

# NEW WORLD ORDER

powerless to halt overseas relocations. Union busting has been a priority of the Reagan and Bush administrations. Labor law has failed to protect workers, and government acts as a tool for the company. Corporations breach labor laws and are not held responsible. Union strikers are arrested and unions heavily fined. The bitter assault upon unions by government and industry crippled union power to such an extent that they are unable to gain significant wage raises or protect the jobs of thousands who are sacrifices to company mismanagement or divestiture as a result of takeovers.

Eliminating entire classes from employment necessitates huge welfare costs which the wealthy who eliminated the jobs are not paying, leaving it up to already overburdened middle and working classes to pay.

The 1992 Presidential campaign seems to concentrate on the loss of opportunities for the middle class as a result of the declining economy; and to divert attention from its real causes, this year's political catchphrase is "the people on welfare," a thinly disguised appeal to racism, and also an assault on poor people of every race who are blamed for the depressed state of the union.

Molly Ivins disagrees with this slanderous deceit. "The people on welfare," she writes, "did not create the savings and loan debacle now costing us half a trillion bucks. The people on welfare are not responsible for the orgy of mergers and acquisitions and leveraged buy-outs that left the corporate economy stagnating with debt, and unable to make it through a recession. The people on welfare aren't the ones who spent two trillion dollars on the military in the 1980s without raising the taxes to pay for it, leaving us with a deficit the size of a galaxy that now eats half of every tax dollar we pay."

The real purpose of the American experience is that human beings are capable of coexisting as equals, that so-called free competition is not one of unfair or dominating advantage. Nor is a democracy healthy when enormous numbers of its citizens are unemployed with poverty and homelessness their only prospects. The remedies for repairing our ravaged economy and reversing the intolerable social catastrophe it has precipitated are many, varied, complex, and depend upon reapplying the nation's fundamental principles with fresh interpretations. Reestablishment of a union culture in the United States and radical reform of union laws should be a primary goal for the good reason that labor and production are at the heart of economic and political recovery.



AN EARLY SOCIALIST VIEW OF CAPITALIST AMERICA

The legal framework for the labor movement needs radical change. Collective bargaining should give way to political solutions in which workers' rights and industrial democracy in its broadest sense are guaranteed. A generous concept of industrial democracy would give workers more rights, both in collective bargaining and law, would allow them a voice in investment policy and in such matters as plant shut-downs, takeovers and selection of top management. Workers' rights should be manifested in various ways that would prohibit any employer interference in their decisions about organizational representation, which should include representation rights for unions with only a minority of workers, and mandate collective bargaining that leads to solid contracts with represented workers.

Radical changes in labor law should be accompanied with wide involvement of women, blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and even environmentalists, and should focus on a social crusade framed as an extension of American democracy instead of special pleadings by a collection of pressure groups. A special effort should be made to recreate a social justice movement like civil rights in the 1960s. Such a sharply defined crusade would be an initial stage in educating, mobilizing and trusting union members. The next stage would be for these members to spread the message as far as possible,

in schools, churches, civic meetings, political caucuses and beyond traditional picketlines. To bring strong political support into the labor movement more workers need to be organized and be willing to risk arrest and to sit down on highways like the miners in Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky, and endure longstanding picketlines like striking auto mechanics in Astoria, Oregon.

The "New World Order" should start at home — neither Hitler's nor George Bush's visions of international suzerainty — but an alternate solution to centralized planning or raw capitalism, a social/industrial democracy that would reflect not only responsible and economic policies but political equity, which Marxism and capitalist democracy have ultimately failed to do.

As Theodore Roosevelt said, the real enemy of anarchist capitalists are socialist working people.

The above article is an attempt to synthesize several essays and articles that have appeared in The Nation, In These Times, The Progressive, and other publications, with particular attention to arguments and analyses by David Moberg, John B. Judis, James Petras, David Kotz, Fredrick Dammen and Molly Ivins.

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