

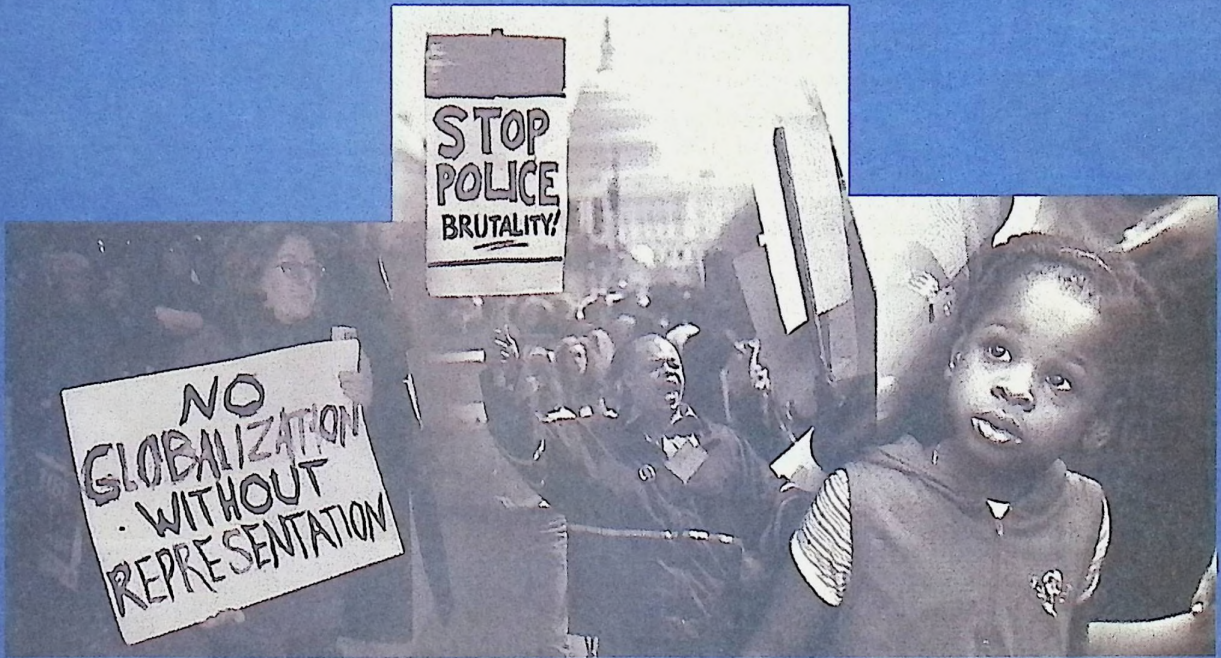
# political *Affairs*

Journal of the Communist Party

JULY 2000

\$1.75

just because you managed  
to survive capitalism



doesn't mean  
your children will.



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The Nation of Islam is seeking a new image as it prepares for a family march in the fall. Will they shed their conservative posture and join the mainstream? Will they stop flirting with the right and give up anti-Semitism? PA editor Joe Sims explores the meaning of the changes and what they portend for the future. Is Farrakhan for real?



old capitalism? Are countries losing their independence to the transnationals? What forces are moving this process and what does it mean for labor? Contributing editor Scott Marshall examines the fast-paced change in the political economy of world capitalism.

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**American Skin**

Bruce Springsteen has emerged as the poet laureate of working-class America. His songs speak powerfully to the suffering, pain, love and joy of every day people, Black, Brown, Asian, and white. From *Born in the USA* to his ballad to striking Ohio steel workers, to his most recent *American Skin*, Springsteen's songs encourage us to "keep on keeping on." His courage has now earned him the wrath of the New York Police Department for telling it like it is regarding the realities of race in America. Here's what he said:

- 41 shots x8  
and we'll take that ride
- 41 shots x3  
Lena gets her soon ready for school  
She says now on these streets Charles,  
You got to understand the rules  
Promise me if an an officer stops  
you'll always be polite  
Never ever run away  
and promise mama  
you'll keep your hands in sight.  
Cause is it a gun?  
Is it a knife?  
Is it a wallet?  
This is your life
- It ain't no secret (x2)  
The secret my friend  
You can get killed  
Just for living in your American skin.
- 41 shots (x3)  
Across this bloody river to the other side  
41 shots they cut through the night  
You're kneeling over his body in the vestibule,  
Praying for his life  
41 shots and we'll take that ride  
Across the bloody river to the other side  
41 shots my boots caked in mud  
We're baptized in these waters  
and in each other's blood  
It ain't no secret  
Is is a knife?  
Is it a wallet?  
This is your life
- It ain't no secret (x2)  
The secret my friend  
You can get killed  
Just for living in your American skin.

The police have called for a boycott – but Springsteen's popularity has never been greater. It's not difficult to figure out why.

**PA FUND DRIVE**

Dear Readers,

As we go to press the fund drive is in full swing and we've passed the halfway mark. However, we still have a long way to go. The second half won't be as easy as the first. It will take your personal contribution to help us get over the top.

We are happy to inform you that PA has big plans for the next several months. The August issue, which will be passed out at the demonstrations during the Democratic and Republican party conventions will be a special issue on politics 2000. How do we fight for political independence while working to defeat the ultra-right? A knotty question that writers like Jarvis Tyner, Joelle Fishman and John Bachtell will help answer.

September/October will feature a special issue on labor that will be distributed at Labor Day marches all over the country. It will cover international trade union unity, the world Communist movement and the fight against globalization, labor and the elections, the situation facing people on welfare and other topics of interest. We want PA to be a must read among labor activists all over the country. This issue will help achieve that goal.

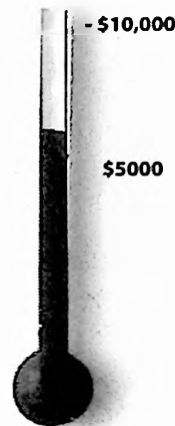
The economy will be the focus of the November issue. Marxist economists, and trade unionists, along with PA's contributing editors will cover a wide range of issues concerning the direction of the economy, providing clues as to what to expect in the future and how to grapple with it.

We also plan in the next months to the develop an on-line presence and develop a new web page. In addition look for new contributing editors who will help cover such issues as science and technology, gay rights, legal struggles and other important topics. We also hope to improve our international coverage with regular articles from Asia, Latin, America, Africa, and Europe. In this globalized world nothing less will do.

As you can see we have big plans, plans which you are an important part of. All of our efforts revolve around you our readers. We want PA to be more interesting, relevant, educating, and stimulating to you. Please let us know what you think about what we are doing. If you don't like something tell us. If you do, well, we don't mind hearing that either. And don't forget to give when you can.

In struggle,

Joe Sims  
Editor



\$10,000 GOAL

**YES, I want to contribute \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

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(Make checks payable to *Political Affairs*)



# ABOUT FACE *or Face Lift?*

*The NOI Attempts a Makeover*

*by Joe Sims*

**O**n a warm summer evening several years ago, a friend and I drove through the streets of Baltimore looking for the Enon Baptist Church in search of what would prove to be a historic gathering.

We were brought to this industrial Maryland town by a meeting of the national African American Leadership Summit and the controversy surrounding it. Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., had just been fired as executive director of the NAACP charged, variously, with misappropriating funds to settle a sexual harassment suit and inviting Nation of Islam (NOI) minister Louis

Farrakhan to participate in the gathering. Stealing may have been the official reason; however, it is doubtless that Farrakhan's presence figured prominently in the decision – his notorious anti-Semitism had sparked protests within and without the civil rights organization. Some, including racist forces in the Anti-Defamation League, had used the issue divisively for their own purposes, demanding the Black leadership denounce the Muslim minister, again, and using it as a litmus test.

After the firing, what was left of the summit regrouped at the church. Approaching the house of

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*Joe Sims is the editor of PA.*

worship, the traffic thickened, and parking spaces grew sparse; it seemed every space within several blocks was taken. Finally managing to steal one, we walked back noticing clusters of the NOI's bow-tied Fruit of Islam security (FOI) on street corners and in alleyways, slipping silently, secretly, in and out of shadows along the route, the immaculately-dressed men presenting an impressive if menacing sight in the gathering darkness. As we drew within a half block of the church, they lined the sidewalk welcoming oncomers. "Welcome beloved," one cooed in an eerie velvet-smooth yet steely voice, "Please come in - they're waiting for you, beloved."

### Chavis' Last Stand

As it turned out, Chavis didn't make much of a stand that night, overshadowed in every sense by the towering figure of Louis Farrakhan. Still smarting, Chavis insisted on his right to meet with whom he pleased. "Farrakhan is my brother," he thinly wailed, "Farrakhan is my brother." Farrakhan took the floor and rising to the occasion, assured all that he too would not abandon his brother during his trial and tribulation. As Farrakhan thundered, his oratory reaching ever new heights, Chavis seem to shrink in direct proportion, his setting sun even then eclipsed by

the Muslim's rising crescent moon.

So it was that the Rev. Benjamin Chavis, a favored son of North Carolina's Black ministry, whose Wilmington 10 case catapulted into national and indeed, international attention, first as a political prisoner, then as a leader of the United Church of Christ and the NAACP fell head first, into the conservative embrace of Louis Farrakhan. And there he has remained.

I recalled that scene a few days ago when attending an event at Columbia University featuring a "public conversation" between Dr. Manning Marable, chairman of the University's African American Studies Department and Minister Benjamin F. Muhammed (Chavis), Farrakhan's East Coast representative. Dr. Marable has regularly held "public conversations" with important African American personalities, among them Ossie Davis, John Hope Franklin and others.

### Critics of the Man March

Much had transpired since those heady days in Baltimore. Chavis went on to organize the atonement-oriented Million-Man March. This event, historic in its own right, began to dissipate and disperse even as its forces gathered.

Some brave and bold souls prophetically anticipated these problems. On the eve of the huge October 19, 1995 assembly, Black women activists including Angela Davis, Barbara Ramsbey, Kimberle Crenshaw and others, later calling themselves "African American Agenda 2000," courageously and correctly criticized the sexism inherent in the very concept of the march.

While identifying with and supporting the sentiment that motivated a million Black men to gather in Washington, many were critical of the event's platform, which focused on a curious mixture of self-blame, self-help, and personal redemption.

They pointed to the failure of the march leaders to place demands on the government during the time Congress was debating and voting on a bill to eliminate welfare.

While identifying with and supporting the sentiment that motivated a million Black men to gather in Washington, many were critical of the event's platform, which focused on a curious mixture of self-blame, self-help, and personal redemption.

Others pointed to its similarity to other "men's" movements like the Promise Keepers and similar rightward trends worldwide.

### Alliance on the right

More eyebrows were raised, when, in the period after the march Farrakhan, Chavis, and company went on an international tour that embraced some of the world's worse dictators. Apprehension turned into alarm however, during a poorly attended meeting of the Black leadership summit in 1996. This meeting at Farrakhan's behest, called for creating a "third political force" to contest the elections and was attended, incredibly, by right-wing CIA thug, Lyndon LaRouche who was invited by Chavis to speak. When the out-



Dr. Manning Marable, held a public conversation with Benjamin Muhammed at Columbia University.

PWW file photo

raged audience strenuously objected, Chavis attempted to defend LaRouche, calling for "tolerance" and "listening to other points of view." This ploy failed to quell the rebellion from the floor. According to one account, a delegate who loudly voiced his objections was set upon and severely beaten by LaRouche's thugs while the FOI security stood idle.

If that wasn't enough, reports both in the mainstream and the African American press from around the country featured stories about NOI operatives hosting receptions for Republican Party candidates. According to the *Amsterdam News*, one such reception was held in Sylvia's restaurant in Harlem. That this was no fluke was revealed by Farrakhan's now infamous visit to the Boca Raton, Florida retreats of billionaire Republican business executives. Right-wing columnist Robert Novak waxed ecstatic over Farrakhan's address to the gathering. Farrakhan, he crooned, was a man they could work with.

This policy continued during the 1998 Congressional mid-term elections, an election that resulted in the humiliating and historic defeat of the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich. On election eve, Farrakhan, appearing on *60 Minutes* suggested African Americans had no stake in the electoral outcome, implying they not bother voting.

In sharp contrast to Farrakhan what has been described as a quiet electoral uprising was occurring among the African American people. Responding to an almost decade-long campaign coming from the highest circles of business and government aimed at eliminating affirmative action, undermining voting rights and criminalizing Black youth, African Americans turned out in record numbers. This electoral uprising occurred mainly in the South and resulted in a 3 percent increase in the Black vote, the high-



Ap photo

Black women are being murdered at a higher rate in Youngstown, Ohio, than anywhere else in the nation. The mother and daughter above lost a child to homicide.

est of any group in the nation. By comparison, overall voting percentages for others declined. Significantly, this vote was the single greatest factor in the Republican defeat; a defeat that sent shock waves throughout the country precipitating a crisis in the right that even now is making itself felt. In their wisdom, Black folk stayed the course and overwhelmingly rejected the last-minute appeal that could have turned the course of the election.

#### Shift in policy

Little has been heard of Minister Farrakhan since. Then early this year, the march was announced with great fanfare accompanied by news of a dramatic shift in NOI policy.

Savior's Day in Chicago (a NOI holiday in early March) was the setting for the public unveiling of the new plans. In his Savior's Day address, Farrakhan presented himself as a changed man, a near-death experience having altered his views in ways fundamental and profound. From the podium he described a deathbed spiritual reawakening revealing it as the source of a broad-

ening of his theology to embrace traditional Islam and a desire to right past wrongs. And to prove the point, joining Farrakhan on stage were the estranged former ally in faith, Iman Warith D. Mohammed, son of the deceased NOI leader Elijah Muhammed, and leader of the large American Muslim Society, and representatives of a Hasidic Jewish sect

This religious reconciliation, important in its own right, was but a prelude to an even bolder initiative, a Million Family March organized along multi-cultural and multi-racial lines where all - including whites - would be welcome. The march, scheduled for two weeks before the November election, would be devoted to "strengthening the family" and achieving dramatic new political objectives outlined in a new detailed political platform: *The National Agenda for the Million Family March*, a draft version of which was circulated for comment at the time.

#### Examining the Agenda

A cursory glance of the final version of the *National Agenda*, its continuing call for atonement notwithstanding, reveals an attempt to move the NOI away from an insular conservatism and toward the mainstream of African American political discourse. The platform is religious in tone and "God-centered" in orientation. However it also borrows heavily from the legislative agenda's of the Congressional Black and Hispanic Caucuses and expresses support for affirmative action, voting rights, environmental protection, "economic empowerment," and reparations.

Without pretending to be exhaustive, a review of its planks on political empowerment, criminal justice, immigration, the environment, housing and government entitlements like Social Security and Medicare suggest a shift in emphasis. For example, the section on poli-

tics, among other things, calls for proportional representation and campaign finance reform. The planks on criminal justice demand ending sentencing disparities and an abolition of the death penalty, an important change for the NOI. On employment policy "decent wages" are called for, and "job creation through public infrastructure projects" modest goals along the lines of CBC proposals. In addition, the *National Agenda* comes out against the privatization of Social Security and Medicare and maintaining the safety net for the poor. Issues relating to environmental racism is also well developed. There is also anti-imperialist language, calling for a reform of the IMF and WTO. The overwhelmingly progressive character of the CBC and Hispanic Caucus legislative platforms lends the *National Agenda* a democratic tenor.

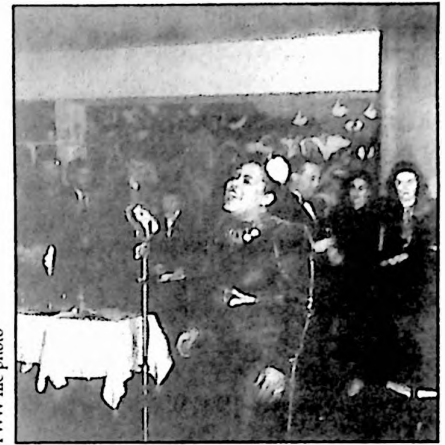
Several chapters appear to be more of the NOI's own inspiration. In some of these sections important differences exist between the draft

and final versions of the *Agenda*. Many of them move in quite another direction.

### Contradictions and crosscurrents

The plank on education *begins* calling for church involvement in schools. Another proposes civic and business involvement in schools but is silent on trade unions. On the other hand, in-school childcare is proposed, as is wide use of the Internet. The plank on education calls for public funding of charter schools, a step in the direction of privatization and loss of union control. The section, does however, attempt some balance, calling for \$20 billion for school infrastructure repair.

More revealing of the contradictory ideological crosscurrents at play is the treatment of health care. The preface to the section harkening back to the "self-reliant" conservatism of old claims:



PWW file photo

Billie Holiday pictured above singing *Strange Fruit* was an early champion of women, labor, and Black rights.

The key is not forcing government to give healthcare to the people. The key is providing the people with an internal force of enlightenment that allows the people to give basic health need to themselves and, what the government does provide the people healthcare should they need it.

Concepts like "not forcing the government to give health-care" appear concessionary not matter how they are couched in an era of conservative retrenchment. The decades-long drive of the corporate right is an attempt to undermine the modern social contract: the idea of government responsibility for social welfare. This concept is the very basis of the New Deal and the civil rights "second reconstruction" programs of the 1960s. They would like nothing better than for some of us to say "we shouldn't depend on the government," or "force the government" to do anything. In reality placing demands on government consists not in asking them for anything but for our own tax dollars and a say over its distribution. This is basic to the fight for democracy.

In all fairness, passing reference is given to in the section to "financial stress" on Medicare and Medicaid along with the "gutting of the infrastructure." However this is a



PWW file photo

Civil rights leader Rosa Parks, whose refusal to move to the back of a bus touched off the Montgomery bus boycott and the beginning of the civil rights movement, is shown being fingerprinted by Deputy Sheriff S.H. Lackey in Montgomery, Ala., in this Feb. 22, 1956, file photo.

mixed message at best, given the absence of a clear demand for universal single-payer coverage.

### Ghosts from the past

Conservative strains abound in the chapter on economic transformation:

We cannot wait for the government to recognize the priority of our needs ... If we pledge to spend at least 75 percent of our dollars within our communities we will create greater economic growth than any government policy can deliver.

While the language here is better than in the earlier version: "If we pledge to spend at least 75 percent of our dollars with business owned by us, we will create more jobs than any other rational policy can deliver. We are white peoples answer to welfare. So let's grab our bootstraps and pull," the essence is the same.

In an era of globalism schemes of pooling resources, while nice sounding cannot possibly solve the economic problems of African Americans. Deindustrialization, the restructuring of the economy, outsourcing, mega mergers, contingent labor, capital's ability to move instantaneously around the globe: these are the realities of doing business in the 21st century. Competition

The linking of religion and public health policy is worthy of concern this election year. Will the Million Family March become a "pro-life" rally two weeks before the election?

with the ruling corporate elite on its own terms is an illusion. Monopoly can buy you out or shut you down at will.

To beat them one has to change the rules of the game. Consideration should be given to the economic implications behind the fact that the largest and most successful employer of Black people are local, county, state and the federal government accounting for over one-third of all African Americans employed. In other words the public sector has been the biggest contributor to African American economic stability in the last half-century. The authors of the *Agenda* should consider the impact of the right's undermining of the public sector and the long-term implications of not making demands on government.

Of course, the NOI is hardly alone in the African American community in its attention and emphasis on business. Indeed, in the period following the collapse of the USSR, many forces, including sections of the left, saw no alternative to capitalism. In a world allegedly devoid of dialectic now that capitalism had "won," they resigned themselves to reforms aimed at ameliorating its worst features. They even gave it a name: TINA ("There is No Alternative") an acronym

coined by Britain's "Iron Lady," Margaret Thatcher. Thus, the problem is a larger one for the freedom movement as a whole.

### "Dissing" labor

Serious questions have to be raised regarding the position on labor in the *Agenda*. Attention to the problems of Black workers, the wage gap, and trade unions are all absent. Again there is a difference in this regard between the final version and the draft. The early version called for "pushing higher minimum wages, unionized employment with high non-wage benefits..." language not present in the final version. Keeping in mind that almost 90 percent of the African American people are workers, it's fair to ask what happened?

### Women's rights

The *Agenda* contains a new plank oddly titled, "pro-life, pro-choice," not present in the prior document which is unabashedly against a woman's right to choose. The section puts the *Agenda* in the misnamed "pro-life" camp and pulls it strongly rightward. It likens choice to "a sin and affront to God," in a section that could have been culled from a Moral Majority handbook.

Farrakhan states:

From the time of the passing of Roe v. Wade which gave women the right to have an abortion, backed and supported by the United States government, millions of unborn lives have been destroyed. What has been the consequence of such a choice. Look at the murder rate, the rise of child abuse; abuse of women and violence in the society since we have shown so little respect for human life.

"The Million Family March supports life," the document continues. To suggest a causal link between



Malcolm X speaking in Harlem.

PIWV file photo



the rise of violence and abuse of women and children to Roe v. Wade and its aftermath is itself abusive, to say nothing of demagogic. Minister Farrakhan claims to have changed his heart, but apparently he has not changed his mind, at least regarding his attitude towards women.

The linking of religion and public health policy is worthy of concern this election year. Will the Million Family March become a "pro-life" rally two weeks before the election?

Most disturbing is the lack of even the barest mention of women's rights in the *National Agenda*. Why is equality for women ignored?

The march claims to be pro-family. However, given that Black women comprise the majority of breadwinners in African American homes and represent the highest number of those employed at lower wages, it is difficult to imagine how families can be strengthened without eliminating the racial and gender gap. The *Agenda* is silent on this most important issue.

The *Agenda's* authors claim to be champions of progressive policy. Can a democratic platform that ignores women's rights be considered progressive? Indeed can such a platform even be considered democratic? The demand for equal pay for equal work and reproductive rights is already almost half a century old. What can one say of a platform that does not even address questions of gender equality already posed in the century past?

### left, right or center?

There are many possible measures of place in the political spectrum: stance on democracy, gender equality, economic justice, gay and lesbian rights, the environment etc. Most basic is the issue of class. In the context of racial and national oppression the right/left divide may appear obscured at times, for all

classes of the oppressed group are victims of institutionalized racism. As a consequence, democratic demands are pushed to the foreground: equality for the people, the tearing down of all barriers, restrictions and injustices become the rallying cry of the oppressed masses. Yet behind the slogan and demands lurks the often unasked question: equality for whom: the worker, the single mother or struggling father, the dentist, the undertaker, the entrepreneur? And how is equality defined? The slogan of "economic empowerment" has become much the fashion and is widely used in the *Agenda*.

What does the fine slogan mean for the young brothers flipping hamburgers at McDonald's, the young sisters processing catfish, the mothers plucking chickens at Perdue, the fathers shoveling coke in steel mini-mills or the mothers sweating on the production line at Ford?

Conservatives tend to defend wealth and property; economic empowerment for them means the rights of business, enterprise zones, free trade, no taxes on income and capital; the radicals and left champion the interests of the workers and people - empowerment in radical terms means equal pay, fair housing, universal health-care, the right to organize, jobs with affirmative action, advanced democracy, a revolutionary redistribution of wealth. A platform that in the main promotes the interests of business must be considered conservative no matter how radical or militant sounding the rhetoric; one that promotes the interests of labor can only be radical or progressive.

Keeping these considerations in mind, how does the *National Agenda* measure up?

An attempt is made in the *National Agenda* at more balance than in the past. There is a wide array of legislative proposals around many critical issues. Many, if fought for and enacted, would benefit the

African American people and indeed all Americans. At the same time, the economic philosophy that underlies the *Agenda* and important areas of its social policy are regressive if not downright reactionary.

The language varies: now progressive almost bursting with populist promise; then waxing moderate; now again assuming tones conservative and moralistic. Indeed, one can almost hear two voices in the *Agenda*, one can almost see two opposing ideals at war in the same torn breast; two dissimilar but linked moments, one hearkening toward the future, the other pulling terribly from the past.

### A mixed bag

Its plank runs the gamut from progressive on proportional representation, to centrist on entitlements to conservative on economic issues and gender equality.

*The National Agenda* is a curious blend of religion, populism, democratic demands, and sugar-coated conservatism. It may seem to some as post-conservative or post-liberal, an eclectic amalgam appearing on the stage of history as part of the ideological fall-out in this post-Cold War world. In this sense it might be compared to other right movements worldwide that are currently, regrouping and groping for position on a rapidly changing economic and political landscape. Its form however, contradicts its essence.

The *Agenda's* democratic advances are welcome. On the other hand, the document's refusal to take a stand on women's rights, indeed, its anti-woman stance on choice, the removal of any support for labor and the raising the minimum wage and other weaknesses cripple it severely.

For these reasons on balance the *Agenda* still falls on the conservative to moderate side of the political spectrum.

Can such a program be consid-

ered a step forward? Given the NOI's origins and murky past, its deeply conservative and parochial character, any steps toward democracy – even small ones – are important. But in this day and age giant steps toward progress are needed.

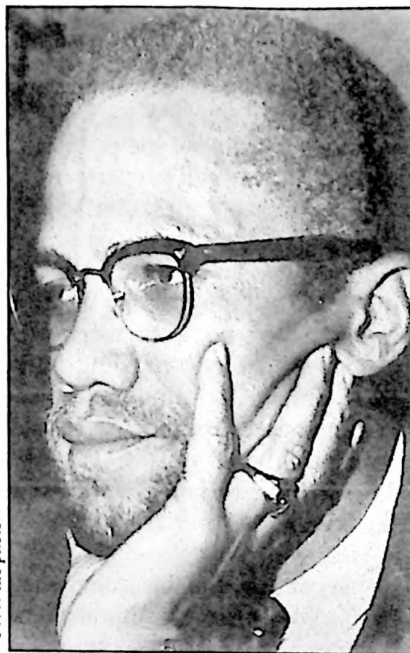
Will the NOI on the basis of this new platform match word with deed and join the picketlines and mass mobilizations against police violence and the defense of affirmative action? Will they join the anti-WTO, IMF, and World Bank demonstrations demanding debt relief? Will they condemn homophobia and take a stand against anti-gay discrimination and violence? Will they support raising the minimum wage and link arms with labor? Will they make a clear statement against the Republican right and join the effort to defeat the forces of racism and intolerance?

### Conversations with Ben

With these questions in mind we listened intently to Muhammed's public conversation with Dr. Marable.

The bow-tied East Coast representative of the NOI surrounded by phalanx of security and followers who filled the hall, appeared nervous and strained as he engaged Dr. Marable in a wide-ranging conversation that touched on his background in North Carolina, his life as a politi-

**The singling out of Jews as special enemies is standard right-wing stock and trade. In the African American struggle it is confusing and divisive: obscuring the real enemy much to their delight.**



cal prisoner and his tenure at the NAACP. "I know you are going to ask me some hard questions, so be ready for some hard answers," he challenged Dr. Marable. And hard answers they were. It was when discussing Muhammed's time at NAACP that the conversation got interesting and quite revealing.

At one point the conversation touched on the controversy surrounding the 30th Anniversary of the March on Washington and the decision to exclude Farrakhan from the speakers list. In a meeting of March organizers, Muhammed claimed that it was AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer Bill Lucy's strenuous objection that prevented Farrakhan's invitation. "Bill Lucy" he stated, "said Black labor would turn off the microphones if Farrakhan spoke."

### Enemies and allies

The Muslim minister went on to make some startling accusations. Other forces he suggested were using the AFSCME secretary-treasurer. What "forces" one wondered and for what purpose? "It's organized labor and the Jews, who use money to control Black people,"

Muhammed declared to nods of approval from his followers in the audience.

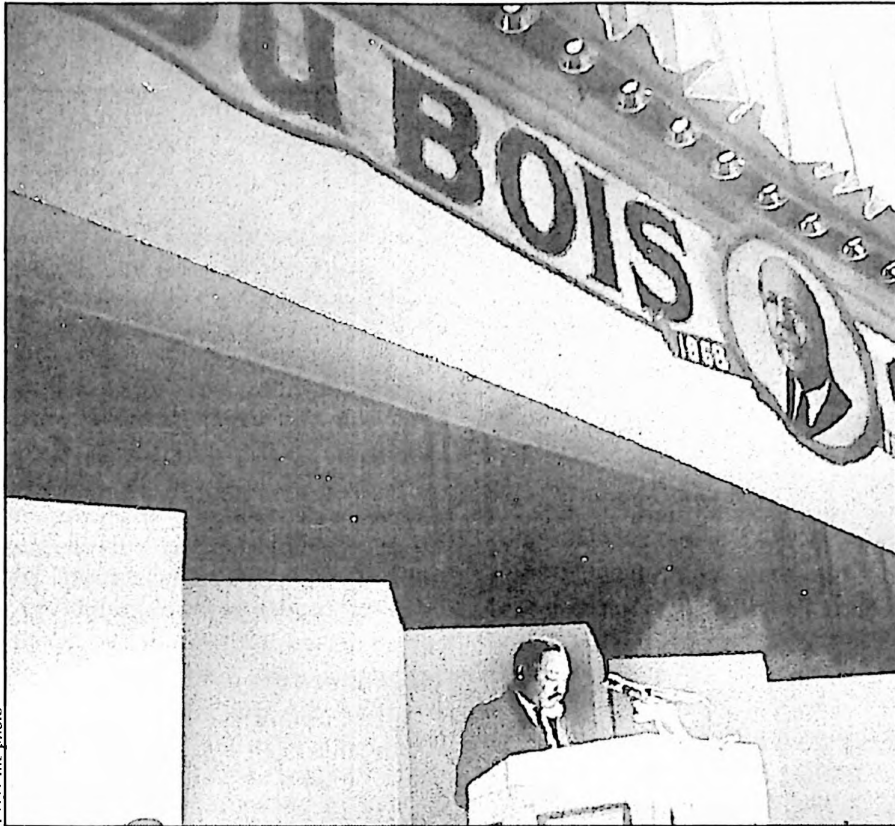
Later in the conversation, Marable mentioned that a newspaper editor told him that he would be dismissed from his job at the NAACP before the actual firing occurred. Muhammed retorted, "Let me ask you a question" he said sharply, "was he Jewish?" Marable, not taking the bait, replied that his nationality did not matter so much as the fact that he knew.

Deplorable as it was, the minister's anti-Semitism was not altogether unexpected, even though one had hoped for more tolerance in keeping with Farrakhan's new message. On the other hand the vicious labor baiting was stunning, at least at first. However, after reflecting a bit on Muhammed's checkered career, it seemed to fit with past patterns. Muhammed's anti-labor stance dates back at least to his time at the NAACP when, it should be remembered, he endorsed NAFTA (against his board's wishes) and that of labor Black and white. He was also accused of using non-union labor to televise NAACP events.

His present stance however goes far beyond these opportunistic endeavors.

The singling out of Jews as special enemies is standard right-wing stock and trade. In the African American struggle it is confusing and divisive: obscuring the real enemy much to their delight.

Who are those enemies? The captains of capital and industry, the Fortune 500, the super-rich one percent of the population that controls 87 percent of the country's wealth; the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant billionaire elite – very few of whom are Jewish. That there are some Jewish capitalists who share responsibility and belong to the enemy camp is doubtless. But they are enemies not because they are Jewish, but because they are bourgeois. Jewish workers, students, intellectuals, and profes-



PWW file photo

Dr. King calling Du Bois a radical all of his life said he was a "genius who chose to be a Communist." Both men moved left as they grew older.

sionals who join with us in fighting racism, gay-bashing, and for workers rights are our comrades in struggle.

Today it is difficult to be pro-Black and anti-labor at the same time. Indeed it is not too much of a stretch to say that to be anti-labor in the current period is close to being anti-Black. How could it be otherwise when 90 percent of African Americans are workers? That the trade union movement must still make advances in fully integrating African Americans, Latinos and Asians at all levels is incontestable. It is likewise incontestable that because of the role of these workers, the AFL-CIO is the only nationwide multi-racial organizations with affirmative action in its constitution.

Those desiring to hear something that would indicate a change for the better from the NOI hopes were dashed by Farrakhan's East Coast representative and heir apparent. Whether he reflects Minister

Farrakhan's views or is out of step with NOI leader's new outlook is difficult to know. Was Mr. Muhammed expressing his own personal views or that of Minister Farrakhan? One thing is sure: the ultra-right wing concepts expressed by Muhammed have no place in a democratic, to say nothing of a progressive vision, and should serve as fair warning.

#### The center cannot hold

Farrakhan, and Muhammed's political trajectory, no matter what conclusions may be drawn about its direction, must not be understood simply as the personal inclinations of individuals, but as a product of the national and indeed, international shifts in the political, ideological and economic sands. With a renewed labor movement and indications of a new upsurge in the African American freedom struggle, the center of

political gravity has shifted. Finding itself largely isolated in the aftermath of the Million-Man March and the debacle of the youth march a few years later, the NOI has found that it must shift too, or remain outside the mainstream, an isolated, lonely sect.

Certainly this would not be the first time African American figures moved from conservative to liberal, and even left positions. Under the impact of the labor and peoples upsurge of the '30s and '40s many did precisely that both radicalized by and in turn radicalizing the unfolding class and democratic struggles of the day. Giants like Paul Robeson, Benjamin Davis Jr, W.E.B. Du Bois and Martin Luther King Jr. were the most enduring and perhaps truest expressions of this trend. Ironically, during the '60s this honor was to fall to Malcolm X.

Malcolm was not as we know allowed to complete the transition, cut down in his prime by the very forces that profess similar movement now. Will this process, still in its barest infancy, be allowed to take hold, or will the hands and habits that formed them reach out and snatch them back? As Muhammed's labor-hating and Jewish-bating remarks suggest, the old dies hard. Can Louis Farrakhan, himself a life-long disciple and practitioner of the art, deeply steeped in the dogmas and traditions of the NOI faithful – indeed, its greatest living representative, fully face the devils, deceptions, and duplicities unleashed by his own hand, or will he too at the last moment be pulled back by the sheer weight of that awful legacy? Once, twice. Before he attempted only to fail and return to embrace the comfort of what was old, familiar, and reactionary. Will, as in the magic of the ancients, the third time be the charm?

Unable to rely on the mystical and keeping in mind the past, one hopes for the best, but prepares for the worst. The stakes are far too high to do otherwise.

# Imperialist GLOBALIZATION

Scott Marshall

**T**here is a clear trend in the fight against capitalist globalization. Around the world, and in the U.S. labor is stepping up to the front lines. While still in the early stages, many diverse and powerful anti-monopoly, anti-corporate coalitions are developing.

Much of the development of these movements so far has been spontaneous. Capitalist globalization has hurt so many people that it produces angry victims with many diverse concerns – workers, farmers, environmentalists, peace activists, women, youth and students, religious, small businesses, independent mass media, cultural workers and scientists.

Unity and mass action so far has been based on identifying a common enemy. Every group can agree that the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank are harmful to their interests. However, most have differing and even contradictory views on what should be done with them.

Already, a series of mass demonstrations, from Seattle to Geneva, and from Washington D.C. to Singapore, have backed up the multinationals and forced serious debate in the ranks of global capitalist organizations.

On a parallel track, anti-imperialist sentiment has been building in the wake of NATO's criminal interventions in the Balkans and the naked

use of force for "humanitarian" goals. The U.S. military openly pursues a policy of being able to intervene militarily in many different situations at the same time. This multi-interventionist policy in part explains the criminal behavior of the U.S. Navy on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

## Where do we go from here?

In the heat of battle, unions and the mass movements are asking themselves, "What's next?" A healthy debate is taking place and people are asking: Should we demand the abolishment of the WTO? Doesn't someone have to regulate trade worldwide? How can trade unions effectively fight multinational corporations spread all over the globe? What is the role of nation-states in the new global economy?

In many ways, all these questions boil down to a very basic question: How will these movements arrive at a positive program of demands and actions to curb or even roll back capitalist globalization? We need reform demands to grab on to.

## What about the left?

For Communists and the broader left there is even a greater challenge. Most of these coalitions, especially with labor, have a decided left-center character. Strong left-center ties are being built on bonds of common action and common militancy against corporate domination.

Sam Webb, CPUSA chairman, recently underlined the need for the Communist Party to be "in the mix" of these struggles. "We have to be among the most active in building these coalitions and in fighting for



Worker's march in South Korea.

Scott Marshall is a vice-chairman of the Communist Party and is a contributing editor of PA.

the greatest possible left-center unity" he said. "We have to be even more effective in helping to find winning strategies to curb and reform globalization in the interests of defending working people and working families at home and abroad."

Communist and left forces have a critical part to play. Not having all the answers or even all the questions, the need to produce popular Marxist critiques of capitalism, imperialism and globalization is more than evident. One thing is clear, there is no real and lasting solution to capitalist globalization that leaves the multinational corporations in charge. This is why socialism is necessary.

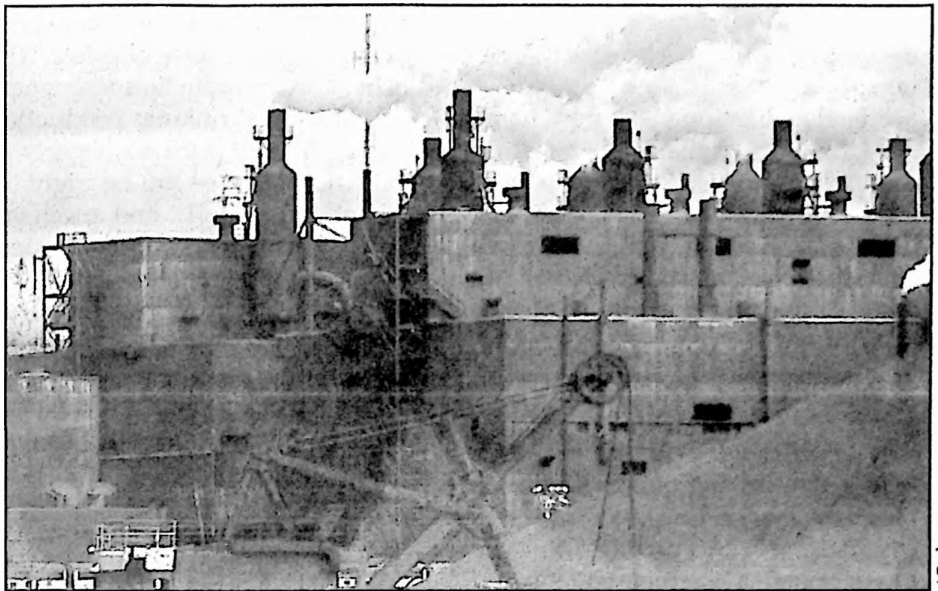
V.I. Lenin pointed out in his famous book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, that imperialism and globalization are not just "bad policies" of the capitalist class. They are rather the "natural" development of capitalism, unchecked and unregulated. They are developments of the capitalist system itself and thus are not subject to change simply by changed policies. The system itself must be changed.

And this knowledge imposes that most difficult of all tasks, what Lenin called, "patiently to explain." One should add for today's usage, patiently to question, to probe and discuss with others in an open, frank and friendly way.

### **Imperialism or globalization or both?**

Lenin wrote in *Imperialism* the following:

Railways are a summation of the basic capitalist industries, coal, iron and steel; a summation and the most striking index of the development of world trade and bourgeois-democratic civilization. How the railways are linked up with large-scale industry, with monopolies,



LTV Steel Mining Company in Hoyt Lakes, Minn., plans to permanently shut down its taconite plant over the next year putting 1400 workers out of their jobs.

AP photo

syndicates, cartels, trusts, banks and the financial oligarchy is shown in the proceeding chapters of this book. The uneven distribution of railways, their uneven development & sums up as it were, modern monopolist capitalism on a worldwide scale.

It is tempting to just substitute the word "computer" for the word "railways" in the quote above. Of course, it's not so simple. The quote does illustrate that much has changed in the specifics of imperialism and world capitalism. But we can recognize enough that is the same to show that each new situation and subsequent creative development of Marxist analysis must be built on solid basics that have come before.

Perhaps the most revealing sentence in the paragraph is: "How the railways are linked up with large-scale industry, with monopolies, syndicates, cartels, trusts, banks and the financial oligarchy is shown in the proceeding chapters of this book." It indicates the tremendous importance Lenin placed

Where once all aspects of production needed to be right at hand today, computers and modular production processes, combined with much greater control over faster and more sophisticated transportation and communications systems make for the fracturing and decentralization of production into smaller and smaller units, often spread out to all corners of the globe.

on rigorous examination of facts and figures, of study of the exact situation.

Is globalization just a new name for the imperialism that Lenin described? Or is it a new stage or level of capitalism? And what real difference does it make how we answer those questions? What are some of the new features of globalization?

### **The sheer size of it all**

In Lenin's *Imperialism* he spoke of the U.S. having about 51 million German marks in direct overseas investments. According to the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 1998 the U.S. had direct overseas investments of approximately \$2 trillion, 140 billion, 582 million in market value. That compares to about \$72.9 billion U.S. direct investment overseas in 1966. This is an increase in scale that could not have been imagined in Lenin's time.

### **The production process**

This illustrates that both Marx and Lenin were correct in their projections that capitalism and imperialism would result in ever larger monopoly concentrations of capital, wealth and power. But they could not have foreseen just how behemoth these concentrations could become. At some point it's no longer just more of the same. And certainly basic industry has expanded far beyond coal, iron and steel, railways and the other mass production industries of the early century.

In *Imperialism* Lenin describes how capitalism, in the era of imperialism, was being concentrated into larger and larger factories and workplaces. It took huge outlays of capital to make effective use of the then new science and technology of electricity and machinery. Production processes were huge and required large concentrations of workers to make them effective and productive.

Today the trend is in the opposite

direction. Science and technology is making huge factories obsolete. The mechanics of production and micro circuitry are shrinking production facilities. Where once all aspects of production needed to be right at hand and physically and mechanically integrated today, computers and modular production processes, combined with much greater control over faster and more sophisticated transportation and communications systems make for the fracturing and decentralization of production into smaller and smaller units, often spread out to all corners of the globe.

For just a taste of how transportation has changed try buying a product online over the Internet. Most often you are given a tracking number that can tell you on a minute by minute basis, where your package is and when it is due to arrive at your doorstep. It is easy to see the implications of such precision in organizing complex and diverse worldwide production processes.

### **The working class is bigger**

At the same time, new technology has considerably reshaped the kinds of skills needed for production. Many skills have migrated off the shop or production floor into offices, changing the face of the work force and somewhat blurring the distinc-

tion between what was known as blue-collar and white-collar work. At the same time, whole new industries like electronics, chips and robots, pharmaceuticals, and many others have grown up.

Millions have been brought into the working class through a raft of new services that are the result of continued socialization of production and daily life. Today the working class is numerically, and as a percentage of the population, bigger than ever before. This has profound implications for those who see the revolutionary role of labor and the working class.

### **Finance capital**

Lenin pointed to the growth and parasitic nature of finance capital in the era of imperialism. He would be astounded at where this has developed in the era of globalization. In the first place the scale would be unrecognizable; secondly, the computer technology that makes it all possible was not dreamed of in his time. Just a few facts from the UN's Human Development Report of 1999 will illustrate the point. In the 1970s the daily turnover in foreign exchange markets was about \$10 to \$20 billion. In 1998 it reached \$1.5 trillion a day. International bank lending grew from \$265 billion in



1975 to \$4.2 trillion in 1994 in just under 20 years. And finally, between 1983 and 1993 cross-border sales of U.S. Treasury bonds increased from \$30 to \$500 billion.

Finance capital, which Lenin and Marx both described as parasitic and dead and as its most reactionary and predatory section, is a much larger percentage of world capital. Lenin began to describe in *Imperialism* how finance capital is inextricably tied to industrial and all other forms of capital.

Today that is even more so. Globalization, export and import trade, shifting manufacturing, improvements in transportation and communications, the new technologies, including biotechnologies, are all tightly bound to finance capital. Nothing in the global economy is built, exported or imported, insured, financed or moved without a slice off the top for finance capital. Today, finance capital is qualitatively more the "mover and shaper," the "command and control" of globalization and development than ever before.

When Lenin wrote, a large share of direct overseas investment was in the plundering of natural resources of colonial countries. Today, even though direct foreign investment has grown seven times on a world scale since the 1970s, the bulk (58 percent) is invested in the industrial capitalist countries. Only 37 percent is invested in developing countries with the rest (5 percent) invested in the former socialist countries in Russian and Eastern Europe. This includes the fact that capitalists in many developing countries, like South Africa, invest their profits heavily in industrial countries instead of their own economies. Much of this is speculative capital or to speak bluntly – just plain gambling.

This investment pattern of globalization has tremendous significance for the labor movements in America and the other developed capitalist countries. The UN report on Human Development points out

that less than a tenth of the job loss in America can be attributed to U.S. capital flight to Third World or underdeveloped countries.

Once this is understood it's easier to see that General Motors, U.S. Steel and General Dynamics are the real enemies of working families, not the workers of Mexico and China. More jobs are lost to the mergermania of conglomeration than in export of capital to developing countries. To be sure, global capital pursues cheap labor in the "race to the bottom," but there is a lot more going on here, especially with finance capital's role.

### Mergermania.

Deregulation and the weakening of anti-trust laws, especially in the arena of banking and finance, has led to an unpredicted orgy of mergers and acquisitions. This has been particularly the case with the multinationals. Global megamergers like Daimler Chrysler, Exxon-Mobil and world banking mergers like Bank One and First Chicago set the pace.

A totally new feature of globalization is the tremendous domination of news, information, media and culture by giant multinational con-

glomerate.; Warner ate Time, Time Warner ate CNN, America Online ate Time Warner or was it the other way around? Anyway you get the picture.

"From 1990 to 1997 the annual number of mergers and acquisitions more than doubled from 11,300 to 24,600. Cross-border mergers and acquisitions accounted for \$236 billion in 1997," according to UN figures. A chart in *Forbes* magazine shows corporations like General Motors, Ford, Mitsubishi, Shell, Exxon, WalMart, and many others have gross sales that exceed the GDP of many countries.

### World trade

World exports have now reached an astounding \$7 trillion a year. That is about 21 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the 1990s. That compares to 17 percent of a much smaller GDP in the 1970s. World exports of goods and services almost tripled between the 1970s and 1997 in real adjusted dollars. According to the UN report, "the top fifth of the world's people in the richest countries enjoy 82 percent of the expanding export trade and 68 percent of foreign direct investment –



NAFTA for Jamaica. Above Jamaican garment workers.. Last week the U.S. Senate passed a bill that would end duties on apparel made in the Caribbean and Central America, effectively granting the region trade parity with Mexico for selected products and industries.

AP photo

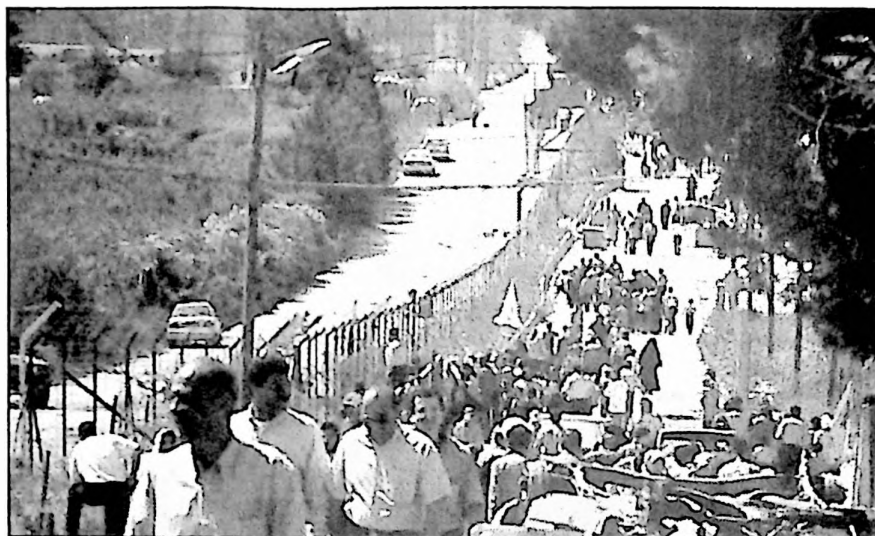
Nearly 1.3 billion people on this planet have no access to clean water. One child in seven of primary school age is not in school. More than 840 million people are malnourished with a very high percentage being women and children. The UN estimates that 1.3 billion people live on incomes of less than a \$1 a day.

the bottom fifth, barely more than 1 percent."

### **Rising and savage inequalities**

World inequalities have been rising steadily for the last century. They are accelerating today. In world income distributions between rich and poor countries the pattern is thus: In 1820, the ratio of rich to poor countries was about 3 to 1, that is rich countries had about 3 times the assets and wealth of poor countries. In the 1950, it was 35 to 1. In 1973, it rose to 44 to one and in 1992 it had risen to a ratio of 72 to 1.

Here are some startling statistics on the poverty that imperialism and globalization leave in its wake: Nearly 1.3 billion people on this planet have no access to clean water. One child in seven of primary school age



AP photo

is not in school. More than 840 million people are malnourished with a very high percentage being women and children. The UN estimates that 1.3 billion people live on incomes of less than a \$1 a day.

In the industrial countries, though often hidden, human poverty and exclusion are also on the rise. In the eight richest countries, one out of every eight people is stricken by one of more of the main poverty indicators: long-term unemployment, under 60 years life expectancy, an income below the national poverty line or illiteracy. Wage inequality, that is, the gap between the highest and lowest wages has continued to widen except in Germany and Italy.

### **Racism national chauvinism, and gender inequality**

Many of these statistics do not illustrate well enough the extra cutting edge caused by racism and national oppression. Any map that illustrates the patterns of global investments, or that charts the poverty ratios of the world will make the point. There are more than enough statistics available in the U.S. to prove the impact of racism and chauvinism on poverty, unemployment, lack of health care, lack of decent housing. What is not so apparent to many is the conscious role of imperialism and globalization in fostering and creating these extra burdens of

inequality.

Take the debates in the WTO itself. It was clear in Seattle that one factor in the failure of those talks, besides the mass pressure outside, was the dissatisfaction of delegates from the underdeveloped countries. Delegates said that seeing the resistance to the WTO in the streets emboldened them to stand up. They cited unfair and exploitative trade rules and policies being forced on them. Many also pointed to the totally secret closed-door governing committee comprised of the architects of globalization.

According to the UN report, foreign investment has meant an increase in women in the work force. But they note that for many women this amounts to extending their workday by eight to ten hours when allowing for unpaid work that many women perform. In addition they point out that much of the increase in women's employment in the last few years has been in the "informal economy." These jobs are most often very substandard and frequently part-time, home-work situations, - most are also "off the books," making for easy cheating on wages and hours.

When Lenin wrote *Imperialism*, a world socialist system was coming into being. Today, while some of that system still exists, it is greatly weakened. This relative lack of a socialist counterbalance has emboldened cap-





AP photo

California fried chicken in China.

lenged military superiority does not mean an end to war dangers. We only need to look at the military destruction rained down on the Balkans, the continued bombing of Iraq or Vieques to see the danger.

This unbridled U.S. power is a totally new feature of globalization. While it is most clear in the military arena, U.S. domination of globalization is apparent in trade and in the institutions of global governance like the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank. This in no way means an end to the contradictions between imperial powers but it does give the deadening appearance of power so great as to be unchangeable.

### Some tentative conclusions

In South Africa, labor and Communist activists speak of fighting TINA, an acronym for "There Is No Alternative." This is clearly the mass line of globalization. All their think tanks and all their apologists for imperialism work overtime to try and convince the working people of the world that capitalist globalization is the end of history. And they are very keen on trying to convince the left that only modest reforms of the system are possible.

One of Lenin's greatest contributions in *Imperialism* is the idea that imperialism cannot be fought in little pieces. It is not enough to fight only against this or that manifestation of imperialism or globalization. It must be fought by Communists and the left in particular as a system of relations.

This is what some might call fighting the big picture. To put it another way, while we have to be deeply involved in every fight, against every aspect of capitalist globalization, we have to constantly show those we fight with the system of imperialism and that can't be done effectively without presenting an alternative:

socialism.

This isn't a call for breast-beating or holding up signs that read socialism now. But it does mean that how we introduce the question of socialism as the only alternative to capitalist globalization is a critical task right now. Ultimately we cannot defeat TINA without it. There are no effective stages here. We have to bring the courage of our convictions into the mix of our allies and coalition partners fighting globalization. If we don't, cynicism, detours, and disillusionment are bound to follow.

### Boldly search for struggles that target the multinationals

We need, with our coalition partners and allies, to think big and bold. We know many of the demands that begin to make up an anti-globalization program:

- Curbs and taxes on capital exports: how about the requirement that corporations invest \$5 at home for every \$1 they invest overseas. In the U.S. just closing investment tax loopholes on foreign investments would bring hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenues that could be spent on public works and job creation. This must include full taxation on overseas U.S. corporate profits made by foreign branches, subsidiaries and subcontractors.

- Abolish the WTO and instead deal with trade issues and trade treaties through the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN. These are far more democratic international organizations that



AP photo

italism to new heights of globalization and savagery. The 1990s saw a worldwide offensive to weaken labor, to privatize and destroy the public sector, to demolish social programs and to turn back the clock on freedom and equality struggles.

The setbacks to socialism was a terrible blow to the world peace forces. Movements for nuclear disarmament, solidarity and liberation movements all took a beating. (One important exception being the final defeat of apartheid in South Africa.) This trend was natural, given the emergence of "one world superpower."

Not even at the end of World War II was U.S. imperialism in such an unchallenged position as "top dog" of world imperialism. Today, while inter-imperialist rivalry is still very much a feature of globalization, there is no serious challenge to U.S. military might. In the past few months the European Union made noise about setting up an independent military structure for its forces. And while there is nervous chatter in Europe voicing fears about U.S. plans to establish an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system, there is no real challenge. The ABC treaty is a dangerous military corporate boondoggle that is clearly in violation of many treaties signed by the U.S.

Also it is clear that even a "one world superpower" with unchal-

already include the participation of labor and other public interest Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

- The U.S. Congress should immediately ratify the six core labor conventions of the ILO that they have refused to confirm, including the right to collective bargaining, the right to organize, against all forms of racial, national and gender discrimination, against child labor, and against forced and slave labor.

- Cancel the debt of developing countries and fully fund the UN Development agencies. The U.S. government should immediately live up to its financial responsibilities and pay up its dues.

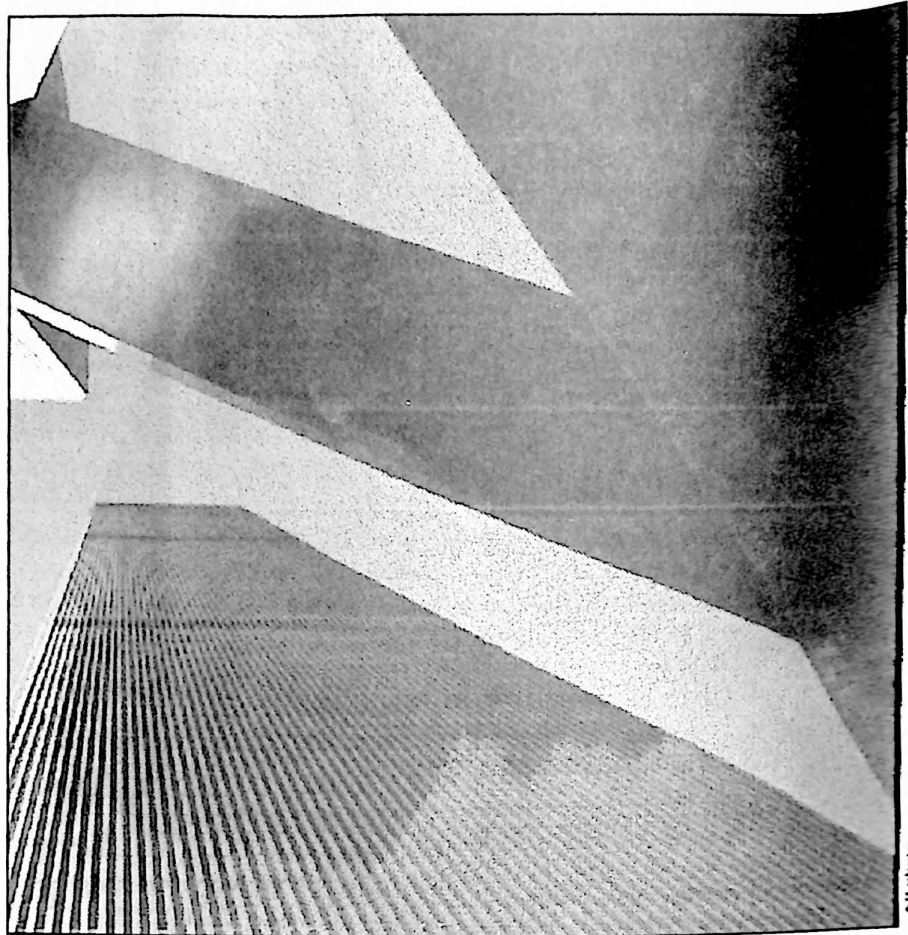
- Develop a corporate code of conduct, enforceable by Congress on U.S. corporations abroad that include the right to organize, collective bargaining and minimum wage, health and safety, and environmental standards.

Importantly, one of the demands put forward by the UN Report on Human Development calls for "a world anti-monopoly authority to monitor the activities of multinational corporations and ensure that markets are competitive." If the UN can make such a bold proposal then the world Communist and labor movements ought to be able to come up with a militant program of action to fight globalization.

### One last point

There is nothing about globalization that makes it above the laws of capitalist development presented by Marx and Engels, rather it confirms them.

For one, the basic contradiction between the social and cooperative nature of work versus private profit is intensified. The socialization process has now intensified across borders in an unprecedented way. Today an auto worker in Detroit knows a lot more about the conditions of an autoworker in Mexico than previous generations and vice



Above: The World Trade Center in New York.

versa.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx remarked,

This union (of workers) is helped by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry, and that place the workers in different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralize the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes.

What prophetic words for today's struggles against capitalist globalization. Marching in Seattle, marching in Singapore, marching in Johannesburg, striking in Ohio, striking in Osaka, sitting in at the University of Wisconsin, sitting in Indonesia, these are just the contact we need to centralize numerous national struggles into one interna-

tional struggle against capitalist globalization. ■

# The Trade Union Movement and the Struggle in Canada Today

The struggle of the Canadian people for democracy, peace and social advance is a political struggle against big business. The interests of the majority of Canadians are in conflict with the anti-democratic, policies of the transnationals.

The working class, due to its size and place in the production of goods and services, is the leader of all progressive forces. It is organized as a consequence of modern production itself into a cohesive and militant force that is compelled to fight against exploitation. Its class interests are diametrically opposed to finance capital by virtue of its position in the economy.

But the working class needs allies to defeat the immense power of finance capital. The trade union movement must build unity with other sectors of the Canadian people adversely affected by the domination of finance capital, and which have an objective interest in winning a new democratic course for Canada. To be effective, the struggle against finance capital must have the working class as its core. The Communist Party works for the development of a democratic, anti-imperialist alliance, uniting the labor movement and led by the working class. Such an alliance can win broad support to curb monopoly power and improve living standards and social benefits, environmental protection, and defense of democratic liberties.

The role of the working class is as the indispensable factor for effective united action against monopoly capi-



Riot police form a barricade around a bus that was blocked by protesters outside the site of the Organization of American States foreign ministers meeting in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

tal. The working-class movement cannot advance on the basis of economic struggle alone. It must defeat the political power of the ruling capitalist class. To accomplish this, it needs its own political party. The Communist Party strives to be that political party.

A united trade union movement is vital to the advance of the working class. Canadian workers have built their own trade organizations to protect their economic interests as wage workers. The unions are the basic organizations of class struggle. The gains made by the trade union movement serve the interests of all working people. Economic and social gains achieved by the unions help to raise living standards and social conditions for the working class. Finance capital wages an ideological cam-

paign to turn working people against the trade union movement. The capitalist class has launched an attack to destroy the trade union movement. This is a part of the corporate drive to lower real wages and living standards. Using mass unemployment and the intervention of the state, monopoly capital reduces labor's bargaining strength to extract concessions. The struggle to enlarge the scope of collective bargaining is an integral part of the struggle against finance capital. The most pressing task facing the trade union movement is to unite its ranks around class-struggle policies and militant actions to confront the corporate offensive, to bring about democratic and anti-monopoly transformation, and to shift the balance class forces.

To combat the power of the transnationals, the trade union

*The above is an excerpt from the draft discussion Program of the Communist Party of Canada.*

movement must become sovereign and independent, with the highest level of coordinated action. It must be governed by the principle "an injury to one is an injury to all," placing the interests of the movement above the sectional interests of individual affiliates. It must oppose raiding, and resolve jurisdictional disputes in the interests of affected workers and the movement.

Workers and their unions must demand greater control over the introduction of technological change, the closing of factories, work time, investment policies, worker retraining, health and safety and pay equity. To win a greater share of the benefits of the new technology, unions must fight for a shorter work week with no loss in pay. They must oppose privatization and fight for the expansion of the public sector.

The trade union movement must defend the interests of all workers, both organized and unorganized, and pay attention to those most exploited and underpaid.

With the organization of the public sector, the majority of organized workers are now in Canadian unions. Many Canadian workers are still represented by international unions headquartered in the U.S. The struggle for Canadian autonomy and independence will continue, always based on the need to maintain unity of the trade union movement, while ensuring that Canadian workers have the right to make all decisions within their respective unions.

The trade union movement must combat all forms of discrimination and intolerance which divides the working class, within its own ranks and society as a whole. It must struggle against racism, sexism, homophobia, and against discrimination of youth, older workers, or the disabled.

The trade union movement must champion the social rights of women, and promote their fullest participation within union structures.

It must also cement the class



Riot police use pepper spray on a crowd of protesters.

AP photo

unity between the workers in Quebec and workers in the rest of Canada, and between aboriginal and non-aboriginal workers; oppose manifestations of national chauvinism; and respect the national and cultural diversity within the working class.

The trade union movement needs to strengthen its international solidarity with workers internationally as a condition for securing its own advances.

It must also build enduring alliances with other democratic and social movements to promote democratic rights, sovereignty, and the socio-economic welfare of working people in general, to oppose globalization, imperialism and war.

No less urgent is the task of organizing the unorganized majority of the working class. This includes the growing body of technical, scientific and professional workers in service industries employing large numbers and part-time, temporary and contract workers. The rights of unemployed workers must be defended, in organizing their ranks and fighting for full unemployment

Bourgeois reformism is still the dominant characteristic of the labor movement. There is increased militancy, but militancy alone is not yet class consciousness. The actual conditions of life for workers under capitalism create the conditions to challenge and overcome these illusions.

benefits and for decent jobs.

The trade union movement must protect the internal union rights of all, and encourage involvement in all activities. It must uphold the principle of inner-union democracy.

To advance the struggle of the working class, the trade union movement must commit itself to a program of independent political action

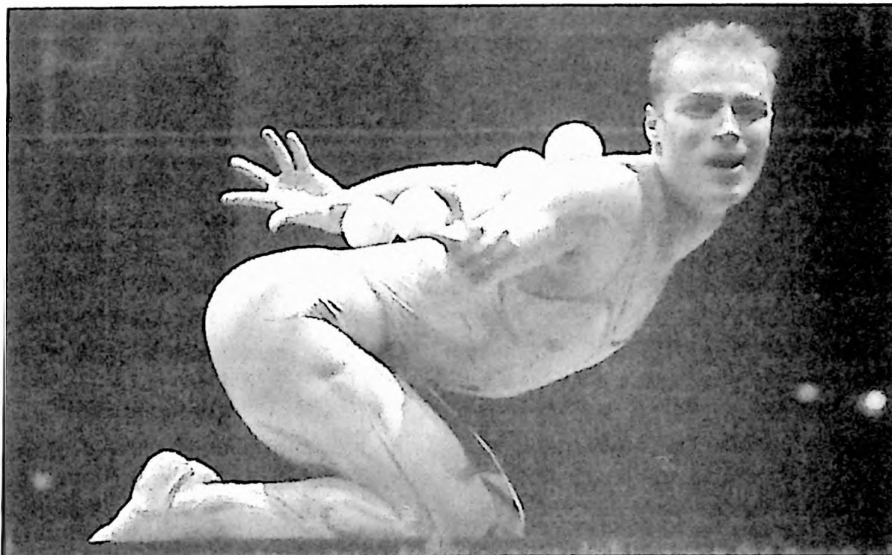
which mobilizes organized workers into political struggle against their employers. Right-wing policies of class collaboration must be challenged and replaced with policies of consistent class struggle. Communists must work to uphold militant trade union principles and democratic involvement in decision-making.

The winning of working-class unity and political power requires a working-class ideology. This involves a long battle for a genuine working-class policy, forged in the process of combating capitalist ideology in the labor movement.

Historically, the economic base for reformism and opportunism inside the labor movement was exploitation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, enabling the imperialists to pass on a small share of their super-profits to a section of the workers in the form of higher wages. This formed a basis for cooperation with the capitalist class – class collaboration – and for the strengthening of capitalist ideas. As the Canadian monopolists shared in those super-profits, this process effected the Canadian labor movement.

Post-World War II, the growth of the forces of capitalism, the productivity of labor and its exploitation and the increasing rate of capital accumulation enabled finance capital to pursue a policy of concessions. The ability of monopoly capital to give special advantage to some sections of privileged workers stimulated the growth of reformist ideas and created a "labor aristocracy." The capitalist class and the right wing used this period of capitalist development to cultivate the false idea that capitalism has a capacity for continuous social advance, meeting the ever-expanding requirements of the people. The wide influence of this propaganda tended to make capitalism acceptable to important strata of workers. However, the economic base for reformism and class collaboration is steadily eroding. As the systemic crisis of monopoly capitalism deepens, big business is placing

The main purveyor of reformist ideology and class collaboration within the labor movement is social democracy expressed in the New Democratic Party. This, however, is not the only conduit channeling bourgeois ideology into peoples' movements.



Juggler Viktor Kee balances a string of balls on his back during his performance in Dralion, the latest show staged by the Montreal, Quebec, Canada, group called Cirque du Soleil

AP photo

increasing demands on the working class, and extracting more and more concessions. This in turn compels the workers to stiffen their resistance. As a consequence, the possibilities of achieving any overall accommodation – or "social contract" – between labor and capital become ever more difficult.

But this objective shift by monopoly to a more open attack on working people does not raise people's consciousness. Bourgeois reformism is still the dominant characteristic of the labor movement. There is increased militancy, but militancy alone is not yet class consciousness. The actual conditions of life for workers under capitalism create the conditions to challenge and overcome these illusions. The exploitation of the workers becomes more intense; they wage broader, more militant and united struggles. The illusions fostered by social

reformism come increasingly into conflict with the realities of the class struggle. Thus the battle for working-class policy and for working-class unity incorporates an ideological struggle against capitalist illusions in the labor movement. The Communist Party conducts a constant struggle against social reformism, the system of opportunist practices and views incorporating policies of class collaboration. Social reformism seeks to perpetuate the capitalist system by limiting the people's movements. They look on the state as an institution that stands above classes to be headed by them to be "good" for working people and that the Canadian capitalist state is an impartial authority whose faults are the result of the "wrong people" in office, adapting the labor movement to the political interests of the capitalist class. Communists hold the general laws of capitalism leave workers no

alternative but to fight back against its systemic crisis, to break the power of finance capital, and ultimately replace capitalism with socialism. While opposing reformism, the Communist Party supports the fight to protect working people from the effects of capitalist exploitation. This helps the working class to gain confidence and experience, to strengthen their unity and organization, to deepen their class consciousness, and to shift the balance of class forces in their favor.

The main purveyor of reformist ideology and class collaboration within the labor movement is social democracy expressed in the New Democratic Party.

This, however, is not the only conduit channeling bourgeois ideology into peoples' movements. Bourgeois parties attempt to influence the trade union and other movements. The state apparatus including educational and cultural institutions and the mass media conduct a daily ideological assault against working people. The main obstacle to the unity of the workers' movement is right-wing social democracy and anti-Communism. The Communist Party works with the working-class movement in the struggle for peace, democracy, and against corporate rule. However, capitalism's crisis and the intensified struggle between capital and labor have evoked a deep-going ideological and political clash within the ranks of social democracy. The right-wing of the Canadian social democratic movement has abandoned the goal of "socialism," embraced capitalism and reoriented social-democratic parties in the illusion of managing capitalism "with a human face."

Social democracy's reorientation has had far-reaching effects. It has provoked divisions within the NDP between its right-wing leadership, and a section of the membership that retains socialist convictions. This has carried over into the labor movement, calling into question the con-



Holding a portrait of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, demonstrators stage a sit-in in front of police outside the Willistead Manor in Windsor, Ontario, Canada Monday, June 5.

AP photo

tinued political and organizational relationship between the NDP and the Canadian Labor Congress.

These developments attest to the widening gap between the interests of the working class and those of right-wing social democracy. The Communist Party works for cooperation with forces around common issues, despite the ever-widening gulf between the principles and class allegiance of the two parties.

The more the Communist Party works for unity in putting forward its Marxist-Leninist program, the more the left forces can be brought into the struggle for genuine socialist policies.

As monopoly capital attacks the interests of the working class, a cross-section of the Canadian people are compelled to fight back against the power of finance capital. People's movements involve numbers of Canadians in extra-parliamentary political activity. Uniting these forces with the working class to resist the offensive of finance capital lays the foundation for social advance, and for the emergence of a democratic, anti-imperialist alliance.

These forces include other strata whose contradictory circumstances bring them into conflict with the interests of big business. Farmers, professionals, intellectuals and small business capitalists have common interests in opposing the reactionary policies of finance capital and its governments. These forces include progressive currents in Quebec. While primarily bourgeois forces lead this movement, progressive-minded people are also drawn to its ranks.

Similarly, the growing struggles of aboriginal peoples for their inherent rights to self-government and social justice make them an important force in the struggle against monopoly domination.

Especially important is the array of people's movements that include the environment, peace and solidarity, youth and students, social justice against racism and growing struggles by senior citizens for community and urban reform.

The women's movement has grown into an effective force against neoliberalism. The battle for equal pay for equal work, affirmative action, paid maternity and paternity

leaves and for universal, publicly funded, quality child care has won broad support from the people's movements. To unite women and men in the struggle against the common enemy, it is necessary to combat sexist practices that are reinforced by monopoly-controlled culture and to combat the growing ideological campaign by right-wing forces seeking to promote backward ideas.

The crisis of capitalism is affecting youth directly, giving rise to militancy and resistance. Many young people are opposed to capitalist globalization and aggression. More and more, youth are concerned about monopoly's attack on education, demanding quality adequately funded programs and not those geared to serve the needs of finance capital.

There is also a growing struggle against U.S. domination of our economic, political and cultural life, made possible by the betrayal by the Canadian ruling class. Canadian sovereignty and independence are the future of Canada – an essential condition for the advance to socialism.

Canadians are coming together to advance progressive demands on a myriad of class issues. These

include Medicare, public education, pensions, the privatization of social programs, capitalist globalization and the plunder of Third World peoples, Canadian independence, the environment, imperialist aggression, the continuing arms race and Canada's participation in NATO, racism and intolerance and the rights of gays and lesbians. In striving to realize their objectives, these movements come into conflict with monopoly capitalism. Efforts to change government policy and win even mild progressive reforms challenge vested interests, and meet the combined resistance of reactionary finance capital. In this sense, these movements are objectively anti-monopoly in character, and are, therefore, important forces in the struggle for fundamental democratic and social change.

To win Canadians away from capitalist influence will require a persistent struggle and flexible tactics. Independent political action of the trade union and democratic movements can be the means of winning the people away from the capitalist parties, and setting them on the path of fundamental change. The Com-

munist Party will strive to convince all those involved to fight for progressive, anti-monopoly measures. The Communist Party sees the struggles of the people around their economic, social and political aspirations as the decisive factor determining the course of social development.

The Communist Party combines mass movements with the continuing struggle to win a people's majority in Parliament as an integral part of the path to socialism. No parliamentary advance can be achieved without the people's mass action.

In line with our struggle for working class and democratic unity, the Communist Party determines its own electoral tactic depending on the circumstances and the relationship of forces in each particular election. The Communist Party nominates candidates around the Party's program as a part of the struggle for the unity of the left and anti-monopoly forces. At the municipal level, the Party works for broadly-based reform to address the growing difficulties of our cities, towns and rural areas.

The Communist Party strives to build a democratic, anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist alliance. This will include the Communist Party and other parties and political organizations, democratic people's organizations in Quebec and English-speaking Canada, the trade unions, farm organizations, youth and students organizations, associations of intellectuals and professions and women's organizations. The Communist Party aspires to play a key role in uniting the people's forces as the basis for a democratic, anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist people's government. ■



Young woman protests outside of OAS meeting in Windsor.

AP photo

# Socialism in our history

George Fishman

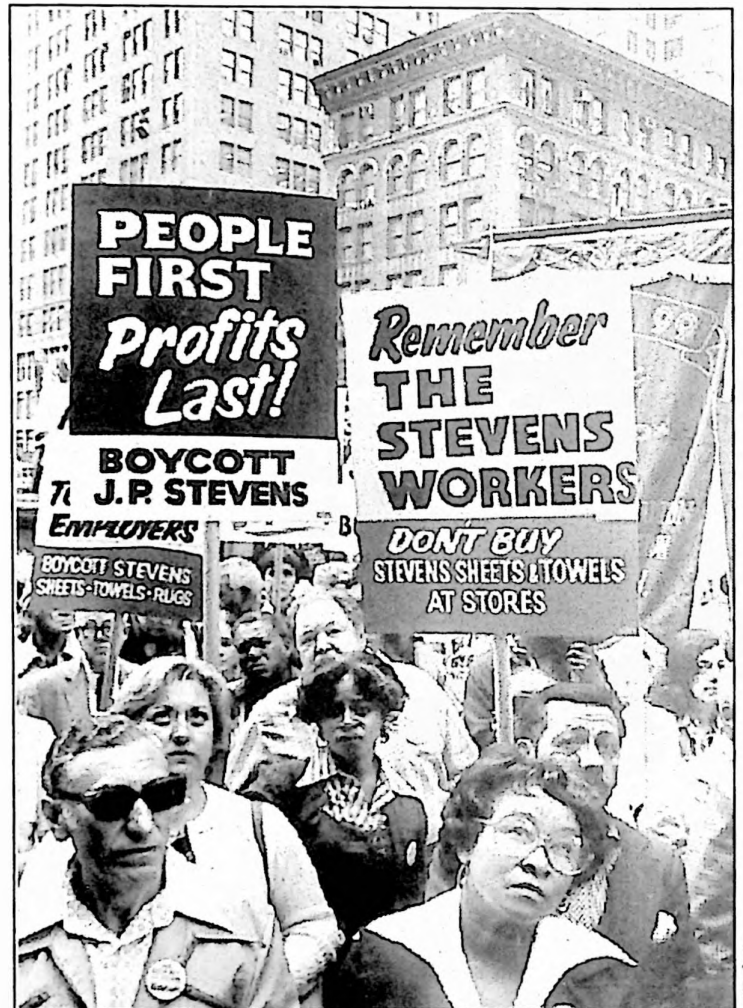
**T**o Henry Ford, the father of today's automobile transnational corporate empire, history was a threat. He sought to head off probing into the roots of the crisis-wrecked capitalist system. He feared workers who looked beneath the hood of history to discover the inseparable bond between past and present and to apply this knowledge to act socially to mold the future.

It is not surprising that this same flivver king reached for his gun when workers unionized. On March 7, 1932, the laid-off auto workers, who had built cars for years and also built Ford's fortune, marched by the thousands in Dearborn, Michigan seeking work. They were answered with bullets fired by thugs from within King Henry's castle. Five young Black and white workers lay dead: Joe York, James Ashford, Joe Bussell, Joe DeBlasio, and Coleman Lenny. This is the same Henry Ford who beamed as the greatest union-buster of all time, Adolph Hitler, wrapped an Iron Cross around his neck.

Corporate predators like Ford were able to kill workers, but they were not able to kill the working class that kept coming on. They were not able to stop the organizing of auto and other basic workers in this land.

Far from being bunk, history, when probed and unlocked, reveals class relations and struggles that are helpful in facing today's crises and move us forward into the new century and millennium. Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm had it right when in his better days he said history records socio-economic systems. This approach is a recognition that society is in constant change and development, contrary to the views of Francis Fukuyama in the *End of History*.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, founders of scientific socialism, discovered the inner laws of motion of capitalism. They showed that class struggle is the inevitable result of the capitalist drive for maximum profits, derived from unpaid labor (surplus value) and superprofits from



Workers protest JP Stevens.

discrimination. They also showed that to advance its interests, the working class must unite as a class to eliminate crises, job insecurity, spreading poverty, discrimination, and environmental pollution by eliminating the root cause of these plagues of the capitalist system. Marx and Engels showed that the working class is able to lead because of its position in production, its numbers, unions, class unity, and outreach. With the building of class and socialist consciousness, the working class can and will

George Fishman is a contributor to PA.



lead the transition to socialism. Together with a political party of the working class, its ideology, Marxism-Leninism, and mass support, it will build the next and higher stage in history socialism, in which social production is entirely for human needs.

In keeping with the conditions, history, and struggles in each country, the working class with the support of allies, international labor solidarity, and world anti-imperialist struggles, will come to socialism in a unique way. These relationships spell out as Socialism USA, with a great expansion of democratic and human rights.

Socialism USA will be a further development of labor, equality and anti-imperialist and socialist trends in U.S. history. These trends have been one of the best kept secrets of our time. They must be made widely known and built further in the period ahead.

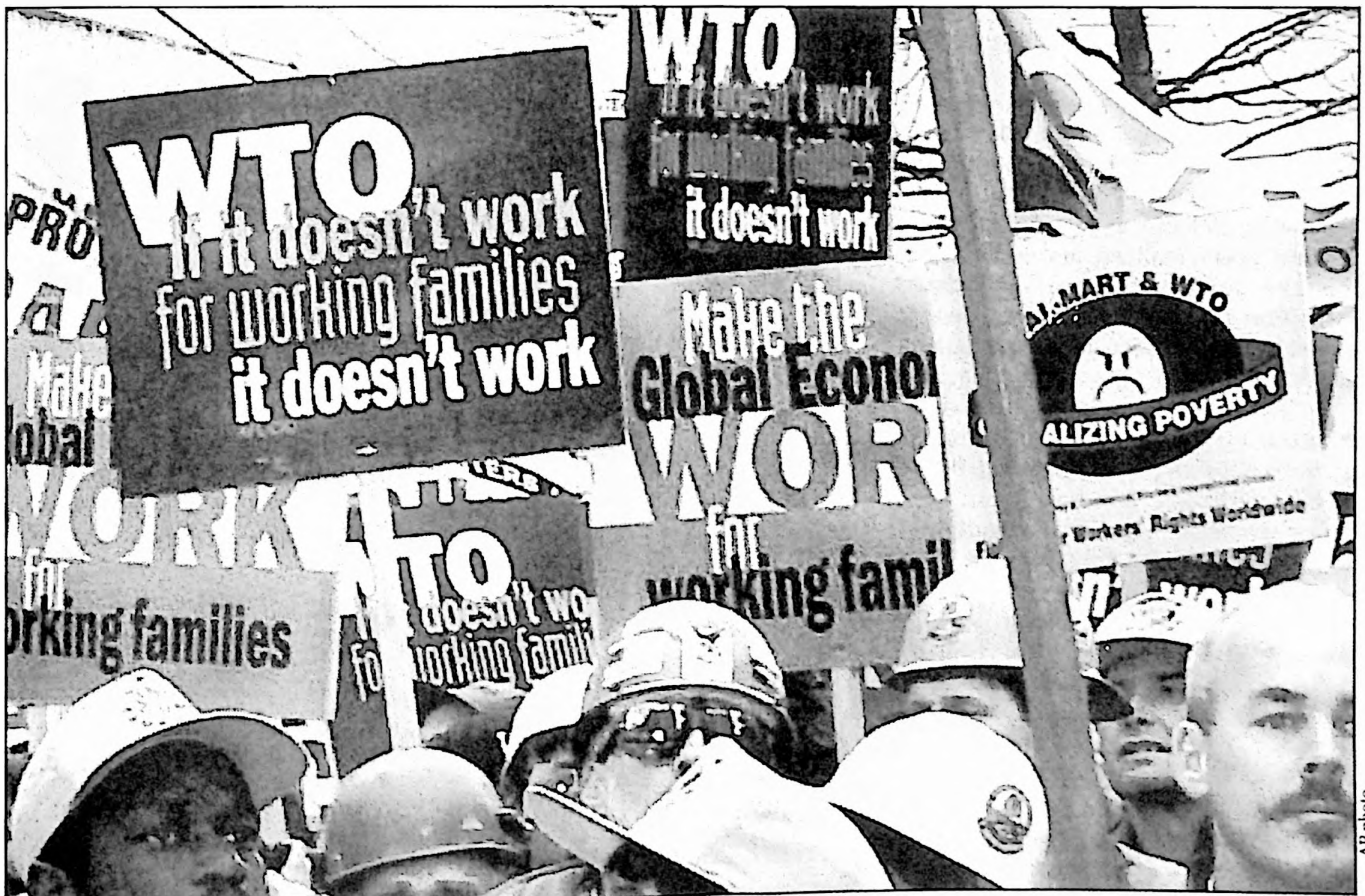
Followers of Marx and Engels were organizing unions in the U.S. as early as the mid-19th century. One example is the National Labor Union, the first U.S. national union affiliated with the International Workingmen's Association (the First International). The First International was led by Marx and Engels who had great influence on the U.S. labor movement. In the 1880s to early 1890s, Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, followed class-struggle unionism. For example, the predecessor of the AFL under his leadership called for a national general strike for May 1, 1886 to win the eight-hour day. He was anti-racist and anti-war until he became a turn coat and went over to monopoly capital and imperialism in the later 1890s. Before that he openly expressed his indebtedness to Engels and published Marxist articles in the *American Federationist*. In the 1880s the U.S. labor movement stated its

goals in Marxist terms as the abolition of the wage system.

In the influential and widely circulated book *Looking Backward* (1888), Edward Bellamy exposed the failures of the unfettered capitalist market and called for a government-guaranteed wage. He advocated U.S. socialism and foresaw its being established in the year 2000.

It is true that steps have been taken in this direction. For example, municipal ownership of utilities by U.S. cities has not been uncommon. As late as 1950 this was advocated by a central labor council in Wisconsin. Much could be written about mass labor and the leaders who were advocates of socialism and builders of socialist ideology, such as Eugene V. Debs, Big Bill Haywood, Mother Bloor, W.E.B. Du Bois, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, William Z. Foster, and Paul Robeson.

From 1848 to the present there has been an organized U.S. Marxist



movement, as depicted by William Z. Foster in his book, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*. It has upheld socialist ideas in the ranks of the labor and people's struggles. The struggle against racist oppression has been of special importance. Throughout its 80-year history the Communist Party USA has overall been exemplary in these regards and in principled thinking about mass working-class involvement in building socialism in the U.S. with the labor-African American-Latino alliance being central.

Eugene Debs was a railroad worker, union organizer, early advocate of industrial unionism, and leader of the historic Pullman strike (1894). He went on to become an advocate of socialism and an organizer of the socialist movement. He advanced independent labor politics as candidate for president four times on the Socialist ticket. He conducted his 1920 campaign from a federal prison cell, where he was committed for his principled opposition to the imperialist World War I. He got 900,000 votes. He did not waver from his working-class, socialist, and peace convictions, coming out in support of the October Revolution and the first working-class state.

While Bellamy's prophecy has not as yet been realized, at the start of this new century, the question of a transition to socialism has been thrust to the front burner for serious consideration.

Today the unrelenting maximum-profit mania by the global goliaths has put labor and the people of the world in a survival mode. It has greatly sharpened the contradictions and conflicts of the system. At the same time it points to the fact that capitalism has outlived its day as a social system worldwide. The technology, produced by social labor, is building a base for social ownership (socialism). The support for the far right and the fascist element shows clearly the desperation of global capitalism. When the fundamentalist Falwell gets on prime-time TV and

boasts against church-state separation, the fascist danger is real and the people's resistance and growing radicalization is all the more important. The deadly military enforcer role of the U.S. itself is showing cracks: For example, the unprecedented unanimous demand by the Puerto Rican people for the U.S. Navy to get out of its territory of Vieques.

In this charged framework, the need for breaking with class collaboration and mounting a strategic offensive to curb corporate capital is being more and more recognized and acted on by labor and the people internationally. The issue is survival, democratic rights, and moving forward to a better life for all. It means taking the road of the rejection of privatization and chauvinism and for enhanced federal, state and local governmental responsibility for human needs and public ownership. This puts the need for moving to a higher and better system – socialism – on the front burner.

#### Five Days That Shook the World

Seattle reflected an outlook that saw the need for an offensive against



Child looks at union button display.

WTO and an opening to basic economic change. The AFL-CIO and a broad world coalition reflected this approach.

Trade unionist marchers in the tens of thousands changed the concept of people's power. Such a labor-led demand is good news for defeating the far right in the 2000. It also points to a wide constituency for considering Socialism, USA.

At the momentous rally in Seattle, John Sweeney, head of AFL-CIO, said, "Today has been historic. We have won a victory. What's next?" Here is where the Communist Party USA and working-class science come in. Meanwhile more of the same, and down the not-far distant road: Socialism USA. ■



Farm workers on the march.

# ANTI-COMMUNISM

Miriam Pandor

C

apitalism's exponents' first act of attrition in demolishing everything that was the GDR was to scoff at the "ordered" anti-fascism and banned anti-Semitism, jeering at the country's laws against racist hate acts, expressions of bigotry and displays of Nazi paraphernalia.

True to its brutal nature, the conquering capitalist system had set out to defeat humanism and its values, in order to make GDR citizens obedient to its profit rapaciousness. Any means being good toward that end, the bigger the promised profit, the bigger the lawlessness that was permitted, and the greater the humiliation and depravity encouraged in the process.

After the storming and demolition of the Berlin wall and the subsequent visit to Leipzig of West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl, swastikas and vicious Nazi tirades about "Bolshevik Jews" were seen smeared on walls of cities in East Germany. Bitter anti-Communism, foster parent to racism and anti-Semitism, as well as other anti-human filth like "foreigners out," became for all too many ex-GDR people accepted thinking.

How useful this proved to be for West German competitors was seen very soon. Gone with the loss of identity was the prior sense of solidarity. Farmers were the first victims. They were ordered to cut down their fruit trees, plow under their leeks and slaughter their pigs. When they demonstrated in Berlin, there was no visible support from any side. Innumerable plant closings ensued, causing devastating unemployment.

Today, the slogan "foreigners are taking our jobs" is voice unashamedly by quite a few people. Yells of "Heil Hitler" are no longer uncommon.

The division and splitting up the people was acquiesced to just as the destruction of the GDR and socialism had been acquiesced to.

Very soon after the overthrow of the GDR, came news reports of the torture and the killing of animals in the Berlin zoo. Children were suspected. No media attention was given after the first reports. At the time one couldn't help wondering, had this depravity been the result of a dare? Why? As training in killing, a debasement, a dehumanization training

program with humans to be murdered next?

Soon afterwards came reports of murdered foreigners which continues to this day. There have been ten years of killings. Often drunken men and boys shouting racist insults, attack a single person. The courts are frequently quite lenient in cases of racist violence that come before them and in more than one case have absolved criminals, dismissing such evil actions as "pranks."

The police, the protectors of the powers that be, are often strangely absent or slow to respond when called to the scene of a racist attack. They have also been known to look the other way when interference could have saved a life. Very few people witnessing these crimes try to help the victims. Fear and indifference have gotten the upper hand. Among some there was even displays of malicious glee.

Old Nazis and sympathizers who, in the GDR, had to keep their heinous views and hatred within their own homes, had children and grandchildren who are now adults. These subjects creep out of the woodwork. They and their befriended gullible discontents are the ones helping extreme rightists with their obscene praises for Hitler. Meanwhile in Berlin this past May Day, the police came out to "protect" some 100 neo-Nazis gathered there in a counter demonstration to the May Day celebration organized by unions and progressive organizations.

The Cold War was the name given to the U.S. policy of anti-Communism practiced against socialist countries. It was a cold-blooded policy of aggression against peoples and



AP photo

A protester shouts during a demonstration of about 3,000 students in Berlin Wednesday, June 7, 2000. The students were protesting against tuition fees and demanded more money for education.

Miriam Pandor lived in Berlin..

their elected governments in socialist countries. The crimes against the Cuban people and the attempted assassinations against Castro are well known. The president of the then newly established government of Congo, Patrice Lumumba, was murdered. The CIA was suspect. Vietnam suffered a bitter war under the joint virulence of the U.S. army, navy and air force. Grenada was overrun and its president murdered; Yugoslavia endured vicious attacks by the U.S. In Angola and Mozambique, the anti-government, pro-capitalist insurrectionists are still warring with the approval of and even active U.S. support. In Central and South America, the U.S. overthrew the progressive government of Guatemala, was involved in the violent overthrow of the socialist Allende government in Chile and actively supported dictators and their death squads such as Pinochet in Chile and others in Haiti and El Salvador.

At home, anti-Communism murdered the Rosenbergs and imprisoned the leadership of the Communist Party which had never been outlawed. This instigated Red scare decimated the effectiveness of unions that had worked in the interest of the U.S. working people. In *The Cultural Front*, Michael Denning writes, (p. 24) "With the announcement of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, in the spring of 1947, the Cold War had begun in earnest. Within a year, the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act was passed (June 1947), repealing the rights labor had won during the New Deal and requiring a non-Communist affidavit from union officers."

Some decades ago, children's organizations in the U.S. began warning against TV violence. They saw the handwriting on the wall as instilling callousness toward human pain, disregard for dignity and even life. They understood this as a danger to society. African American organizations recognized the deliberate dumping of drugs into their neighborhoods as a weapon to keep

the people docile. In retrospect, this could be regarded as a "debasement and dehumanization program," as were the killings in Berlin's zoo. Today, life is being destroyed without impunity, as seen in the actions by racist policemen in New York and its mayor and by children killing children.

Capitalists of the world are uniting in preparing for the global fight. The financial power of capitalism had a glimpse of what just a fraction of the disregarded and neglected can do in the Seattle and Washington demonstrations against policies carried out by the IFM and World Bank. At least then they knew intensified and aggravated exploitation leads to uprisings.

Prof. Michio Kaku, a theoretical physicist at City College of New York and author of *To Win a Nuclear War* has warned against the domination and control of earth from outer space through the Star Wars program.

The meek shall inherit the earth, but if we remain meek, it won't be worth inheriting. Let the people of the U.S.A. never accept the omnipresence of globalized corporate ownership.

Let us unite in ever growing numbers against ever growing onslaughts. We have moved from "evil empire" to "rogue nations" as the scapegoat. Suddenly after the downfall of the Soviet Union we are to be frightened by the prospect of missile attacks by "rogue" states.

The government quickly befriends ex-functionaries of the late "evil empire" like Yeltsin and now President Vladimir Putin. President Clinton becomes a traveling salesman traversing continents to hawk Star Wars Ballistic Missile "Defense" systems for global capitalist corporations unable to care about the life of



German workers strike Walmart.

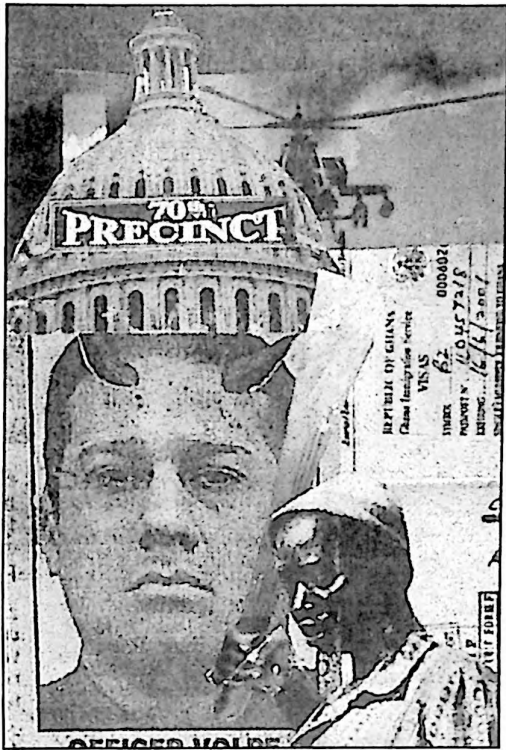
earth or of human beings.

The death throes of capitalism's people-before-profit system may deem it necessary to resort to globally organized fascism. The same forces who screamed to "drop the A-bomb on Moscow," disregard the danger even of retaliatory actions against their own large cities (they had their own private safe haven, so they thought).

It is high time for the working people of the world to unite, nationally and internationally. Let us and our organizations unite and each and all work according to our abilities toward this unity for life while we still have time and the right to oppose.

Let us learn from the words of Pastor Martin Niemoeller, a victim of the Nazis:

They first came for the Communists and I didn't speak up - I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up. ■



## Artist's Statement

*When people view my collages or read my poetry – I want folks to come away from the work with the strength to keep on holding on to these fraying ropes of struggle. For I hope that what I've created is purposeful for the people to use as a weapon in this fight that the poet Lamont B. Steptoe calls "a low intensity war;" in which we are battling everyday for our lives, while our enemies have enough ammo to beat*

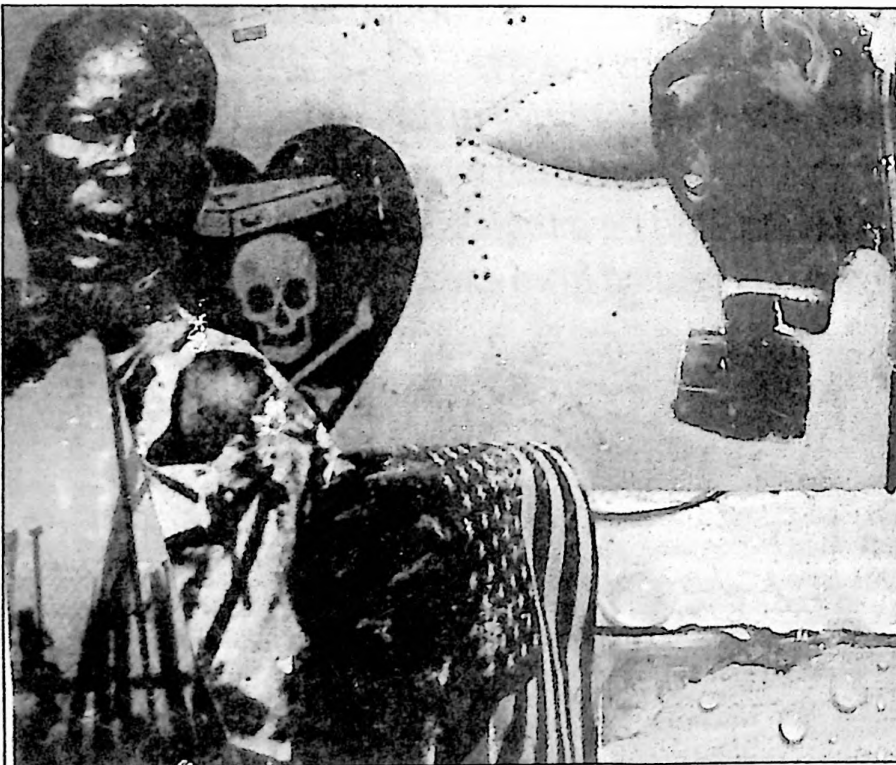
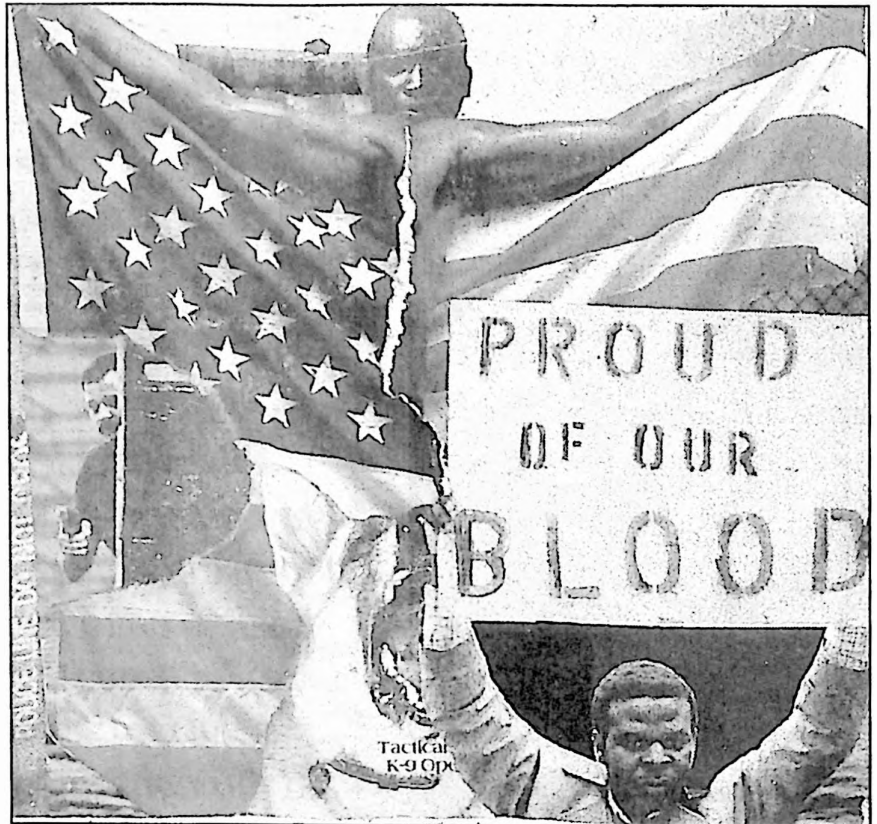
*the stars and stripes out of us forever!*

*If African-Americans do not have artists to keep the consciousness of the people raised, then what good is the artist? The purpose of my art is to be a fogless mirror reflecting the reality of the lives of the exiled from exile.*

*Theodore A. Harris*

### **American Skin**

*Lena gets her soon ready for school  
She says now on these streets Charles,  
You got to understand the rules  
Promise me if an an officer stops  
you'll always be polite  
Never ever run away  
and promise mama  
you'll keep your hands in sight.  
Cause is it a gun?  
Is it a knife?  
Is it a wallet?  
This is your life  
It ain't no secret (x2)  
The secret my friend  
You can get killed  
Just for living in your American skin.*



*Across this bloody river to the other side  
41 shots they cut through the night  
You're kneeling over his body in the  
vestibule,  
Praying for his life  
41 shots and we'll take that ride  
Across the bloody river to the other side  
41 shots my boots caked in mud  
We're baptized in these waters  
and in each other's blood  
It ain't no secret  
Is is a knife?  
Is it a wallet?  
This is your life  
It ain't no secret (x2)  
The secret my friend  
You can get killed  
Just for living in your American skin.*

**Bruce Springsteen**



*Lee Dlugin*

## COLOMBIA

In March, 2000, the FARC-EP People's Revolutionary Army of Colombia put forward a fiscal program to raise money to carry on its work in the effort to build a democratic peace in a new Colombia. Negotiations between FARC-EP and the government to bring repression and the more than 40 years civil war to a end, and establish a just and lasting peace are taking place in territory controlled by FARC-EP. Of great concern to the FARC-EP is the continued intrusion of U.S. imperialism by sending military aid to an abusive Colombian military under the guise of fighting narcotics. This aid can destabilize the fragile peace negotiations that are taking place and undermine support of a negotiated settlement. The main elements of the fiscal program are:

- A Tax for Peace on personal and corporate wealth above \$1 million.
- Late payment of the Peace Tax will result in extra payment penalties.
- Failure to pay can result in detention until the tax is paid.

## FIJI

Fiji's democratic forces condemned the coup which took place on May 18. Members of Parliament and government Ministers, including Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry, were taken hostage by a small group of armed men led by business man George Speight who was under investigation for shady financial dealings in the timber industry. When the Chaudhry government was elected a year ago, a number of the Fijian middle class who had enjoyed the benefits of government contracts during the previous Rabuka regime lost out when the Fiji Labor Party came to power. They support the privatization of Fijian lands for commercial development. There was general condemnation to the coup from Fijian organizations.

## IRAN

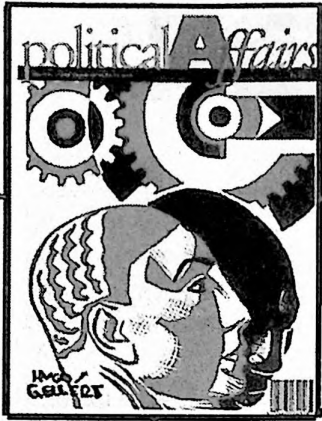
Soon after the landslide victory of pro-reform forces in Iran's sixth parliamentary elections, which put President Khatami's followers in control of the coming parlia-

ment, the right-wing, pro-big capital forces who lost their grip over the country's legislature launched their counter-attack. They did so by closing down about 18 pro-reform newspapers and magazines, arresting many of their writers and editors, suspending the election results in many cities, including in Tehran and arresting several prominent Iranian journalists and writers who had recently participated in a conference in Berlin. This right-wing counter attack was expected since the fifth parliament, which was under the control of the right-wing forces, was the pillar of the anti-reform, anti-Khatami strategy. It is particularly important because with the pro-reform majority controlling the Sixth Parliament, President Khatami can now remove the right-wing ministers from the cabinet.

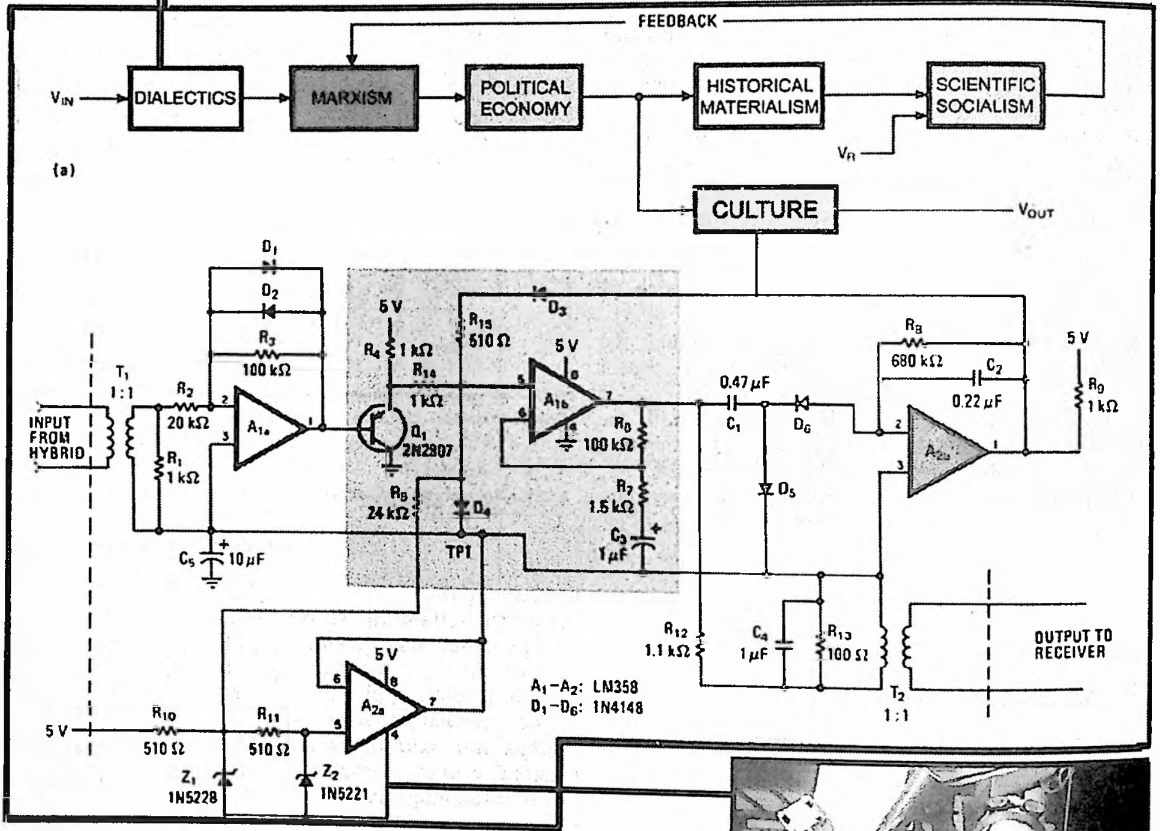
## SOUTH AFRICA

On May 18, 2000, Blade Nzimande, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party addressed the merger congress of the South African Transport and Allied Worker's Union (SATAWU) and the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU). He called for the need for a fundamental review of South Africa's economic policies in light of the deepening unemployment crisis and the failure to increase domestic investment. Nzimande pointed to the lack of an integrated and coherent industrial development strategy. He said the focus was only on the development of a macro-economic strategy, without an industrial development strategy. The core foundation must be the linking of reconstruction and development. Nzimande called for the convening of Job Summits with the clear objective of developing a coherent industrial strategy with the goal of infrastructural growth and development of the country. Such a focus on infrastructural investment and growth will require greater clarity on industrial policy, alignment of fiscal and monetary policies towards this objective, and much greater strategic co-ordination of public capital.

INPUT



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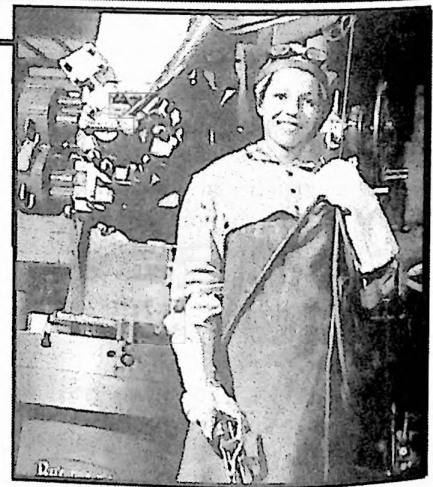
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