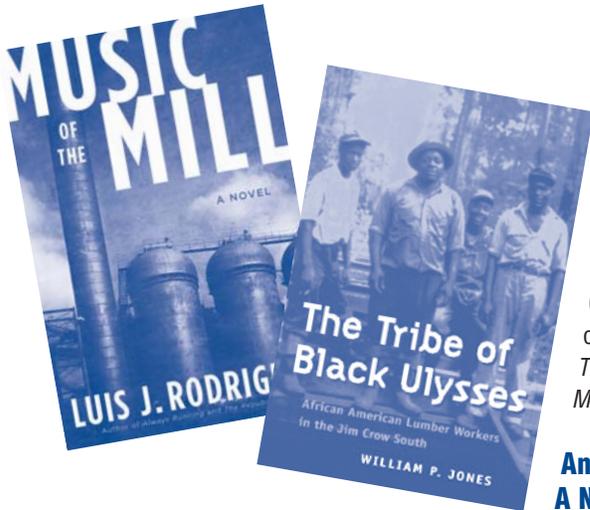


LABORPARTY NEWS

JULY 2005

www.thelaborparty.org



Fiction

Music of the Mill: A Novel

Luis J. Rodriguez captures the soul of a community and a little-known era in America's history in his epic novel about love, family, workers' rights, industrial strife, and cultural dislocation. Spanning sixty years and three generations, *Music of the Mill* (Rayo Publishers, 2005) is set in the industrial boom of post-World War II Southern California.

While post-war prosperity seemed to supply jobs to many migrant, African American, Mexican, and poor white workers, in reality racial discord, low-paying, backbreaking labor and the cruel manipulation by manufacturers pitted groups of workers against one another.

"A sweeping history lesson written with a poet's heart, a journalist's eye and the long view that comes from having worked in the mills. This novel should be required reading for No Politician Left Behind and everyone else interested in the

true history of the United States."

—Sandra Cisneros, author of *Caramelo* and *The House on Mango Street*

Antoine Bloyé: A Novel

In this classic novel, originally published in the 1930s (Monthly Review Press, 1973), French philosopher Paul Nizan tells the story of the son of a railroad worker. The bright young man gets a scholarship to the polytechnic university and becomes an executive in the railroad where he comes into conflict with his father and his father's ideals.

U.S. History

The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South

The lumber industry employed more African American men than any southern economic sector outside agriculture, yet those workers have been ignored almost completely by scholars. Drawing on a substantial number of oral history interviews as well as on manuscript sources, local newspapers, and government documents, William P. Jones in *The Tribe of Black Ulysses* (University of Illinois Press, 2005) explores black men's and women's changing relationship to industrial work in

Summer Books Issue

three sawmill communities (Elizabethtown, NC, Chapman, AL and Bogalusa, LA).

"Jones has concocted a positively daring marriage of cultural and labor history, in a way that should appeal to many readers and will, I suspect, stir up considerable controversy."

—David Montgomery, Yale University
www.press.uillinois.edu

Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age

Arc of Justice by Kevin Boyle (Henry Holt & Company, 2004) tells the story of Ossian Sweet, an African American doctor who bought a home in a previously all-white neighborhood of Detroit in 1924. Sweet, his wife and a group of nine friends gathered to defend the house from a neighborhood mob incited by a resurgent Ku Klux Klan. The resulting shooting deaths of two white men led to all 11 being charged with murder.

Their subsequent trial—with Clarence Darrow leading the defense and Frank Murphy of Flint sit-down strike fame as judge—was rich with theater and personality. Says National Organizer Mark Dudzic, "this case must be seen in the larger context of the residential segregation of northern cities in the wake of the Great Migration. An unholy alliance of developers, real estate agents, politicians and bankers effectively undid Sweet's heroic defense of his right to live anywhere he chose. Today, Detroit is the most resi-

dentally-segregated city in the United States."

Winner of the 2004 National Book Award for Nonfiction

Trade, Corporate Power, and the Ruling Class

On the Rampage: Corporate Predators and the Destruction of Democracy

Rampant corporate crime. Pollution. Cancer. Sweatshops. Dangerous working conditions. Wealth disparities. Corrupted politics. In a compilation of compelling snapshots from Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman, two of the leading reporters on business power, *On the Rampage* (Common Courage Press, 2004) documents the price we pay for living in a corporate-dominated society—and provides energizing accounts of individuals and movements resisting, and triumphing over, concentrated corporate power.
www.commoncouragepress.com

Whose Trade Organization? A Comprehensive Guide to the WTO (new edition)

Globalization affects our lives every day in myriad ways—often for the worse. Yet, as this eye-opening exposé by Public Citizen's Lori Wallach and Patrick Woodall documents, the current terms of corporated globalization are not inevitable, merely one option

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Editor Katherine Isaac

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Summer Books

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being imposed by the powerful, secretive and profoundly undemocratic World Trade Organization.

Whose Trade Organization? (The New Press, 2004) is the definitive guide to the WTO. It reveals which WTO terms have led to U.S. job losses, the race to the bottom in wages, unsafe food, attacks on environmental and health laws, and burgeoning international inequality. It shows how the WTO chills government actions to fight sweatshops, make life-saving drugs available, and protect endangered species—and even limits our elected governments’ ability to maintain policies on everything from meat inspection to media concentration. *Whose Trade Organization?* offers first steps toward a democratic, accountable alternative. It reminds us that change is not only necessary—it’s possible.

www.citizen.org

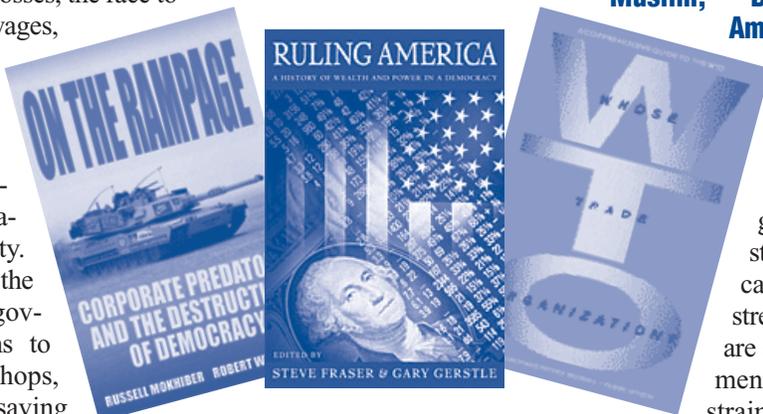
Want more books about corporate crime? Visit the Center for Corporate Policy’s website for a list of 100+ books:
www.corporatepolicy.org/issues/books.htm

Ruling America: A History of Wealth and Power in a Democracy

Ruling America, edited by Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Harvard University Press, 2005), offers a panoramic history of our country’s ruling elites from the time of the American Revolution to the present. At its heart is the greatest of American paradoxes: How have tiny minorities of the rich and privi-

leged consistently exercised so much power in a nation built on the notion of rule by the people?

In a series of thought-provoking essays, leading scholars of American history examine every epoch in which ruling economic elites have shaped our national



experience. They explore how elites came into existence, how they established their dominance over public affairs, and how their rule came to an end. The contributors analyze the elite coalition that led the Revolution and then examine the antebellum planters of the South and the merchant patricians of the North. Later chapters vividly portray the Gilded Age “robber barons,” the great finance capitalists in the age of J. P. Morgan, and the foreign-policy “Establishment” of the post-World War II years.

The book concludes with a dissection of the corporate-led counter-revolution against the New Deal characteristic of the Reagan and Bush era.

Rarely in the last half-century has one book afforded such a comprehensive look at the ways elite wealth and power have influenced the American experiment with democracy. At a time when the distribution of wealth and power is increasingly unequal, *Ruling America* is of urgent contemporary relevance.
www.hup.harvard.edu

Background and Underside of War

Here’s a medley of books that may sharpen a perspective on the Bush administration’s wars: Mahmood Mamdani, **Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror**

(Pantheon, 2004) distinguishes different strains of political Islam. He stresses that not all are similarly fundamentalist; not all strains of Islamic fundamentalism have political aspirations, and not all of those that do are inclined to advance their objectives via terrorism. He also links the global rise of terrorism as a political tool over the last twenty years to a shift in U.S. foreign policy that encouraged its use against regimes our government opposed in Africa, Latin America and Afghanistan and supported the creation and development of groups that rely on terror.

Peter W. Singer, **Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry** (Cornell University Press, 2003), details the rise and growth of the privatized military service industry. These firms, which are prominent in the U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, provide everything from logistics to direct combat. The rapidly growing industry of privatized warfare is now worth \$100 billion a year globally.

Marilyn Young, **Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990** (Harper Collins Publishers, 1991) is a comprehensive history of the Vietnam war and the U.S.’s role

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Summer Books

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in it from the end of World War II until the collapse of Saigon and beyond. She details the many self-deceptions and the arrogance that drove American policy makers and military leadership, as well as the efforts they made to sell the war to the

American people and how they made the calculations and decisions that wreaked havoc on Indochina.

H. Bruce Franklin, **Vietnam and Other American Fantasies** (University of Massachusetts Press, 2001) examines the various mythologies—often the exact inverse of reality—that the right-wing has fomented relent-

lessly about Vietnam and their consequences for American political life. Just a couple: Franklin asserts that no evidence exists of any returning Vietnam veterans being spat on and called babykiller; from the beginning of the war to its end, public opinion polls showed that working class people were more likely to oppose the war than the affluent.

Moreover, every major party presidential candidate from Dwight Eisenhower to Richard Nixon except one—Barry Goldwater—ran on a promise to end the war.

Especially interesting is Franklin's close examination of how movies like *The Deer Hunter*, the *Rambo* and Chuck Norris series and other pop cultural narratives systematically reversed famous images from the war to fuel its rehabilitation.

Claudia Koonz, **The Nazi Conscience** (Harvard University Press, 2003), is a gripping study of how the National Socialists, between 1933 and 1939, methodically engineered a public consciousness that would enable them to follow through on their exterminist program.

Koonz shows how the Nazis drew on American race laws and the American Eugenics Society, as well as the race theories that were prevalent throughout the West during the

first third of the 20th century, to model their own merger of biology and politics

into a social and political order based on racial fictions.

She details the Nazis' relentless infiltration of every social institution and organization—the courts, education system, labor organizations, neighborhood associations and others—and their creation and uncompromising manipulation of popular culture to harmonize them all with National Socialist vision and objectives.

Her account is chillingly resonant with the contemporary American right's strategy for wheeling every public voice into line with the Bush agenda, as is her discussion of how they moved by small steps, always sanitizing their real objectives just enough to make it easier for most people to accept them.

Thanks to the many Labor Party members who sent in suggestions for the Summer Book Issue—we regret we could not include all of them. Unless otherwise stated, all titles are available at Powell's online bookstore where employees are represented by ILWU Local 5. Purchasing through ILWU's portal, www.powellunion.com, results in 10 percent of sales paid directly to the workers' profit-sharing agreement.

Enjoy your summer; the *Labor Party News* will be back in September. **LP**

American Federation of Teachers Adopts Free Higher Ed Campaign

In May the Executive Council of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, officially adopted the campaign for Free Higher Education.

The resolution of support reads in part:

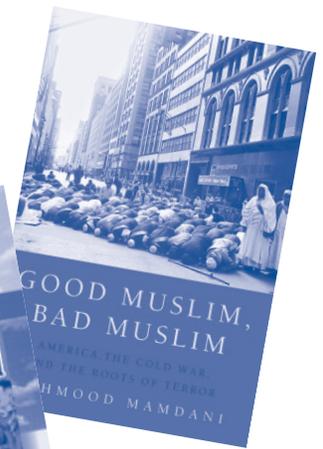
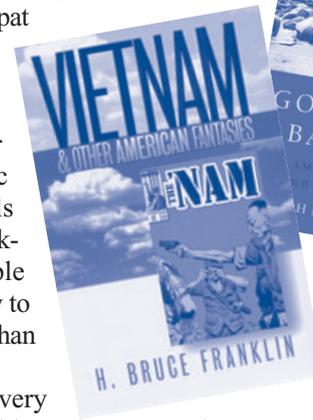
“WHEREAS, the Collective Bargaining Congress of the American Association of University Professors, the AAUP Rutgers Council of AAUP, AFT locals such as PSC/CUNY Local 2334, Local 1789/Seattle Community Colleges, the New Jersey AFT Council of State Colleges, as well as the California Faculty Association, civil rights organizations, and community groups have embarked upon a national campaign to achieve free tuition and fees for anyone meeting the admissions criteria at any public postsecondary educational institution:

RESOLVED, that the AFT support the campaign for the right of all Americans to have access to a fully funded free public higher education; and

RESOLVED, that the AFT assist in mobilizing broad public support for this right.”

“The AFT's endorsement of the campaign is important for several reasons,” says Adolph Reed, Jr., co-chair of the Labor Party's Free Higher Ed campaign. “AFT is a major and highly visible AFL-CIO affiliate with a broad and significant presence in the education sector. Their commitment to mobilize public support for the campaign promises to do much to publicize it. And, of course, AFT's presence in public K-12 education can do wonders to help spread the campaign through public schools, PTA organizations and communities around the country.”

The AFT resolution also affirms the Free Higher Education campaign's organizing strategy. It is the result of the efforts of the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, an AFT affiliate and early supporter of the campaign. The PSC moved the resolution carefully through the national union.



Getting Real with the Democrats

Chris Townsend

The public debate about labor's future has been underway for well more than a year now. And only one thing is certain: the depth of our problems guarantees that the discussion will continue long after the AFL-CIO convention in Chicago. Let's hope that labor's subordinate relationship to the Democratic Party—and what that means to our future as a labor movement—will be a bigger part of that continuing discussion.

Over the past few months some within the labor leadership have alluded to problems on this front, but these expressions of concern are not nearly enough. Instead, labor must ask: "Is the Democratic Party capable of or willing to oppose the unrelenting attacks on working people by both the Bush administration and Corporate America?"

A review of several key Congressional votes over the past months may help answer that question. For starters, the House of Representatives passed the regressive, anti-worker bankruptcy "reform" bill in April, the Senate having done so in early March. The credit card companies rejoiced. The House vote

was 279-149, with 50 Democrats supporting the Bush scheme. The Senate tally was even worse, passing by a 74-25 margin, with 41 percent of Senate Democrats caving in.

The House repealed the estate tax in mid-April by a vote of 272-162. A total of 42 Democrats jumped on this Bush bandwagon. Now the idle rich will remain rich in perpetuity. I don't expect much better whenever the Senate finally gets around to this issue.

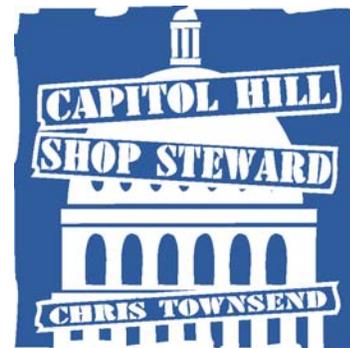
When it came time in early May to give Bush another blank check for his Iraq adventure, the scene was frightful. The House passed a bill to provide \$82 billion dollars for the war, by a 368-58 margin. A grand total of 143 Democrats (71 percent of all House Democrats) supported this unsupportable legislation. A few days later the Senate passed the same bill by a 100-0 margin, with all 44 Democrats (100 percent) surrendering to Bush. Let's not even mention that the last \$400 billion dollars thrown away on this disgraceful adventure has yet to be accounted for. The death toll mounts day after day, with no end in sight. Need we be reminded that this war

was launched on the basis of lies tailored to suit the needs of the Bush White House?

My last example is the May 26 House vote, when Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) offered an amendment that would have compelled the Bush administration to craft an actual plan to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq. It would have made Bush and Rumsfeld come up with a plan—just a plan—to get us out of Iraq someday. The amendment failed 128-300, with 79 Democrats (39 percent of all House Democrats) opposing the idea that we should have a plan to extricate ourselves from this fiasco. Maybe these 79 Democrats think we should just stay there forever and make Iraq the 51st state.

We have managed to get some tough talk out of many Democrats in defense of Social Security, but no votes have been taken. We'll see if that tough talk translates into real opposition when Bush brings his privatization plan to a vote. Does anyone remember the 1983 collapse of the Democrats to Reagan's attacks on Social Security?

The Democrats seemed to grow a backbone recently on the



issue of confirming the judicial appointments of Bush, but that's a pretty remote issue for just about anyone out in the real world these days.

While we are on the subject of "real", perhaps you would be interested to know what House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) had to say recently. When pestered by the arch-conservative *Washington Times* newspaper about why so many House Democrats were voting in support of Bush legislation, he replied, "The only real effort we made was on the budget ..." Please read that again. "The only real effort we made was on the budget." And unless I missed something, we haven't seen much opposition to the Bush budget either. Keep in mind: these are comments coming from the guy in charge of lining up the Democrats on the daily votes in the House of Representatives! Would you want this guy as your shop steward where you work?

My friends, we are in deep trouble. No longer do the Democrats offer a plan or a future direction for our nation that is visible, coherent, or on most days even detectable. This is why we started, and why we work so hard to maintain, the Labor Party. Let's remember that as the discussion about our future goes forward. The case has been made; it's up to us to build the alternative and make it real.

Chris Townsend is Political Action Director of the United Electrical Workers Union (UE)

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