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Stop the Bombing!



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E D I T O R I A L

Stop the Bombing Now!

The following is a statement of the Communist Party USA National Board on the bombing in Yugoslavia:

Together with more than 50 percent of the American people and people all over the world, the Communist Party USA condemns the wanton slaying and murderous bombing of the Yugoslav people by U.S. imperialism.

Already the bombs have killed and maimed thousands and the bombing intensifies daily. This is a thinly veiled attempt by U.S. imperialism to implement its encirclement policies stretching across Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean, from Yugoslavia to Russia to the People's Republic of China, to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

This encirclement process has its roots in the Cold War. Its aim is to destroy all vestiges of socialist development. It is the process of establishing U.S. imperialism as the "one-superpower" dominating the world.

The bombing of Yugoslavia is a declaration and demonstration to all peoples and nations which cherish their sovereignty that they are subservient to U.S. imperialist authority. NATO has become an extension of the U.S. armed forces and foreign policy. The U.S. is using and testing the most sophisticated new weapons. The vote for Star Wars, against a mythical enemy, is a further expression of this "one-superpower" imperialist encirclement policy.

U.S. imperialism's arrogance has put the United States and NATO countries in violation of the United Nations charter which states: "All members shall refrain in international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State." The bombing is also a violation of the Helsinki Agreements on European Security and Cooperation.

The United States and NATO behave like outlaws who flout the laws of civilized society. They act with impunity, without a care as to the rights and sovereignty of other nations. They must be brought back to the family of nations and made to comply with the rule of law and behave like responsible members of that family. The peace of the world is at stake.

The usual convenient ploy used by U.S. imperialism to justify its action is to demonize the intended victim nation, in this case the Serbs and Yugoslavia. At the same time it portrays the terrorists, the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army, as the "freedom fighters" and "fighters for human rights." These terrorists are armed and equipped by U.S. imperialism.

continued on page 23

HEALTH CARE IN AN ERA OF CRISIS

Global Capitalist Meltdown Rocks Health Industry

by Phil Benjamin

The crisis in the quality of life facing workers continues to escalate. Educational costs, especially in higher education, are making it more and more impossible for working-class people to send their children to college. Public schools are being financially drained. Housing costs escalate and

the numbers of homeless increase across the country. Jobs paying a living wage continue to decline as massive layoffs abound. This crisis is also deeply affecting our health care system.

As we enter the last year of this millennium in this, the richest country in the world, over 45 million people have no health insurance. At least double that figure have limited health benefits covered by their insurance policy — nevertheless, their premiums are skyrocketing. These premium increases directly affect the price that insurance carriers are charging employers who buy health insurance to cover their labor contract agreements. Bosses will

be demanding more money from workers to pay for these premiums. There will also be smaller wage increases at contract time. Self-insured funds (insurance programs sponsored by the employers) are included in these escalating costs. Pressure on these labor-management funds (which dominate the construction industry but are prevalent in other labor agreements) is also growing.

Government health programs such as Medicare have seen their costs escalate. Proposed government reforms for Medicare largely mean more privatization of this valued program for seniors and the disabled. The cost of medi-gap

insurance (private insurance that Medicare recipients buy to fill the gap between what the federal Medicare program offers and what hospitals and doctors demand for services) has doubled and is on the way to tripling. Too many working-class people cannot afford this added insurance, and, as a result, their health care will diminish. According to the Census Bureau, the U.S. ranks 20th worldwide in life expectancy, and stands to fall even further behind.

Federal Medicaid is being handed down to state and local governments. Medicaid, the final hope for the poor is in great danger of being privatized by greedy compa-



AP photo



nies seeking immediate profit from the not-too-sick and dropping those with legitimate health care needs. While the outcome of these disastrous policies affect the whole working class, nationally oppressed minorities will bear the brunt of the attack. The struggle against these developments is mounting. Every popular poll puts health care on the top of the needs list requiring immediate action. The reflection of this fight-back is taking place on many fronts.

The background for the present situation is the failure of President Clinton to fulfill his 1992 health care election promises, leading many of his supporters to partly ignore the 1994 Congressional elections. This resulted in the election of the most right-wing Congress in recent U.S. history. The Gingrich Contract on America was the result of the voter action (or inaction, in this case scenario).

In the 1996 elections, after being threatened with cuts in Social Security and other federal programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, the people responded by reelecting Clinton and cutting back the Republican majority in the House. And in the November 1998 midterm elections this process went even further. The people were so energized that they voted against the Gingrich forces to the extent

that the Speaker of the House resigned from Congress in disgrace.

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party and, to some extent, labor movement policy-makers believed the lie that candidates should stay away from the health-care issue, citing the failure of the Clinton health plan. This analysis, led by the moderate-to-right Democrat Leadership Council (DLC), is dead wrong. People are voting for a higher quality education, housing, jobs with a living wage, and health care. In each instance, people see the role of the federal government as crucial to that effort.

Now is the time to act and force a new domestic agenda on the Congress and the White House. Below are some ideas regarding the growing health-care crisis.

THE 1993-94 POLICY FIGHT ■ In 1993-94, when the Clinton administration was considering the DLC form of national health insurance, there were five main health insurance companies. They constituted an oligopoly which set premium prices and determined the kinds of health services and drugs, if any, that should be covered by insurance. These five carriers would have been the centerpiece of the Clinton plan.

The plan was to be similar to the way federal Medicare is conducted. Funded by public tax dollars, private insurance companies would handle all claims submis-

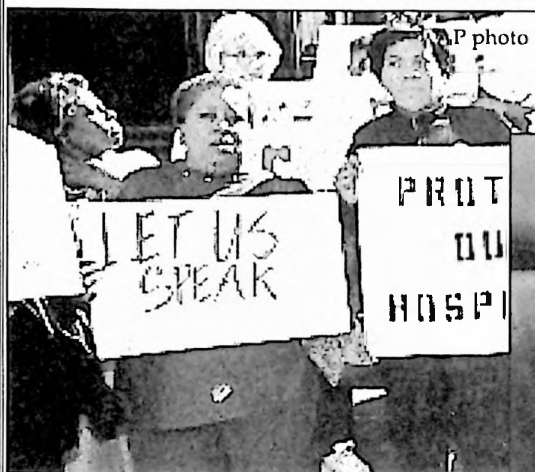
sions from hospitals and doctors. The major players in the U.S. privately-controlled health care system, the insurance carriers, would be guaranteed a level of profit and control of basic health care, public money being used to pay for the whole system.

Due to the anti-government ideology that has swept through both major parties which favored the reliance on the market to decide social welfare needs, this compromise was unfortunately accepted by a large section of the labor movement and liberal policy-makers. The rationale used was "It is a step in the right direction." The Clinton White House thought they had a deal. It sounded good to Wall Street.

Ironically enough, this corporatization of health care was defeated by Republican Party right-wingers and corporate ideologues opposed to any kind of government organization of health, despite the fact that privatization was at the center of the plan. "Let the market decide," was their ideological



Fighting privatization

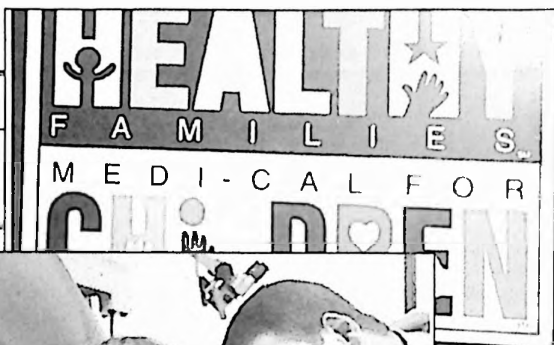


mantra.

However, the domestic agenda of the right-wing does not exist in a cocoon. National and global economic reality has made the Republican's plan to privatize anything and everything a failure, especially in the health care field. After the initial profit taken in 1995 and 1996, the health industry fell on bad times. They simply could not maintain the level of profit that Wall Street financiers demanded.

The failure of the market in health care in the U.S. mirrors the growing financial crisis of world capitalism. World capitalism and privatization has been given a black eye. A recent issue of *The Economist* speaks glowingly of the importance of the private sector in pensions and Social Security as well as health insurance. It reports that in most countries, efforts to privatize are not going well. *The Economist* editors describe the beneficiaries of this policy of greed: "Private firms, particularly insurers and fund-management companies, are licking their lips at the prospect of all that new business." According to the editors, even though each country's efforts to privatize are not going well, largely due to the labor movements and left-wing parties in each country, they are still moving ahead.

In the health care field, the editors cite a "trickier" situation:



AP photo

Market failures, particularly adverse selection and long-term uncertainty about costs, mean that, left alone, the private sector is likely to provide only limited health insurance that will fall short of people's lifetime needs.

The editors know that in the health care field where the results of corporate greed are more readily apparent with diminished health status for people, anger will be greatly increased. Protests are sure to abound. But this does not mean they will stop their greedy ways. Their idea of compromise is the following: "There is a strong case for letting private firms provide the health care even if much of the funding comes from the taxpayer." Taxpayers in the U.S. are responding to this alternative with a resounding "No thanks."

The failure of the market solution comes directly from the demands of patients. All across the country, local statewide and national coalitions of labor, senior, and community groups have said NO! to corporate greed. Congress, influenced by out-of-control right-wing Republicans and a White House that isn't very responsive, required patients to pressure state governments to force health insurance carriers to respect their health care rights. The more these rights were

granted, the less movement that corporate health care had to maximize its profits.

While the terms "managed care" and "health maintenance organizations" were used to cloud the control that the insurance oligopoly maintain

over health care this mask is being lifted. Regional health insurers grabbed millions of dollars in profits, paying neither hospitals nor doctors for services nor covering their clients with needed services. The northeast's most celebrated scofflaw company, Oxford Insurance Company, went belly up, with enough money left over to give more than \$10 million in severance to its founder and chief criminal for his services.

The once safe haven of Blue Cross and Blue Shield as a not-for-profit insurer of last resort is now gone, as each of these companies has gone the for-profit route. Regional carriers are all but out of the picture. They are either being swallowed by the larger carriers or going of out business. Or, as in the case of Blue Cross/Blue Shield, they just become a little window dressing for the big three.

The tide has been turning and now the corporate giants in health care are being compared more and more to the criminals who led the country to an over \$20 billion taxpayer bailout of the Savings and Loan industry just a decade ago. What started off as a crisis facing health-care consumers has now become an economic plight for the corporations that created it.

Over the past few years, it seemed that everyone was trying to sell off their health-care businesses. Travelers, a very high-powered insurance company, sold its health business to Met Life. United Health Care then bought Met Life following its purchase of Humana Corp. A few months later, Aetna bought New York Life's health insurance business (NYLCARE) and U.S.

Toxic explosion rips Rouge Auto plant in Michagen



AP photo

Health Care, a major health insurer both located in the northeast.

Now, in a truly mind-boggling action, Prudential Insurance Company abandoned their own mega-health insurance business and merged with Aetna. The price tag was over \$1 billion. Aetna has 32,000 and Prudential has 16,000 workers (250,000 and 148,500 physicians, respectively), figures which are sure to be slashed considerably.

This leaves just three major health insurance companies: Aetna, United Health Care and Cigna. According to some industry analysis, by next year there will be just two, probably Cigna and Aetna, with Aetna being the overall decision maker.

INTERLOCKING DIRECTORATE □ The directors at Aetna include major U.S. corporate giants: United Airlines, CBS Corporation, IBM, Exodus Communications, Armtek, Jeffbanks and Travel One. Cigna Directors include British Aerospace, Sun Company, Texaco, Northeast Utilities, Brunswick Corp., American Water Works, Dow Chemical, Best Foods, Air Products and Chemicals and a few others. United Health Care directors include: Fannie Mae

Financial Services, The Saint Paul Corp., Medtronic and Spears, Benzak, Salomon and Farrell, a finance corporation. Together, they represent a corporate power base that intends to determine health care policy matters in the U.S. While there are some at the Brookings Institute and other Wall Street think tanks that will argue the giants will compete among themselves and as a result premiums will be lower, no one believes them.

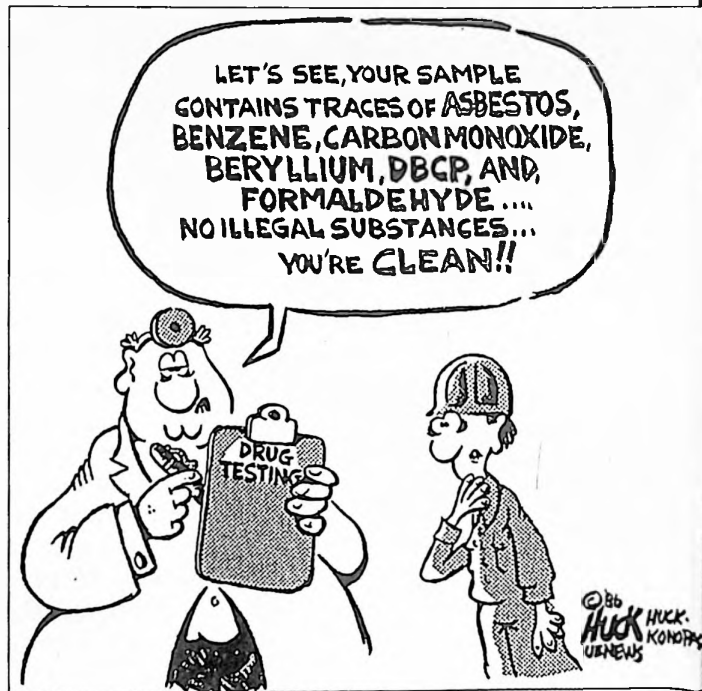
Aetna was among the first insurance companies to begin dumping Medicare recipients who were over its accepted cost factors, intending to extort more money from the federal Medicare program. Its medi-gap premiums are already skyrocketing. Aetna does what insurance companies have always done, maximize profits

and minimize benefit programs which only, to its thinking, increase cost risks. Now that there are only three major carriers and soon to be only two, with costs on the rise, the size of the uninsured sector will become even greater. There are already over 125 million people with little or no health insurance. It is time to act.

A new corporate monster has been given birth: the Medical-Industrial Complex. Consisting of the insurance monopoly, the drug companies, Wall Street financial corporations, for-profit hospitals, and medical supply/equipment companies, the Medical-Industrial Complex has its own combined agenda of greed and power. Derailing the Complex by nullifying the insurance carriers' power is very possible with the growing unity of labor and peoples' organizations. The hatred for the insurance carriers is a catalyst for unity and aggressive action.

The answer to the dilemma is rather obvious. If the private profit-making sector refuses to cover people for health insurance, our own government must.

Maximum pressure must be placed on the White House and Congress to protect everyone



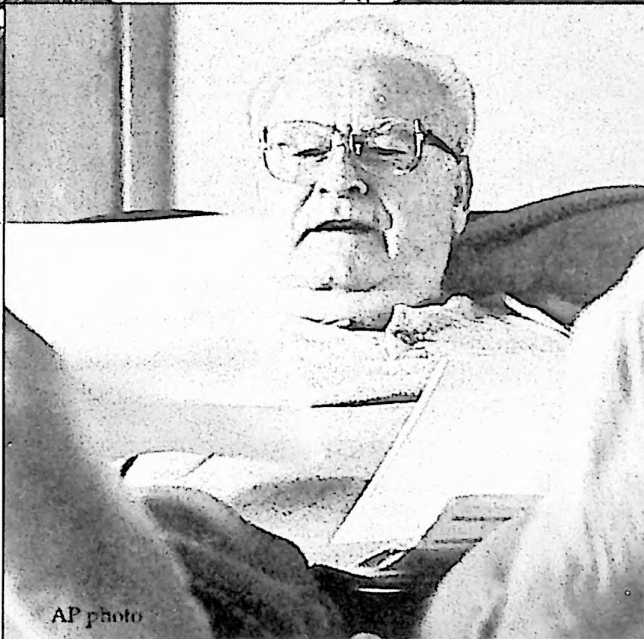


Greater unionization of health care workers is key to providing better patient care.

against illness and disease. The answer is *not* to subsidize insurance companies so that people can buy insurance at lower premiums. Incredibly, that is the alternative that some Wall Street and liberal policy-makers are considering. Why? They are afraid to take on or they represent the private health insurance industry. They are afraid to take on the anti-government profit-makers. They are afraid to take on the myth of the marketplace and its so-called successes.

However, their interests are not the interests of the workers and their unions. They are not the tens

*The current bill number is HR 1374. To access the file on the Internet: www.thomas.loc.gov/ Then just enter the HR No.1374 into the box and you'll see for yourself the logic and reasonable approach for using tax dollars for the people's needs. PB



of millions of people who are facing daily health crises. Imagine having no insurance and facing hospital and doctor bills for many thousands of dollars. It can happen to any of us.

A solution, which more and more people are considering, is one which post-war Europe utilized in one form or another. A solution that, even today, global capitalism cannot destroy. It is still alive and well, though underfunded. The solution is a national health service or national health insurance pro-

gram that covers everyone, regardless of their status in the country, with health care services and needed drugs.

This year the Dellums National Health Service Bill will be reintroduced into Congress. Representative Barbara Lee, the person elected to replace retired Congressman Ronald V. Dellums indicated she will carry on this important work. Under that bill, our tax dollars will be used to directly provide needed health services to people.*

Under this legislation laid-off workers and physicians, both in these and previous mergers, would be gainfully employed. Doctors, nurses, other health care professionals and managers of health care facilities, would be hired into this new federal health care system. Doctors in training who face tens of thousands of dollars in unpaid medical training bills could fulfill their obligations by working for the new system. This option would eliminate the need for costly, immoral and unnecessary insurance carriers along with profit-gouging hospitals. It has the potential to make the alleged voluntary, not-for-profit hospital act on the patients' behalf. It would not use costly and outdated fee-for-service rules to pay doctors. It is a common sense approach to a problem.

All local union and community activist organizations should get in touch with their elected officials (local, city and national) to let them know that a progressive domestic agenda for education, housing, jobs at living wages, and health care must be fulfilled. The way to end inaction in federal and state government is by direct grassroots action on the part of the people.

Speaker after speaker who voiced their opposition to impeachment during the House hearings pointed correctly to the aims of the right-wing Republicans that never included an action for a peoples' agenda. Now is the time to change that. Let's get to work.

WARNING!

CAPITALISM AND RACISM MAY BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH

In this article the concept of "class" is used in the Marxist sense. The working class is composed primarily of wage earners. On the other hand capitalists own and control the workplace. The destructive consequences of a predominantly for-profit health care enterprise are not limited to just the poor. Highly paid workers may find the adverse health consequences of their working-class status blunted for some period of time, but they are nonetheless workers and sooner or later share the fate of that class. Moreover, a working-class family that owns stock through retirement funds, for example, nevertheless remains working class in all significant respects. Gray areas can be disputed, but the concept of working class is clear. Therefore, a key question is, "Is health and health care controlled and distributed inequitably by class?"

The concept of race as it is generally used and understood in our society is an historical and social invention with virtually no basis in science. Racial classification systems based on skin color, skull measurements, blood analysis, or purported

by David Lawrence | How class, race and the lack of adequate health care have intertwined to produce a deadly combination

level of intelligence tell us far more about the researcher's ideological assumptions than about the alleged scientific basis of the concept of race. In the American experience the historical concept of race has hinged primarily on the pragmatic issue of skin color and other related superficial aspects of appearance. In the context of health care the question then becomes, "Is health and health care distributed inequitably by (the historical concept of) race?" The answer to both questions is a most

emphatic "yes."

HISTORICAL INEQUITIES: CLASS ■ During the last century the historical development of effective public health efforts targeting low-income families was sabotaged by the emerging class of profit-oriented physicians, pharmacists, and drug manufacturers. For example, in the 1890s the New York City Health Department pioneered a way to manufacture inexpensive diphtheria serum. The serum was sold at low cost through drugstores

and given away for free when used to treat low-income families. Diphtheria fatalities throughout the area plunged as a result of this innovative and effective program. Nevertheless, local pharmaceutical manufacturers and physicians complained of "municipal socialism" because they believed their profits were threatened. Ultimately, political pressure levied by these for-profit health care interests killed the program. (Starr 1982, 185-87)

During the 1920s hundreds of baby clinics and tuberculosis clinics were established across the United States.

In most of them public health workers provided health education and conducted medical exams but found it politically expedient to refer patients to the private for-profit sector for treatment. A venereal disease clinic in Chicago bucked the tide by providing treatment to low-income patients at a fraction of the cost for which the treatment was offered in the offices of private physicians. Mentioning something about unethical practice and

BELOW: HEALTH CARE WORKERS DEMONSTRATE FOR HIGHER WAGES.



AIDS Quilt



AP photo

AIDS is leading cause of death among African Americans 18-24 in Harlem.

unfair competition, the Chicago Medical Society expelled the clinic's staff physicians. (Weiss 1997, 7-8)

During the last two or three decades the phenomenon of "tailgate medicine" has burgeoned across the United States in response to the dramatic rise in cost of prescription drugs (which not surprisingly accompanied the growth of unparalleled profits by drug manufacturers). Tailgate medicine involves the illegal sale of sometimes outdated, banned or unapproved and illegally imported prescription drugs. Often the drugs are sold "off the tailgate" on street corners and in flea markets frequented by low income families - particularly recent immigrant families and those from a variety of ethnic groups.

Enforcement of laws against the sale of these dangerous or ineffective drugs has been notoriously lax. California Assemblyman Richard Katz served on a task force in the

early 1990s established to address the tailgate medicine problem. He was told by enforcement agents from the California Department of Health Services that they had little incentive to police the tailgate drug trade since the state saves money when low-income people treat themselves rather than seeing a private physician who then bills the state. "Apparently, in the eyes of some officials, illegal, contaminated, outdated, dangerous, and ineffective 'medicines' are perfectly acceptable for low-income, disproportionately minority families." (Weiss 1997, 127)

Perhaps the most infamous racist medical event in the 20th century is the notorious Tuskegee Experi-

ment. Beginning in 1932 nearly 400 Black men with syphilis were deliberately left untreated for decades so that government researchers could monitor the long-term progression of this disease. The program was finally terminated in 1972. (Pugh 1998)

Until the 1960s Black physicians could neither admit their patients into segregated white hospitals nor practice in them. In addition white hospitals rarely located in Black communities. These problems plagued the north and the south. From the 1940s through the 1960s federal Hill-Burton funds for hospital construction and remodeling went primarily to segregated white hospitals. Civil rights struggles dating as far back as the 1930s attempted to redress these racist health care issues. However, no real progress was made until the 1960s, when stronger anti-discrimination legislation was attached to the Hill-Burton funds, and also accompanied the new Medicare and Medicaid legislation.

Discrimination in nursing homes, however, was barely affected by the civil rights legislation. As recently as the mid-1980s nursing homes were disproportionately located in states with larger white populations, and elderly whites



AP photo

were much more likely than elderly Blacks to be placed in nursing homes with such care covered by Medicaid.

During this same period studies by both Black civil rights organizations and by the federal government indicated that the health of Blacks was far below that of whites. A major government study of the period indicated that Blacks suffered 60,000 preventable deaths annually compared to the white population. Secretary of Health and Human Services under the Bush administration, Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, wrote in a 1991 article,

I contend that there is clear, demonstrable, undeniable evidence of discrimination and racism in our health care system. For example, each year since 1984, while the health status of the general population has increased, black health status has actually declined. This decline is not in one or two health categories; it is across the board. (Sullivan 1991, 2574)

The following statistics are best understood in light of Dr. Sullivan's statement:

- The infant mortality rate among Black babies is 230 percent greater than white babies. (Byrd 1992)

- A child in Chile or Malaysia is more likely to celebrate its first birthday than a Black baby born in the Mississippi Delta. (McKenzie 1994, 266)

- Asian-American children have a tuberculosis rate almost 15 times greater than whites. (Reeves 1998)

- African-Americans aged 15-24 years are 50 percent more likely to die of all causes than white Americans. (Lillie-Blanton et al. 1993, 566)

- African Americans aged 45-64 are 70 percent more likely to die of all causes than whites in the same age brackets. (Lillie-Blanton et al. 1993, 566)

- Vietnamese women are five times as likely than white women to get cervical cancer. (Reeves et. al. 1998)

- Black men in central Harlem are less likely to reach age 65 than men in Bangladesh. (McKenzie 1994, 266)

- Native Americans suffer from higher than average rates of sudden infant death syndrome and suicide. They have the highest rate of liver disease and the second highest rate of diabetes (with Blacks having the highest rate). (Reeves et. al. 1998)

- Hispanic men are nearly twice as likely as white men to die from AIDS; Hispanic women are nearly five times as likely to die from the disease as white women. (Reeves et. al. 1998)

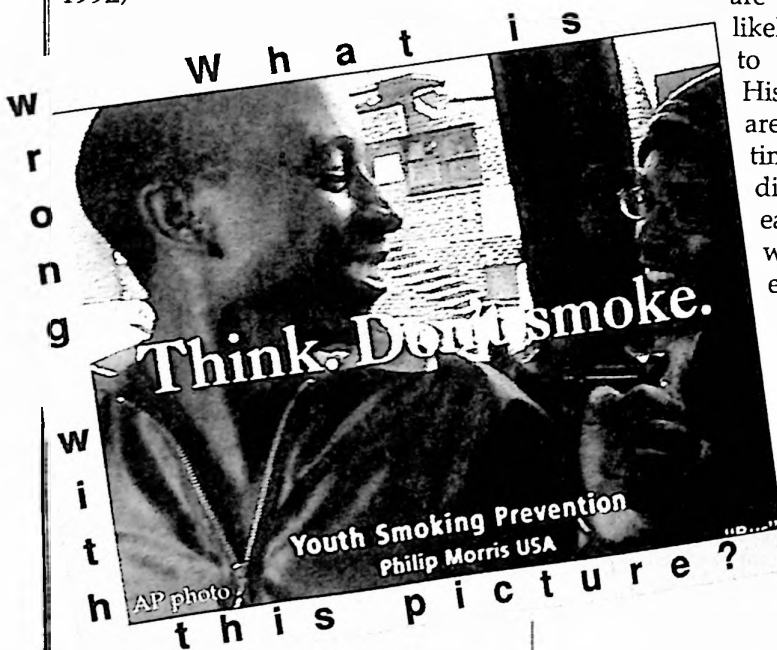
(or wealth) and health. In other words, low-income families are more likely to have a wide range of disease and disability compared to higher income families. Low-income families are also less likely to see a physician, less likely to have preventive care, and less likely to have aggressive treatments with modern equipment than higher-income families.

Low-income families are also less likely to have medical insurance. Obviously families associated with the ownership and control of all but the smallest corporations are far more likely than wage earners to be wealthy.

It would be easy to jump to the erroneous conclusion that the issue is really one of income rather than race. In other words, some might conclude that maybe Blacks and other minorities have poorer health simply because they are more likely to be low income. If they had higher income, then their health experience would mirror that of whites in the same income bracket. Increasingly the research indicates that this is simply not true. Race (in the commonly used sense) and racism play an independent role in health status and health care opportunity. In fact, "Poverty explains only about one-third of the differences," according to Jim Marks, a top official at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Schulte, Unequal Care, 1998)

For example, a study of Black and white active-duty military personnel who are all equally insured and have equal access to physicians and treatment found that Blacks were more likely to get cancer and more likely to die from it. Another study of Blacks and whites compared groups with similar incomes and levels of health insurance. Despite the theoretical equality of access, Blacks were far more likely to receive less aggressive treatment and to be treated with older, inferior medical equipment. (Schulte, Unequal Care, 1998)

Some of the treatment differ-



RACE, CLASS, AND HEALTH ■

There is a massive body of research indicating the relationship between income

AP photo



A national health service is the only solution to the crisis in health care.

ences noted above are certainly due to racist attitudes by physicians toward Black patients. However, while research in this area is scanty, the role of racism itself is finally being revealed as a probable cause of adverse health consequences. For example, a recent study by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research included interviews with 1,139 adults in several counties in Michigan.

Participants were asked about their daily experiences with discrimination. They were also asked about their overall health. The results showed that those who reported more cases of discrimination also reported poorer mental health, whether they were Black or white. For physical health, the connection existed only among Blacks. (Schulte, *Unequal Care*, 1998)

Fully 96 percent of all medical school faculties are white, so it is not surprising that little attention is paid to the health problems and related issues of minorities during the typical medical education. A comparable absence of minority researchers plagues the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a major grantor of funds for

research in the United States. "Of nearly 1,500 panel members [in 1997], 209 were Asian or East Indian, 57 were Hispanic, 26 were African American, and four were American Indian." Dr. Louis Sullivan characterizes NIH officials as "tone deaf" regarding minority health research. (Schulte, *Disparities*, 1998)

Concrete examples of the underfunding of minority research issues include:

- A tiny 1.6 percent of all of NIH's research budget was allocated for the study of minority health in the mid-90s.

- Despite the fact that one-quarter of all minority researchers in the United States are at historically Black colleges, these scientists usually receive less than 1 percent of NIH research grants.

- In 1996, a mere 18 of 666 grants from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease were awarded to minority scientists (this is the only NIH institute that even tracks such data).

THE STRUGGLE FOR SOLUTIONS ■

A democratically controlled National Health Service is the only comprehensive solution to the complex issues around minority health care. Public health care facil-

ities governed by community boards and staffed on the basis of affirmative action would bring high quality health care facilities into low-income and minority neighborhoods, and would bring highly trained minority health care workers into those facilities. In addition, public funding allocated on the basis of health care as a right would encourage the development of modern facilities and treatments in low-income and minority communities. Regional health professions schools operating on the principle of affirmative action would ensure a proportional and adequate supply of minority and low-income members in the health care professions as researchers and as faculty members.

The monopolization of health care and the centralization of its control across the nation by huge financial conglomerates like AETNA and CIGNA is an economic reality. The solution is to nationalize these for-profit multinational corporations, place them under public and democratic control, and use these assets as the basis for building the National Health Service. The current conditions require nothing less. □

SAVE OUR CITIES!

AP photo



At times we lose sight of the biggest and most obvious thing around us, like the city we live in. Perhaps because it is so big, we belittle it to feel comfortable, and this creates a problem for us, for it results in political apathy.

A Working-Class Approach to City Politics

Morris Zeitlin

Let's behold our city afresh – politically. When we consider some overlooked facts in the light of basic political principles, we will see their significance in relation to the class struggle. In our expanding cities, capitalism concentrates production forces – labor, materials, technology, and capital – to exploit our labor and maximize its profits. It has turned our cities into contrasts of ruling-class wealth and working-class poverty and, consequently, into fields of class struggle.

Heavily outnumbered, the ruling class has resorted to schemes that frustrate political opposition in cities. It has managed to confound city government by fragmenting it geographically into suburbs and functionally, by privatizing city services. It has cunningly used the mass media to sow confusion about the state of cities, instilling the belief that they cannot be managed democratically and freed of fraud, crime and injustice.

For too long this strategy has had the effect of lulling us into indifference over city affairs.

Capitalism has built some much admired cities. However, the parts of them that look prosperous and dazzling are the smallest in area. Beyond their lush centers and small swanky quarters are the dreary expanses where the working class lives; where neglect, monotony, poverty and slums stretch out for hundreds of city blocks. This contrast illustrates the enormity of the suppression by a small ruling class of the vast working-class majority.

We know this, of course, from seeing it daily, and have become immune. We come to see our city as a backdrop against which we act out our daily lives and so we take it for granted. We pay little attention to its government. Its mayors may come and go, but the city just stays there as always. We grumble over taxes, poor garbage and snow removal, water shortage in droughts, or floods in the spring, and shrug them off as something we can do nothing about.

Yet the city is our very sustaining environment. Think of what



AP photo

AP photo

would happen to us were it suddenly to suffer some crippling catastrophe, or, equally terrible, were it to fall under tyrannical rule. Unthinkable? Perhaps, but only if its people are politically alert to what's happening and are organized to deal with it.

In rhetorical nods to democracy, politicians like to say "a city's greatest asset is its people" to flatter us into buying what they sell. "Which people?" we rightly ask. All people may be born equal but they form different classes in the society in which they grow up. The working-class majority makes a living producing its goods and services. The ruling minority who doesn't produce the goods and services, profits from the labor of those who do. Both have different living needs in the city and to each the city serves different ends.

To the ruling class, the city is mainly an economic machine which it uses to combine a versatile labor force, the complex infrastructure we create and maintain, and capital to accumulate wealth by paying the least possible for the labor it buys and charging the highest price possible for what it sells. It promotes the growth of the city because the bigger and more versatile it gets and the more varied goods and services it produces and buys, the big-

ger profits they reap. To the working class, however, the city is a place to live and work. It populates cities in large numbers for their choice of jobs, homes, goods, schools, social facilities, and social contracts.

These different class purposes in the city generate different class needs and, consequently, different class politics. The needs and politics of the ruling class are well established and known. Those of the working class require definition.

FULFILLING PEOPLE'S NEEDS ■ To the millions of us who work for a living the city is not just an "economic machine." It is a living social environment. Because ruling-class politics restrict democracy to exploit our labor, our politics must necessarily strive to extend democracy to better the life of the people.

Our potential political strength is awesome. When we stop work, on holidays or on strikes, the city becomes lifeless. Even when only a small number of us lay down our tools, the city's rhythm misses a beat. Collectively, we make it the great city it is and profitable for our bosses. If they push us to the wall, we can unmake it.

But we can do this only when we all pull together. Collectively we make up the city's population. The

city needs each of us who produce its goods, perform its services, erect and maintain its buildings, generate its power, store and distribute its fuels, supply its water, remove its waste, run its homes, teach its children, heal and nurse its sick, air its news, and nurture and apply its arts and sciences. All of us together, each with our unique skill and efforts, make the city work, and in our mass numbers we find our political strength.

To do our daily work, however, the city must in turn sustain our lives and creative powers in the neighborhoods we live in. It must be planned, built and run to serve our living needs. But it isn't. It is built and run instead to serve the interests of the class ruling over us. In the city, class injustice is the most direct and visible. We learn firsthand that the class in power will grant us nothing of its own free will, that to get what we need takes political struggle. Where and when the working class stood up for its needs it forced its exploiters to yield substantial reforms. But where and when it has been politically passive, its class enemy has dealt freely with city affairs as if we did not matter. Only now and then has it done us small favors just to keep our anger in check. Until we assert our class needs and put them on the city's bargaining table, nothing will change.

Our needs in the city differ

from those of our exploiters, as do our daily lives in our homes, neighborhoods and workplaces. Many of us rise with the sun, and start the daily rush within our humble, often crowded homes: making beds, washing, fixing the family breakfast and packing lunches, getting children off to school, and going off to overcrowded buses, jam-packed trains, or congested highways. We arrive at our workplaces unnerved and shaky and are at once swept into the driven pace of our jobs. We repeat this mad dance in reverse in the evening rush hours. To do our daily work at a sane human pace we need spacious and cheerful low-rent homes in neighborhoods, with well-staffed facilities for child and invalid care, after-school and study facilities, and easy access to shopping for food and household goods and services. We need schools and nurseries close to our homes and workplaces. Such neighborhoods should be close to similarly well-appointed work districts, accessed by fast and convenient public transportation.

At work we deal with the stressful demands of our jobs,

“Our exploiters force us to defend ourselves on two fronts – by means of unions, for higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions at the point of production, and by means of politics, to cut living costs and improve living conditions at the point of consumption. *Political struggle is, in effect, economic struggle by other means.*”

many of us in poorly kept workplaces or unsafe environments. We need strictly enforced public-health rules and labor-safety laws protecting us from bodily harm and managerial abuse.

The transportation system our city provides is designed mainly to take us to work and shopping places at the least possible cost, exposing us to crush, crawl and accidents. We need the safe, rapid, and comfortable public transportation that modern technology makes possible.

To get, and keep, a job in the city’s high-tech production and services, and to keep up with social changes in a complex society, we need access to good affordable schools, colleges and universities.

We need well-staffed patient-friendly health-care services in clinics and hospitals close to our homes.

We need all these things and more.

In all justice, we who create the wealth in our cities should have our living needs fully met with the wealth we create. But the ruling class can’t abide by what is just to us or even by its own long-term interests. For its own good, it should let us consume more of what we produce, lest our underconsumption lead to overproduction upsetting the balance of supply and demand on which its economic order depends. But driven by blind competition to maximize profits it responds mainly to immediate necessities, gets into conflicts with the people and survives by the use of might.

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS ■

Our class history has made two things clear: one, that in the exploitation of labor, economics and politics are closely related. Underpayment for our labor at the point of production is matched by overpayment for the goods and services we

must buy at the point of consumption. Thus, our exploiters force us to defend ourselves on two fronts – by means of unions, for higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions at the point of production, and by means of politics, to cut living costs and improve living conditions at the point of consumption. Political struggle is, in effect, economic struggle by other means. And we cannot trust established politicians to defend us. When they need our votes they are full of promises, but the most we’ve ever gotten from them is pretended sympathy and token favors. In short, politically unarmed, we are like being without a union at the point of production.

Among many working-class people, “politics” is an ugly word. It has come to mean “playing politics” and “dirty politics” – the intrigues and fraud typical of ruling-class politicians, covered up in public with pompous posturing and doubletalk. The conduct of ruling-class politicians aside, however, politics is the art and science of government and the use of political principle and methods in the conduct of political affairs. In our class-divided society that comes to political struggle between social classes in defense of their respective political interests.

“Politics” has been aptly called “the art of the possible” a means to reach the achievable. An oppressed people can use politics as a lever to pry at what cracks may appear in the political armor of the ruling class. Capitalism’s inner contradictions inevitably cause such cracks to appear in its political structure because, as Michael Parenti pointed out, the ruling class rules

not without restraints, not absolutely. It must act affirmatively on behalf of the public interests some of the time... [it] must maintain democratic appearances and to do so [it] must... occasionally give in to popular demand...

It must provide some of the ser-

vices essential to a specialized working people in a city of an economically complex society. To the ruling class, however, providing public services is an annoying inconvenience. This brakes its drive to maximize profits and raises political expectations in the class it keeps down. It therefore tends to provide public services at the lowest possible level, creating conflicts in the city with the class it exploits. This opens areas of political vulnerability the working class can turn to its political advantage.

COALITION AND POLITICAL POWER ■

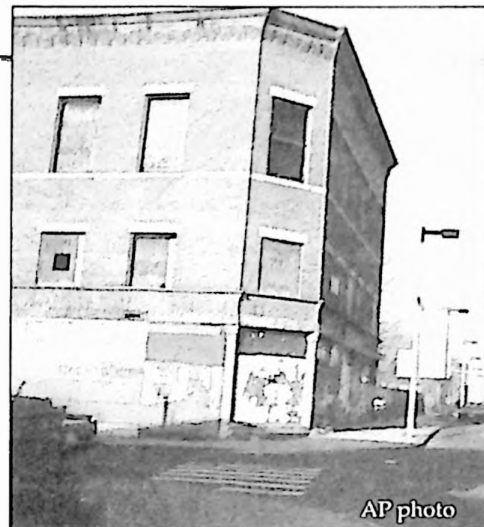
To improve the health and dignity of our city living and working places, we must enter city politics and enter it fighting – organizing, demanding and forcing the ruling class to cede to us what is ours by right.

Launching regular working-class city politics should be easy, for we have long-developed islands of political force in the city. It resides in our local unions, neighborhood groups, and community organizations. Now and then we've gotten together to fight militantly around some special grievances. The gains won by such politics have been due largely to our great strength of numbers – always a silent warning to political bosses that, unless they concede, the small show of political force can bring on a much bigger blow.

Our mass numbers and our wins in grassroots politics hint at the great potential we have in organized city politics. We need to build our own permanent political organization to regularly expose the injustices committed against us that the upper class mostly hides from public view. How, for example, it takes public lands and infrastructure, misuses public funds, and misallots city services. Organized, we can fight to guard our interests with the force of our political might. Organized, we would debunk the rhetoric of glib politicians, reveal the real causes of city

problems, and build confidence in the people's own political wisdom and ability to rule.

From the start, our city politics must build and maintain a coalition of working-class groups – from local unions, neighborhood councils, national and special-concern communities, churches, to sport and social clubs – any and all people wronged by the ruling class' arbitrary rule over the city's life and resources. The coalition should build a democratic struc-



ture for consultation, decision, and action, clearly stating its purpose to champion the interests of the working class and all oppressed people. Its politicians must be strictly accountable to the people they represent.

After some period of preliminary formation, the coalition might form a local labor party. But the party may not long remain purely local, for cities are not islands unto themselves; they are inseparable parts of their regions and nation. Indeed, many seemingly local problems stem from economic and political actions in higher seats of power. Labor parties may begin in cities but must logically unite into state parties and a national labor party.

Moreover, with growing global exploitation of labor by transnational corporations (TNCs) local class struggles take on a global significance. The giant TNCs try to force cities to adopt anti-labor policies on pain of moving their capital and jobs to "friendlier" places if

they don't, thus setting cities against one another. Their threats, however, are largely bluff. They are less free to move than they pretend, for their operations depend heavily on the huge complex infrastructure and multi-skilled labor force of the cities they settle in. They must, therefore, come to terms with their politically organized people. Solidarity between world sister cities would take on a practical political meaning, as they could exchange local data about the operations and tactics of TNCs.

In sum, the working-class struggle to defeat capitalism and found a socialist society calls for political organization on the local, regional, national and global levels. That requires raising generations of able and dedicated political fighters and leaders. In our urbanized world, they must emerge out of working-class grass roots in cities, reared in political struggle on their home grounds to dream noble ideals and be able to organize, teach, plan, manage, and lead. □

my big brother

Hunting class and family loyalties
in a small industrial town

Phillip Bonosky

The canoe sprang a leak and we sank in two feet of water that immediately froze our bones. My brother, George, cursed a blue streak and threw his paddle away in disgust and got out and waded ashore, not caring what happened to the canoe or to me.

He was boiling mad when I joined him on shore, and blamed me for not caulking the canoe the day before as I would have in the past, and should have now, too, except that I had had other things on my mind. And so had he. Irene had told him that she was leaving him ("Leaving" meant moving cross-town to stay with one of her five sisters). But there was more to it than that, of course. The plant had closed down, leaving everyone high and dry, and had moved south. None of the strikers had been asked to join it down south except those that had stayed loyal. Which meant George. He'd been promised a job as foreman (a promotion), teaching them North Carolinians how to punch out pots and pans. Go South? Leave home? Not for Irene, no siree, bob! Nor me.

George was 15 when I was born and the first thing I ever saw was his big hulk of a body and his moon face hanging over me. My old man was around somewhere in the background blocked by George, who was always in front of me, and that was perfectly fine with me, because, unless you've got an older brother, you've never understood the OK feeling you get when you tell that big-assed bully at school that if he touches you just once more - just



Rick Stinson



did was say he, Georgie, ought to be more careful with matches. Just gave in! I felt something like awe for George then – I mean, real devotion.

All George said to me after that was – well, he swore a bit, and I even felt he was in a way let down – when you beat your old man in anything you not only feel like the cock of the walk, but let down too – and as for my old man, well, he sort of faded into the furniture and George took over. Not just like that, of course. Except suddenly I realized my mother was asking George about this and that, and in the morning first thing George tapped the barometer hanging outside the door and said, “gonna rain” or “gonna shine”, and my old man would then do the same, and if he said anything different, we believed George. Then, I forget when it happened, but one supper do you know what? He – my old man – passed the first plate to George, and George took it and loaded it up with double of everything and we took what he left us.

So what? Life is life. George was my big brother, and for a long while he kept getting bigger and I seemed to stay the same size. He despised me so much for being so ineptly alive that I used to look up at him with such dog-like adoration – such sympathy for him having to put up with a little runt like me. How really sorry I used to feel for him – really, deep and true. I used to have a dream when I’d wake up in the morning and hear him say – in my dream – “Let’s rattle.” And I’d rattle him with our elbows on the table, he’d grip my hand in his and squeeze it like squeezing mud, and I’d get him down one time in three. Even in my dream I knew where my limit was. And I’d hear him say, You’ll be a man before your mother, runt. And I had to live on that! He’d look at me – in my dream – and you know what? I’d change my dream fast and go on sleeping otherwise for a good half-hour

... Still, when I was no higher than that – knee-high, like they say, to a grasshopper – if I fell into a wad of wet paper I’d probably drown – and wobbled on my rubbery legs, I stuck to him like a leech, and wherever he went I’d go, too. I meant for him to earn his despising me. But even though I had this deep respect for him, nothing unpeeled me from his shadow wherever he went, including kicks, rocks, blows, curses, bribes, or threats of inch-by-inch mayhem. What did I care? I wanted to go where my big brother went, sure that where he went was the best place in the world to go. I got a kick out of hearing him growl: “You wanna me tear your arm off by the roots and beat you with the bloody stump?” Believe me, a five-year-old runt hanging on behind you, and you’re 20, can make your bones ache: George invented curses I never heard anybody else use, nobody’d have the nerve, nobody’d have to. And it made me feel proud sometimes to see how close I could drive him to insanity, how close he came to murder without letting him actually do it – knock my brains out, you see. I think he didn’t knock my brains out because deep down he saw his fate in me, felt a sort of predestination (good word!), even a sort of love, if you catch my meaning. Something like what you feel after going through a hurricane, a war, and earthquake, barbed wire – what’s left after that, and you can still endure to look at it, well, that’s what he must have felt about me. Picking up that roasted baseball out of the ashes of your burnt-down house and suddenly bawling like you’d never bawled before.

He used to get up Saturdays while I was still having my forbidden dream, and slip out of the house without, he thought, waking me, and start downtown only to look back and see me trailing him – see me, then, squat down and pretend I was counting ants. I didn’t bother washing or do anything unessential like that, and, of course, I didn’t shave yet, and I peed in a hurry right there in the alley, and all I did was drop into my pants and

once more –

you were going to tell your big brother on him!

Usually that did it. So George was real family to me – that is, he was law, the police, even the fire department. For he put out at least three serious and a half-dozen not so serious fires I’d set, a couple accidentally, one of them our old man’s rustbucket of a Chevy he’d nursed along for 15 years. And if your brother tells your old man that it was his fault, and you know of course that it was your fault, it takes a lot of living and being on the receiving end of things before you feel you’ve evened life up a little. It wasn’t that he was all that generous, or even cared too much for me. It just appealed to his nature to test his powers, and whom do you test your powers first against except your own family? He’d put it up to the old man that he’d set his car on fire, see what the old man would do about it. I learned a lot then. My old man knew he was lying, but took one look at George who was now 26, a foot taller than my old man, and all my old man

stick my shirt with no buttons around my neck, and while he was still tip-toeing past the door thinking I was dreaming sweet kid dreams I was already outside hunched under a bush. Saturdays were precious to him, of course. It was his day off from work at McCullough's Manufactory, and Sundays you sort of closed in on everything interesting and good and just toughed it out till Sunday went. Saturdays he'd set out to catch the floating crap game, for by this time he loved to gamble, and the game had to float because they didn't want to pay off the cops, who were so greedy they asked for a cut from every pot. (First time I voted I voted against our mayor but the guy that took his place changed nothing – just like George said would happen.)

Well, all that educated me and expanded my vocabulary with words not to be found in our school dictionary. It also supplied me every Saturday with stories for confession that used to expand the pupils of Father Gurney's eyes when he heard them.

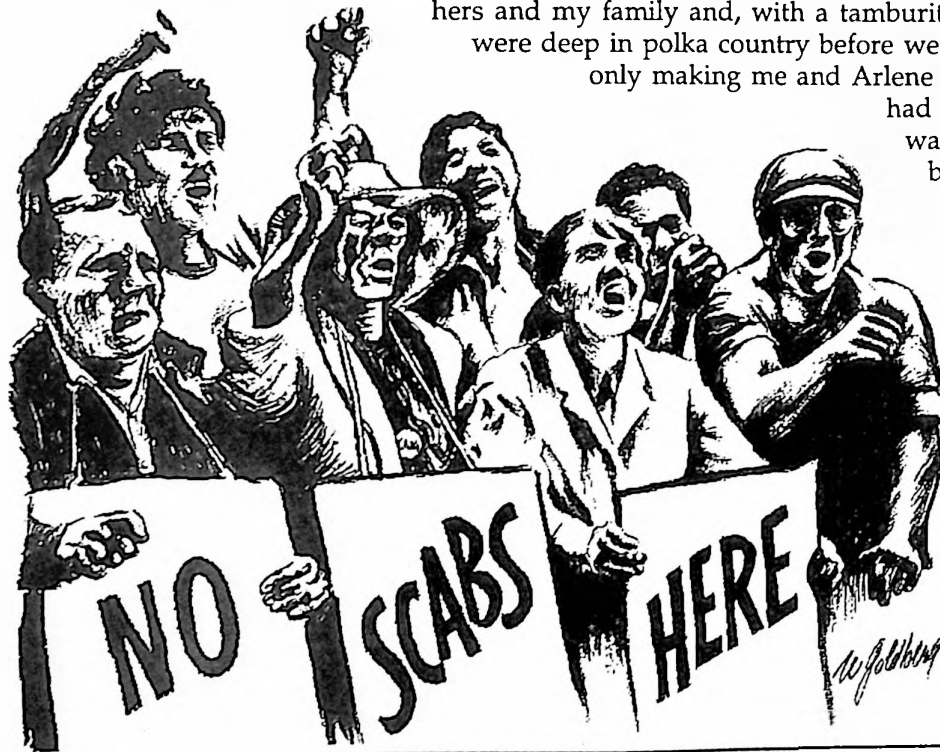
So you see that was me and that was my big brother George. I thought there was nothing George couldn't do if he wanted to. Some people go around. George went right through. You know, when he fell in love with Irene, I think it was – I hate to say it, but I got to – to get away from – me. Nobody in his right mind would have married her, unless he was desperate, and the only thing I could see would make my big brother desperate was me. And do you know what? I'd come over their house for supper – then dinner, too, and sometimes I'd be there for breakfast – until finally she told him that it was either me or her, and do you know what? I was shocked when he chose her.

The first time George ever took me hunting – I came once hidden in the trunk mixed into the gear, and he told me he was going to send me out into the woods with an 8-pointer moose's antlers tied to my head, so nobody would know to blame him when I showed up, a prime trophy, on somebody's living room wall (but he was only joshing me). So I stayed. He showed me how to load a rifle, what shells, how to keep it clean, and most important, how to keep it safety-locked. That was important. George, who wasn't afraid of anything, was afraid of weakness, and he put down carelessness as weakness. And looked at me. And I clicked the safety catch on and he nodded his head with partial satisfaction. (I never got a moose or a deer or a bear or even a rabbit. Some are born hunters. Some are born rabbits.) Meanwhile, I had my own growing up to do, and I did it the way most of the guys in our town did.

When Arlene told me she was three months late I panicked. Not that I knew too much about the inner workings of female biology but all us guys lived in holy fear of them words "I'm three months late." I was due out of high school that June and being a father at 19 hadn't been in my plans. We talked it over, Arlene and me, and figured maybe we could run off to Gretna Green and get hitched without anybody's knowing. Or we could get rid of it. Except for both one and two we needed money – money quick and plenty. That was when I made my mistake – one of my mistakes. I asked my big brother to lend me the money and let me borrow his car for an afternoon, and it didn't take too much pumping to get the facts out of me.

Before I could finish telling him, he had us before a priest, surrounded by hers and my family and, with a tamburitza orchestra going full blast, we were deep in polka country before we knew it. George footed the bills, only making me and Arlene promise to name it George (they had no kids). To jump ahead a little, it was born two days after my 19th birthday and was a girl and we named her Georgina. You could see George didn't care for that but he had to settle for it. Sorry, George. By the way, our town's the kind they made that old joke about – its population never varies because every time a baby's born some guy leaves town.

Ha-ha. I didn't leave town. I was stuck. Arlene and I moved in with my old man who let us have the two upstairs rooms rent-free. Supper was free, too. So was breakfast and lunch... So



that's' how I started married life, a first-class sponger...

George came to the rescue. Yeah, the rescue. He drove up to the house one morning and said to me: "Pile in." I didn't ask him why or where we were going. I piled in - as directed. We went straight downtown to McCullough's Manufacturing Company and George marched me straight into the Personnel Office and said: "Jeff, this here's my kid brother. See the resemblance in them squinty eyes? He was the runt of the litter and my old man didn't have the heart to give him to the Salvation Army, so he's hung around and needs a job like a regular human being. Got something you think Squinty Eyes can do?" (I forgot to say I had already started wearing glasses.) The old geezer - he was maybe 50 - took off this specs and said: "You sure you want to work here?"

Funny question. I didn't get it then. And didn't have a chance to ask it for George barked out: "Needs a job! The kid's going to be a father any minute now! He can't feed himself, how you expect him to feed a baby and his Mom?" (It was still "his" in his mind).

So I was hired. They put me in Department "D" where they stamped out aluminum pots and pans on a drop-Forge. There wasn't much to it. Once you learned to coordinate your hand with your foot, so that you stamped out the aluminum pot and not your hand, that was all there was to it. I got the hang of it in one afternoon. In three days I was turning out as many pots and pans as anybody else on the floor, which meant old-timers too.

George, who worked in the shipping department as a "pusher" (who is just that - a "pusher", hoping to become foreman), came over to me at lunch break and gave me half his sandwiches that first day because I'd forgotten to pack any and there was no cafeteria in the works, and anyhow we only had 20 minutes and asked me how I was doing. And I told him, it was a lead-pipe cinch, but I hoped I wasn't holed up here for too long. At least till you're 65," he said.

Not me! Nosiree, bob, not me!

Then I started learning some of the facts of life - smart too late, maybe. Anyhow, when I asked him why only me and a few others were working on the floor, and what had happened to the other guys, he said: "What other guys?"

"Why," I said, a little confused, "The other guys. The other guys who worked here?"

"Who worked here," George picked up. "Worked here. But they don't work here no more."

"Well, then, where did they go?" (Don't laugh: at 18 I was busy getting Arlene pregnant and not thinking about wages and working conditions). "Oh," the light went on in my brain, "they're on strike?"

"Strike?" George said. "Them bozos think they're on strike. But that's what they think. They've been fired. They don't work here anymore. How can you go on strike it if you don't work here anymore?"

I chewed that over. The darkness where my brain was lit up again for a second, and looking at George like I'd discovered America, I said: "So I'm a scab?"

"What the hell you talking about?" he said. "What you are is a teen-aged father and a working man rolled into one. You're free and easy days are all over!" He gave me a friendly punch on the shoulder. "Thank your lucky stars you got a big brother who's got clout enough to get you - who don't know up from down - a grown man's job. No more delivering groceries for Sandy's Grocery, or delivering papers for kid's wages! You're in the big leagues now, Bubby. Hitch up your socks and look around you."

I did. I looked around me and noticed that every second forge wasn't working and that the aluminum strips were piling up and though George wasn't my pusher, still he kept nudging me to speed it up - turn 'em out faster.

What I'd learned bothered me an awful lot. We come from a union family from way back - my grandfather helped set up the union when it could cost you your job forever - you could be black-listed for life, and you just had to leave - leave for parts unknown, so unknown you hoped the blacklist didn't reach, which was far, far away from home! Grandpap was blacklisted and that made life a little stickier for my Dad and Mom.. But, like they say, we prevailed. But George knew all that - knew all that! Meanwhile, while I was looking around, Adele kept getting bigger and bigger. She'd accumulated a cradle, a warehouse of diapers, a bassinet, even a high chair, all new; she said she didn't want anybody's hand-me-downs, cause the baby was no hand-me-down...

And that takes money. That's when my headaches began. I ate aspirin like you eat popcorn. And though it was tough enough at home - though my old man didn't say a word, we lived rent-free - my working environment, like they say, didn't improve any. For instance, when I dropped into Ed's Ye Olde Beer and Ale House for a pick-me-up after work, will you believe me when I tell you that all - let me repeat: all - the guys left their drinks undrunk on the bar or table and just left - and Ed said to me later he didn't hold it against me personally but he'd prefer it as a favor to him if I didn't re-visit this place because my being there was bad for business.

You don't have to hit me over the head with a sledge hammer for me to take a hint! When George came to pick me up next morning it was all I could do to look at him - to look my big brother in the face. I told him to go on without me, I had some last-minute chores I had to do for Arlene. Instead, I moseyed down to the union local hall and tried to get the girl in the office there to issue me a card but she said it could cost her her job with the

union to give me a card. "Look," she said to me like she was talking to a three-year-old, "I was told not to issue cards to scabs." She wanted sympathy from me. "You understand, don't you?"

Yes and no. I did and didn't understand. I did tell her though that I didn't want her to put her job in jeopardy, and started downtown to work just in time to see why the union hadn't put up a picket line. Some of the guys did line up, complete with signs and the American flag, but hardly had they done that when the cops were on them. It was sickening to see Ralph McCabe, who I went to school with, being one of them, ready to pound in the head of his one-time buddies. That's what happens in a small town,, which is also a company town, when the cops could also be your relatives.

When I got my first paycheck I noticed it fell pretty short of what I had expected to get. When I asked George about it, he explained the amount was correct: I was getting beginner's wages. Beginners: It had taken me two or three days to get the hang of working those out-of-date machines and in a week I was turning out as many, or even more, pots as the average 'til one old-timer took me aside and told me to slow down, pace myself; if I put out X number of pots a day more than he did, then the boss expected him to catch up with me - and if he did that, and a bit more, then it would be my turn to catch up with him! Now, it seems to me my big brother George should have put me wise. He should also have told me that the reason so many first-time guys were working was simple: they were being paid beginner's wages, which meant that the Company was paying half in wages what it would have had to pay if it had a normal working crew.. And here I thought somebody had to have a gun to rob you!

That's what the union had been beefing about. Everything makes sense once you look into it. Once I got this sorted out I laid it on George, and he took me aside and said to me that I'd been talking to the wrong people. Not all the older guys were being fired and replaced by young guys just out of school: was he fired, and here he was rounding out is 11th year. "Don't get your balls in an uproar," he advised me. "When the time comes I'll see to it that you'll always get your work slip. Show a little loyalty to the company," he said. "It won't go unnoticed. Don't forget: your big brother George's in charge, and they know it at the front office." He looked me in the eye and said: "You gotta choose who you're gonna line up with in life, the winners or the losers." He jerked his head toward the outside. "Them bozos down at that dimestore union are yesterday's news: They'll go around bare-assed looking for a job, and there just won't be no job that will look for them. Once you're fired from McCulough's you stay fired."

That much was the truth, and I knew it. It was like an icicle was stuck right through my heart! But all I could do was yell at Arlene that we didn't need two bassinets! She'd have to send one of them back!

And then it crashed. I can't put it any other way: it crashed. I went to work that morning like every other morning, only to find the gate closed, padlocked, and on it a sign with just that one work: Closed.

The Company had just skipped town - that is, the front office. They left everything else behind just as it was, and later I heard they got a big tax write-off for the loss of all that machinery that was already out-of-date and should have been junked years ago.

I went looking for George. He hadn't shown up that morning to drive me to work. I had to take the bus. After visiting a half dozen low-down dives, I found him finally in a little joint down on Mellon Avenue sitting in front of a glass of beer like it was a holy relic or something he was praying to. Only his lips didn't move.

"You knew it was coming, didn't you?" I said to him right off. "You son-of-a-bitch you knew they were planning to skip town and leave us all high and dry. Since you got such a 'in' with the front office they musta told you what to expect."

He didn't answer.

"What deal did you cut with them?" I asked, suddenly figuring it out.

Definitions

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¹scab/'skab/n [ME.of Scand origin: akin to OSw skabbr scab:akin to OE sceabb scab, L scabié mange, scabere to scratch - more at shave] (13c) 1: scabie of domestic animals 2: a crust of hardened blood and serum in a wound 3a a contemptible person b (1) one who refuses to join a labor union (2) a union member who refuses to strike or returns to work before a strike has ended (3): a worker who accepts employment or replaces a worker during a strike. (4): any of various bacterial or fungus diseases of plants(5) [colloquial] pimple on the ass of the working class.

He didn't answer. Rather, I didn't wait for his answer. I learned from his wife later that he was going to go South where they'd promised him a job as foreman in the new works they'd opened up somewhere in one of the Carolinas, in an open-shop state, of course, where the rednecks were still living in the dark ages when to join a union meant you'd

made a pact with the devil.

We all got a letter from the Company that week in which they invited us to come down South where they'd kept our jobs for us. They explained the move south was due to the "ingratitude" of the workers, of the "self-seeking" ambitions of the union leaders, of the well-known fact, which the FBI had dug up for them, the Communists had taken over the national union. No mention of taxes. It seems not only weren't they going to pay any taxes in the new home, the state would pay them to set up their new works! They were paid for closing down the old works and paid for starting up the new works. My God, how could you knock it?

But George did run into trouble. Irene just flat-out refused to go. Nothing was going to pull her away from her folks and her friends, her knitting circle, bingo at St. Catherine's every Wednesday evening, her novenas and big and low masses, the hurry-up of marriages of her nephews and nieces, and most of all, the cemetery where her folks were buried and where she brought flowers every Easter, and tended herself, keeping their grave neat.

They had a big fight. In his marriage George had been Number One Boss, and as long as he let Irene do what she wanted to do – attend all the masses in the calendar, play bingo, take care of her folks' grave, etc. – she let him go on thinking he was Number One. He held it against her that she never produced a son and heir for him. It never crossed his mind that it might have been his fault. To think that way undercut his image of being the Strong Man of the Appalachias. When Irene actually packed a suitcase and moved in to live with her sister (she had about four or five of them and could have her choice), it surprised him a lot, and when she told him she'd sic the cops on him if he came and bothered her, he looked like he'd crossed the border into No Man's Land. Why, if he'd forgotten to get her something for her birthday it could reduce her to tears – and now this! He looked at her as if she'd sprouted two heads!

And now me. I have to admit that when he ordered me to get out the canoe and come along with him up the lake to get him a deer, I did just as he ordered. After all, I was still his little brother, and still afraid. But not now of him but for him. . One thing about take-charge guys you ought to know, and I had the information free of charge, on the cuff. Now George had to become used to telling just about everybody to go and expecting to see them go, and to come, and see them running to come. He was murderous with everybody below him. But I noticed he held his hat in his hand when he walked into the front office. That's when I started getting worried for him. I wasn't sure he could take getting there, telling someone to go get him coffee and that someone telling him to go to hell instead. I had to be his little brother to the end. I just didn't have the moxie.

I dragged the canoe off the rocks and then started hustling up a fire. I dug a can of beans out of our pack which thank God was waterproof, and cooked them over the fire. George just sat there brooding on the other side of the fire with the smoke getting into his face but not paying any mind. He was cursing to himself in what sounded like a foreign language – he'd picked up a working vocabulary of insults and dirty words in Polish at work – and he kept throwing little rocks at the burning wood, making a hit once in a while and flaring up some sparks. Every time he hit he nodded as if that had decided something for him.

It's tough going through a divorce even with a woman you can't stand. His troubles often made me forget my troubles. I really felt for him, and wanted to make him feel as comfortable as possible out here in the woods which were so empty. As far as I could see, I couldn't figure where you'd find a deer, and in any case I was pretty sure getting a deer wasn't really high on George's list. We had landed at this part of the lake where you looked around and asked yourself, what the hell am I doing here? Why'd I leave my TV to freeze of my diddly-do? Why didn't I have the guts to tell my big brother I wasn't his little brother anymore? Once I saw up close what had made him salute, well, I decided to take the other way. But I couldn't just outright say so...

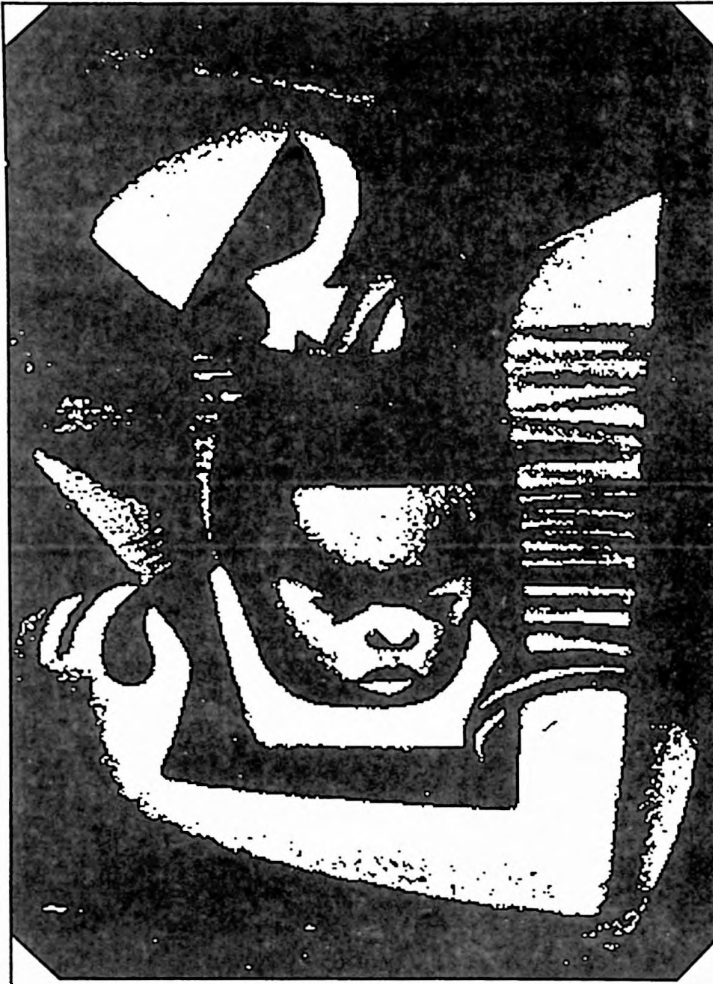
We had a couple of hours before dark, and George got his shotgun (don't ask me to make out the gauge, I just don't know), broke it open, squinted inside, cleaned it with an oiler's rag, broke open a box of shells, and once the warm beans were inside him – and we'd knocked off a bottle of beer apiece – he got my gun, cleaned it, and announced: "Let's get us a 6-pointer..."

Why not a 10? Why not a 4? And where? You looked down into the woods and you shivered. There was nothing good down there! It looked like one of those places where it didn't matter who you were, what you thought you were, how rich or poor you were, you had this lousy feeling as though you'd been led not only to the end of the world but to the end of everybody's life, of the idea of life itself. That's when you wished you'd been a good boy and gone to church more often!

At no time did we ever mention the company, the lock-out, Irene or Arlene, or his going down South. We'd just come this cold, cold November to see if we could snag a deer – any pointer or no pointer as far as I was concerned. In addition, it was getting prematurely dark. I stood in heavy need of rescue.

"How about – " I began.

"No!" he exploded and slipped in two shells and locked them in. He did the same for my gun, only saying: "Be sure to keep the safety catch on." The laugh that came out of him then was flat and empty, as he ended his sentence, " – or you'll shoot yourself in the balls."



No, I said to myself, no I won't! I took the gun and it felt hot in my hands. Suddenly, feeling that it was hot, I came alive and jumped up and ran after my big brother, and the first log I came to I tripped over and the gun went off. I saw the hole open up and immediately fill up with blood and become spongy. At first he only turned and looked at me and said it was nothing but a flesh wound, and I hadn't listened to him about the safety catch. That's a bad mark against me, he said. But then I'd seen a piece of sharp white bone stick out, and I tell you, that was not a flesh wound. He couldn't take more than a couple steps and was bleeding bad – it was awful to see how the blood came rushing out like it was out of school or something – free. I got into a panic. What do I know about first-aid? I never thought George would ever need first-aid from me. George's face suddenly went ash white, he'd sat himself down with his back against a tree, and now he closed his eyes, and suddenly I thought: he's going to let himself bleed to death because it's the easiest way to go! No messy divorce, no finding out about me and Arlene, no admitting I wasn't his little brother anymore. He sat there and bled.

I tore off my coat, then my shirt, and got to my T-shirt and tore that into bits, and my bare body felt as hot as a stove. I mean I could feel how hot it was! My T-shirt had on it: "Kiss me quick!" – something sappy Arlene hated, too. But I tore it into pieces and started trying to tie up his wound – but that wasn't easy to do. I finally had to take his shoe off, roll up his pants leg and winter underwear, suddenly seeing his snow-white skin, you could see the blue vein in it, then his hairy calf and finally

the wound in his thigh: I got sick, but told myself I'd have to vomit later, I had to tend to it now, and I shoved bits of my T-shirt into the wound, (I'm caulking the canoe, I heard myself saying like a nut), until I thought I stopped some of it; then I wound what I had left around his thigh – muscular, hard as a rock, big – and stepped away from him like a painter does to look at his painting – to see if I was doing it right – and noticed his eyes were open and he was sort of laughing at me. Laughing as if I was a sap!

But, you know, I was just his little brother who had grown up, because after the blood stopped, or seemed to stop, I discussed what to do with him, and since I couldn't carry him (and he wouldn't have let me), not wanting to leave him here till I got help, all I had left was to haul the canoe clear out of the water and start stuffing the cracks with whatever I could – moss, bits of my T-shirt, paper – and hope that with my one paddle I could make it back down lake to home, which was a good 20 miles. All the time I was working he sat there against a tree, sometimes his eyes closing, sometimes opening, and when they opened they looked at me as if I was some strange beast. Finally he said "I didn't think you had it in you."

I managed to float the canoe and went over to him.

"Get up." I said.

He didn't move.

"You can't stay like that, you'll either bleed to death or freeze to death."

"I didn't think a pisswilly like you had the guts." He said. "Why didn't you do it in the front, why did you do it in the back?"

"Get up, you son-of-a-bitch," I yelled. "You think you're going to conk out on me? That's too easy. I'll get you back if I have to drag you!"

"You should have angled it a bit higher," he said, as though all that bothered him was still my clumsiness.

I took a step toward him and suddenly I was looking into the end of a shotgun. I felt a punch in my stomach as though I'd got the full load – and I moved back. It was a stand-off. He held the gun across his lap and kept the barrel pointed at me. Once I said to him: "You shoulda told me the Company was cheating me. I'm your brother, you shoulda told me!"

"I shoulda told you a lot of things," he said.

"Yeah," I said, "you shoulda."

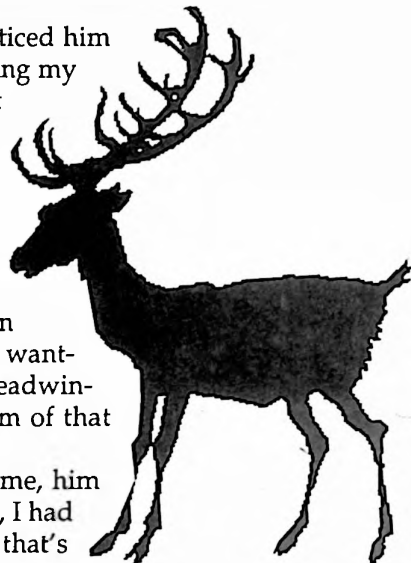
That ended our conversation for a while. It got colder. I got colder. But I noticed him winking in and out, losing consciousness for a second or two. And, finally, closing my eyes, I yelled: "Here goes!" and fell on him, grabbing the gun and getting it away from him. By this time he was too weak to resist, and I half-dragged, half-lifted him over to the canoe and piled him in.

George didn't go South next day. When Irene heard the news she came rushing over in the grip of six kinds of hysteria. In a couple of days he could hobble around. When he got a little better he found he couldn't get a job anywhere and hitched up with the Syndicate writing numbers, which kept him mostly on the phone. When the State went into the gambling business of its own that wrecked the Syndicate, and George had to spend days going through the want-ads while his wife got herself a job and became what they used to call the "breadwinner" of the family. And there wasn't a day went by that she didn't remind him of that fact.

Mostly he sits before the TV, and sometimes the three of us sit together - me, him and a bottle of beer. Since the works shut down and the company skipped town, I had to learn a new trade - or whatever. My uncle taught me how to lay bricks. And that's what I do - lay bricks. I build stone fences, chimneys, fancy stone fireplaces, walls, sidewalks, and I even tried my hand at chiseling angels to see if I could become stone-cutter, make head stones for cemeteries, which pay a lot.

I sometimes catch him studying me the same way he did that cold afternoon in the woods that certain November. Sometimes a look comes over his face as if a light had gone on and he'd suddenly figured it all out. Then the look would go and the old look would come back - the one with the big question mark in it: Did my little brother do it on purpose? That's what my big brother mostly thinks about these days.

And me? I've reached the point where I can almost get it so that both the wings on my angels look right - fly you to heaven, you might say. I sell them pretty cheap, considering. Wanna order one?



continued from page 2

Today's propaganda rationale for the aggression is a "humanitarian response to killing and suffering." In this case, President Clinton says it is to stop the "ethnic cleansing" and civil war when the reality is that U.S. imperialism launches an attack whenever and wherever corporate and military interests dictate. Far from ending the atrocities and genocide, the bombing intensifies the killing.

There can never be such a thing as "humanitarian bombing." The real aim is to bring in an occupying army on the soil of a sovereign country.

It is the "one-world superpower" and "new-world order" policy of U.S. imperialism in its drive to create havoc, fuel the flames of civil strife and nationalist antagonisms, set citizen against citizen, family against family and to divide coun-

tries in order to dominate, control and plunder for profits. It brings on needless death of innocent people and the destruction of homes and whole villages. First it was Macedonia, then Croatia, then Bosnia, then Slovenia and now Kosovo.

Each of these intensifies the crisis of refugees and people being forced to struggle to survive in war conditions. Each of these has brought on atrocities and ethnic cleansing by extremist nationalist forces. Each of these heightens the danger of a wider war in Europe.

The divide and conquer policy in Yugoslavia is the same racist policy used by the U.S. monopoly corporations to split the unity of the American people. Their plunder for profit aggression has already cost the American people over \$1 billion, just as their racism at home has netted them uncountable billions in superprofits.

The Communist Party USA calls for

- An immediate end to the bombing of Yugoslavia by NATO, led by U.S. imperialism.

- No unilateral introduction of NATO troops on the soil of the sovereign state of Yugoslavia.

- Peaceful settlement of all matters under the auspices of the United Nations.

- Spend our tax dollars for U.S. children, not to bomb Yugoslavian children.

- Stop the supply of arms to the KLA waging civil war in Kosovo.

- Dissolve NATO.

The Communist Party USA calls on all people to call on the White House and Congress to stop the bombing and put an end to ultimatum diplomacy.

Poetry Notebook

The Wind to the Stones

A flower planted on the sands
Doesn't bloom, even on a bright spring day.
Bamboo rustles
Because the wind blows.
Wailing reeds flail their hands about,
this too because the wind rages on.
Scree rolls and causes rockslides
Unable to sustain its weight in the wind.
We want to live quietly.
Knowing too well what comes around, that there will be nothing
But the stigma of lay-offs, hunger, beatings, and a life behind bars,
Who will there be to stand and speak out?
Though you say to us
We cause the labor problems,
Like the stones, like the grass, we want to live quietly.
Only, we must go on spreading the desiccated roots
From the sands, on toward the fertile soils.
On spring days, we too want to be fragrant like the
humble flowers.
the wind drives us on ruthlessly
So we are compelled to cry out,
We are forced to start rockslides,
Because we cannot endure it any longer.

- Pak Nohae

Pak Nohae is a 40-year old South Korean steel worker and poet. He is in prison serving a life sentence for his political activity and convictions.





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In the factory yard
pleasant spring sunlight falls,
forsythia-blossom snowflakes dance
over the vibrant holiday faces of
children.

With chimerical longing
small yellow hands
fly on the skirts of the blossom wind,
yet I yearn more and more and since I yearn
my whole body shakes
then a lone teardrop falls.

Though the wind is strong,
longing seeps through my heart
rekindled by the heat's shimmering haze
You left in tears,
after twenty-five springs of a poverty
stitched by the staccato of sewing
machine needles.
I miss you to the point of pain.

Love is
sorrow, heart searing grief,
Love is wrath, out and out hatred,
Love is wailing, writhing in blood,
Love is separation,
distinct separation for the sake of unity,
Love is agony, wretched agony,
Love is practice, concrete practice,
Love is labor, the tedious and trou-
blesome path of the laborer,
Love is the act of taking apart the
self,
the act of becoming we, of dispersing
and then returning to life inside history,
Love is an inhumane act, a cold-

blooded resolve,
Love is battle, merciless battle,
Love is a cyclone,
it is all the seas, mountains,
fields, skies rising up in revolt,
then
raising violent winds and lightning,
roaring and flying anew in the color
of blood,
after all that, finally, love is
an illuminating sea of silence,
an azure sky pouring out sunlight
over a dew-drenched plot of blue ground,
everything alive has become one,
the great conception of a dancing,
singing, blindingly bright
new day.



ON BACK OF A MILK CARTON, THEN MAYBE

Chris Butters is a poet and worker living in New York City. His recently published book of poetry *Americas* is published by Vietnam Generation and Burning Cities press.

Money for missiles,
not for schools.
Money for jails
but not for jobs at union wages.
They vote for the balanced budget
agreement
as if it was the most judicious thing
in the world!
As if wielding the scalpel
to programs
that entitle the poor to scrape by
is not a matter of life and death!
But it is a matter of life and death!
This is happening in the real world
the world of rich and poor
Black and white
afterschool programs and bridges to places
daycare centers and food stamps
that mean things!
The children of the poor will die
because of what they do!
If people would only know!
If they could only see!
If we could print the faces of the
little kids
who die every day from budget cuts
on the back of the milk carton,
the way they do the kidnapped
children's
-RAFAEL MENDEZ, 6,
crushed from the runaway elevator
that never was inspected
SANRA CHISHOLM, 14,
tuberculosis having made
its spectacular comeback
-CYNTHIA JACKSON, 13,
having fallen through the cracks
of a crumbling public school system
-one can almost trace the path
of carcinogens from
the incinerator upwind,
BAMBI RIVERA, 16
those shining faces,
hopes and dreams
- budget cuts
in the richest country in the world!
schools and hospitals,
parks and libraries,
clinics and subways trains,
soup kitchens and housing agencies!
-And so it is
the children of the poor are shafted,
and so it is
in the richest country in the world
the rich,
the glittering rich, go free-
as we eat breakfast in the morning,
THEN MAYBE
-CHRIS BUTTERS





Claudia Jones was a member of the National Board of the Communist Party. She was sent to prison during the McCarthy period along with party chair Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and several others and was deported to England where she died in 1962.

To Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

Claudia Jones

I think I'll always see you everywhere-	Is when I'm least aware
At morn-when sunlight's radiance	Because you will intrude I know
bathes all things like verse	Upon my inner ear
Proclaiming man, not beast,	Beloved comrade-when from you I tear
Is king of all universe.	My mind, my heart, my
	thoughts, you'll hear!

I'll see you in young shooting sprouts
That sneer at weeds-age-gnarled in doubt
Of users who defile in epithet,
A life we-lived in service built from strife.

I'll see you too at noontime
When the sun in orbit

(from exile)

Flings its rays like thyme through
skies on days that hurt
Causing you to weld anew full courage spurt.

Paen to the Atlantic

To watch your ceaseless motion
Your foam and tideful billows view
Is but to glean your beauty
Of immemorial hue

I'll see you Oft at twilight's dusk
Before the sun will fade

I'll conjure up your twinkling laugh
Your eyes so much like jade.

Oh, rest wide Atlantic
Path of nations old and new
Asylum of path of peoples

I'll see you in the dark of night
When Nature seeks her rest

Except the reedy crickets
Who muse in watch, I guess.

Bound to social progress true

I stand awe-struck before you
As swiftly league on league

I'll think of you forever

And how your spirit rings
Because your faith leaps as a flame
Sweet nurture to all things.

You cradle us to lands - accrue
Of mankind's search for freedom's clue

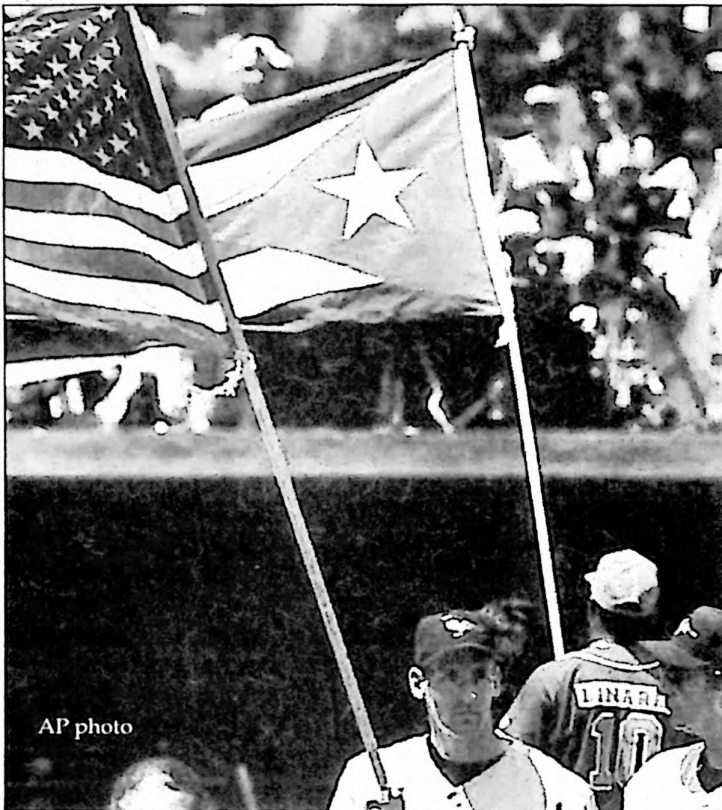
Of all the times I'll miss you most

To understand your motion
Is to reason why like you
Millions move to accession
Nurtured by you ancient dew.



Fighting the Helms-Burton Law

Richard Grassl



The brutality of capitalist control of the wage-earners of Cuba ended January 2, 1959. However, the American people have tragically been sold "a bill of goods" ever since the blockade was signed into law by president Kennedy, February 3, 1962. The only consistent policy of the United States toward Cuba since the beginning of the Castro regime has been to indiscriminately cause pain and suffering among those requiring medical attention. The scarcity or lack of medication, spare parts for surgical mechanisms, shortages of food and other essentials such as improved computer technology are the legacy of the repressive Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996.

The law known as Helms-Burton usurps power from U.S. citizens under the guise of what's best for Big Business is better left to the aristocrats, and that working people do not have the means or capability to approach decisions of such magnitude as free trade or fair labor standards, equitable distribution of goods or a market economy, the right to organize a union vs. unlimited management rights. The reforms necessary for setting the correct priorities in the United States are derived through a process driven

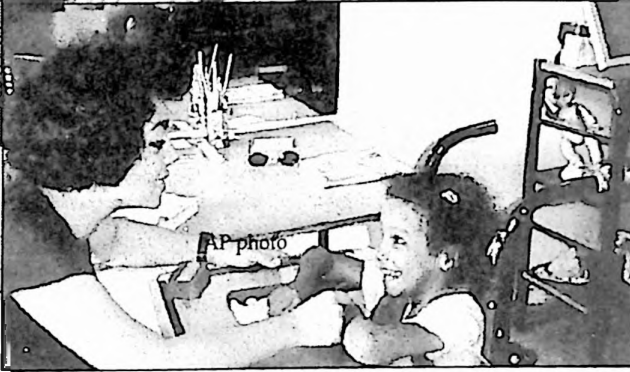
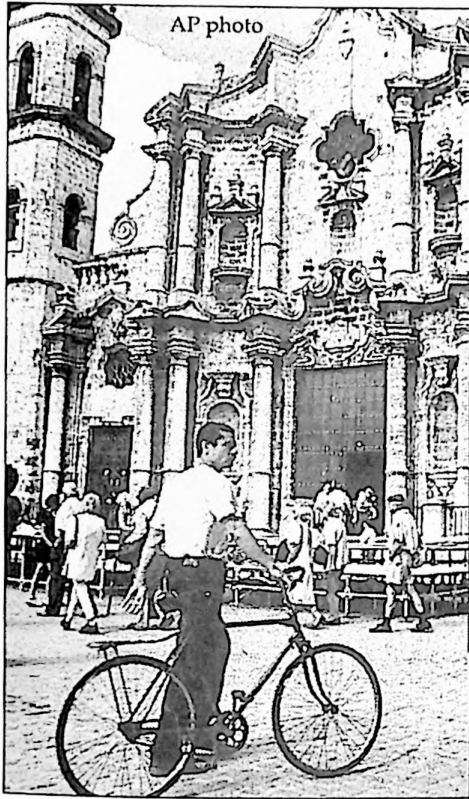
by working people who have no input. The outcome is often circumvented by laws to subvert the will of the people.

For example, the assertion that "wrongful trafficking in property confiscated" by a recognized government is somehow illegal indicates that the economic system of distribution (socialism) is in fact the issue. Of course, ownership of a claim to property of the Cuban people, i.e. U.S. nationals, would be subjectively determined by an international/foreign claims settlement commission subject to approval by the CIA.

Learning to appreciate 130 years of struggle and the authority on claims for confiscated property by U.S. nationals originates in various sections of the U.S. Code, Titles 5, 12, 22, 31; The War Claims of 1948, the International Claims Settlement Act. The historical context for Helms-Burton underlined by Section 102 (enforcement of the economic blockade of Cuba) is based upon the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917, Title 50.

The struggle of the Cuban people "for their own place in the sun" can illuminate the current misunderstanding. Tobacco and tourism have taken on a stronger role in the Cuban economy after the sugar quota was elim-

Cuba possesses its own historically distinct human and cultural origins independent of the United States. In spite of this, the essence of the conflict between imperialism and the independence of the Cuban people has been the right to self-determination embodied in international law.



inated by the U.S. in 1960. The disdain and contempt for the political will of the Cuban people is the most shameful aspect of Helms-Burton and reflects the unwillingness to recognize the legitimacy of reforms undertaken by the Cuban government to restore the loss of trade after disintegration of the Soviet Union. The reference in Section 202 (assistance for the Cuban people) consists of welfare handouts and authorization cards to workers unemployed due to downsizing in the utopian market economy Senator Helms wishes to implement in a post-Castro era. "Preparing the Cuban military forces to adjust to an appropriate role" under a shadow government subservient to Wall Street would be a retreat back to the days of Batista.

Because of geographic proximity, Big Business has savored the unlimited exploitation of land and climate for profit in Cuba. But, political annexation through increasing U.S. imperialist power was the ultimate aim of a blockade to maintain control over an emerging nation fighting for its sovereign-

ty and independence. The road to reform in the USA leads through mass pressure on the Executive branch to renounce the illegitimate Helms-Burton and dismiss the great-power chauvinism of those government leaders blinded by self-interest.

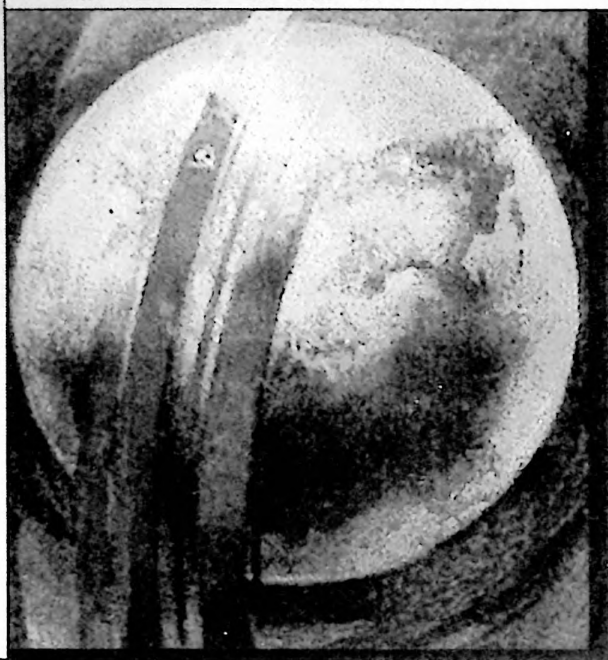
Internalizing the struggle for democracy means progressives must not hesitate to resist the undemocratic propaganda contained in Helms-Burton. We must not become "silent accomplices" to the power of multi-national corporations which exclude working people and trample on our rights. Analyzing why the quagmire exists when the United States and Cuba have every reason to be on friendly terms can lead only to speculation. The extreme right fringe Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) "wrote" the legislation which powerful tobacco interests supported to keep Cuban-American families from uniting on political issues in their community; they are still miffed about Cuba and its

socialist government. The logic behind the sinister intrigue involves getting Castro out of the way. But time is running out on the terrorists

employed by the CIA. The United Nations vote (157-2) to demand an end to the illegal US blockade against Cuba serves to expose the political isolation of the U.S. government.

The friendship of the Cuban people and the international solidarity of their democratic government reaching out to victims of Hurricane Mitch in Latin America proves the "unipolar" intent of Helms-Burton. Polls stating 67 percent of U.S. working people favor an end to the blockade show normalization of U.S. relations with Cuba is the only way to break with the past.

Communication with trade union officials backed up by phone calls and letters to President Clinton and Congress demanding a change in trade and travel restrictions to Cuba are important. Labor exchanges were to educate workers and build solidarity between the U.S. and Cuba. Standing up to Jesse Helms is the American thing to do. □



**Communist Unity Grows
in face of Yugoslavia Bombing**

CPs OF NATO COUNTRIES

In face of the continuous criminal bombardment and the aggressive intervention of the U.S. and NATO forces against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, an independent and sovereign European state, an act which trampled the UN Charter, flagrantly violated international law and created the biggest humanitarian catastrophe of the last half-century on our continent, we call on all peoples, youth, peace, trade union and other social movements:

To condemn NATO's aggressive intervention and the bombing of innocent civilians and build protests against this aggression. To demand the immediate end to the criminal bombings and to reestablish peace in the area. To intensify efforts in order to achieve a solution to the crisis, using political means, by all the parties involved. The solution should insure the autonomy of Kosovo, the rights of all minorities and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

To express the strongest opposition to the "new NATO," to the

"new strategic role" that allows NATO to operate outside the territories of its member states, outside its operational limits as these were known up to now and for NATO to become a more dangerous instrument for imposing the imperialist New World Order.

Our Parties - Communist, Workers and Left parties of the member countries of NATO will develop, by all means, actions to counter such a dangerous development and will support every effort in this direction.

CP USA, CP of Canada, Party of the Communists of Catalonia, CP of Britain, New CP of Britain, New CP of the Netherlands, German CP (DKP) CP in Denmark, CP of Denmark, The Party of Labor (EMEP, Turkey) Workers Party Hungary, CP of Bohemia and Moravia, CP of Belgium, CP of Greece PDS, Germany.

CPs OF ARAB COUNTRIES

It is with great anger and disapproval that our parties have been following the news about the savage aggression that has been conducted for four continuous weeks by NATO forces under the leadership of the United States against the Federation of Yugoslavia, and about the deliberate barbaric destruction of hospitals, bridges, thermal and energy installations and other infrastructure works in this country, where the number of civilian casualties is growing constantly and the conditions are deteriorating rapidly for the inhabitants of Kosovo. The continuation of this aggression constitutes a grave threat to security and peace in Europe and all over the world.

This aggression, which is taking place under the NATO label, consti-

tutes a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and the principles of international law. It openly oversteps the competencies and duties of the Security Council. It represents the effort by the U.S. to abrogate the role of agencies of international law, to practice its hegemony unhindered, and to intervene wherever and whenever it wants, using any means of destruction it chooses, however barbaric.

While deploring all forms of national and religious oppression and ethnic cleansing, whatever their origin and by whomever they are practiced, we confirm that our peoples, who have suffered and continue to suffer from the hypocrisy of the U.S. and the policy of double standards that it implements, are well aware that Washington's real goals behind this aggression are, on the one hand, to continue the dismemberment of Yugoslavia in revenge for its historic role in supporting national liberation movements all over the world and because it continues to insist on preserving its national sovereignty and refusing to submit to the dictates of Washington and the demands of NATO; and on the other, to reinforce the U.S. military presence in the Balkans, which Washington is trying to subjugate and control, so that the region may become the launching pad for bringing pressure to bear on Russia and for its encirclement, but also to work against Europe from the inside, and to obstruct the processes of unification that stand in the way of U.S. hegemony.

We demand an immediate end to this barbaric aggression and a return to the negotiating tables in search of a political solution that will achieve autonomy for Kosovo within the framework of a united and fully sovereign Yugoslav state.

The Jordanian Communist Party, Bahrain National Liberation Front Sudanese Communist Party, Syrian Communist Party, Iraqi Communist Party, Lebanese Communist Party, Egyptian Communist Party.

EUROPEAN LEFT PARTIES

The "Meeting of European Left Parties on the Yugoslav problem", held in Nicosia, Cyprus on the invitation of AKEL, on 21 - 22 April, 1999, discussed the situation and adopted a resolution. Please, find below the adopted resolution and the list of participating parties.

The Meeting of Left Parties from European countries, held in Nicosia on the 21st and 22nd April, 1999, following a constructive exchange of views and reflections, concluded on the following Resolution:

It condemns in the strongest way the U.S. and NATO attack against and bombing of Yugoslavia, and demands their immediate end. The bombardment violates flagrantly the International Law and the Charter of the UNO, setting dynamite at its foundation.

It expresses full solidarity with and support to the greatly tested Yugoslav people. It expresses its concern about the fate of the Yugoslav people now and in the future.

It demands the immediate end of NATO bombing and hostilities in Kosovo. It supports the resumption of a political dialogue under the auspices of the UN and with the participation of Russia, aiming this to lead to the peaceful settlement of the Kosovo problem. The solution should provide for the granting of the right to autonomy to Kosovo, and safeguard the human and political rights of its inhabitants. At the same time, however, it should recognize and secure the sovereignty, territorial integrity and borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

It condemns the intentions of

the USA and NATO to use ground forces in the F.R.Y. Such an action is going to destabilize further the situation in the Balkans. It will create dangers for a broader conflict with incalculable consequences for humanity and will not contribute to achieving a solution.

It expresses concern for the constantly increasing number of refugees and their terrible living conditions. It insists on the safeguarding of the right of all refugees to return and for the creation of pre-conditions that would allow them to return to their homes in safety.

It appeals to the countries which refugees are traveling to, to respect

action directed against the interests of peoples. Its new principles, which are expected to be adopted during NATO's 50th session, will lead to the further replacing of the UN and the unconcealed use of military force whenever it is deemed that this is what US and its allies' interests demand.

It concluded to take further specific initiatives taking into consideration proposals submitted by various parties present in this Meeting, as Peace Marches and human shields and other forms of mobilization of public opinion.

The Resolution has been adopted unanimously although the Parties

have a different evaluation of the policies followed by the Yugoslavian Government in Kosovo.



European peace demonstration.

the Fourth Geneva Convention on Refugees, to welcome them and create conditions for their comfortable, temporal living. At the same time, it calls on all countries to contribute with humanitarian aid, offering relief to the refugees.

It rejects the proposals of NATO troops guaranteeing the solution. The solution should be guaranteed by the UNO.

It expresses the concern that NATO, within the framework of the so-called new order, is upgrading its role as a world policeman with

Armenia - Communist Party, Austria - Communist Party, Bulgaria - Socialist Party, Germany - Party Of Democratic Socialism, Greece - Communist Party (KKE), Greece - Synaspismos, Hungary - Hungarian Workers' Party, Italy - Communist Refoundation, Italy - Italian Communists' Party, Portugal - Communist Party, Russian Federation - Communist Party, Russian Federation - Agrarian Party, Slovakia - Communist Party, Spain - Communist Party, Spain - United Left, United Left Parliamentary Assembly Council Of Europe, Cyprus - (Organizer) Akel, Observers - Cyprus - Democratic Party, Cyprus - Socialist Party Edek, Cyprus - United Democrats, Cyprus - New Horizons, Cyprus - Euro-Democratic Renewal.

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