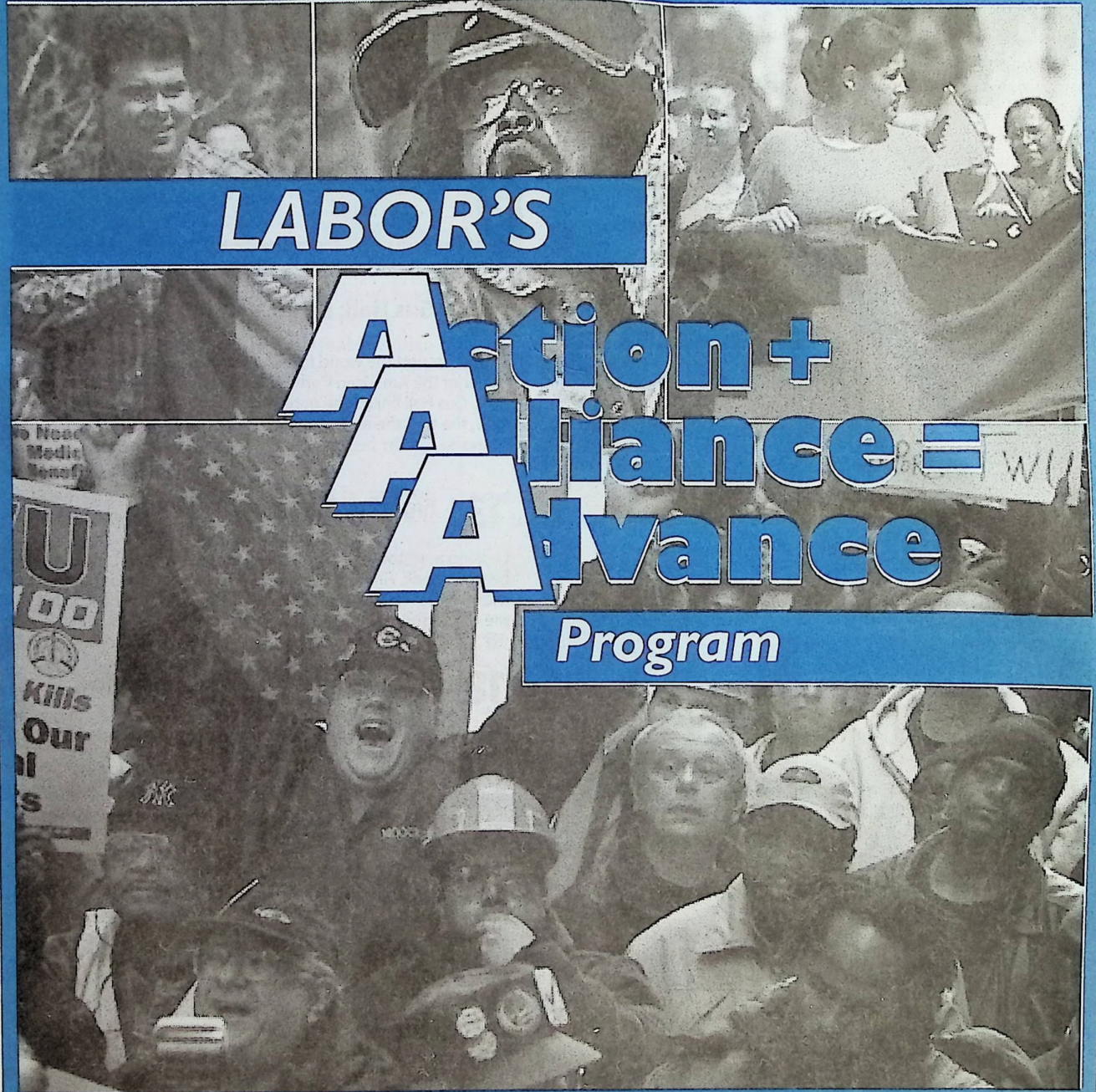


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LABOR'S

**Action +
Alliance =
Advance**

Program

Features: *Labor's Triple A Program:* CP Labor Dept; *Gus Hall Labor Up Front:* Scott Marshall; *Fighting Racism:* Dee Myles; *U.S. Students on the Front Lines:* Ali Fischer; *The Times Call for Clarity:* Karen Talbot

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Cover Story

Action + Alliance = Advance: A Triple "A" Program for Labor

How do Communists view the current situation facing the labor movement?

Labor Department CPUSA



Features



10 Gus Hall: Labor Up Front

Known around the world for his theoretical writings, as a leader of the American Communists, and a midwest labor militant, Gus Hall linked the generations from the days of the IWW, the CIO, the rank-and-file upsurge, to today's dramatic changes.

Scott Marshall

13 Fighting Racism

Looking at history, experience and the laws of capitalism, in his 1985 book, *Fighting Racism: Selected Writings*. Gus Hall showed the relationship between the fight for democracy and the class struggle?

Dee Myles

18 U.S. Students On the Front Lines

The United States Student Association's story is the tale of the last half-century of the American student movement. USSA president Ali Fischer talks about USSA's agenda and the road ahead.

Interview by Israel Smith



Departments

3 Editorials

23 Pre-Convention Discussion:

The Times Call for Clarity

Are we keeping pace with developments or trailing them in these changing times?

Karen Talbot

29 Book Reviews

MOSHER: *Hegemon: The Chinese Plan to Dominate Asia and the Rest of the World*

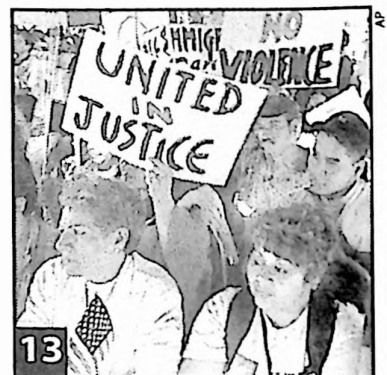
Gerald Horne

RIMMERMAN, WALD, & WILCOX: *The Politics of Gay Rights*

Gary Dottereman

YATES: *Why Unions Matter*

Roy Rydell



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Who Let the Dogs Out?

There's an ugly noise coming from Washington. The air is filled with the howls of the mad-dogs of the ultra-right. Feeling their power and smelling blood, the hounds from hell are on the hunt.

Their rapacious hunger seems to know no bounds: education, the environment, worker health and safety, the right to strike, the right to choose, affirmative action, you name it and they are going after it. The future well-being of all Americans is at stake.

Having run as a moderate, Bush and his administration in their first 100 days have swung to the extreme right, further right than even Reagan. Many seem surprised by their venom and viciousness.

All across the country, corporate wolf packs, emboldened by the president and attorney general, are on the prowl. Pro-gun and pro-death penalty forces have been set loose; anti-abortion fanatics have a new lease on life.

In what could have been a remarkable anticipation of this clear and present danger, the hip-hop generation has asked "Who let the dogs out?" An equally important question is, who can put them back on the leash? Only the organized might of the people can.

A broad all-peoples coalition must be revived in this new stage of the democratic struggle. It must be broader and better organized than the coalition that defeated Bush in November, a victory undone by judicial *coup d'état*.

With the right-wing Republican majority controlling both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court and the White House, the political climate in our nation and in the world is more dangerous than before. The people must be more vigilant. The struggle must be intensified. Labor, small and medium-business people, civil rights, women, youth and all democratic forces must be mobilized to muzzle the pit bulls of the ultra-right. ■

Bush Leads the Big Business Assault on Labor

Today George Bush the second is distinguished only by the ferocity of his attack on labor and the people. Some have called it "Blitzkrieg." It sure seems that the Bush administration comes up with fresh outrages almost every day. The damage has already been extensive to civil rights, the environment and women's rights.

Labor has suffered more than its share of the Bush onslaught. Just a few days after his coronation, Bush tore into project labor agreements in federal contracts, the rights of unions to engage in

political activity and the basic rights of unions in dealing with the federal government, including mandating that federal project sites now post notices telling workers that they need not belong to unions.

Bush immediately, and without the required judicial triggers, invoked emergency powers against the airline unions to disrupt and interfere in collective bargaining at four major airlines. He flat out declared that he would use the power of the federal government to stop any strike before bargaining had even reached an impasse in most cases.

Perhaps most vicious of all is the attack on workers health and safety. When the Bush administration engineered the death of standards that promoted healthy ergonomics in the work place, he sentenced millions to painful injury and disability. A stroke of the pen ended ten years of hard work and careful scientific research by labor and health and safety advocates.

To Our Readers:

This special labor issue of is dedicated to Gus Hall. Featured in this issue are two articles by contributing editors Scott Marshall and Dee Myles.

Gus Hall was a regular contributor to *Political Affairs*, served for several years as its editor and over the years contributed hundreds of articles on a wide range of issues. A working-class intellectual in the true sense of the word, Hall's reach was as wide as his vision broad, touching on many aspects of social, political and cultural life.

While his contributions will be missed, his legacy lives on. Hall not only contributed to *PA*, but also played a key role in shaping its current direction. The concept of *PA* as mass journal of ideology, politics and culture was his.

He emphasized the need for boldness and creativity in theory, ideology and politics and for discussion and vigorous exchanges of view as a means of developing theory. Hall stressed the need to look for what is new and emerging in life and its underlying causes, understanding that it's sometimes necessary to shake things up in order to get to those causes. Sometimes it's necessary to be provocative, he suggested.

Once he compared *PA* to a kite, sailing in the ideological winds and storms of the times. That the kite swings this way and that should not be cause for worry, he would say – so long as it's firmly rooted in the working class and the scientific method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and other great thinkers.

As we celebrate May Day during this spring season of struggle, *PA* remains committed to keeping the kite flying and seeing the vision fulfilled. ■



PWW

Political Affairs welcomes all contributions. Send letters, opinions and articles to:

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Letters should be limited to 200 words, opinions to 600 words, articles to 3,000 words. PA reserves the right to edit for length, content and clarity.

Manuscripts are invited. If a manuscript return is requested, please enclose a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope.

Some see this as "pay back" for labor's valiant efforts to defeat Bush and his ultra-right, anti-working families agenda. We think it goes much deeper than that. In a capitalist society, a class-divided society, profits can only come at the expense of labor, just as gains for labor can only come at the expense of the corporate bottom line. The current economic downturn is cutting deeply into profits. Declining profits always provoke a union-busting, wage and benefit-cutting assault by capital. The pay-back glee of labor's enemies is just frosting on the cake. ■

Our health and well-being

A ferocious attack on the health and well-being of working families has been unleashed in the first weeks of the Bush administration. Cabinet and lower appointments are now stacked with extreme right-wing, racist, anti-labor corporate representatives. Many of their edicts, representing the interests of the wealthy few, will inflict long-term damage if left unchallenged.

With the Bush/Cheney team in the White House, the oil monopolies have direct representatives in the nation's highest office. Previously, the elder Bush brought us the oil war in the Mid-East. While draped in nationalistic overtones, a fundamental aim of U.S. imperialism was to maintain control of oil prices.

The goals of the Bush/Cheney "oil team" became immediately obvious with the choice of Gail Norton for Secretary of the Interior. Norton, a James Watts protege, is an extreme

right-winger and founder of the Coalition of Republican Environmental Advocates (CREA), funded by such energy corporations as ARCO and Amoco.

Norton's first pronouncement was to back oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The threat of higher gas prices has been used as a club to solicit public support. Brownouts in California have been a scare tactic, pitting the environmental movement against the needs of the general public. Meanwhile, the energy corporations are left off the hook for their unconscionable price gouging, the real reason that many thousands of families have been left without heat or electricity.

Public support is also being solicited with the argument that the exploration will create new jobs. Public investment into renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, could serve both job creation and environmental protection goals.

The strengthened labor/environmental unity ("Turtles and Teamsters"), which came to the fore in the Battle of Seattle against the World Trade Organization, is of great importance to defeat the overall anti-people Bush agenda. Unfortunately, the decision of the Teamsters to support the push to invade ANWR is a step backwards.

ANWR exploration is a grave threat to the native people who depend on the wildlife, especially caribou. It is one of the last wholly intact arctic ecosystems with a vast array of wildlife,

including polar bears, musk oxen, arctic foxes, arctic wolves and many migratory birds, that use its 18 million acres. Oil exploration expands dependence on fossil fuels and the global warming they contribute to, particularly threatening coastal countries and island communities.

The fight to protect our environment is integral to the overall fight-back to preserve and expand the democratic, social and economic rights of the people of our nation. United opposition to exploration of ANWR, price gouging by the energy monopolies and oil wars in the Mid-East is part and parcel of the growing people's movement to turn back the profit-hungry expropriators of the White House. ■

PA Fund Drive



The time has come for our annual \$10,000 fund drive. Again we are requesting your financial support.

This has been a momentous year. The crisis around the presidency and the cyclical economic downturn, have given all of us cause for concern.

The labor and peoples movement reached a new stage of unity in struggle. *Political Affairs* has striven to keep abreast of it all and provide insightful Marxist-Leninist analysis of today's trends and developments.

We have continued to renovate the content and form of the journal and make breakthroughs towards a mass publication.

Understanding the need to continually seek fresh ideas and insights, we have added a number of innovations, including a guest column and the good books for activists section. Our reconstituted editorial collective plays a larger role in shaping policy and covering events at home and abroad. We've also added to our staff and volunteers.

Needless to say, all of this requires hard work, creativity and, importantly, money. The additions to our staff will cost an extra \$20,000 alone.

To make a political breakthrough, we have to make a financial breakthrough. Only you can help us achieve this. Please give as much as you can. Every little bit helps.

-Editorial Board

Labor's Action Alliance Advance Program

Issued for pre-Convention discussion
by the national labor department of the
Communist Party. Your comments are
invited at cpusa@rednet.org.

Why a Communist Party Labor Program? In the years since our last labor program, in 1993, there have been historic changes in labor. The organized labor movement is stronger and more mobilized for action than at any time since the mighty movements that built the CIO. Fresh winds of change brought new leadership, new policies and renewed energy to organized labor in the last decade. Fresh battles against corporate greed at home and globally have sharpened up labor's fighting trim. Labor's ranks are growing for the first time in decades.

More and more, labor is becoming the champion of all mass movements for social, political and economic justice. Coalition style, coalition unity, coalition building are the lifeblood of where labor is going. Organized labor has taken great pains to build unity and coalition with African Americans, Latinos and all those who suffer racial and national dis-

crimination. Labor coalition efforts have also championed coalition relations with the women's movements, youth movements, environmental movements, rural and farm movements, lesbian and gay movements and all others who are victims of corporate greed and discrimination.

On the other hand, workers and their families are facing the sharpest assault in decades. The appointment of George W. Bush to the White House is a blow to labor. His presidency ushers in a renewed corporate offensive against labor and the basic needs of working families. This right-wing political assault on democracy comes as the U.S. economy is facing a cyclical downturn. Already mass layoffs and plant closings echo the severe crisis days of the early 1980s.

The political extreme right and their big corporate sponsors are now moving with all means at their command to try

and destroy both the political and economic strength of the trade unions. The early days of the Bush administration give proof that the attack is on against labor. The prosecution of longshore workers in South Carolina for picketing and indictments of progressive labor leaders are vivid indications.

This dangerous time requires that we close ranks with labor, with our allies, and build the broadest, strongest, fight-back movement ever seen in our country. We can't stress enough the need to step up defending labor rights in these times when the ultra right is gearing up for even harsher and sharper attacks.

Thus the challenge is how to develop labor's fightback against these threats, to defend our rights, our jobs, our communities, our living standards and our families.

This Communist Party Labor Program is our modest attempt to help find some answers.

National labor department of the Communist Party.

How Communists View Labor

We submit this program from our own Marxist point of view. America is a capitalist society divided by class and conflicting class interests. In a capitalist society there is a constant class struggle between capital and labor.

On one side is big business: the huge multinational corporations, the banks and the political forces that serve their interests. Their main interests are profits and domination.

On the other is the vast majority: the working class and their families, the African American, Latino and all other racially and nationally oppressed people, and all who suffer from the social and political domination of big business. Our main interests are democracy, equality and the well-being of all.

We Communists view the working class and its organized sector, the trade union movement, as the leading force in society for defending and advancing the interests of all working people. Labor, because of its key economic, political and social role in capitalist society, is in the unique position to unite around it those whose interests are trampled by capital. We Communists have no interests apart from those of labor and the people. We see Marxism and the Communist Party as tools for helping the working class and people achieve their rightful goals of economic, political and social justice.

In this light we submit the program below for your consideration:

The Need for a Much Larger Trade Union Movement

The new labor movement has played a critical role in every important struggle in recent years. Turning back anti-labor, anti-people measures at the state level (most notably Proposition 226 in California), defeating fast-track trade negotiations, fighting to save Social Security and Medicare, rallying against the WTO and initiating massive voter registration and turn-out-the-vote

drives are important examples. Yet, just a couple of million more members would have defeated Bush and prevented the stealing of the 2000 elections.

Union membership is at its lowest percentage level in decades. In response, unions have launched many creative and new approaches to organizing, showing fighting spirit and great determination. The tide is turning. Still, to make the massive gains needed, organizing the unorganized must be more broadly defined. What is required is a broad social movement to organize unions for all working people.

**This dangerous time
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Such a broad mass approach combines the best traditions of the CIO drives in basic industries of the 1930s and the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The stage is set for just such an approach. Organized labor is reaching far beyond its ranks for alliances with progressive social movements. Most progressive forces now see labor as a source of strength and support for their objectives, and see a much larger trade union movement as the key to progress for all.

Organizing includes new strategies for including part-time, day-labor and other contingent workers. Young workers in new industries are ripe for organizing. Young workers will come to the labor movement with different experiences and concerns. Hiring youth organizers and giving full range to new methods

and styles of organizing are key. Young people are increasingly marginalized, attacked and ripped off by corporate America. Young people have been the backbone of challenging big business, capitalism and corporate globalization, and have proven themselves steadfast allies of labor.

Besides a vigorous labor/community coalition approach we need nationally coordinated organizing campaigns that strategically target key sectors of industry, including new industries. The mass production industries still set the pace for improving wages, hours and working conditions for the rest of the working class. In this regard, national union contracts and industry-wide collective bargaining with common expiration dates are critical to maximizing labor's clout.

Unity

Unity is the great strength of the labor movement. The American working class is multinational and multiracial, male and female, young and old, gay and straight, skilled and unskilled. Real progress has been made in building a labor leadership that includes African American, Latino, Asian American, Native American and women workers. But much still needs to be done.

Racist hiring and promotion policies are still the common practice of big business. Discrimination in housing and education remain real roadblocks to the American dream for millions. Attacks on immigrant workers and "English-only" discrimination are increasing. Women still earn less than men do for comparable work. Racist practices and inequality continue to drag down wages and working conditions of all workers.

Unity to confront corporate power requires greater, more direct challenges to racism and discrimination. Big business uses technology and changing working conditions to foster new patterns of racial and

Unity requires wholeheartedly embracing the AFL-CIO's new approach to immigrant workers. They are a full and equal part of the American working class and add a vital dynamic to the struggle.

gender inequality for greater profits. Identifying and answering new forms of discrimination must be higher on labor's agenda.

Fighting for unity requires a fresh look at affirmative action and other methods of fighting inequality. Establishing and re-establishing civil rights and fair employment practice committees in unions and workplaces is key. Building labor coalitions and alliances with civil rights, human rights and women's rights organizations to fight against racism and discrimination in society as a whole is also critical.



Union members protest the stolen election at a rally in Tallahassee, on inauguration day.

This includes greater attention to broader issues facing women including abortion and health rights, ending sexual harassment and job discrimination. So-called "welfare reform" has been devastating for millions of women and children and promoted racism and union busting. Re-establishing a real social safety net is critical, not only for working families, but for building unity.

Immigrant Workers

Unity requires wholeheartedly embracing the AFL-CIO's new approach to immigrant workers. They are a full and equal part of the American working class and add a vital dynamic to the struggle. Immigrant worker organizing in the '80s and '90s were models of building labor/community coalitions from which all of labor can learn.

The Cesar Chavez holiday in California is the first such holiday to honor a labor leader in modern times. To meet the times, labor needs to take on deportations and the militarization of the border with Mexico.

The broadest unity also includes trade union unity. Ideas like a metal workers federation with common expiration dates for contracts in steel, auto, electrical and machine tool industries are an example. The AFL-CIO's Union Cities program and union coalition drives to organize whole industries like Silicon Valley are also important initiatives for greater unity.

Winning for working families also means championing new and broader concepts of unity. For example, fighting the attacks on public education and for other critical social needs is key to uniting the widest possible sections of the people with labor.

Unity also demands an end to anti-Communism. When the AFL-CIO removed the anti-Communist clause from its constitution, it signaled the end of the Cold War in

labor. Now state and local labor federations are following suit and thus bringing a renewed spirit of democracy and working-class unity to the labor movement.

Political Independence

In the 2000 elections, thousands of union activists saw for themselves the severe limitations of the Democratic Party in the battle to defeat the extreme corporate right entrenched in the Republican Party.

No longer is the adage of "Reward our friends and punish our enemies" the main pillar of labor. Workers are writing laws and setting policy. In the last three national elections labor has developed its own independent apparatus for political action. Union election efforts are now much more likely to be run out of union halls. Money is used to build union efforts and labor/community efforts for specific candidates and not given to political parties as it was in the past.

The AFL-CIO "2000 by 2000" program was met with such enthusiasm that the goal of 2000 workers seeking public office was surpassed before November 2000. Grassroots coalitions formed the base of union victories. In some states, like New York, labor built its own independent political party. This is an emerging trend out of the experiences of labor that needs to be built upon in a unifying way.

Election law reform is on the front burner for labor. Following the lead of the UAW, we must declare election day a national holiday, establish 24-hour voting and registration at the polls. Restoring the franchise to former felons could add millions to voter lists. Full government funding of election boards and infrastructure would begin to rebuild respect for the battered democratic process.

Repealing the Hatch Act, which denies 3.5 million organized federal government workers the right to run for public office, would help more



Union members protest Florida election fraud with allies from community, civil rights and women's organizations.

African-American, Latino and women workers take seats in government.

Rank-and-File Union Democracy

Union members are the grass-roots power of the union movement. Even with the positive changes taking place in labor, building rank-and-file participation and union democracy are key tasks.

The best guarantee is a militant shop steward system backed by a grievance procedure giving the union the authority to settle beefs in the workplace. Corporate lawyers and negotiators have helped shift the grievance system away from the shop or workplace floor. Too many issues are "resolved" away from the shop or workplace floor. Too many issues are "resolved" in arbitration in offices rather than by workers on the job.

This takes the rank-and-file power of the union membership out of the process. It also ties up valuable union staff time in lawyer-like work rather than mobilizing and involving the membership in enforcing the contract.

Lack of attendance at union meetings and activities is a warning sign that union democracy is in trouble. It is the responsibility of union leadership to ensure that the union is not a "business" relationship of mailings and dues. Real union

democracy means that the members set policy.

Union democracy means better ways of mobilizing and involving members in the work of the union. Some unions are now experimenting with part-time and volunteer organizers from the ranks. This needs to be greatly expanded. Even more, unions need to bring the issues of the day to the shop floor. Members have to be mobilized for elections, demonstrations, solidarity actions, mass protests and organizing.

Union democracy also means beefing up health and safety enforcement on the shop floor. The right to refuse unsafe and unhealthy work is critical.

Jobs & Job Security

Boom and bust cycles and economic crises are permanent features of capitalism. As this draft program is written, a new, possibly severe, economic downturn is looming. The steel and auto industries, as well as much of manufacturing, are already in crisis. Plant closings and thousands of layoffs are daily news items. As the unemployment lines get longer, workers everywhere are asking, "Will my job be next?"

We are faced with all the signs of a classic capitalist crisis of overproduction. "Crisis of overproduction" is misleading. There is a crying need for steel, for transportation, for hous-

labor and capital do not have the same international interests. Globalization led by corporations and imperialist goals means misery and global union busting for working families everywhere. Globalizing social and economic justice means international labor solidarity and respect for each country's right to develop as they chose.

ing, for hospitals, schools, and for most things that mass production industries make. The crisis is, in part, that working families cannot buy back the goods they make.

Labor needs to champion production priorities that rebuild our country and our infrastructure. Bridges, roads, dams, sewer systems, schools, low-cost housing and hospitals are examples of what needs building. New priorities must also include investment in social needs like education, health care, housing and child care, to name a few.

This kind of useful production priorities does not generate the highest rates of profit. If the corporations do not want to make what is needed, then rather than allow plant closings, we should consider public ownership for the common good. Already in California there are proposals in the legislature for public ownership of energy to ensure this vital resource for the people.

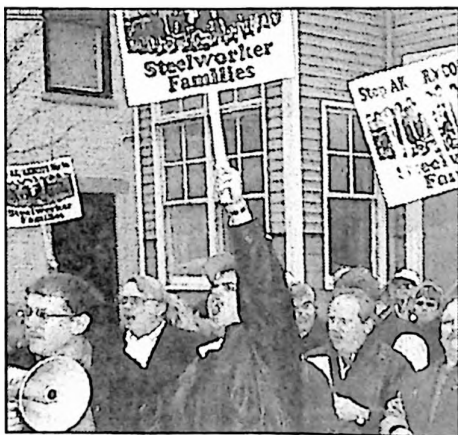
There are many demands that can help save and create jobs. Some are:

- a Rebuild America's Infrastructure Act;
- shorter hours with no cut in pay;
- heavily tax and close loopholes for overseas capital investments;
- unemployment compensation for the entire duration of layoff to be paid for by taxes on windfall corporate profits;
- make large corporations maintain health care and pension contributions for their workers who are victims of layoffs or plant closings;
- corporations that receive subsidies and tax abatements should be forced to repay them if they shut down or move plants.

In addition, labor has to continue to fight for the overall needs of working families in times of economic crisis. This includes such things as energy price relief and making it illegal to cut off heat and utilities.

International Labor Solidarity

Capitalist globalization is a fact of life. Giant multinational corporations and banks span the globe in their drive for maximum profits forcing workers into what the AFL-CIO calls "a race to the bottom."



Union members protest outside a radio station in Cincinnati after they refused to let them give their side in a labor dispute.

New and creative forms of international labor solidarity are critical. World solidarity actions by longshore unions in defense of longshore unions in England and Australia, and actions in support of the WTO protests in Seattle, are fine examples.

U.S. corporations and banks are aided in their world plunder by the American government and military. The CIA, the State Department and the military have often intervened to help break unions and democratic movements that challenge U.S. big business interests around the world. Recent discussions in some AFL-CIO central labor councils questioning the role of labor in supporting such efforts in Chile and asking for a nationwide discussion in labor of similar union activities are most welcome. It is time for labor to have a deeper discussion of international relations and foreign policy.

Labor and capital do not have the same international interests. Globalization led by corporations and imperialist goals means misery and global union busting for working families everywhere. Globalizing social and economic justice means international labor solidarity and respect for each country's right to develop as they chose.

Cold war anti-Communism was used to split the world labor movement at the end of World War II. Globalization is forcing all sides to reconsider world labor unity. There is growing awareness that unity must be based on a common fight against the multinational corporations and not on ideological agreements.

Socialism

Did you ever wonder why unions have to fight the same battles over and over again? Why is it that what is won never stays won? Is this the best way we can do things? Do we really require the giant monopoly corporations and banks siphoning off the wealth that they never toiled to earn?



Delores Huerta (right), secretary-treasurer UFW, listens to speakers at an immigrant rights press briefing at the AFL-CIO convention.

Capitalism only works for the privileged few. A tiny percentage gets most of the wealth and the basic needs of millions go unmet. Adequate health care, decent housing and education and even enough to eat are out of the reach of millions of children and families. Even those who have decent jobs are plagued with economic insecurity, crime, pollution and decaying cities and towns.

In the early days of the American labor movement many unions and labor leaders called for socialism as the solution to the exploitation, racism and misery experienced by the working class. Socialism and labor have common roots in the struggle for economic and social justice for all workers. Many great labor leaders like Eugene V. Debs and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn were passionate advocates of socialism. Unions in most other countries, including Europe, Asia, Africa and South America, officially call for socialism.

It is time for a serious discussion of alternatives to capitalist exploitation and greed. We advocate Bill of Rights Socialism, based on the revolutionary and democratic traditions of our country. Socialism is based on the idea that the democratic majority who create our nation's wealth should own it and say how that wealth is used for the common good.

We invite your comments, your criticisms and your ideas. ■

LABOR UP FRONT

Once the basic class nature of capitalism and the place of the working class within it is firmly established, then it is possible to view the working class as a part of a much wider and more complex social, political and economic framework. To understand capitalism is to understand its class structure. To understand class structure is to understand capitalism.

— Gus Hall, Working Class USA

Scott Marshall

By most measures, Gus Hall was a remarkable man who made a remarkable contribution to the struggle for a better world. His unique contribution came out of his experiences and his deep working-class roots in American soil.

Many first thoughts of Gus revolve around his background as a member of what is now being called the "greatest generation," the union organizers, men and women, Black, Brown and white, who stood at the plant gates in sub-zero weather to sign folks up for the CIO. They ran soup kitchens and picketlines, put back the furniture of those being evicted in the Great Depression and challenged Jim Crow. They fought and died to defeat fascism.

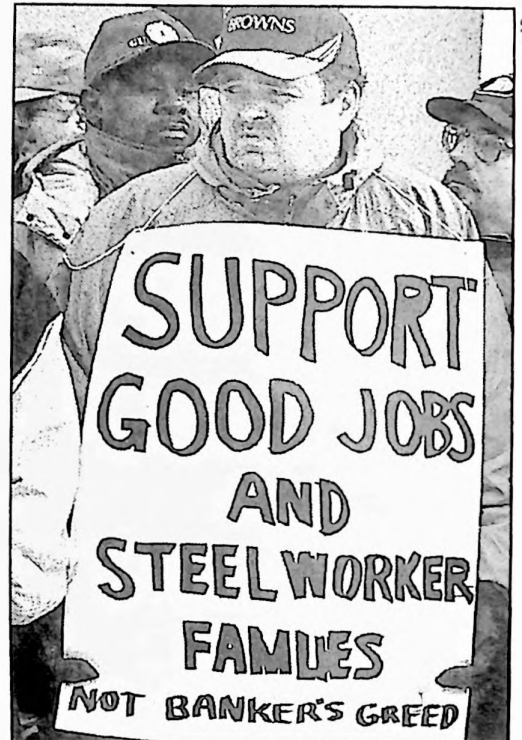
Gus knew Phil Murray and John L. Lewis. He knew the Reuther brothers, and Wyndam

Mortimer and Harry Bridges. He battled for labor as a contemporary of A. Phillip Randolph, Cesar Chavez and Jimmy Hoffa.

Gus is known around the world for his theoretical writings, and as a leader of the American Communists. But on the Minnesota Iron Range and in Youngstown, Ohio he is known as a labor militant. No contradiction. A rounded Marxist, Gus thoroughly understood and lived the interconnections.

One aspect of Gus' great contribution perhaps is less often thought about: he played an important role in bridging generations of working-class radicals and labor militants.

While he knew and was a contemporary of Elizabeth Gurly Flynn, Henry Winston, William Z. Foster, Big Bill Heywood and Hosea Hud-



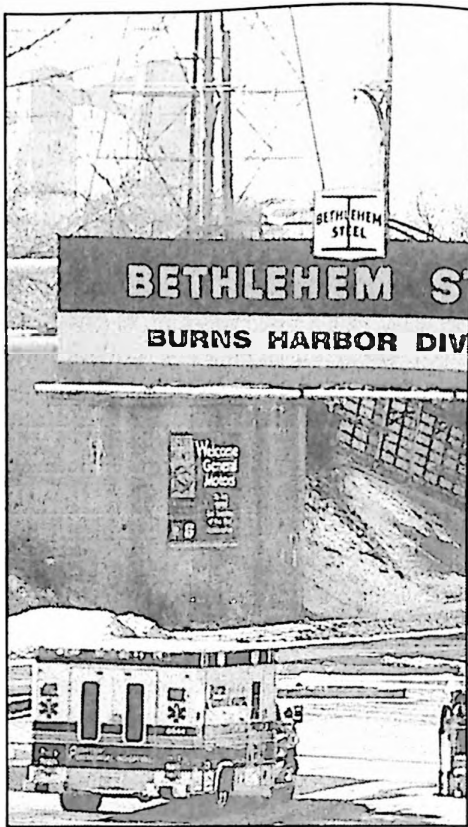
LTV steelworkers rally in Youngstown, Ohio.

son, he also knew hundreds of rank-and-file activists of the '60s, '70s and '80s. He helped train hundreds of them, both in and out of the Communist Party.

In his person, Gus kind of shows us an unbroken chain of labor militants that stretches from the early days of the IWW, through the CIO days, through the rank-and-file upsurge, to the changes taking place in labor today.

Outside the unions themselves, the Communist Party is one of a very few organizations so long led by an industrial worker. Throughout

Scott Marshall is a vice-chairman of the Communist Party.



In February a furnace exploded in Burns Harbor, Indiana, killing two workers.

his life in the party, Gus fought to keep party policy focused on the class struggle, not in a narrow or rigid way, but in its complexity, diversity and interconnections.

Just as every generation comes to socialism in its own way, so too every generation of labor radicals faces a new set of challenges in

understanding and moving the class struggle forward. But it helps to know where you've been and where you're going. The employer's offensive and the accompanying red-baiting attacks of McCarthyism in the '50s meant many of today's workers were cut off from their radical past.

But despite their best efforts, the enemies of labor were never able to wipe out the left and Communist trends in labor. In large part, Gus Hall and his greatest generation taught hundreds and thousands of labor activists the lessons learned from earlier periods and earlier critical battles. This, even in the face of unrelenting media and pundits who proclaimed labor dead, something from a bygone era. This, even while some on the left proclaimed labor bought off and no longer revolutionary. In 1966, with the cold war in labor still virulent, speaking to a leadership meeting of the Communist Party, Gus put it this way:

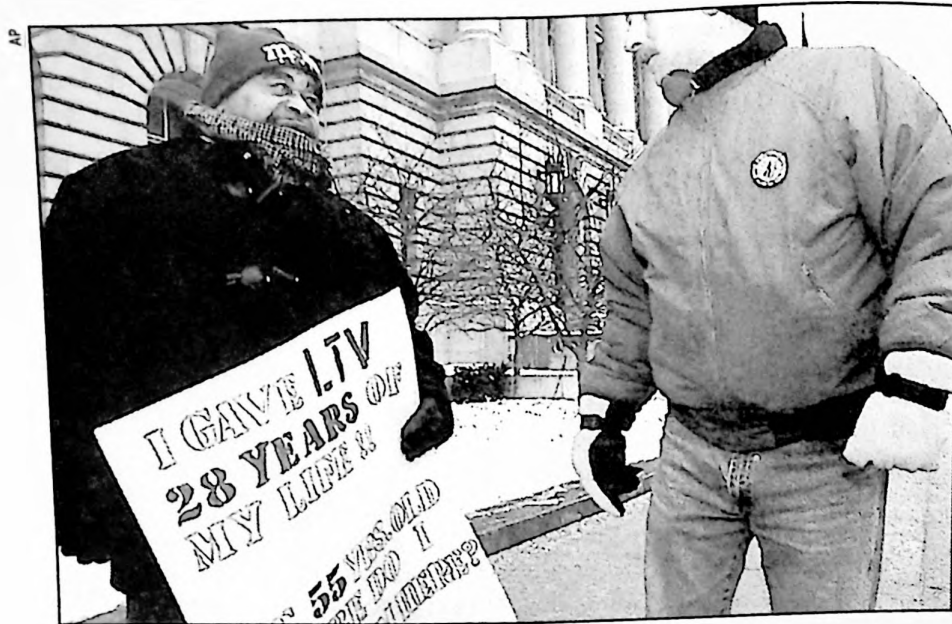
The future – and I mean the immediate and the long-range future – of all social progress, the future of the left upsurge, the future of our Party is decisively bound up with this question. All subsequent developments in the struggle for peace, for civil rights, as well as the youth upsurge will, in a critical measure, be determined by what the working class will do, how it will react to coming events.

We are dealing here with one of the fundamental laws of social development under capitalism. The position of the working class doesn't necessarily determine how struggles and movements will start. But it does determine how far they'll develop, how much and how lasting the gains will be and, above all, what the political content of the victories will be.

Perhaps one of the most important things that today's labor radicals and activists bring to the dance is a sense of their own history and traditions. In fact, in many cases this sense of history and what labor has done before is a key ingredient that tends to distinguish the left from the center forces. And as workers move more to the left they often develop an unquenchable thirst for labor history.

What Gus helped teach many young workers was not dry history of dates and personalities. Rather it was a feel for movement, big and bold enough to challenge the most powerful interests on the earth. It was the feel of America's earliest unions making common cause with the abolitionists to fight slavery. It was the sweep of the general strikes in San Francisco and Seattle/Tacoma. It was the audacity of Eugene Debs and William Z. Foster developing strategy to organize the giant trusts of rail and steel. It was the

hat Gus helped teach many young workers was not dry history of dates and personalities. Rather it was a feel for movement, big and bold enough to challenge the most powerful interests on the earth. It was the feel of America's earliest unions making common cause with the abolitionists to fight slavery. It was the sweep of the general strikes in San Francisco and Seattle/Tacoma. It was the audacity of Eugene Debs and William Z. Foster developing strategy to organize the giant trusts of rail and steel. It was the mass organizing of millions of rank-and-file CIO members.



LTV employees wait outside Cleveland City Hall for buses to take them to Youngstown, Ohio, December 2000, where LTV Steel filed for bankruptcy protection.

mass organizing of millions of rank and file CIO members. It was the "Labor for Peace" initiative that not only challenged Nixon and the military industrial complex's dirty war in Vietnam, but the Cold War backwardness of George Meany's AFL-CIO foreign policy.

Gus was truly a working-class intellectual. He learned and internalized the basic theory of Marxism. His years in the Communist movement grounded him in the science. He wrote books and pamphlets and articles on all aspects of the working class, the labor movement, the struggle for Black, Brown and white unity and all other critical elements of the struggle. Undoubtedly his works reached and influenced thousands.

But what made Gus such an influential leader of the Communist Party and among working-class activists was that his very life validated and informed his theory. How his life, his theory, his party and his activities all intersected was most vividly and warmly shown when he returned to Warren, Ohio in 1995. He was invited back by USWA local 3375 at WCI steel (Republic Steel in 1936) to talk about his experience as picket captain in the 1936 strike.

He was invited back, yes, because of his past experience, but even more because the local was facing a new tough fight with the company. The union wanted to hear from someone who had been there, done that.

Gus was at home, not as a returning hero, but as a fellow worker. He was intent on giving them a bridge to the days when the union

stormed heaven. It went without saying that a Communist leader like Gus would know how to hone in on the company. It was assumed that a Communist leader would have international contacts with other steelworkers who could be counted on to show solidarity and support. But what the local really wanted to know was how do a small group of workers stand up to a corporation with all the power of the state at their beck and call. How can we beat them?

It won't be that many years until some eager young trade unionists will approach some of us and say, "You knew Gus Hall, what was he really like?" That calls for a big answer. We will have to do our part to show that Gus' work was part of an unbroken chain of ordinary folks making extraordinary contributions. When Gus was asked similar questions about William Z. Foster, or Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, or Juan Chacon, or Joe Cook, he would inevitably tell you a funny story. Followed by, "You know, she/he really played an important role in '85 - it really changed things. There's a lot we can learn from '85." ■



SEIU, representing 47,000 LA county workers, pushed their contract demands with a rally outside and by packing the Board of Supervisors meeting inside.

Fighting RACISM

by Dee Myles

This is the first installment in what should be a series of writings contributed by many. This article represents the beginning of the process of reexamining the written work, indeed the legacy, of Gus Hall in the fight against racism. This first installment will focus exclusively on the material contained within the pages of *Fighting Racism* (International Publishers, 1985). If you have not read this book in full, or if you read it long ago, then you must read it now to gain the deeper meaning of what happened during Election 2000 and to prepare for the great battles against the right-wing policies of the newly selected president which lie ahead.

To defend and expand democracy is the goal which is clearly on the front burner. Reading *Fighting Racism* helps us to understand the depth and breadth of the task a little better. Without hesitation, Gus Hall speaks to the relationship between the fight for democracy and the fight against racism: "The struggle for democracy will be limited and will flounder if it does not take up the struggle for those whose democratic rights are most brutally violated." (p. 93)

Indeed the Election 2000 battle and its aftermath gave us an inkling of the extent to which corporate America will reach to secure its desired end. Though we the people hold democracy sacred, the protection of increasing private profit is the only thing held sacred by corporate America. In this context, Gus' analyses help to renew our spirit and bring satisfaction to our soul.

There can be no successful long-range struggle for democracy which does not undertake the struggle against the racist ideology of the anti-democratic forces. There can be no anti-monopoly coalition that does not confront the racist ideology and practices of monopoly capitalism. Thus, the struggle against racism is inextricably linked with the most basic processes of the class struggle, the struggle for social progress and socialism. (p. 227)

For the most part, in writing and speaking about the question of racism and chauvinism, Gus Hall sees his

target audience as white workers, in particular, and white masses, in general. One could ask why such a target audience when the fight against racism most directly affects the quality of life of its racially and nationally oppressed victims. Here is where Gus Hall differs with many theorists on the matter. He injects the notion that the ideology of racism has much more to it than appearance would suggest:

Racism is an ideological poison that induces white workers to act against their own interests. It is acceptance of the rules set by the class enemy. It is letting the enemy con you into believing that you are better than your fellow workers. ... It is also a means of increasing the rate of exploitation of the whole working class, squeezing higher profits from all workers. This is the starting point, the foundation upon which the struggle against racism can be built. (p. 52)

White chauvinism remains the most persistent and widespread poisonous ideological current influencing the thinking of white masses ... It is the moving spirit and the ugliest segment of U.S. great power chauvinism. It is the main obstacle to Black-white unity ... influences of white chauvinism feed other areas ... without a more effective and more consistent struggle against the penetration of white chauvinism, we simply cannot effectively fight the other ideological currents and influences. (pp. 16-17)

Gus feels strongly that white workers have an unavoidable stake in the fight against racism and hence, a decisive role in its defeat. In fact, he advances the need of conscious white workers to become experts on waging struggle against racism, which means exposing the intrinsic interest of white workers in the fight and therefore winning them solidly to the cause.

When we speak about becoming experts, capable fighters against racism, we are speaking mainly about white Communists and white trade unionists, those who understand the class roots of racism. But it is just as

Dee Myles is a contributing editor of Political Affairs.

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important to understand and to explain clearly the inter-connections, the overlapping self-interests. One cannot be an expert and a capable fighter without that knowledge. (pp. 209-210)

Gus calls on "Communists in shops, in local unions, in communities" to "become experts in leading struggles that will wipe out every vestige of inequality" within the working class, so that we can bring into being the unbreakable unity required to ultimately wipe out the inequality that exists between the working class and owners and allies of corporate America.

His starting point is the premise that "struggle is an inseparable part of the existence of all living things, including the social existence of people." (p. 90) His starting point is also the concept that capitalism represents the struggle between two great classes with differences between them which are impossible to reconcile: big business on the one side and the working class and its allies on the other.

The process of moving forward in the struggle includes engaging in various levels of inquiry, and in that context, Gus argues, the working class comes face to face with the problem within its own ranks of the enemy ideology of racism:

Struggle is a stimulant of thought. A confrontation compels one to ask: Who is my enemy? What is the ideology, the politics of my enemy? The answers lead workers



A sign left by Bloomington United, a group advocating tolerance and combating racial hatred, outside the Korean United Methodist Church of Bloomington, Indiana, where Won-Joon Yoon was shot and killed by Benjamin Nathaniel Smith.

to a deeper class consciousness. Struggle forces workers to think in terms of class unity, and to recognize obstacles to unity, such as racism and class collaboration. (p. 57)

For Gus, the class nature of racism is an elementary truth. "Certain elementary truths must be repeated at every turn of events. The class nature of racism is one." (p. 52) And, as a result, the struggle to win white workers and white masses to the struggle against racism in their own interest is not only realistic but historically necessary. "The people of our land want honest answers. Their inquiry is sincere. Increasing numbers of our people are ready to draw the necessary conclusions. They can be won for progressive solutions." (p. 265)

The fact that white workers can be won to waging the fight against racism, for Gus, is an irrefutable fact based on history, experience, and a knowledge of the laws of capitalism.

We are confident of being able to win against racism because we have confidence in the working class. Our confidence in the working class is not wishful or romantic. It follows from our understanding of the laws of capitalism and their effects on the working class. (p. 226)

Yet, Gus also states that the struggle is very difficult. It is, in fact, the most difficult of struggles:

Winning white workers and white people in general is the most difficult aspect of the struggle against racism. It is an area of the struggle which we still tend to avoid. The task can best be done when the mutual self-interests are thoroughly understood and clearly explained to white workers. (p. 210)

We can ask ourselves, have we and do we always examine the connections between class exploitation and racism, and do we clearly explain them to others? Have we placed in bold relief the interconnection between the violations of the voting rights of the racially and nationally oppressed in Florida and the absolute theft of a working-class victory, as defined by the goal set by organized labor, in the 2000 election? Do we see the connection between the mass imprisonment of racially and nationally oppressed peoples and youth and the threat to the jobs and wages of the working class overall? Do we see the connection between the expansive past and present poverty in racially and nationally oppressed communities and the downward pressure on the wages of the working class overall? Do we see the connection between the threatened policies of the Bush administration and the introduction of revitalized and new angles of racism, domestically and internationally, toward justifying those policies and undermining our efforts to fight back? Gus wrote:

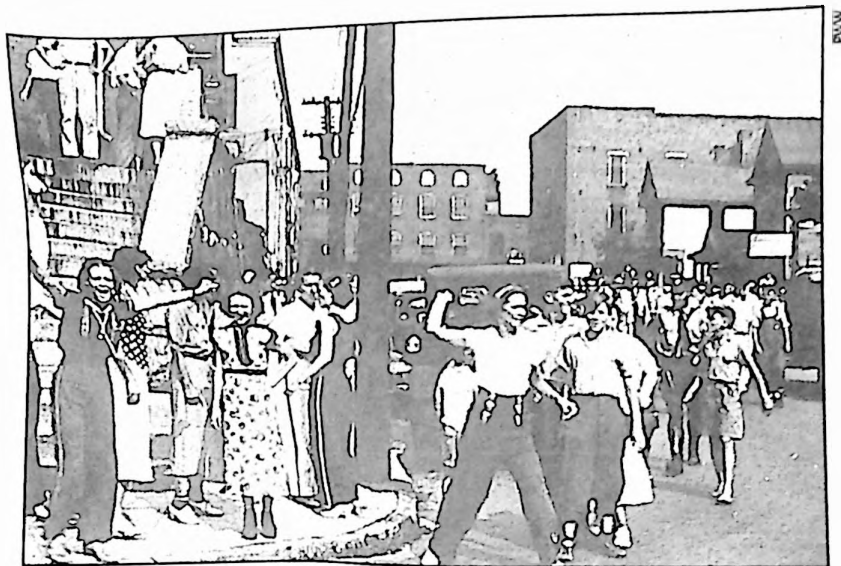
White chauvinism is the most formidable ideological road block to social progress in general, and to the transition to socialism ... Because of this, the struggle against racism, against chauvinism, is the most crucial of all ideological questions for us. Because of its deep roots, the struggle against it is in many ways the most difficult of all tasks. Because it is the most persistent, our struggle against it must be the most persistent. (p. 17)

Gus warns that "under the pressure of movements and struggles racism retreats, changes channels and constantly emerges in new disguises." (p. 228)

We are also forewarned to ready ourselves to meet the new challenges and therefore take full advantage of the new opportunities which will emerge full force as a result of the policies of the new Bush administration:

The influences of racism exhibit, dialectically, two sides: new opportunities in the struggle against racism, as well as continuing efforts by the ruling class to inject this poison into the bloodstream of our society. As crisis contradictions sharpen, racist pressures increase. This sharpening of contradictions gives rise to struggles, which exert pressure for greater unity, which in turn helps to create conditions in which the fight against racist pressures can be more successful. (p. 60)

Waging a winning fight against racism requires total immersion in the struggles of the working class and the lives of working-class people. We cannot stand outside the pond of working-class life and throw stones to cause a ripple. We have to move to the center of the pond and become totally immersed and contribute to the creation of massive continuous ripples as a result of our activity.



Textile workers on strike hurl tomatoes in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1937.

The test in the struggle against racism is not in abstract rhetoric, not in the formulation of general demands ... The test is carrying on concrete struggles on concrete issues. The test is winning these struggles. The test is our ability to convince white Americans, to mobilize them to end concrete practices that flow from the ideology of racism. (p. 22)

This does not mean simply raising the issue of racism disconnected from the particulars of the moment. This requires being on the alert for the emergence of real opportunities to expose how racism is linked to contradictions and crises that affect the working class and the racially and nationally oppressed, in particular.

We start from the premise that the obstacle to Black-white unity is white supremacist racism. Thus, unless the concept of unity of Black and white is backed up by daily, principled struggle against racism, it is a meaningless phrase. (p. 151)

This requires being prepared to explain the linkages and interconnections in the context and the process of struggle on any issue. It requires that we uncover and expose the avenues by which racism is used to divert the masses from the course of winning struggle. It requires active rejection of racist analyses and explanations and the interjection of analyses that show how big business and corporate America are the only real benefactors and everybody else who goes along is simply a peon.

Any movement that does not see racism as an instrument of exploitation and therefore fails to see the fight against it in relation to the struggle against class exploitation, will end up in a pessimistic, opportunistic accommodation to racism. (p. 29)

Where racism attempts to hide the common interest of Black and white workers, the fight against racism has the goal of exposing the fundamental interlocking interests for the purpose of producing united action. "The mutual and parallel interests of Black and white constitute the key lever in the struggle against racism, a pillar in the struggle for social progress." (p. 137) It is through this process and in this context that the quality of unity, based in equality, required within the working class can be continuously forged.

The historic path to a united, integrated working class has been marked by many obstacles and set backs. It is a slow process because it is fundamentally a process of development of a class ideology and class outlook. Ideology is the result of experience upon experience. For long periods white workers could not see their overall class interests because of the heavy fog of chauvinism and prejudice. The fog has slowly dissipated, though much of it remains. (p. 244)

Gus formulates the concept that the relationship between the African-American people and labor constitutes a community in and of itself with common political and economic interests.

In a sense, the Afro-American/labor coalescence is more than an alliance or a united front. It is a political and economic community, an overlapping interlinked unit. As the consciousness of this grows in its ranks, this community will become the power that will determine the direction of events in our country. (p. 243)



Several thousand attend a candlelight rally in Hauppauge, New York, to decry the assault of two Mexican day-laborers.

... hat force so stubbornly resists and obstructs the peaceful ... resolution of this question? ... This resistance flows ... from the fact that the system of discrimination ... is imbedded in the very fabric of United States capitalism ... white supremacy ... is a central pillar in the ideology of U.S. capitalism ... It is this that explains the stubborn persistence of discrimination.

Though one could add that the relationship between all of the nationally and racially oppressed and labor constitute an even broader community with common political and economic interests, the relationship between Black and white within the working class must be tackled fundamentally, as a result of the specific history of this country, in order to solidify the basis for the unity of the whole.

... the main challenge for us, is the task of winning greater numbers of white Americans to the ... task of burning out this influence of racism among white Americans. Winning this struggle is key to Black-white unity. We can achieve unity to the extent that we accomplish this task. (p. 135)

Gus argues that this challenge is inescapable. No real victory in any area can be won without waging this fight and winning this battle continuously. We have to unravel the ways in which the challenge of racism emerges in every arena.

Because of the general, overall nature of the Big Business offensive, winning a victory in any area is now tied more closely than ever to the struggle against racism. Therefore, a new kind of unity of our people is on the agenda.

... to raise the struggle against racism to a new level is bound up with and a crucial feature of the efforts to raise the class struggle and class consciousness to a new level. (p. 34)

If racism has its roots in slavery, then why does it persist? After hundreds of years of struggle, why are we constantly forced to come back to this question? Gus answers:

... what force so stubbornly resists and obstructs the peaceful ... resolution of this question? ... This resistance flows ... from the fact that the system of discrimination ... is imbedded in the very fabric of United States capitalism ... white supremacy ... is a central pillar in the ideology of U.S. capitalism ... It is this that explains the stubborn persistence of discrimination. (pp. 115-117)

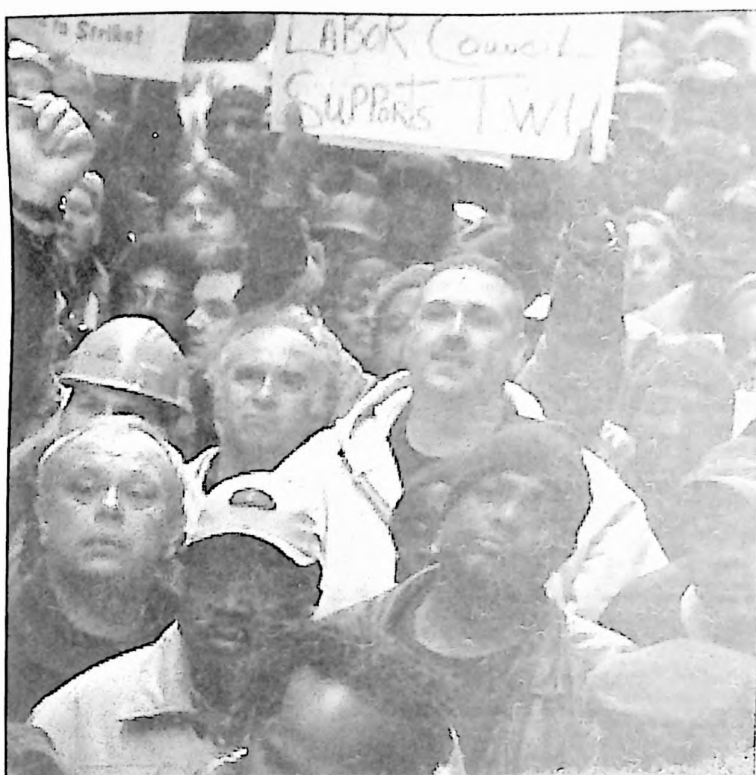
More profound is Gus' point that what we face today is not simply a carry-over or a survival of the past. "In our capitalist society, racism is not only present, it is constantly in the process of production." Hence, "complacency, or a letup in the struggle against the influence of chauvinism, itself turns into chauvinism." (p. 28) Nothing worthwhile comes out of such complacency.

... chauvinism is, in all its varieties, ideological support for oppression. Because it is an instrument of oppression, it is reactionary, in all its varieties at all times. Under no circumstances can it be a progressive force. Thus, there can be no accommodation with it. (p. 40)

Under no circumstances does Gus suggest that one should become a lone soldier in the wilderness recklessly agitating with no goal at winning working-class forces to their own interest. More effort in the process and in the context of struggle is required than just that. We must work tirelessly to find the ways to produce real results, and we have a history of real results from which to draw.

The seriousness of this question extends beyond concern for the African-American people or any of the other racially and nationally oppressed peoples. "... white chauvinism is a danger related to much more than the struggle for the rights of Afro-Americans." (p. 25) The seriousness of this question extends beyond domestic policies. "White chauvinism is a big factor in great-power chauvinism" (p. 18), which means it reaches into the international arena and is related to imperialist aggression and militarism.

A big test is on the horizon. Without a doubt, George W. Bush and his cohorts will attempt to create a majority base of support where none now exists. What the rallying cry will be, I'm not sure. That the ideology of racism and



Transit workers listen to speakers at a rally in New York City

chauvinism will be a major pillar of its content, I am absolutely positive.

The struggle against racism and chauvinism is not an act of kindness done for someone else's benefit. The struggle against racism and chauvinism is the fight to destroy one of the most powerful weapons that the ruling class continuously uses against us.

The problem is basically one of class solidarity. Scabbing may bring a person immediate advantage. However, most workers have always despised scabbing. Gaining an advantage from discrimination is like scabbing. It sacrifices the interests of the whole class for momentary, individual, selfish gain. We need to build up a tradition against ... discrimination that is as strong as the tradition against scabbing. (p. 80)

Given the challenges we face ahead, we all have cause to take the time to reflect on how Gus Hall addressed these questions in his writings. You may not agree with every concept, but the exploration will make you a better fighter. The exercise will give you strength.

The fight against racism,

... it is not hopeless. Rather, to win victories in this ideological contest is a matter of continuous struggle, a matter of developing ever new approaches, a matter of using the new experiences of people to deepen their understanding. (p. 270) ■

Students on the Front Line

Ali Fischer is president of the United States Student Association.

Political Affairs interviewed Ali Fischer on March 11, 2001, during USSA's annual Legislative Conference and Lobby Day in Washington, DC.



What is the United States Student Association (USSA)?

USSA is a coalition of college and university student associations from around the country dedicated to ensuring access to higher education for everyone. We define access to education very broadly. Our slogan is "Education is a Right."

We see it as being a concrete tool for achieving larger social justice aims and altering the relations of power in this country. We think the purpose of education is not just so people can get out of school and join the economic wheel that's turning and run like hamsters to keep the whole system going.

We think as education is democratized and made available to more people, the results of education will

change. People will get the tools to see how the system works and how they can go about changing, reforming, or revolutionizing it. But first they have to have access.

How do these goals translate more specifically into the different areas and issues USSA focuses on?

We argue that education is a right regardless of income, so we work a lot on federal financial aid programs and try to expand them. We realize it's not perfect right now, but we have to get more people into college little by little while we work toward the larger-scale change. We work to expand things like the Pell Grant, campus-based grants, campus child care, early intervention and mentorship for students who are historically under-represented, students who don't have parents who went to college, etc. – all these are barriers based on income.

Education should be a right regardless of race or ethnicity, so we work on programs to expand affirmative action, end hate crimes on campus and support student-run recruitment and retention centers.

Education is a right regardless of gender, so we work on the Violence Against Women Act, campus safety, and, informally, on empowering lots of women – as evidenced by our officers and national board.

Regardless of sexual orientation, regardless of veteran status, regardless of ability, traditional status, children, etc., we should be able to go to college, get a good education and have some say over our education and what's happening with it.

That's, very broadly, how we define our positions on everything from Pell Grants to an independent Palestinian state. All these tie back to education being a right and expanding access to it.



USSA president Ali Fischer at a demonstration for DC parking attendants' right to organize last Fall. Several students and union members were arrested during peaceful civil disobedience.

Has USSA always been like this? At this conference you see USSA, with its caucuses and coalitions, struggling on a broad range of issues, and yet access to education is the key element unifying it all. How has the organization evolved?

We started in an international context, after U.S. students returned from the very first World Festival of Youth [in 1947]. For a while the group did a lot of international work. From what I understand, that work started with very good intentions – with the anti-fascist movement – but then we were infiltrated by the CIA. Now, when you say CIA, students think COINTELPRO, but we were infiltrated way before that to bring back information on other international youth and Communist youth organizing. That was a very dark part of our history.

In the early '60s when all of that became public, it really cut our international ties for a while, and rightly so. The organization went through a purge and a radical shift. NSA [National Student Association], which is what USSA was called back then, became a lot more involved in the civil rights movement, encouraging folks to go on the freedom rides, etc. Al Lowenstein and others

think welfare reauthorization is going to be a huge legislative priority because it's a very concrete manifestation of the effects of globalization, the effects of privatization, this myth of economic prosperity for everyone.

helped provide start-up funding and office space for SNCC through our southern project. The '70s continued the anti-war work, etc.

What about the '80s?

In the '80s there were so many attacks on students and education and social programs in general from the Reagan cuts, that it was a hugely defensive time for the organization. It really hurt a lot of the forward motion. I mean everybody, not just students in this country, but all folks who were for expanding resources, were under such virulent attacks from the Reagan and Bush administration.

Of course, the Clinton administration left a lot to be desired, but in comparison we were actually able to gain a lot of ground back. Now, as

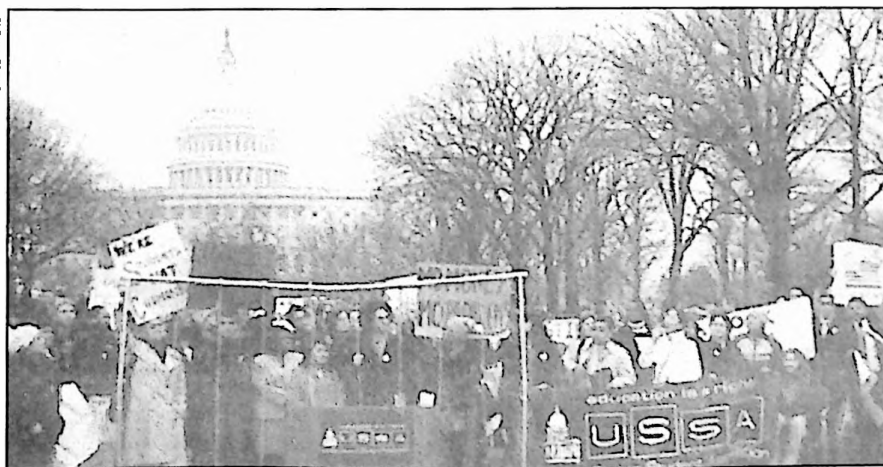
we face what everyone is saying are very similar cuts to the '81 Reagan revolution, we are trying to maintain consciousness of what happened before and say it's not okay to lose ground on these very basic things we've just started to get back.

USSA chose three areas of work at its last Congress: the Action Agenda items. Can you talk a bit about those?

The first thing that we chose was to do a really comprehensive voter education and mobilization campaign. We were really concerned with the whole idea that students are apathetic and don't care. We came out with a statement that said: Students aren't voting because candidates aren't speaking to what matters to students. Yes, we need to register more students; yes, we need to make sure people get out and vote. But you "gentlemen" need to start talking about issues that matter to us. That's how we are going to turn out the vote. And that it is a conscious decision to disenfranchise young people, because you're scared of what they will demand of you if they vote for you.

So what we did was put out questionnaires on everything from federal financial aid to living wage issues, to hate crimes policies and racial profiling. And we asked all the candidates to answer them. And then we put out 60,000 copies of the results, and that's not even counting the copies the students made [on their own].

Political Affairs



At the press conference to kick-off USSA's National Student Lobby Day, students pose "behind bars" with signs that read "we're students, not criminals."

Students went door to door, and what we saw in the places where we worked was incredible student turnout. In Madison, Wisconsin, their turnout went up by 54 percent or something. And so that was our fall campaign.

What that did was put us in a position now where we are actually saying "things were great in some of these places like Madison, but here's also the reasons things weren't so great in other places."

Florida was very highly publicized, but [students were disenfranchised] at campuses all over the place. For many of these students it's their first time voting, so it's very easy to tell them they are not on the rolls or confuse them about where they're supposed to vote. That has a huge amount to do with the disenfranchisement of young people.

The second Action Agenda item was of course federal aid funding – the Pell Grant, two campus-based aid programs. Also, we added a childcare grant program. And also Title X, which is National [Family Planning Program], because again, [educational access] is seen as a broad umbrella, but obviously access to health care for low income women and access to contraceptive information is a big factor [in people's ability to choose whether or not to go to school]. We know that having a child is a big barrier to getting a degree when you're young – or whenever – it's harder. We're not saying people shouldn't have children, but it should be a real choice.

The third campaign we did was against the criminalization of young people. Students know their campuses are not safe because the police have identified them [students] as being unsafe. And that is absolutely insidious and it's as bad today as segregation policies and Klan intimidation was. We're doing a lot of education on how racial profiling ends up feeding the prison system, how companies are motivated to put more people into private prisons.

Are there coalition partners in these campaigns?

Yes, on the voting campaign we had a lot of support. People for the American Way printed our vote manuals. Neighbor to Neighbor trained our organizers. AFSCME printed our voter guide. CWA gave us money to hire folks. It was great!

With the financial aid campaign there were all the traditional student aid folks, but on the criminalization campaign there were a lot of new coalition partners for us. We are a member of the Public Safety and Justice Campaign, which is a really interesting coalition. There are the traditional sentencing reform folks, like Families Against Mandatory Minimums, but it also includes the unions who represent corrections officers and the Police Benevolent Association. Because everyone recognizes that these private prisons are sort of the pinnacle of compromising justice and perverting the process.

We all have different long-term goals. But on this one we really got together. It's brought up really interesting class issues. Most people wouldn't be prison guards if there were other viable job options for them, if they had opportunities to have training to do other things. I mean, most human beings don't want to spend their lives removing freedom from other human beings.

As a USSA Action Agenda item, that seems a bit of a new development, an even broader perspective of USSA's mission.

Not connected to education?

Some may see it that way.

Yes, and we've taken a lot of flack for it. It's really important that all of our students can articulate that it has a hell of a lot to do with education. The chair of our national Student of Color Coalition is getting harassed by police at least once a

month at his student union because he looks to them like someone who doesn't belong at the University of Wisconsin, Madison because he's six-feet tall and African American. That has a lot to do with how comfortable our students feel on campus.

If students have been pulled over or arrested three or four times before they even get to college, that doesn't look very good on a college application. So it's a direct tie in to access to education.

Is this a different direction for USSA?

Yes and no. I think that right now racial profiling is our desegregation movement. De-funding private prisons is our [generation's] divestment from South Africa.

And the important thing is, although we have a Bush president ... 53 percent of the electorate voted center or left. So the majority of the country is at least slightly to the left. And we can't let people forget that.

These are very similar themes, they just have new and different details. It's definitely more external. You know, people are saying, "why is a student organization working on 'non-student' issues?" That usually comes from folks who don't think of students as being all these other identities.

How is USSA organized and has that changed or evolved?

I think as far as us talking more about multi-identity organizing, talking more about class as a unifying agent across race and gender and sexuality and all these things, it has really changed since I've been a part of the organization. I came to my first conference in '97, and I think maybe coming back from the 14th World Festival, a lot of folks started talking about how it's great that we have these caucuses. It's great that we identify that students of color need to meet with students of color, women with women, but if

we allow ourselves to stop there and just be 22 groups who all meet at the same conference, then we aren't ever going to come back. We aren't ever going to achieve. We have to talk about how we are going to start working together.

Our caucuses started back in the early '70s. We started with our People of Color Caucus I believe in '72. And then we've institutionalized parity on our Board, first for people of color and then very quickly after for women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender folks. [Other] caucuses have come on down the line. We have caucuses because they connect to specific barriers to access to education – barriers based on race or ethnicity, barriers based on gender, on sexual orientation. So that's how we developed what we have.

In addition to the discussion spaces, the real purpose of the caucuses is to have representation on the board of directors so that every decision that we make has a student with disability perspective, and a veteran's perspective, and a non-traditional student perspective.

Are there things that are happening differently with the caucuses now in the way that they are used or the way that they play out in a meeting like the Legislative Conference?

I think things go in a pendulum, so is what were doing now different from what we were doing ten years ago, who knows? It's different from what was happening five years ago and I think that's maybe how things swing.

I think we got dangerously theoretical a year or two ago. Right now folks are trying to make things very concrete. We're saying it's all well and good to come talk about socialization and fighting paradigms, but it's a hell of a lot more important to say, "On our campus, we got this resource center because we got these different groups of students to work

together and here's how we did it and here's how you can do it."

And so I think that there's something different happening. People are really trying to tie back to concrete campaigns and issues. They are really trying to tie back to the three issues that we chose to work on at [last year's USSA] Congress. I think it's also stronger because through those issues, you get the theoretical, whereas through the theoretical I don't think you necessarily got the concrete.

Which way do you think USSA will go next as an organization? You alluded earlier to the more defensive posture that USSA took on during the Reagan years. USSA adopted this broad, struggle-oriented agenda. Now we have Bush as president, the right-wing controls Congress, the Senate and the Supreme Court. How do you see things taking shape?

Obviously, we'd like to not go back, we'd like to go forward and keep pushing for more. I think what we need, rather than defensiveness, is flexibility. For example, I guarantee you almost nobody at this conference knew or cared about tax cuts a month ago, and now we are talking about it at this conference as much, if not more, than any other issue that we're working on. Our job now is to point out to students that what this means is less money for our programs, more money for rich people.

You know, I was 4 years old in 1981, so I can't really speak to what USSA did around those cuts. I think for that generation – it wasn't that they were unprepared – but I don't think they knew how bad it could get. But, I think the history is there that we can internalize and learn from to keep that from happening again.

And the important thing is, although we have a Bush president (and the Democrats are not much

I think that racial profiling is our desegregation movement. De-funding private prisons is our [generation's] divestment from South Africa.

Political Affairs



Students at USSA's National Legislative Conference gave Bush's tax plan a failing grade.

better), 53 percent of the electorate voted center or left. So the majority of the country is at least slightly to the left. And we can't let people forget that.

This whole bi-partisan sentiment out there seems to me to be ridiculously foolish. You don't make compromises on things that are wrong, and yet that seems to be what is going on out there. I think students and young people have the ability to say, "Hey! we are on the right track, we are getting the right message across – this is a four year president."

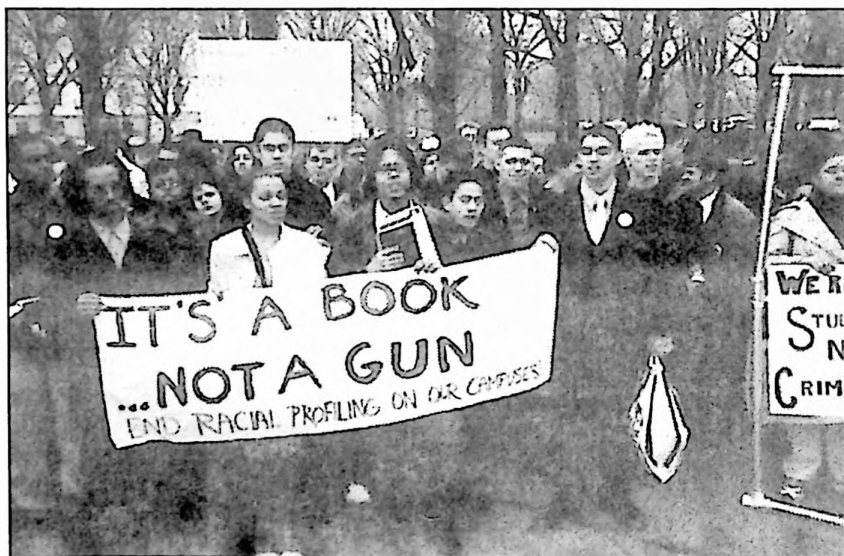
Now, USSA is non-partisan of course, let's be clear. But George Bush's policies are using progressive rhetoric to go back to the same old Reagan policies. He's talking about working families, but he means Gates and Rockefeller. The fact that they are using that rhetoric means that's what people want to hear. And if that's what people are looking for, then we just have to deal with the substance of what's behind that so we can see some real change.

What issues do you see coming to the fore in the next year or so in this new situation?

Well, of course everything here is democratic so it's all up to our students. I think welfare reauthoriza-

tion is going to be a huge legislative priority because it's a very concrete manifestation of the effects of globalization, the effects of privatization, this myth of economic prosperity for everyone. This huge tax cut we were talking about and cutting money already, all this is going to come down on the folks who are most vulnerable. A lot of our students come from these families. The criminalization issue is not going to go away anytime soon. If I had to put money on our agenda next year, that's what I'd say. ■

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USSA campaigns against racial profiling, the criminalization of youth and their impact on education.

Political Affairs

The Times Call for Clarity



by Karen Talbot

As we embark on the 21st century, events are accelerating, spurred by the exponential expansion of technology. In the process, the cycles of economic boom and bust, the generating of imperialist wars, the devastation of the environment, and the class struggle, also move at break-neck speed.

The failure of political, economic and social development to keep up with scientific and technological advances is epitomized by the wanton destruction of the planet's ecology. Placed in the context of this planet-under-siege is the intensifying misery of at least two-thirds of Earth's six billion people living in poverty. All of this means that U.S. Communists have a special responsibility to demonstrate solidarity.

The demands are greater than ever on the Party and the labor movement. This historic moment confronts Communists with unsurpassed urgency to determine "what is to be done?"

Marxism-Leninism

Above all, it is necessary to assess what new and emerging developments move all other fac-

tors. This means applying the science of Marxism-Leninism, a science because it has been tested for decades in the laboratory of life. It is not just a collection of ideas that can be tossed aside. What is variable (and where mistakes can be made) is the effectiveness in applying Marxism-Leninism and in correctly assessing new developments. Of course, the conclusions, strategy and tactics will vary.

There is a burgeoning anti-corporate mood among millions of people. Even a *Business Week* poll showed that 82 percent of the public feel corporations have too much power.

Of central importance among the tenets of Marxism-Leninism is the inevitability of the class struggle under capitalism, where the exploiting class, those who own the means

of production, accrue profits by extracting surplus value from the labor of workers. The interests of these two classes are diametrically opposed. Workers, and those racially and otherwise oppressed by the ruling class, will inevitably resist, and that resistance will be met with all the power at the disposal of the ruling forces. This class struggle will exist so long as there is capitalism.

There is nothing more dear to the hearts of the ruling class and its mouthpieces than to deny the class struggle. The only class they speak of is an amorphous "middle class." It is a fundamental component of their ideological assault.

Anti-Corporate Mood

I stress this point because there has never been a greater possibility, nor a greater necessity, than there is today for class consciousness to develop among multitudes in our country and worldwide. This is very much in the cards because there is a burgeoning anti-corporate mood among millions of people. Even a *Business Week* poll showed that 82 percent of the public feel corporations have too much power.

Karen Talbot is a peace activist living in Northern California.

Pre-convention Discussion

This mood is to be found among working people, farmers, the poor, the racially oppressed, women, youth, environmentalists, religious groups, even among small-business people. This is attested to by the way in which even presidential candidate Al Gore felt it necessary to take on corporations, however meekly. The outpourings against corporations, the WTO, the World Bank and IMF manifested in Seattle, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere, and the growing anger among consumers against the energy corporations and the tobacco companies, all are road signs that people are fed up.

Add to this picture the recent stealing of the U.S. presidency, the racist denial of tens of thousands of the right to vote, the blatant refusal to count votes and the sinister role of the U.S. Supreme Court. Also add the openly pro-corporate agenda of George W., including his unblushing cabinet selections of spokespeople from the most racist, sexist and right-wing forces in the country. And it should be said that all of this was aided by the racist and capitulationist failure of the Clinton forces to speak out forcefully on the denial of voting rights to African Americans.

Developing Class Consciousness

All of these factors combine and provide the potential for mobilizing a powerful, united, anti-corporate coalition, one that will generate street heat as never before. Within this picture, there is also the potential for huge numbers of people to become class-conscious and anti-imperialist, to develop understanding of the class parameters of these struggles.

The evolving anti-corporate mood is not accidental. Capitalism has been in a global economic crisis for some time, marked by such factors as a greatly diminishing workforce replaced increasingly by high technology and stagnating GDPs. That crisis, which brutally devastated regions like Southeast Asia and

elsewhere a few years ago, is now surfacing in the U.S. All the massive investments from abroad and from retirement funds, etc., are not enough to keep the speculation bubble floating. It is a crisis of overproduction in which consumers are not able to purchase the mountains of goods on the market. Smarting under the assault, people are placing increasing blame on corporations and questioning the mantra of the "free market."

Hard hit are the automotive and steel industries, but high-tech, retail and general manufacturing also are rapidly downsizing. The pundits decry the fact that people are not shopping. Living costs, particularly energy costs, are increasing to astronomical levels. The stock market is consistently down as the speculative bubble is bursting – a bubble that was based on rosy and deceptive projections and not actual profits, especially in the high-tech stocks.

All of this is in a context where already one-third of all jobs are temp, casual or part-time positions, union membership has declined, and real wages have fallen at least ten percent since the early '70s.

Ruling Class Needs Bush

If that were not enough, we have Bush in the White House, where he was enthroned by the ruling class precisely because he was their best choice to impose, even more brutally, the burdens of the evolving economic crisis onto the working and oppressed people and

to maximize the profits of the banks and corporations. The ruling class needs George W. Bush and the ultra-right because they can do the job best for them. They are bringing us a "whiff of fascism." In this regard, it



A trader holds his hand to his head as he works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

is critical to keep in mind the Bush family's direct connections with Hitler's fascism, as well as their long-standing involvement, along with many in Bush's staff and cabinet, with the eugenics movement and with the Manhattan Institute, which gave birth to the *Bell Curve* and welfare reform.

Sword and Dollar

Their agenda will also be carried out by increasing, to even greater heights, the gargantuan military budget to fatten the coffers of the military-industrial corporations and by waging imperialist wars to back up the globalization by the transnational corporations (TNCs) and banks.

Pre-convention Discussion

Bush was enthroned by the ruling class precisely because he was their best choice to impose, even more brutally, the burdens of the evolving economic crisis onto the working and oppressed people.

The sword and dollar are marching together as never before. It will be done in the context of renewed rivalry with other capitalist powers both in the economic sphere and increasingly in the military sphere. (Two catastrophic world wars were unleashed in this way.)

This is epitomized by such things as the development of a European Rapid Response Force (ERRF), which promises to rival U.S.-led NATO, much to the chagrin of the Pentagon. Nevertheless, NATO is aggressively moving eastward, taking in more and more nations of Eastern Europe and courting, through various "Partnership for Peace" arrangements, countries of the former USSR.

In the Far East, there is rapidly growing emphasis on building up an "Asian NATO," the centerpiece being the U.S. military alliance with Japan and South Korea. The Bush entourage is increasingly shifting its focus to the Pacific region and openly aiming this alliance at China.

George W. Bush and Dick Cheney are deeply immersed in oil. Almost every conflict in the world has some connection to oil interests and involves U.S. covert and/or overt intervention. Already, Bush moved with lightening speed towards resumption of a full scale air war against Iraq, in addition to continuing the sanctions that have killed one and a half million, a large percentage of whom were children. The name of the game is influencing the price and access to oil. So, too, the carnage continuing in the Mid-

dle East against the Palestinians, and the billions in U.S. aid dished out to Israel, are designed to maintain U.S. hegemony over that oil-rich region.

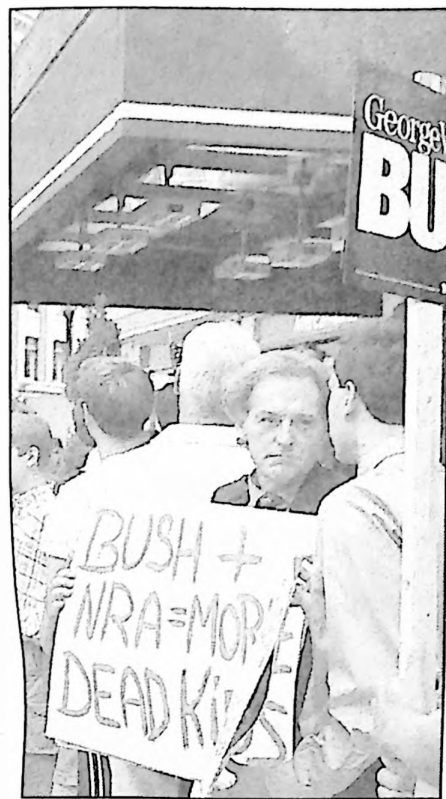
We have yet to hear the end of the U.S./NATO intervention in Bosnia, Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia, which they bombed mercilessly for 78 days.

Now, as some predicted would happen, the neo-fascist KLA forces from Kosovo, backed and trained by the U.S. and NATO, are extending their terrorist attacks to Macedonia and into the Presevo Valley of southern Serbia adjacent to Kosovo. The U.S. forces and KFOR, despite their huge military presence in Kosovo, predictably make little effort to stop these terrorist activities. Similarly, they have not stopped massive "ethnic cleansing," killings and attacks on non-Albanians throughout Kosovo.

Star Wars Weaponry

The most perilous course the Bush administration will pursue is the deployment of ballistic missile defense systems including the National Missile Defense (NMD) and theater missile defense systems. Linked with those plans is the intention to move speedily forward with anti-satellite and space-based (star wars) weapons, including lasers.

These plans are vehemently opposed by China and Russia. Even European nations are expressing opposition. It will mean the scrapping of the ABM Treaty, and the treaty on weapons in space. It will provide the U.S. with first nuclear



Anti-Bush protesters at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston during the 2000 campaign.

strike capability. Already, these plans are beginning to spark a new arms race. The U.S. Space Command openly states that the goal is to protect U.S. global investments.

Stopping Environmental Devastation

The United Nations has once again provided scientific proof of the ecological disasters befalling humankind. These include global warming and climate change. Yet, the U.S. led the way in the UN conference at the Hague in balking at critically necessary greenhouse emissions gas restrictions. The conference broke down with no final decision.

Within two days of his taking office, speaking of the energy crisis, Bush said that California should lift environmental restrictions, using the excuse that this would allow the generation of more power. He promises to go all out to permit extensive oil and gas drilling in the pristine Alaska wilderness, and

already has sought to reverse the modest late-hour rulings by Clinton to protect public lands from further unbridled mining and timber harvesting. The Bush administration is moving with great haste to undo even the existing limited environmental laws.

Within two days of his taking office, Bush said that California should lift environmental restrictions, using the excuse that this would allow the generation of more power.

Globalization

A major item on Bush's agenda will be winning "fast track" authority to push through Congress the hemisphere-wide version of NAFTA, known as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). This "agreement" goes beyond NAFTA, by incorporating the essence of the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

Despite the remarkable closing down of the World Trade Organization (WTO) millennium round meeting in Seattle by the combined efforts of the demonstrators and the nations of the South, the U.S. and G7 nations are blatantly pushing forward to hold a new round which will expand the WTO mandate. The demands of the developing nations to review WTO rules and to otherwise reform the organization, including a "moratorium" on submitting issues to WTO dis-

pute panels until changes have been made, have been ignored. More cases than ever have been brought against developing countries.

The effect of the policies of the WTO and other financial institutions, as with free trade agreements like the pending FTAA, is greater than ever intrusion into national policies on public services such as Social Security, health, education and utilities, not to mention requirements to privatize all publicly-owned enterprises.

The U.S. has its own version of this agenda. Bush will push ahead with privatizing schools through the voucher system. The campaign to privatize Social Security is still a Bush priority as well.

What is to be done?

Taking all of these factors into consideration, what should be the Party's role?

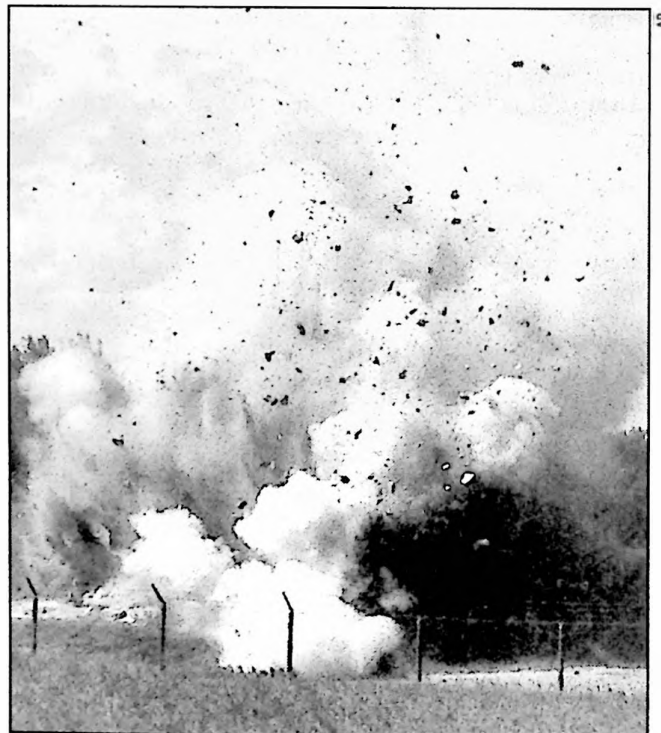
Clearly, the Party should always fight for the widest ranging unity. They should promote action around demands that resonate with the great mass of working people and other oppressed sectors of our society that meet their immediate needs. The movement which is now emerging will be based on defending and extending democracy and combating racism around immediate social and economic issues. It will be objectively anti-corporate and will

be linked with the tremendous outpouring of opposition to globalization.

Raising Understanding

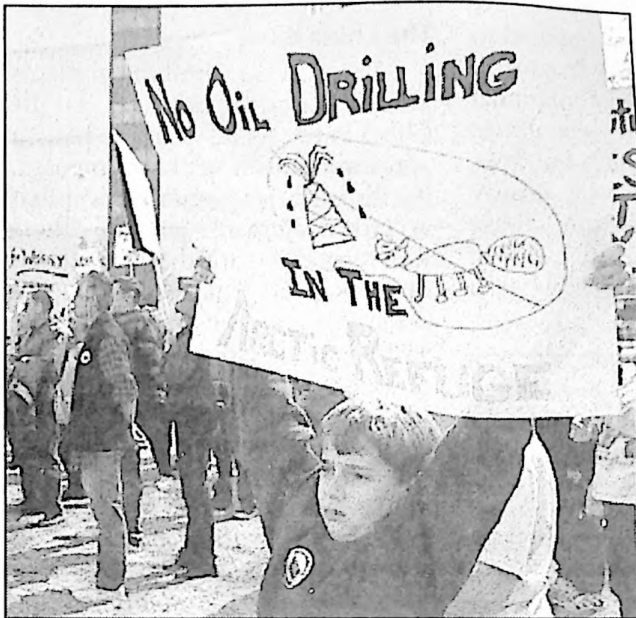
But something equally important is needed from Communists. There is a critical need to strive to raise the level of understanding and information to equip workers, the poor and oppressed for their struggles.

Communists must take every opportunity to help people understand that the wrongdoing and evils of the corporations are not just the result of mismanagement or because of greedy CEOs and stockholders. Rather, the very nature of businesses, corporations and banks requires that they expand or die. They are driven always to extend their markets, grow their profits, buy out or merge with other monopolies and otherwise expand, or be wiped out



A U.S. missile silo in North Dakota was destroyed July 2000 in compliance with the START treaty with Russia.

Pre-convention Discussion



Protesters await the arrival of President Bush March 26, 2001

by competition. Therefore, they will lay-off thousands of workers, steal pension funds, pilfer tax pocket-books, lead nations into war and destroy the environment. They will resort to fascism and slave labor if need be.

There will even be times when a higher understanding can be incorporated into broad demands. One thing has always proven true: unity and coalitions can often be based on considerably more advanced demands than one might think at a given moment.

Related to this is the necessity of always being the best defenders of any victim of capitalism. This, above all, is the way in which people can come to learn the true nature of capitalism and its state apparatus, but this will only happen if those lessons are brought to their attention.

Related to the previous point is the need to find ways to have people understand that the government is basically answerable to the corporate class. It is one and the same with that class. Now, after the events around the elections, we can and

must help people understand that the election fraud that transpired in Florida has not happened for the first time, though the outcome was perhaps more serious than in other instances. We must help them to understand that the Supreme Court makes rulings all the time that are "political" on behalf of the corporate class.

Any victories won have occurred only because of protracted democratic struggles by the people. Millions are ready to grasp that yes, democracy must be defended and strengthened at all costs in order to keep the door open as wide as possible to stop the machinations against the workers and others oppressed by the ruling class. However, it is critical for people to realize that the government is fundamentally in the hands of the corporate class while struggling for the immediate needs of workers and all who are oppressed. In so doing we have to step carefully and skillfully around the abyss of reformism.

Again, it is not necessary to bring up these issues in ways that would cause disunity. We don't have to insist that our points be included. There will be many times when we will be surprised that these understandings, if they are raised, will be accepted in the demands of a movement. But not if they are never mentioned. Time and again, the potential for unity is on a higher ideological plane than we might have first thought possible.

Backing Up Globalization With U.S. Military Might

It is absolutely critical, especially in the context of the worldwide movement against globalization, to show that the U.S. military backs up globalization with war and by covert and overt intervention. The Pentagon and the military industrial corporations promote war to rake in huge profits in the trillions, gleaned from the tax dollars of working Americans. The ruling class, through its domination of information and the media, has done a breathtaking job of hiding this fact from the people. Through its masterful warmongering methods, such as demonization, staging of provocations and anti-communism, it has succeeded in either neutralizing or rallying the public around war. Thus, revealing the truth about U.S. foreign policy is a tremendous challenge, but a critical one.

With regard to the movement against globalization, we have our job cut out for us in all the ways referred to above. But there are some special ideological challenges.

We should strongly discourage



Pre-convention Discussion

notions of U.S. exceptionalism. Yes, the U.S. participation in the Seattle actions was extremely significant. But to fail to acknowledge that the nations of the South and the movements and workers' struggles in their countries were as much, if not more, responsible for closing down the WTO meeting, does a disservice to our common struggle. Of course, the representatives from these countries were greatly encouraged and spurred on by the fact that such a powerful demonstration could take place in the U.S.

Related to this is the tendency, especially in the labor movement, to concentrate on the fact that U.S. jobs have been siphoned off to workers in other countries for cheap labor, rather than also emphasizing the commonality of interests we have with those workers. The demands around observing labor's rights tend to ignore the failure to realize those rights in the U.S. itself, and tend to put the onus on the policies of other countries and not enough on the U.S.-based TNCs and banks.

The manner in which the issue of labor rights is dealt with often also fails to acknowledge that the International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions pertaining to those rights already exist and have been signed and ratified by most countries, but not the U.S., not even the "core" ILO conventions. Clinton announced at the time of the Seattle WTO meeting that the U.S. had signed (not ratified!) an ILO convention on child labor. But what he did not mention is that this convention was a watered down version (only speaking of "the most egregious forms") of an earlier ILO Core Convention on child labor. The U.S. had been instrumental in pushing this version through the ILO.

Many unions and mass organizations in countries of Latin Ameri-

ca, Asia and Africa were opposed to the demand to add labor's rights to the rules of WTO and international financial institutions because it was closing the barn door after the cows were out – after the TNCs already have their clutches on those economies – thereby making it next to impossible for nationally-based



Students protest the death penalty at the Weston Hotel in Indianapolis, during a fundraiser for George W. Bush last Fall.

businesses to compete with the TNCs. Besides, they cannot be enforced. It's like adding the non-enforceable workers' rights provisions after the fact, as they did with NAFTA.

It was important that John Sweeney, head of the AFL-CIO, spoke at the Jubilee 2000 rally at the Washington, DC IMF/WB demonstration because reducing or eliminating the foreign debts of poor countries would help raise their living standards, including wages. This in turn, would move in the direction of protecting the jobs of U.S. workers.

The China Issue

There were similar problems around labor's campaign on the China issue. Aside from the blatant anti-communism of that campaign, the thrust of their argument was that a "lack of human rights" in China was responsible for the exploitation of workers in China's export processing zones. Seldom were the TNCs and the globalization policies of the U.S. mentioned in this context, nor again were violations of human rights and labor rights in the U.S.

Though the fight centered around granting China normal trading status with the U.S., never did the labor movement mention the destructive IMF/World Bank-type conditionalities imposed by the U.S. on China in the subsequent agreement between the two countries.

So too, it was the height of chauvinism and arrogance to suggest that the U.S. had any right to tell any nation it could not belong to the WTO. WTO membership likely will prove to be devastating to China, as it is around the world, but that was not the reason the AFL-CIO and various mass organizations opposed it. Besides, it is a matter for the Chinese to decide. Furthermore, that campaign plays into Bush's warmongering agenda, increasingly aimed at China.

There is a great need to emphasize international solidarity with workers in other countries, and to promote cross-border, industry-based organizing. Joint actions with union struggles in other countries are needed. A current example is the strike of Daewoo workers in South Korea. They need the solidarity of U.S. unions. At least there should be messages of solidarity and mention made at union rallies concerning general strikes or other labor struggles in other countries. ■

BOOK REVIEWS

Hegemon: The Chinese Plan to Dominate Asia and the Rest of the World

by Steven W. Mosher
Encounter Books, 2000

Reviewed by Gerald Horne

The George W. Bush White House has dropped the previous administration's reference to China as a "strategic partner." Now, we are told, Beijing is a "strategic competitor." This semantic sleight-of-hand barely masks what appears to be a deterioration in relations between the U.S. and the Peoples Republic of China, the largest nation ruled by a Communist Party. The apparent decision by Washington to sell advanced weaponry to Taiwan, China's rebel province, and the ongoing U.S. effort to charge Beijing with human rights violations are symptomatic of this downturn.

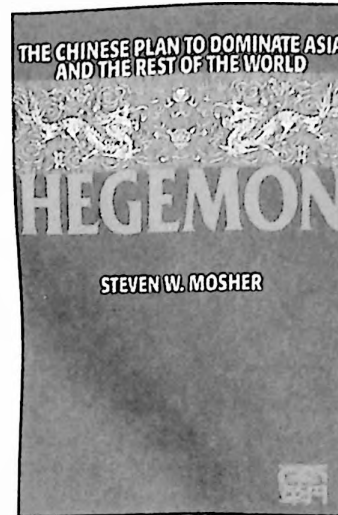
The book at hand is penned by veteran anti-China hawk, Steven W. Mosher. In the afterword to this highly inflammatory book, he thanks Ambassador James Lilley, who served as the top U.S. representative in Beijing from 1989-91 during the administration of George Bush, the elder. This suggests that this work should be taken seriously, which is evidenced further when the author gives thanks to Congressman Dana Rohrabacher of California, the well-known right-wing Republican and key leader of the anti-China faction in Washington.

These forces have forgotten or deem unimportant the alliance between Washington and Beijing that was so helpful in bringing the former Soviet Union to its knees. Indeed, the author heaps scorn on Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor to Jimmy Carter, who he sees as still preoccupied with Moscow. "It takes a great deal of imagination," says Mosher,

"to see Russia as a threat at a time when all indicators of national strength and well-being, from GDP to average lifespan, are in precipitous decline." The efforts of those like Brzezinski to hasten the dismemberment of Russia – just as they pushed the breakup of the Soviet Union – is deemed as nothing less than insanity by Mosher, since this would "deliver" the "Russian Far East and Siberia into the hands of China."

Mosher does not mention that father George Bush has made a small fortune in China, nor does he dwell for long on the leading role played by U.S. transnational corporations in the Chinese economy – a signal factor constraining Washington's attempt to heighten tensions with Beijing. However, he deems it a "scandal" that "most former secretaries of state, beginning with Henry Kissinger, most former national security advisors (also beginning with Kissinger) and most of their senior deputies have gone into the China trade subsequent to their government service." He feels that this "profiteering" hampers a more robust U.S. response to China.

With chutzpah, Mosher writes that "we need make no apology for striving to maintain America's global primacy, the chief threat to which is the emergence of China, a hostile superpower." In other words, contrary to the sub-title of this book, the author is concerned with China's supposed attempt to disrupt the U.S.'s "plan to dominate Asia and the world." This is one among many distortions in this tendentious work.



Though the U.S. has taken the doctrine of white supremacy to stratospheric heights, Mosher ignores this and, instead, writes bitterly about how Beijing is supposedly seeking to "replace the decaying myth of communism with a robust, race-based chauvinism."

And though the Pentagon is now re-orienting its strategic plan of attack to focus

on China, Mosher warns, "perhaps Angelenos will be treated to missile splashdowns off of Santa Catalina. China outpaces the U.S. in two key ways: a willingness to sustain casualties in war and a readiness to annihilate the enemy, military and civilian, indiscriminately."

In unveiling this macabre scenario, Mosher unwittingly reveals another side of the now diminished Beijing/Washington alliance. It was not only aimed at Moscow, he says, it was also aimed at Tokyo; thus, he writes, in the aftermath of the 1989 disturbances in Tiananmen Square, Kissinger "suggested that the U.S. needed China as a counterweight not merely to the Soviet Union but also to Japan."

And this is yet one more reason why the attempt to destabilize China is so dangerous. This plot must involve Japan to be effective, yet building up this powerful nation militarily is quite dangerous and could easily backfire – just as it did in 1941, when Washington's effort to encourage Tokyo to strangle the Communist Party of China wound up with an assault on Pearl Harbor.

Moreover, there are other problems that Mosher inferentially reveals. In 1999 when the U.S. "accidentally" bombed the Chinese

embassy in Belgrade, mass anger boiled over in Beijing as masses took to the streets and stoned the U.S. embassy. Mosher wonders, "why would fifty recently retired People's Liberation Army (PLA) generals sign a 'strong protest' against President Jiang Zemin's 'weak' policies toward the U.S., Japan and Taiwan?" Apparently, he does not recognize that the increasingly jingoistic and bellicose U.S. policy towards China is not being accepted supinely across the Pacific. An explosive and dangerous situation is brewing with potentially devastating consequences.

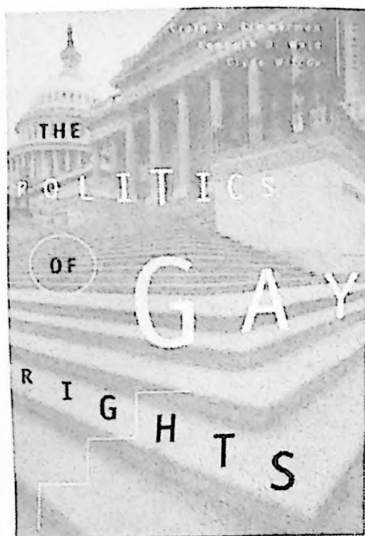
This book provides a direct challenge to peace forces in the U.S. – indeed, worldwide – in its virtual call for war against "Communist China." Normalizing relations between Beijing and Washington should be seen as a top priority by all those concerned about the fate of the planet. ■

The Politics of Gay Rights

Edited by Craig A. Rimmerman,
Kenneth D. Wald & Clyde Wilcox
University of Chicago, 2000

Reviewed by Gary Dotterman

This book could be a good starting point for someone who does not understand the Gay Rights movement to begin to look and open one's mind to understand. For too many years people have not been open to really looking at and understanding the Gay Rights movement. The history of this modern-day gay movement comes to the streets for and by the working class of the U.S. In fact, out of the home of a southern California Gay Communist Party member came the movement to liberate homosexuals.



This book gives only a small picture of this struggle and the events that were impacted by the party of which Harry Hay was a member in 1950. This book misses a great deal of information between 1955 and 1990. Indeed, other than a few books, it is not easy to find good class viewpoints about the gay movement. I believe if one would like to understand this movement one should read *The Trouble with Harry Hay*, *Gays in the Work Place*, or *Out at Work*.

The Politics of Gay Rights is a good outline of the struggle to become a part of the real world. But it does not give a class analysis of the politics of the movement, nor does it give a good look at the very important organizing drive in the late '60s, '70s and '80s. We are given only a small look at the giant role women played in the development of the "Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgender" (GLBT) movement. The editors chose to spend time on the organization of the "Gay Republican," but not enough remembering others who fought in the earlier days to be seen as people and not freaks.

More time should be spent on the struggle to overcome hatred of the unknown, and of one's self, and build common ground for the

campaign of all workers for justice.

I am pleased to note that the editors of this book did not overlook the role of African Americans. However, I am disappointed that nothing was said about the building of a strong GLBT labor movement as a part of the politics of Gay Rights.

The Politics of Gay Rights suffers because of a lack of class understanding – not just by those writing this book, but also by many in today's GLBT community who overlook the history of the movement. For example: in October of 1987 more than 600,000 people marched in Washington, D.C., for Gay Rights. The SEIU, CLUW, CBTU and the National AFL-CIO hosted a major event, which more than 5,000 GLBT trade unionists attended, in the lobby of the national offices of the AFL-CIO. Not one word or piece of film about this event has been printed or broadcast (although more than 100 reporters covered the event). Today the AFL-CIO has "Pride at Work, AFL-CIO." It is not mentioned in this book, but the founding of the "Log Cabin Club" (Gay GOP members) is covered.

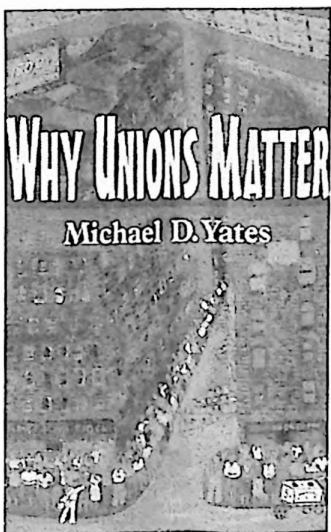
From my point of view, the GLBT movement would still be in a closet if the working class in the Gay and Lesbian community had not fought back in the streets of our cities and towns and on the shop floors. It is those unnamed people that have built the politics of Gay Rights. Without a class analysis we are seeing a new corporation called GLBT, Inc., overlook the role of the people again.

If you are looking to learn about Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual and Transgender politics, this book is only a small picture with many holes. I remind my comrades that it is time that we march with our brothers, sisters, sons and daughters in the GLBT movement as well as

BOOK REVIEWS

any movement.

If you would like to learn more the following books are good to read: *Homosexuality: Power & Politics*, edited by the Gay Left Collective; *Fighting Words (An Open Letter to Queers & Radicals)*, by Scott Tucker; *Queerly Classed*, edited by Susan Raffo; *Sexual Identity on the Job*, edited by Alan L. Ellis, & Ellen D.B. Riggles; *The Rise of a Gay & Lesbian Movement*, by Barry D. Adam; *Out of the Class Closet (Lesbians speak)*, edited by Julia Penelope; *Out of the Closets*, by Land Humphreys; *Creating Change: Sexuality, Public Policy and Civil Rights*, by John D'Emilio, William B. Turner & Urvashi Vaid; *Skin*, by Dorothy Allison; *Yours in Struggle*, by Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt & Barbara Smith; *Rebellion* by Minnie Bruce Pratt. ■



Why Unions Matter

by Michael D. Yates
Monthly Review Press, 1998

Reviewed by Roy Rydell

Michael D. Yates, a professor of economics at the University of Pittsburgh, has written an informative book on the how-to's of organizing a

union. Coming from a working-class background, he has a sense of friendship for workers and was himself a member of the American Federation of Teachers.

The introduction of the book describes Yates's experience in Meadville, Pennsylvania, in 1994, when workers at Pittsburgh Plate Glass asked him to speak to unorganized workers about their legal right to organize. Yates spoke, but the union lost by 20 votes.

Yates describes all of the company's maneuvers to defeat the union: relocating plants to rural areas where workers had no experience with unions, organizing work quality circles, getting workers to increase productivity by calling them associates and giving them the trappings of power without giving up any real power.

Yates compares the wages and benefits of a worker at an organized shop to one at an unorganized shop. The workers at the organized plant come out way ahead.

The author also describes the weapons a union needs in order to win an organizing drive. He tells how weapons like the boycott are used and shows how to mobilize the whole community to aid the organizing effort. A culture of solidarity should permeate every aspect of the unionization drive.

Credit is given in the book to the Communists for their role in organizing the CIO. W.E.B. Du Bois is quoted as saying that probably the greatest and most effective effort toward international understanding among the working masses came about through trade unions.

Yates credits all the unions that were later expelled from the CIO after the Second World War for building their unions on an anti-racist foundation. He also discusses the trade union's role in the anti-Communist witchhunts and the chilling effect this anti-Communism

had on organizing Southern workers.

Why Unions Matter was published in 1998 and does take into full account the big changes that have taken place in the AFL-CIO. However, it's still lacking in its evaluation of the labor federation today.

The author criticizes organized labor for lacking working-class ideology. He says that the AFL-CIO shies away from saying what it stands for. He proposes that labor should call for employment as a right, meaningful work, socialization of consumption, democratic control of production, shorter hours of work and end to discrimination, wage and income equality – so why doesn't he call for socialism?

Yates calls for labor to embrace independent working-class politics. We agree. However one wonders what the author would say in the face of George W. Bush's election.

The book cites the United Electrical Workers (UE), as being an example of union democracy. He points out that it has survived being expelled from the CIO after the war and now has some 40,000 members. However, UE is so "pure" that it hasn't reaffiliated with the AFL-CIO to push for a better, more militant federation. This certainly doesn't help the fight against Bush.

Finally, *Why Unions Matter* is certainly worth reading even if one doesn't agree with all of its conclusions. ■

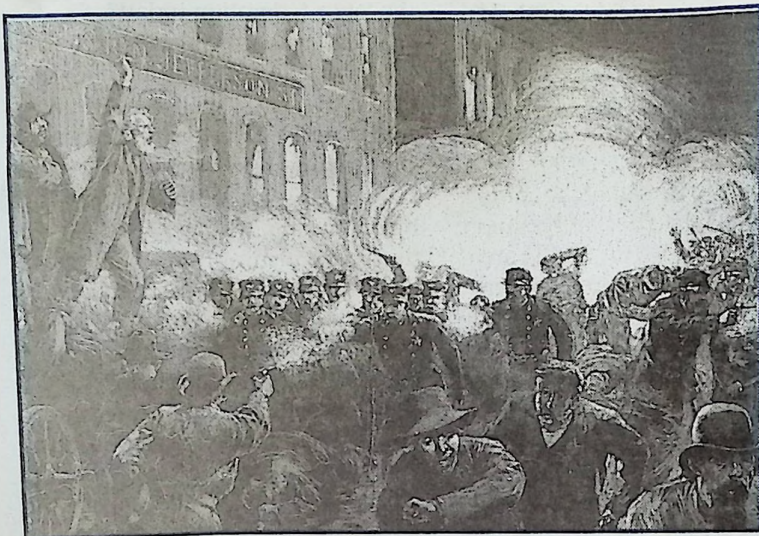
Forgetting by Eduardo Galleano

from *The Book of Embraces* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1989)

Chicago is full of factories. There are even factories right in the center of the city, around the world's tallest building. Chicago is full of workers. Arriving in the Haymarket district, I ask my friends to show the place where the workers whom the whole world salutes every May 1st were hanged in 1886.

"It must be around here," they tell me. But nobody knows where.

No statue has been erected in memory of the martyrs of Chicago in the city of Chicago. Not a statue, not a monolith, not a bronze plaque. Nothing.



May 1st is the only truly universal day of all humanity, the only day when all histories and all geographies, all languages and religions and cultures of the world coincide. But in the United States, May 1st is a day like any other. On that day, people work normally and no one, or almost no one, remembers that the rights of the working class did not spring whole from the ear of a goat, or from the hand of God or the boss.

After my fruitless exploration of the Haymarket, my friends take me to the largest bookstore in the city. And there, poking around, just by accident, I discover an old poster that seems to be waiting for me, stuck among many movies and rock posters. The poster displays an African proverb:

"Until lions have their own historians, histories of the hunt will glorify the hunter."

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