beginning of the market approach can be traced to the early 1990s when market force advocates demanded accountability of urban schools. Advocates of marketplace education say parents are consumers and should have the right to seek the best educational alternatives. The movement towards marketplace education may be the most serious threat to public education, and more specifically the educational survival of African American youth. Some education scholars say that in the education marketplace, private schools, including those supported by vouchers, offer a better

education. Furthermore, they argue, as the quality of public schools within a school district diminishes, the number of children in private school increases.

What these scholars overlook is another view that says that in our society some families distance them-



Credit: Social Security Administration

Clinton's welfare-reform policies made life for poor people much more difficult.

selves from others considered to be socially different. There has been an historical tendency for economically advantaged groups to seclude themselves from disadvantaged groups. In other words, families sometimes send their children to private schools as a way of physically and socially distancing themselves from people perceived to be of lower social status. The consequences here are that children from advantaged families are “skimmed” from public schools, especially from schools that serve higher percentages of African American, poor and other children of color. These families demand that their tax dollars also be removed. ●

Public education advocate Jonathan Kozol states that choice will only force parents to claw and scramble for the good of their kids only, with serious consequences for the system of public education. Vouchers have become a seductive scheme for removing much-needed public funds from desperately under-funded schools. But school choice, whether one is talking about vouchers or charter schools, trans-

◆ (continued on page 27)

Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. CENTENNIAL 1903-2003

By Norman Markowitz

Ben Davis, Jr., didn't come from the sort of background one associates with revolutionaries. He was the son of a longtime Republican Party official in Atlanta, Georgia. In the era of segregation, the Democrats controlled Southern politics on the basis of "white supremacy," and the Republicans often attracted the small number of Blacks who could vote and liberal Southern whites.

Davis' background enabled him to attend Amherst College and the Harvard Law School. His career as a political activist began with the case of Angelo Herndon. Angelo Herndon, a young African American Communist leading an integrated hunger march in Atlanta in 1932, was arrested by Georgia police for trying to "incite insurrection," an offense which carried the death penalty. Ben Davis, then a young attorney in Atlanta, broke with the Black elite of the city by accepting the plea of the Communist-led International Labor Defense (ILD) to take the case, even though the trial, set before a racist judge and jury, had something of a foregone conclusion.

The role of Black and white Communists in the Herndon defense and their principled opposition to segregation and racism, led Davis to join the Communist Party and dedicate the rest of his life to it. Although Angelo Herndon was "convicted" and sentenced to 20 years on a Georgia chain gang, the CPUSA-led national appeal campaign ended in victory in 1937 as the Supreme Court, by a five to four margin, voted to overturn the conviction and the Georgia "anti-insurrection" law on which it was based.

Facing serious death threats in Atlanta after the Herndon trial, Ben Davis moved to Harlem and became



Ben Davis in Harlem.

a leader in the Harlem branch of the CPUSA. An editor of the local *Harlem Liberator* and the national *Daily Worker*, Davis was also a founder of the National Negro Congress, which sought to build the alliance between African Americans, the CIO unions and all progressive forces in the country. He led campaigns against discrimination in employment and housing, against Italian Fascist aggression in Ethiopia in 1935, and against the racism and anti-Semitism of local fascist groups like the German-American Bund and the Christian Front.

Davis in the process became a well-known and respected figure. When Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., who had allied himself with Davis and Harlem Communists in anti-discrimination campaigns, was elected Harlem's first African American Congressman in 1942, he supported Davis to succeed him to the City Council. With

Norman Markowitz is a contributing editor to Political Affairs.

the support of the Communist Party and the American Labor Party, Davis was elected to the council in 1943, becoming, with Brooklyn's Peter Cacchione, one of two Communists who held council seats. His strength in the community was such that Davis gained votes in his reelection campaign in 1945.

As cold war politics brought about anti-Communist hysteria, the New York City Council in 1947 dropped its proportional representation system, which allowed voters to choose a number of candidates, expressly to defeat Davis and Cacchione. Davis remained popular in Harlem, but the end of proportional representation and anti-Communism among liberal and trade union allies made his defeat inevitable.

Ben Davis continued to fight for the freedom of American workers, African Americans and his own rights as a CPUSA leader when the Truman administration arrested him in 1948 along with the rest of the national leadership of the CPUSA. While the state of Georgia had convicted Angelo Herndon of "attempting to incite insurrection," the Truman administration convicted the national leadership of the CPUSA for "conspiring to teach or advocate the violent overthrow of the government" under the Smith Act of 1940. Also, the antics of Judge Harold Medina in the Smith Act trial of the CPUSA national leadership were outrageously prejudicial, as had been the actions of the judge in the Herndon case.

In 1937 the Supreme Court, frightened by the Roosevelt administration's campaign against it, had thrown out the Herndon conviction at the time that it began to uphold New Deal labor and social welfare legislation. In 1951, a Supreme Court led by Truman-appointee Fred Vinson upheld the Smith Act convictions over the eloquent dissents of Justices William O. Douglas and Hugo Black. Ben Davis spent years in the federal penitentiary at Terre Haute, Indiana, fighting attempts to segregate him and other abuses.

Benjamin Davis spent the last years of his life as a leader of the CPUSA and an activist in the Harlem community, supporting the national civil rights movement that he and his comrades had helped to establish in their earlier and ongoing struggles. FBI COINTELPRO documents show that Davis remained a major target of FBI harassment. This extended to the campaign to deny Davis, Gus Hall, historian Herbert Aptheker and others the right to speak at college campuses or in other public forums.

Ben Davis died in 1964, the year of the passage of the most important civil rights act of the 20th century. Without him and his

comrades, both white and Black, in the struggle against fascism and colonialism on the world scene and in the struggle for social justice here, it is impossible to imagine that movement existing.

At the 1944 Republican convention, Ben Davis, Sr., dumbfounded many of his fellow conservative anti-New Deal Republicans, by mentioning his son's election to the New York City Council and stating that if the party system remained indifferent to racial injustice, African Americans would know where to go politically to advance their interests. He implicitly suggested that Black voters would turn to the Communist Party. Although that has not yet happened, the party of Ben Davis, Jr., remains the serious alternative to mounting inequality and injustice, racism and neo-colonialism, which threaten the gains made by the civil rights movement of the late 20th century.

Editor's note: The best sources for the life and work of Ben Davis are Gerald Horne, Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party (Newark, Del., University of Delaware Press, 1994), and Benjamin Davis, Communist Councilman From Harlem: Autobiographical Notes Written in a Federal Penitentiary (New York, International Publishers, 1969). ■



Ben Davis and Peter Cacchione

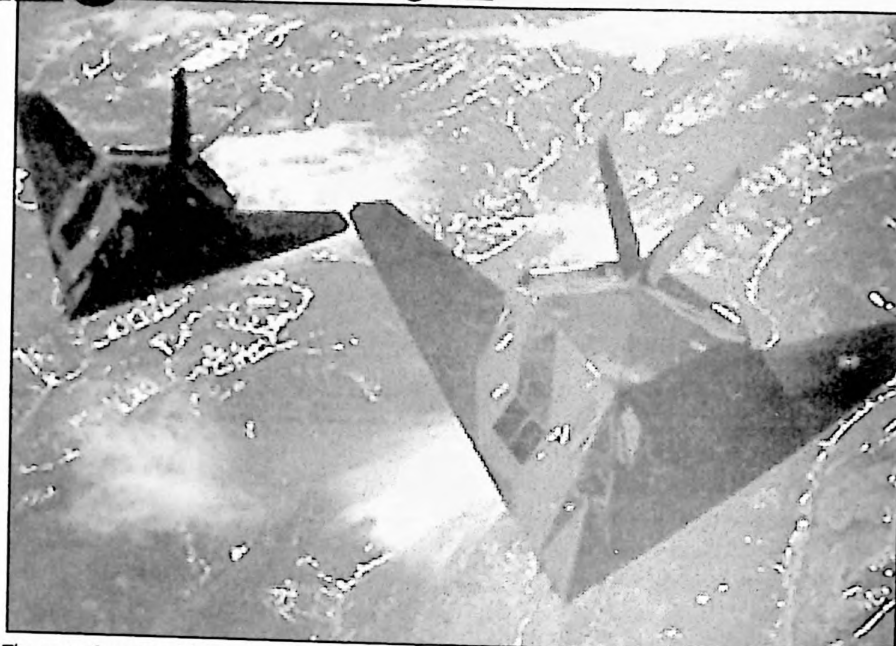
PA archive

The WAGES of War

By David Eisenhower and
Alix Burack

The emergence of America as a rogue state, abrogating international treaties that set limits on establishing a "Pax Americana," entails the exponential growth of military expenditures. The Bush administration's official doctrine is a comprehensive strategic reassessment that represents a qualitative break with the past. Ruling circles appear to be united (at least for the moment) behind the brute nature of these new imperial strategies. The Nuclear Posture Review, the National Security Strategy, the National Strategy for Homeland Security, and strategic recommendations from a variety of commissions and think-tanks fundamentally reject nonproliferation in favor of counterproliferation, promote unilateralism over multilateralism, encourage the transformation of space into a military theatre under the direction of a new unified space command (US Strategic Command), and seek to elevate the US to absolute global domination.

This was all anticipated in a report issued in 2000 by the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), an organization composed of apparatchiks in the future Bush administration. Entitled *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, this report states that the top military



Credit: US Air Force

The cost of two stealth bombers could put thousands back to work permanently.

priorities are: American strategic superiority; the capacity to "fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars"; the development and deployment of global missile defenses ("to provide a secure basis for US power projection around the world"); and the control of space. The report fur-

Bush's militaristic policies are pushing more and more people into destitution and desperation.

ther states that "a failure to preserve [American] preeminence allows others an opportunity to shape the world in ways antithetical to American interests and principles." Actually, as Rick Salutin reports in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* (11/15/02), this "rebirth of imperial thinking" has been the "dream of the Cheney-Rumsfeld-Powell axis" since the collapse of the Soviet Union. September 11 made it possible to move full steam ahead. Salutin quotes National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice charging her staff "to think seriously about 'how do you capitalize on these opportunities' to fundamentally change American doctrine, and the shape of the world, in the wake of September 11."

Couched in the rhetoric of combating terrorism, the administration's National Security Strategy (NSS) holds that the US "will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self defense by

*David Eisenhower is a member of the Economics Commission, CPUSA.
Alix Burack is a graduate student.*

The real goal of Bush's doctrine is full-spectrum supremacy, including control of the world's oil resources.

acting preemptively," America's "comprehensive strategy to combat WMD [weapons of mass destruction] includes proactive counter-proliferation efforts. We must deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed." Further, in order to "forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively" to "decisively defeat any adversary if deterrence fails." And potential adversaries are warned that the US

will take the actions necessary to ensure that our efforts to meet our global security commitments and protect Americans are not impaired by the potential for investigations, inquiry, or prosecution by the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose jurisdiction does not extend to Americans and which we do not accept.

Bush's pronouncement in the introduction to the NSS that "the only path to peace and security is the path of action" was confirmed in his summer 2002 speech to West Point graduates, when he remarked that "the only path to safety is the path of action." He also proclaimed that "our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary."

It is clear that so-called "defensive" strategies are patently their opposite. A key provision of the National Strategy for Homeland Security (NSHS) states that the US

must have an intelligence and warning system that can detect terrorist activity before it manifests itself in attacks so that proper preemptive, preventive, and protective action can be taken.

Just how this "terrorist activity" could be detected before it is actualized is a logistical problem solved by the existence of a "P2OG." The creation of the "Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group" has been advocated by the Pentagon's Defense Science Board (DSB), whose leaked summary report is discussed in a recent article by David Isenberg. He writes that the DSB document maintained the P2OG

would launch secret operations aimed at "stimulating reactions" among terrorists and states possessing weapons of mass destruction, meaning it would prod terrorist cells into action, thus exposing them to "quick-response" attacks by US forces. The means by which it would do this is the far greater use of special operations forces.

Isenberg also notes that the P2OG would be overseen by a "'Special Operations Executive' in the National Security Council" whose "plans would be executed by the Pentagon or the CIA." (*Asia Times*, 4 November 2002).

The real goal of Bush's doctrine is full-spectrum supremacy, including control of the world's oil resources and, thus, the transfor-

mation of domestic energy issues, in particular, into strategic matters of national security proportions. A James Baker Institute task force, made up primarily of energy and military interests, authored a report entitled *Strategic Energy Policy: Challenges for the 21st Century*, which states:

An oil supply disruption ... could have a potentially enormous impact on the U.S. and world economy, and would affect U.S. national security and foreign policy in dramatic ways.

The report urges that if America

does not respond strategically to the current energy situation, the US risks perpetuating the unacceptable leverage of adversaries and leaving the country's economy vulnerable to disruptions and volatile energy prices.

Moreover, the task force recommends the US "pursue new paths to assure that neither its economy nor policies are excessively vulnerable to foreign influences."

The strategic aim of global supremacy was foreshadowed in the 1998 report by the Rumsfeld/Wolfowitz-led Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States. This report maintains that such a threat not only exists, but does so in the context of a "new strategic environment," wherein the US can no longer assume sufficient advance

STATE OF THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY:

Unemployment rate is **5.9 percent** and rising.

Median household income declined **2.2 percent** overall from FY2000 (falling **6.3 percent** for African-American families and **6.4 percent** for Asian families).

Poverty rate rose to **11.7 percent** from **11.3 percent**, with the number of poor rising **1.3 million** to a total of **32.9 million**.

One in five children in the US is poor, with children representing **36 percent** of the official poor.

Double-digit poverty rates for children (**16.3 percent**); senior citizens (**10.1 percent**), and African-American families (**20.7 percent**).

Per person poverty gap rose to **\$2,707** below the poverty line; largest gap since 1979.

30.7 percent of those living below the poverty line have no health insurance

43 million Americans are without health insurance, representing **14.6 percent** of the population.

Income inequality (the disparity of shares in national income between the top fifth and bottom fifth) reached its highest level in 2001 since records were first kept in 1967.

Federal deficit could top **\$170 billion**.

Total deficit of the US states exceeds **\$60 billion**, with Medicaid deficits in 23 states.

Current Social Security cost of living increase was only **1.4 percent** (the smallest increase in 4 years).

\$1.35 trillion in tax cuts for the rich (enacted through 2010) and continued abolishment of estate and capital gains taxes for the most wealthy Americans.

warning – if any warning at all – before hostile missile deployment. The commission endorsed a “revolution in military affairs” – the constellation of remote, stealth and space-based weapons, guidance and surveillance systems – noting that the US military is integrating such new strategies with the

objective ... to make US forces lighter but more lethal, so that fewer personnel with less equipment can strike over long distances and with a far more powerful effect.

The Pentagon’s projected “full-spectrum dominance” involves not only weapons development, but also a permanent, worldwide American military presence in the form of “forward operating bases” and “constabulary missions.”

This new global “architecture” of American military supremacy would be constructed on the economically unsustainable foundation of a permanent war economy as well as a narrow class foundation. Already the costs of this plan are staggering. Congress has authorized the Department of Defense to spend \$393 billion in 2003. Included in this appropriation is close to \$7.4 billion for a national missile defense system, \$3.5 billion for the Joint Strike Fighter, \$3.2 billion for 46 Navy F/A-18 E/F fighters and \$249 million for Navy Tomahawk cruise missiles (the *New York Times*, 23 October 2002). Also funded are Tactical Intelligence and Related Activities (\$12-15 billion), CIA Special Forces (estimated at \$5 billion), 23 new F-22 Raptor stealth fighters (\$4.7 billion), eavesdropping satellites (\$3.5 billion) under the direction of the National Security Agency (\$4 billion agency budget), increased production of laser and



Bush blows his nose and declares war on the world.

satellite-guided bombs (\$1.1 billion), development and production of the Predator and Global Hawk pilotless airplanes (\$1 billion), modification of four Trident submarines to fire Tomahawk cruise missiles (\$1 billion), the Space-Based Infrared Systems-High program (\$815 million) and a \$10 billion discretionary “war disposal” fund (www.cooperativeresearch.com).

This is only a down payment. The defense budget does not include an estimated \$100 billion to \$200 billion for immediate “battle costs” of a war on Iraq.

Amounts into the hundreds of billions will be required for the long term maintenance of Bush-Pentagon plans. These include technology-intensive weapons and weapons-delivery construction (including the V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor helicopters, HIMARS rocket artillery system, ballistic and anti-ballistic missile systems, satellites and other space-based missile interceptors and lasers); the build-up of strategic nuclear superiority, including miniaturized nuclear missiles fired from space; establishment of forward operating bases around the world; “constabulary duties” (read: armed occupation forces); increases in armed services personnel; homeland defense (read: domestic repression); and

Sources: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (www.cbpp.org); Federal Government Leading Economic Indicators (www.whitehouse.gov); US Census (www.census.gov); World Socialist Website (www.wsws.org); OMBWatch (www.ombwatch.org); National Priorities Project (www.nationalpriorities.org); Center for Tax Justice (www.ctj.org).

SOCIAL PROGRAMS CUT AND ELIMINATED IN FY2003 FEDERAL BUDGET

PROGRAMS CUT (partial list):

\$9.4 billion cut from public transportation programs.

\$3.56 billion cut from aid to homeless and for public housing programs.

\$1.3 billion cut from environmental and energy programs.

\$491 million cut from Welfare-to-Work grants to states.

\$485 million cut from public housing operating and capital funds.

\$300 million cut from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash receipt fund.

\$284 million cut from the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant.

\$157 million cut from youth employment programs.

\$156 million cut from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Program

budget and the Native American Housing Block Grant.

\$138 million cut from the Center for Disease Control's preventive, occupational, and environmental health programs, and the HIV/AIDS formula grants.

\$116 million cut from Dislocated and Migrant and Seasonal Worker programs.

\$82 million cut from Rural Health and Indian Health Services programs.

\$80 million cut from the Administration for Child and Families Community Services Block Grant.

\$50 million cut from adult employment and training programs.

\$41 million cut from the Child Care and Development and Social Services Block Grants.

\$33 million cut from violence against women prevention programs.

\$20 million cut from the Child Care Assistance Program, the Special Milk Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

\$15 million cut from Senior Supportive Services and Senior Centers, the National Family Caregiver Support programs, and Community Services Employment for Older Americans.

\$10 million cut from the Medicaid and State Children's Hospital Insurance Program (SCHIP), which provides low-income and poor children with health insurance coverage, threatening 900,000-1 million children with loss of coverage.



"humanitarian relief." The stated goal is to win "multiple, simultaneous major-theatre wars." The Institute for Policy Studies cites a Congressional Budget Office prediction that increases in military spending will likely total \$450 billion or more over the next ten years, not including costs associated with a war on Iraq (www.ips.org).

The scale of this military spending is a broadside against a domestic economy weakened by recession, corporate corruption, growing inequality, a stock market crash, a teetering "globalization"

phase of extracting imperial tribute, a real estate "bubble" about to burst, states facing severe fiscal crises, a massive accumulation of private sector debt and a shredded safety net (see box on page 22). What remains of the safety net has already been considerably depleted by nearly \$17 billion in federal budget cuts, or wholesale program elimination, in FY2003. The military build-up, and the raid on funds for social programs which helps to sustain it, is exacting a deadly toll on the most vulnerable members of the American populace.

Trillions of dollars for the war machine, an aggressive, preemptive military strategy aimed at the seizure of oil reserves and global military domination, coupled with more tax breaks for the rich, rising unemployment and deep cuts in the social budget are surely a recipe for disaster. Far from sustaining or improving the conditions of American households, Bush's militaristic policies are pushing more and more people into destitution and desperation. And it is unlikely that the Bush administration will willingly deviate from its New World Order

Wages of War

agenda.

There is already significant domestic sentiment against the impending war against Iraq. This resurgent peace movement can only be expected to swell as the domestic economic casualties mount. The severity of these economic consequences will be felt most intensely at the level of the

cash-strapped states, where municipal and county governments will be pressed to provide for social needs as the federal government pursues its imperial priorities. Demands for provision of basic health, housing and employment programs will place the states on the front lines of a growing grassroots struggle. Despite

fearmongering and attacks on civil liberties arising from the Patriot and Securities Acts, a center/left bloc will inevitably emerge out of mass mobilization and coalition-building opposed to permanent war, austerity and repression. In the process, the seeds of a socialist imagination might be sown. ■

PROGRAMS ELIMINATED (partial list):

Nutritional Program for the Elderly	Low-Income Energy Emergency Contingency Fund	Rural Housing and Economic Development Programs	Supported Employment Services for Persons with Severe Disabilities
Farmer's Market Nutritional Program	Disabled Veterans Outreach Program	Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund	Grants to States for Incarcerated Youth Offenders
Department of Education's Drop-Out Prevention Program	Emergency Medical Services for Children		Rural and Low-Income Schools Program

Cross Over Dixie ♦ (continued from page 10)

ty. Others are emphasizing that the election shows the need for redoubled mass action. At the center of the debate are disagreements regarding the community's relations with the Democratic Party.

Cynthia Tucker, in a post-election column, used the results to call for an end to protest in the African American community. "McKinney was a poor representative of a district that is home to a large enclave of economically successful, mainstream African American voters," she wrote. "They don't share McKinney's fringe beliefs." Criticizing the support McKinney received from Jesse Jackson, Tucker wrote,

A new generation of black political leaders, moderate, pragmatic, consensus builders, is coming to the fore... Jackson came out of the protest movement. But the same tactics are less useful, even counterproductive, these days.

Along similar lines, Terry Neal of the *Washington Post* wrote of McKinney:

She found herself to the left of many of her black middle-class constituents ... The black electorate is increasingly independent and moderate, scornful of old-style machine politics, and ultimately, less responsive to the civil-rights

era rhetoric that ushered the first significant wave of black politicians into office in the '60s and '70s.

Neal went on to speak of the "emergence of affluent African-Americans as an independent political base." Other African American commentators dispute this analysis by suggesting that racism still broadly affects even financially better off African Americans.

The implications for the Democratic Party are also being sharply debated. The general election results in Georgia in which Senator Max Cleland and Governor Roy Barnes were unexpectedly defeated, show a



Jesse Jackson, Sr., strongly supports coalitions of progressive Jews and African Americans.

divided party. McKinney had been instrumental in pulling out the vote for the Democratic ticket in South DeKalb. An intensive struggle within the Democratic Party nationally emerged from the 2002 elections. The experience in Georgia is very much a part of that struggle and offers significant lessons.

Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney has a unique vantage point from which to contribute to the struggle within the Democratic Party. The day after the general election, McKinney issued a statement that sets the tone: "Democrats...will have to be inclusive, outspoken, bold and unafraid to challenge, and we must speak with conviction against that which is wrong."

Implications beyond 2002

Every aspect of provocation and manipulation was called into play in the many-sided attack to defeat

McKinney and Hilliard. Appeals were made to both conservative white voters and sections of the Black community to split the historic Black vote.

The defeat of McKinney and Hilliard is part of a national effort to defeat the most progressive forces among elected officials. In such a climate, developed left politics and a working-class approach will help defend against provocations and develop tactics for the broadest possible unity.

The right-wing has clear goals and

unlimited resources. In the McKinney and Hilliard primaries, they targeted key races and issues to advance their agenda. Without proportional representation, progressives have a smaller voice in Congress than their constituency. Where progressives do have representation, the right-wing focuses their resources to eliminate it. The right-wing is building their coalition across party lines. McKinney was targeted by Republicans and in part by elements of the Democratic Party, who also would love to get rid of the Progressive Caucus.

Right-wing provocations can be expected to increase in the coming period. In order to defeat the pro-corporate, militaristic Bush agenda, the main focus must be to build unity and to embrace the broadest possible coalitions. Top priorities are organizing the unorganized and the labor movement in the South and strengthening progressive grassroots organizations and elected officials.

Only with mass struggle have gains for justice and equality been achieved in our country. The experience in Georgia (and Alabama) is a call for more marches, not less, more outreach and coalition building, not retrenchment, more organizing and mobilizing. ■

Check Out Your MARXIST I.Q.

The answers to the questions on page 4:
1) A, 2) A, 3) D, 4) A, 5) C

How to score yourself:

Each question is worth 20 points.

0-40: You need to go to a re-education camp.

50-60: You are unprepared to withstand bourgeois revisionism.

70-80: You qualify for a medal.

90-100: You should be writing articles for PA.

BE PREPARED: Next month the quiz will be on Woman's Equality.

— 'You are what you read'

Worlds Apart ♦ (continued from page 13)

down wages and local standards of living. This, in fact, was their main reason for being there in the first place. Corporate ideology was based on the crudely racist idea that countries treated this way, almost always countries mostly populated by people of color, deserved this treatment because they were incapable of developing their own resources, of being democratic or fiscally responsible.

Global corporations also began to push for "free trade" policies. The most commonly known agreement dealing with free trade is the North American Free Trade Agree-



A Jamaican garment worker employed in Kingston's free-trade zone.

ment (NAFTA), which opened the borders of Canada, Mexico and the United States by reducing or eliminating tariffs. The stated goal was to encourage trade; the result, however, was to allow the US to dominate the economies of both countries and increase unemployment in each country. Other lesser-known "free-trade" tactics included the "free-trade zone." In countries like Jamaica, Haiti or the Philippines, national governments established city-sized areas called "free-trade zones." In that zone overseas corporations can locate their operations, hire local workers and rake in big profits tax-free. The

supposed benefit is that local workers will find better paying jobs and boost the local economy. Once again the result was low wages for local workers and an enormous drain on tax revenues for the host country.

Countries such as the Philippines borrowed hundreds of millions of dollars to build free-trade zones to attract businesses. They provided huge subsidies for overseas corporations that did not result in benefits to the country's treasury. To stay afloat the government had to borrow more, usually from the US and international financial institutions. As we know, these deals resulted in increased financial dependency on the US and the international financial system. To get more loans, these countries had to promise to cut social services such as public education and health care subsidies. This process is commonly referred to as neo-liberalism.

Neo-liberalism at Home

But neo-liberal policies are not just happening overseas. They are happening here. And the people who are most directly affected are people of color.

The victories of the working class in the World War II period were not just victories based on workplace struggles over the length of the working day or wages. They were victories in civil society generally. A social safety net was formed to aid workers displaced by uneven development. The public education system was expanded and dramatically improved literacy. Health care benefits, though usually through private insurers, still came to be expected, even by many non-union workers. Public assistance and subsidization of certain infrastructural needs such as public transportation, public education, unemployment insurance, Social Security,

Medicare, Medicaid, etc., became the rule rather than the exception. Workers took up the fight to improve their lives beyond the need for more pay. Much of this came in the form of reluctant concessions to hold back the influence of the international communist movement.

As the left came under attack and suffered a setback with the dismantling of the Soviet Union, and as the crisis of capitalism deepened, capitalists needed to roll back these gains. They needed to free up capital tied to public services in order to subsidize their new adventures overseas, their unsuccessful gambles in the financial bubble of the 1990s, or simply to keep them afloat.

A recent study by the Applied Research Center (www.arc.org) called *Race and Recession*, details the consequences these policies have had for communities of color. Unemployed African American and Latino workers in December 2001 were less likely to receive unemployment benefits. Racist employers simply blamed them for their loss of work. Racist hiring practices prevented them from having enough time at a particular job to collect benefits. And as the Bush administration refuses to extend these benefits, more and more Black and Latino workers are at risk of severe hardship.

Often workers in these situations turn to public assistance as a last resort. But workers of color who go to the welfare office for aid find discriminatory treatment. They experience rude behavior by state employees who assume they won't need or qualify for education or training opportunities that might help them find better work. Often they are not told about resources such as subsidies for child care while at work, health care benefits or access to other programs that might help them make ends meet.

Some welfare recipients have complained that instead of education programs they were forced to go to hygiene workshops. George Bush recently clarified his views on the matter when he insisted that public assistance was not a system for putting people through college. He seemed unconcerned that education is the main vehicle by which people escape poverty.

Welfare reform saw the exclusion of hundreds of thousands of legal immigrants and hundreds of thousands more undocumented workers from public aid. On the surface this was called an attempt to discourage and control immigration, but corporations knowingly continued to hire undocumented workers. This saved them billions in costs they would have had to pay to "legal" and unionized workforces. The federal government reaped huge savings as well. While collect-

ing billions in payroll taxes, the new laws allowed them to limit access to public education and withhold services such as public aid. Liberated capital was turned over by the billions to corporations and wealthy individuals in the form of tax breaks. Additionally, racist anti-immigrant sentiment helped to ensure that immigrants would hesitate to organize labor unions. Employers would knowingly hire undocumented workers, but if these workers wanted to organize, employers would hand them over to the federal government for deportation or imprisonment.

As in the past, the racist aspect of the neo-liberal project is a way of making extra savings from discriminatory policies, racist ideology and practices that divide the working class as a whole and drive down standards of living for all workers. What is clear, however, is that social

democratic reforms were gains made by the entire working class and are in its objective interests to protect. Success, however, requires a united fight against discrimination based on race and nationality (and all other forms). It must be shown that it is in the material interest of all workers in to end racism, and that whites especially have no stake in preserving racial privilege and inequality.

Even further, as it is necessary in the current crisis of capitalism for the ruling class to install neo-liberal policies, the fight for these reforms becomes more crucial. Saving public services, with the particular focus on ending discrimination, means demanding greater social control over the flow of capital and a sharpened challenge to the dominance of capitalists. Opposing racial oppression is more and more closely related to reducing class exploitation. ■

Who is Going to Save the Children? ♦ (continued from page 17)

forms education into a private good. Education as a public good has been the foundation of schooling in this country for decades. The marketplace has never been concerned about equity in education.

The quality of the education African American children receive is another important part of the debate. Although both genders of African American youth are greatly affected by the new trends in education, "there seems to be a systematic plan to program African American males to fail." In her book *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*, Ann Ferguson argues that African American males are tracked to become inmates in prisons just as other children are tracked to become doctors, lawyers, accountants, or other skilled trades workers. Schools, as socializing institutions, are in the business of creating, shaping and regulating social identities, says Ferguson. In labeling and categorizing youngsters, schools often, construct an image of African Amer-

ican boys as individuals with behavioral problems. According to Ferguson, African American males are disciplined more often than any other group of students.

A separate review of disciplinary practices in a school district near Cleveland, where 40 percent of the school population are African Americans, supports Ferguson's thesis. Beginning with middle schools and into high school in this district, 90 percent or more of the students with suspensions or expulsions were African American males. It is significant that in the County Juvenile Detention Center in Cleveland, approximately two-thirds of detainees are African American youth. In all cities, African American males have much higher suspension, expulsion and drop out rates as well as dramatically lower GPAs. There is a relationship among the image schools foster of African American males, the data on disciplinary procedures, and the fact that almost 30 percent of African American males

between the age of 18 and 24 are involved in some way with the criminal justice system.

As the country enters the new millennium, African American families, especially the children, face a struggle for survival. For African American children, the future looks rather bleak in a market-oriented society dominated by those who have little interest in equity, social justice and peace. African Americans live in a society that is more interested in building prisons than providing equal access to health care, quality education and jobs, and economic justice. The real victims here are the African American children who continue to suffer due to benign neglect. Many of these children from African American families will have their dreams deferred and no promissory notes to cash in. They will be deprived of the opportunity to reach their maximum potential, socially, emotionally and physically. Who is going to save the children? ■

Freedom: A Photographic History of the African American Struggle

Edited by Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, New York, Phaidon Press, 2002.

Reviewed by Rosita Johnson

F*Freedom: A Photographic History of the African American Struggle* is a beautiful book of 512 pages, 600 photographs and 85,000 words of narrative text divided into five sections. Published by Phaidon Press with photographs compiled by Sophie Spencer-Wood, this book is indeed a powerful educational resource. Open the book to any page and you will be compelled to turn page after page, read explanatory text and experience a flood of emotions from anger to joy, from sadness to surprise.

The authors are Manning Marable, a history professor at Columbia University, and Leith Mullings, a professor of anthropology at City University of New York. Marable is the founding director of the Institute for Research in African American Studies, an author of many books and a lecturer on the politics and history of race. Mullings is the author of many books on race, class and gender in African American communities. Together they also edited the groundbreaking anthology of African American texts, *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*.

In the introduction, the authors say that African Americans' concept of freedom has been group justice, the freedoms to work and receive the fruits of their labor, to have families, build institutions and determine their destiny. In order to enact these freedoms, African Americans have had to create communities within a

context of brutality and inequality while developing strategies to confront their oppression. In this book are many, many photographs of African American notables, some whom we recognize immediately and others to whom we are introduced. But the focus of this photographic history is not on a small elite but rather the African American working class – the Black people who have been at the core of the workers who built America from the time of slavery, through Jim Crow segregation, the great migration to northern cities to find jobs in manufacturing and industry, the Civil Rights Movement and the present deindustrialized era. African American Communists and the influence of CPUSA in the labor and the civil rights movement is documented. The contributions of women are well documented. African American participation in the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War is chronicled, as is the fight for equal rights in the armed services. The brutal system of enslavement, the years of lynching, mob attacks on Blacks, police brutality, racial discrimination and an unjust criminal justice system are all illustrated.

In spite of all the hardships, obstacles and violence faced by African Americans, this book shows their humanity over a period of 160



years in their daily lives as women, men, children, families, as farmers, builders, care givers and factory workers.

We see African Americans expressing themselves through the arts, sports and the religious experience. This book illustrates how African Americans have been a catalyst for the transformation of American society in spite of strong resistance.

In the last section of the book, the period from 1975 to the present, we learn that the Black business sector has grown faster than at any other time and the number of Black professionals and managers has also increased. But the loss of millions of urban jobs has also resulted in high unemployment, underemployment, decreased public services and the epidemic of drugs and violence. The African American poor have been isolated without needed resources and many times without the support and organization skills of the African American "middle class." The struggle continues.

Freedom: A Photographic History of the African American Struggle is a book that can make African American history come alive for everyone.

"If you don't know where you've been, you won't know where you're going and any road will take you there." ■

Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past

By David R. Roediger, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002.

Reviewed by Clara West

Some academics have established themselves as scholars in "whiteness studies," but none so prominently as David R. Roediger. Claiming a strong affinity to the Marxist tradition with much influence from W.E.B. Du Bois, historian Philip Foner and cultural historians like Herbert Gutman, George Lipsitz, Robin D. G. Kelley, Karen Brodtkin and Alexander Saxton, Roediger has produced an impressive body of published work. His most recent contribution is *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past*.

In a series of arguments, Roediger exposes the cynical purposes of the right's racism. First, Roediger shows that New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani's 1999 attack on the Chris Ofili painting, *The Holy Virgin Mary*, a painting that followed particular cultural traditions and used a variety of media for its subject including elephant dung, was designed to garner extremely conservative political support for a senate bid. Giuliani sought to build "white" racial solidarity in order to underscore his support for police violence against African American, Latino and immigrant working-class people, to legitimate his class war attacks on New York's homeless, while sidestepping difficult questions and real solutions to the city's economic woes. Only a sex scandal and his stand on women's reproductive rights prevented solidifying this support.

Similarly, Roediger reads the

canceled Rush Limbaugh television show as a sort of political performance of whiteness. Focusing on Limbaugh's technique of silently ridiculing African American political and intellectual figures with gestures and knowing glances at his audience, Roediger argues that Limbaugh used his attacks to fuel anti-Black hatred among his largely white, conservative audiences, but also to give him space for justifying a right-wing, corporate class agenda that has intensified economic inequality. Basically, Roediger accuses Limbaugh of performing the old racist minstrel act (absent the blackface) of mocking "uppity" African Americans in order to distract attention from the crucial questions of class arrangements that oppress even white members of his audience. For their part, his audiences assume the pretense of the power of "whiteness" in order to assert control over people of color in lieu of the control they really desire over their own lives, but which they have surrendered to white, ruling-class oppressors.

Roediger also refuses to spare the conservative section of the Democratic Party (the Democratic Leadership Conference, or DLC) for manipulating racist images and policies in order to cooperate with the right on propelling "globalization" particularly injurious to the entire



working class. The DLC appealed to "middle-class" voters, which it consistently saw as white and thus advocated policies that closely resembled the right's, to provide

a sense that their main concerns were with "white" issues and leave the general impression that "middle-class" values were closely aligned with those of the ruling class, e.g. the racial politics of welfare "reform" snugly fit with the crushing results of privatization and downsizing.

Roediger then turns his attention to the history of anti-racist radicalism, examining the coalitions that broadly formed the abolitionist movement. Though the reason for this shift in focus in the book is obscure, the connected study of the rhetoric and politics of "race" gives continuity. In this section, Roediger challenges the notion that alliances among oppressed racial, ethnic, national groups or women as a whole are not natural but rely on negotiation and activist work to succeed. He points specifically to the case of the utopian socialists (non-Marxist) who sincerely sought revolutionary systemic change to end the oppression of all people. Contrary to their view, thoughtful activists such as Frederick Douglass understood that a large coalition of social and class forces must ally themselves to defeat the plantation system, end

slavery and set about transforming relations of inequality. Roediger indicates that for Douglass, who generally opposed class exploitation as well, thought that slavery was the primary obstacle to equality, and that to succeed progressive forces needed to build alliances with class forces that did not favor overthrowing capitalism, i.e. Northern industrial capitalists who favored "free" labor.

In the final section of the book, Roediger looks to the role of the labor movement in "transcending the racial past," and ultimately as the source of liberation for working-class people. In a previous book, Roediger cited the significance of inter-racial unity to working-class power and liberation, but here his argument has shifted somewhat. He notes the structural and demographic change in the composition of the labor movement: from industrial to service-related work and from primarily white males to predominantly men and women of color and white women (8 million of the former and nearly 9 million of the latter). These changes have produced a different outlook in union leadership, but are they evidence of a more progressive anti-racist, anti-chauvinist labor movement? For the most part he thinks not, but suggests that the necessities of organizing among people of color might push unions toward a democratic social movement of tremendous potential.

One significant problem that arises in the course of this argument appears in a chapter called "Mumia Time or Sweeney Time?" In this chapter, Roediger asserts the crucial and historic meaning of the support Mumia Abu-Jamal has received from many sections of the labor

movement. This he contrasts with the "whiteness," though quite visibly progressive, in the leadership of the Sweeney executive in the AFL-CIO. He uses these two positions as symbolic of possible routes union activists might take in the next few years. Will they continue to support explicitly anti-racist politics represented by the Mumia case, or will they rely on the racial politics-as-usual embodied in the Sweeney position?

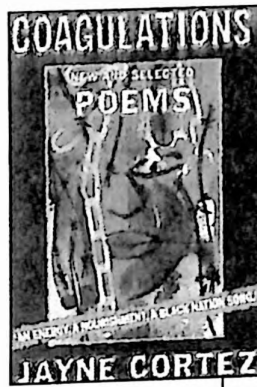
There are a number of problems with Roediger's representations of this dichotomy, but the primary one is that Roediger himself has forged the difference he supposes to exist in reality. Certainly if one buys into an essentialist argument about skin color or inflates the importance of the individuals used to symbolize the competing positions, his argument has some validity. Sweeney's existence (and his politics) relies specifically on the transformations in the structure and demography of the trade union movement. Further, structural changes that have increased the proportion of people of color, who likely have sympathy for someone in Mumia's position, also serve to explain the possibility of coalition and alliance across "racial" lines symbolized by growing labor support for Mumia's release. Likewise, Mumia turns to the labor movement for support as it still is the largest, most progressive social movement and because his own politics have a home there.

Certainly, Roediger's concern about democratic unionism and rank-and-file power is of great interest, but organizing efforts taken up in recent times stress specifically the power of workers in forming unions and using them to transform their

work conditions, their lives generally and the political power they hold in their communities. New organizing efforts succeed when they stress the workers' control and leadership in unions rather than outside ownership from the international. Organizing would fail without such a philosophy. Organizing fails when unions don't focus on the bosses' power to impose humiliation and severe economic hurt on workers, agitate against the system of exploitation and corruption that workers already implicitly understand, and foster unity among workers. These are no longer slogans advanced solely in the left press but are dominant themes at the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute. Thus, Sweeney and Mumia do not signify distinct possible futures for labor, but uniquely intertwined developments in the labor movement.

The importance of Roediger's work is that it consistently shows the emptiness of "white" identity politics for working-class white people. White racism, Roediger indicates, is used by the right, and by right-leaning elements of the center, to give rhetorical (if not material) substance to white identity in order to advance the goals of US imperialism and its ruling class, always at the expense of most white people and people of color. What is troubling about Roediger's work is that he ultimately advances an argument that resembles in form the utopian socialists of the 19th century, who, in calling for purity of the progressive forces, nearly undermined the possibility of coalitions against slavery. Though Roediger's critique derives from a tough-minded historian's healthy skepticism, he must be careful not to follow the utopians' path. ■

JAYNE CORTEZ These poems are reprinted (with permission from the author) from two of Jayne Cortez' major collections of poetry: *Coagulations* (Thunder Mouth Press, 1984) and *Somewhere In Advance Of Nowhere* (High Risk Books, 1996). She has also recorded six celebrated CDs with her band *The Firespitters*. The critic Robin D. G. Kelly wrote in his recent book *Freedom Dreams* that Jayne Cortez "exemplifies the revolutionary commitment that has always been at the heart of the Black radical imagination. She wages poetic war against imperialism, racism, sexism, fascism, consumerism and environmental injustice. She creates magnetic images of convulsive beauty, yes, but they are fighting words."



IF THE DRUM IS A WOMAN

If the drum is a woman
 why are you pounding your drum into an insane babble
 why are you pistol whipping your drum at dawn
 why are you shooting through the head of your drum
 and making a drum tragedy of drums
 if the drum is a woman
 don't abuse your drum don't abuse your drum
 don't abuse your drum
 I know the night is full of displaced persons
 I see skins striped with flames
 I know the ugly disposition of underpaid clerks
 they constantly menstruate through the eyes
 I know bitterness embedded in flesh
 the itching alone can drive you crazy
 I know this is America
 and chickens are coming home to roost
 on the MX missile
 But if the drum is a woman
 why are you choking your drum
 why are you raping your drum
 why are you saying disrespectful things
 to your mother drum your sister drum
 your wife drum and your infant daughter drum
 if the drum is a woman
 then understand your drum
 your drum is not docile
 your drum is not invincible
 your drum is not inferior to you
 your drum is a woman
 so don't reject your drum
 don't try to dominate your drum
 don't become weak and cold and desert your drum
 don't be forced into the position
 as an oppressor of drums
 and make a drum tragedy of drums
 If the drum is a woman
 don't abuse your drum don't abuse your drum
 don't abuse your drum

GLOBAL INEQUALITIES

Chairperson of the board
 is not digging for roots
 in the shadows
 There's no dying-of-hunger stare
 in eyes of
 Chief executive officer of petroleum
 Somebody else is sinking into
 spring freeze of the soil
 Somebody else is evaporating
 in dry wind of the famine
 there's no severe drought
 in mouth of
 Senior vice president of funding services
 No military contractor is sitting
 in heat of a disappearing lake
 No river is drying up
 in kidneys of
 a minister of defense
 Under-secretary of interior
 is not writing distress signals
 on shithouse walls
 Do you see refugee camp cooped up
 in head of
 Vice president of municipal bonds
 There's no food shortage
 in belly of
 a minister or agriculture
 Chief economic advisors are
 addicted to diet pills
 Banking committee members are
 suffering from obesity
 Somebody else is sucking on dehydrated
 nipples

Somebody else is filling up on fly specks
 The Bishops are not
 forcing themselves to eat bark
 The security exchange commission
 members
 are sick from
 too many chocolate chip cookies
 The treasury secretary
 is not going around in circles
 looking for grain
 There's no desert growing in nose of
 Supreme commander of justice
 It's somebody else without weight
 without blood without land
 without a cloud cover of water on the face
 It's somebody else
 Always somebody else

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

A Unique Publication

Mother Warriors Voice

Subscribe to *Mother Warriors Voice* a 28 page national activist quarterly written by mothers in poverty. Published by the Welfare Warriors, moms fighting for the lives of mothers and children. Subscribe! Enjoy an exciting publication and help make a difference.



**\$5 Mothers in Poverty
and Other Victims of Poverty,
\$15 Individuals, \$25 Organizations and Foreign**

Welfare Warriors 2711 W. Michigan; Milwaukee,
WI 53208 (414) 342-6662; wmvoice@execpc.com

**We Can't Stop the War
Without You.**

2,500 march against war in Taos, New Mexico. 5,000 gather for peace in Brussels, Belgium, 5,000 protest in Zaragoza, Spain. 10,000 demonstrate in Athens, Greece. 10,000 in Portland, Oregon. 45,000 in Melbourne, Australia. 60,000 in San Francisco, California. 100,000 in Washington, DC 300,000 in London, England. 1.5 million in Rome, Italy...

Yet the strength of the peace movement doesn't only lie in numbers, it lies in you. Now you can link up quickly with rallies, protests, vigils, and other non-violent direct actions - plus get essential news, action alerts, resources and more all in one place. Got something to say about war in Iraq? This is the place to find people to say it to.

www.unitedforpeace.org
a place of sanity in a time of madness

Subscribe to the People's Weekly World

I'd like to subscribe for:

\$20/1 year \$10/1 year (low-income) \$1/two month

Name

Street Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

E-mail

SUBSCRIBE to political Affairs

YES! I want to subscribe to Political Affairs!

ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND \$ _____ IN PAYMENT FOR THE SUBSCRIPTION INDICATED BELOW:

\$22 for 1 year \$36 for 2 years \$46 for 3 year

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

SEND TO:
Political Affairs, 235 West 23rd Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10011

All funds payable in U.S. currency, drawn on a U.S. bank. Foreign subs: add \$2.50 per year for shipping.