



Manning Marable

## Beyond The Minimum Wage

On January first, about five million American workers received a modest raise. The federal government's national minimum wage rose twenty cents, from \$2.90 to \$3.10 per hour. Next New Year's Day, Congress has scheduled another modest increase of twenty five cents, pushing the minimum wage to \$3.35.

Naturally, any wage hike for workers brings charges from corporations, Republicans and many small entrepreneurs that the increase is both inflationary and counterproductive. The Chamber of Commerce declares that the minimum wage discourages the hiring of teenagers and other potential employees who have difficulty competing for jobs. In effect, the Chamber of Commerce advances the idea that the federal government should not set a minimal pay standard for lower income employees. Businesses that could hire someone at the wage of \$1.50 per hour instead of \$3.10 would have an incentive to employ the disadvantaged worker. Lower wages means greater job opportunities for blacks, Hispanics, and working class whites.

What are the economic realities behind the reactionary rhetoric? First, let's consider the recent minimum wage increase against last year's wage and price scene.

The increase of twenty cents equals a pay hike of only 6.9 percent. Nationwide, the pay increases for all jobs averaged approximately 8.1 percent. The rate of inflation during the past calendar year was about 13 percent, and inflation for this year will exceed 11 percent. In short, in real economic terms those employees receiving the minimal wage of \$3.10 actually lost money--it was a pay reduction, not an increase.

Next, let's examine the relationship between the minimum wage and other rates of pay for industrial workers. Only a couple of years ago, the minimum wage amounted to 57 percent of the typical wage for an employee in manufacturing. With this new increase, this percentage drops to only 49 percent of the average industrial wage. Once again, lower income workers experience a real loss in earnings in comparison to workers involved in other, higher paying jobs. This income gap discriminates against black workers especially, since blacks are represented in disproportionate numbers at the very lowest end of the economic spectrum.

Many researchers have come to the conclusion that the minimum wage level must be increased steadily as an incentive for employment and greater economic and social well being. As quoted recently in the *New York Times*, economics professor Sar A. Levitan declared that "without the minimum wage, workers on the bottom of the wage scale would increasingly turn to welfare -- or to illicit forms of earning a living." With a more equitable wage level, people would be encouraged to leave welfare; crime in the central cities would diminish as more people had an incentive to work.

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## CAMBODIA IS DYING

**Save the Children**  
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## Crime and Psychiatry

by Fidele Essono

An honest person can't really define the aim of crime without mistaking to definitely condemn the action as inhuman and wild. Even the criminology experts are still pondering to find out how to prevent the high toll of crimes today. The solution is still in a dream land, which can't immediately respond to this prayer for stopping the worst deed of mankind.

Crime has been speculated in various interpretations pertaining to social, economic or sentimental reasons that favor it. However, no motivated reason leading for committing a crime can't advocate that conviction. Recently, several opinions were loudly spoken out to suppress the death penalty as being inhuman. Well, his seems to indirectly implicate jurisdiction to be human feelings less by shooting down or shocking electrically on a chair the convicted killer. Logically, in this case, people appear concerned after the crime is accomplished and forget to take good care of all tendencies which generate it.

One day, in my own experience, I had personally discussed the topic with a few comprehensive and realistic people whom have severely critized and judged the crime as cruel and inhuman. Reasonably, any kind of killing is cruel, but the punitive counter-part inflicted to whom voluntarily slain can be judged differently than simply killing. This is not to clearly support death penalty as a necessary and imperative need to master a society or a system. The problem of the crime evolution through different sources that unfortunately would implicate the expensiveness of human life and mistreat it. So, the adequate medication will not be 20 years jail term or more, and then released or a paid bond with a good lawyer's intervention.

A few months later, I went in deepest discussion with some friends on the same subject for attempting to find a loyal answer to that human crisis. I started by issuing my point of view on the problem. As a personal advocate of human life as an unredeemable treasury, I launched out my total support for the total punishment of any killer. I found out myself later that I was preaching in the desert, when I was angrily unwelcomed by a disappointed audience that was treating me as an "old fashioned, criminal, non-demoncratic, silly and arachaic thinker." I felt lonely and guilty but my consciousness was still around me and I finally asked with a soft argument, "Tell me which one of you needs to be killed for a penny?" I again felt more lonely in icy atmosphere that made me believe that question was terrifying for my discussion mates. I did not receive any positive answer, except the emptiness around me and the sporadic arguments trying to defend their thesis by "Nobody, nobody, but killing is not good!"

Of course killing is not good and particularly when it is a premature death caused by a capricious individual. From a "Time" magazine survey on the criminal behavior, that shows more and more criminals are subjected to psychiatric tests to determine their mental state. That probability might be efficient in some cases not all of them. But, the majority of criminal cases are just regardless attitude to human life for gaining what they obviously set in mind to fulfill.

In scientific terms, psychiatry is a skill from human being intelligence to recognize his mental illness. That means it can

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Fidele Essono (Photo by Lillie Booth)

## Fidele Essono

By Ronald Spicer

A smile, a cheerful face and a friendly greeting are just a few of the characteristics of Fidele Essono. He has shown during my short stay to be a very serious, dependable and reliable person. Each issue that has come out during the year has had comments from Fidele. He has written major articles pertaining to national, international and campus news.

Born in Cameroon (Central Africa), Fidele attended high school in the French school system. He attended Vogt College where he majored in geography and minored in French. After graduation he became interested in Civilian Aviation and Air Traffic Control. Today he is involved in commercial aviation training. His main reason for attending FSU was to improve his English.

Fidele admits that he feels right at home here at FSU just "because nobody can tell you that you are a nigger" and also he feels that he has a right to be here and that he belongs.

Relations between Africa and African-Americans could be better, he thinks. The idea of their being a better Negro just isn't so and this notion has to be put aside. This type of thinking does more harm than good, Fidele believes.

Looking forward to seeing more of Fidele's work in *The Voice*. He's a dedicated and dependable worker.

