

PLEASE STAND UP

major movie studios. In 1945, 80% of our daily newspapers were independently owned; half a century later 80% of them are owned by corporate chains. The commercial television corporations which dominate the national consciousness day to day, debase and daze people with foolish and violent programming. Before one of our children is out of grade school he or she watches on the average 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on TV.

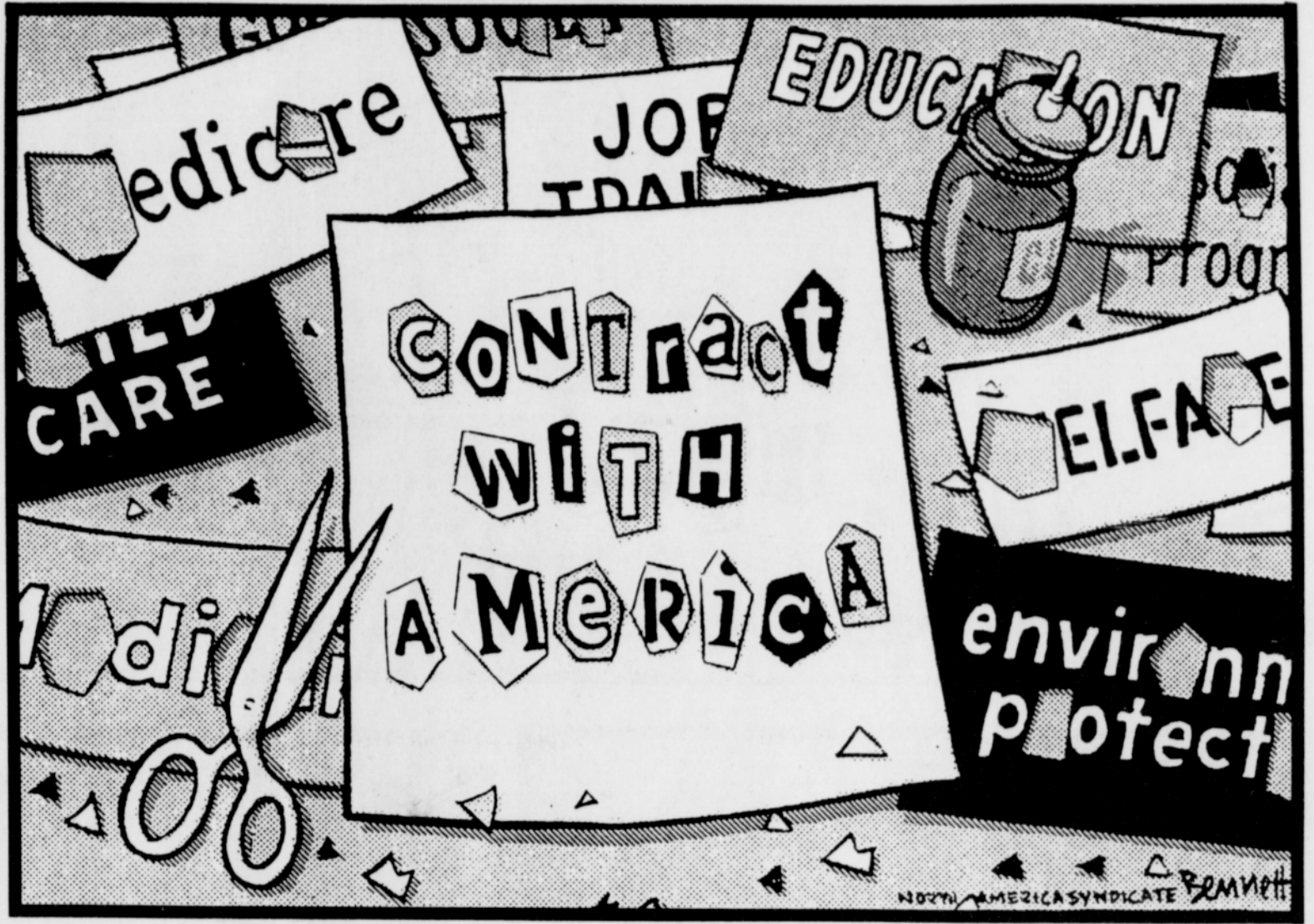
There is no vision, and the people are perishing. For decades savings and loan institutions were required by law to provide low-interest loans to help families buy homes. President Carter "deregulated" interest rates, Congress deregulated the S&Ls, and their ensuing collapse destroyed the government's low-interest housing program. Both parties lied to the people about the disaster until after the 1988 elections and then we were stuck for the bailout of half a trillion dollars.

Forty-one million Americans, and rising, still have no health insurance, even though they could have been covered for nothing by the savings from national health insurance such as Canada's single-payer system.

When changes in cost-of-living components since 1960 are factored into the government's measures of poverty, about 25% of us are in poverty, almost twice the government's official story line. Yet the Republican Congress continues deliberately to scapegoat and squeeze the poor and the elderly to provide still more tax benefits for the rich and the corporations, voting to give tax breaks of \$245 billion by 2002 primarily to the wealthy while also cutting Medicare \$270 billion and Medicaid \$182 billion during the same period. Both parties cry out that the poor must work for their welfare, but neither would dream of providing the public revenues necessary to capitalize enough public-sector jobs for the poor to take. Benefits under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program were slashed 42% between 1970 and 1991, yet Congress is still slashing them and seeks to end them as a federal entitlement. The oligarchy, tut-tutting against "class warfare" at every hint of a politics that might threaten its wealth and privileges, has declared its own class war against the poor.

Mostly we are shattered into subgroups -- split by race or by duels between the hurting middle, working and out-of-luck classes or enclosed within one-issue or special-focus organizations or efforts. What resources do we have to take power and democratize the corporation?

We as a people are rich if we could just get at our own common wealth. As Ralph Nader teaches, workers' pension funds come to \$4 or \$5 trillion, our bank deposits and savings accounts total a couple of trillion dollars and mutual insurance proceeds come to a trillion and a half; yet all of this, our money and therefore our power, is controlled by the corporations. We as the people own about one-third of the land in the United States, yet ranchers and mining companies ravage and pillage it for next to nothing. The airways are public property -- ours -- yet our politicians hand them free to broadcasting companies, which use them to control our minds. We are fabulously rich, but the oligarchy controls our wealth while we are privileged to pay off the national debt, now more than \$4 trillion.



Many millions of us know more than the imperious establishment wants us to, and we are moving. The Industrial Areas Foundation has organized people in many communities around their own needs and hopes, inventing new principles for authentic democracy that can be applied anywhere. The phenomenal movement spawned by Nader gallantly fights on for the people's interests through scores of organizations, and Nader is now considering the formation of a special national civic empowerment organization, 1,000 trained organizers who will form citizen-action groups of 500 to 1,000 people in every Congressional district. A majority of people polled nationally favor the establishment of a major new third party; the New Party and the Greens are showing encouraging signs of growth and by the end of the year a new Labor Party will come into being. Insurgents engineered the retirement of the aging chief of the AFL-CIO, a woman was on both rival slates for the new

national officers and black unionists demand more influential roles in the leadership. A small but important effort, the Program on Corporations, Law & Democracy (P.O. Box 806, Cambridge, Maryland 02140), is focusing on corporate tyranny and on withdrawing giant corporations' privileges and immunities. There is of course no way to do justice here to the dedicated myriad other movements for justice and equality in the country.

All this is what needs to be fused, if and to whatever extent people and their organizations want to be fused, into a pro-people national alliance. But can we reassemble and take power? Can a people so different in origin, race, religion and history know and care about each other enough and act together in our common interests powerfully enough to save the democracy and ourselves?

"We, the people," ordained and established the United States "to...promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity" solely on our authority and power as persons. We did not ordain and establish the United Corporations of America. Each of us still has the same authority and power on the sole strength of which the founders of the country declared themselves independent of the King of England. We can use this same authority and power, our strength as citizens, to write a new Declaration of Total Democratic Sovereignty Over the Corporation and make the United States, even if it will be for the first time, a democracy that is actually governed by the people who live in it, in our own interests and those of posterity. I don't know if we will do it or not. But we can. If we want the power we can take it. We are entering now the first great test of whether we, one nation's people who are as different as the people of the world, can govern ourselves. Can we see ourselves in others and the other in ourselves? I believe the first great experiment in international democracy will succeed or fail on the answer we give collectively to that question. We can or can't, and the answer in events will be the answer we give to history. Let's try: Let's revive and continue the American Populist Movement on the strength of our knowing that its best democratic passions have never died among us. With Tom Paine, we will "lay then the axe to the root, and teach governments humanity."

ALTERED STATES

Whatever the new Citizens Alliance does and stands for will be determined by what Ernie Cortes has called "democratic conversations." What follows is only one citizen's contribution to those conversations, and is no more important than anyone else's.

Once we are formed (in my opinion) we should at once connect with other democratic workers' and citizen movements and people-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) around the world, because the only hope for turning giant corporate fictions into fundamentally subordinate bodies is direct and cooperative citizen action.

Here are some of my thoughts about policy issues, with which you may or may not agree -- please come forward with your own, so that, in due course, a document on issues can be democratically composed by the participants in the new Alliance:

- Publicly mandated free television and radio time for bona-fide candidates for office at each level; a limit on all campaign contributions to \$100 from a flesh-and-blood person who is a permanent resident of the candidate's district; prohibition of contributions or any other political activity by corporations.

- Single-payer national health insurance such as the Canadian plan, with automatic universal coverage.

- A doubling of the minimum wage and indexing it to inflation.

- A full-employment (3% unemployment) antipoverty policy rooted in a 35-hour workweek with 4- to 6-week vacations; equal pay for equal work.

- A huge public-investment program, including the creation of a community-owned, community-controlled public nursing-home system and a new profession of caring for handicapped and neglected people, funded by the radical simplification of the income tax and the restoration of its steep progressivity, a permanent surtax on corporate profits and a steeply graduated annual wealth tax on personal assets of \$5 million or more.

- A generic low-interest-rate national policy, which will require the abolition of the Federal Reserve System.

- Statutory reversal of court-made law that corporations are "persons"; the redefinition by law of corporate boards to require that they include representatives of workers and other stakeholders, including the public; re-establishment of strict personal civil and criminal liability of corporate officers and agents; corporations' rechartering and, in cases of repeated wrongdoing, the revocation of corporate charters and their dismantling and distribution.

- A national public oil company to produce our own oil, and other local, state or federally owned yardstick corporations in airlines, communications, air travel and other transportation, and public utilities.

- Legislation to enhance freedom of speech and the press by limiting the ownership of newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations to one of any kind per person or independent owning entity.

- The criminalization of any large employer's opposition to the

formation of a union among any of its employees (the employer, not the government, required to stand neutral); the repeal of the requirement of a majority vote to form a bargaining unit, permitting minority unions; preference in federal contracts for unions that conduct periodic open accountability sessions among their membership and officers and that dedicate some specified portion of their assets to organizing the unorganized.

- Voting only on nonworking days; proportional representation and preference voting; initiative, referendum and recall; a requirement that judges inform juries of their common-law right and power to judge the law itself.

- Use of public moneys to front-end the costs of homes rather than letting banks double or triple them through compound interest charges.

- Classification of cigarettes and alcohol as dangerous drugs; removal or reduction of the profit from narcotics, tobacco and alcohol by forbidding their sale other than by nonprofit local or state entities, decriminalizing narcotics use and a new addiction-treatment system.

- Making U.S. participation in world trade with other nations conditional upon those other nations' workers' pay, conditions and rights to organize, citizens' rights and practices concerning the environment; no trade with dictatorships like China that use slave labor and shoot down, jail and torture their dissenters.

- The halving of military spending; the closing of most U.S. bases abroad and the withdrawal of most U.S. troops; the criminalization of the export of all lethal weapons abroad by U.S. manufacturers coupled with a U.S. campaign in the U.N. to achieve the same freeze internationally; the mandated impeachment of any President who wages any war without a formal declaration of war by Congress.

- Participation by U.S. citizens in a U.N. volunteer international armed force to stop mass murders anywhere while they are happening; U.S. support for permitting any person anywhere to join the U.N. for a small fee and receive a card as a world citizen, with the fees dedicated to paying the costs of the volunteer armed force.

- The abolition of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and dedicated international work toward that goal; punishment of their first use by any state by harshly turning that state into a world pariah.

What else might we do to broaden and advance our views, to back up each other's endeavors and help in mutually beneficial activities and enterprises? Internet actions? Buying groups? Low-interest loans among ourselves? Periodic accountability sessions with public officials or corporate executives? Teaching citizen action in high schools? Becoming distributors for Nader's "democratic toolkit"? Actions in civil disobedience? Mass demonstrations?

-RONNIE DUGGER



URIAH HULSEY

Columbian Cafe
1114 Marine Drive
Astoria, OR 97103
503-325-CAFE (2233)

Hours: Mon - Fri 8am - 2pm
Sat 10am - 2pm
Dinners: Wed - Sat, Open 5pm



The Local Artist
360 9th Street
Astoria, OR 97103
(503) 325-2883

Natalie Gustafson
OWNER

ART SUPPLIES • STUDENT GALLERY



BUCK'S BOOKBARN

★ USED BOOKS & RECORDS ★ 738-4246
1023 BROADWAY • SEASIDE