

and the knowledge he had gained, Jane made various attempts to open up debate on naval matters, Brooks says. The naval establishment did not appreciate his efforts. When one admiral publicly objected to Jane's expressing opinions on naval tactics, the analyst replied that he was "professionally compelled to devote hours and days to the study of points which the average Naval Officer can only spend as many minutes on."

Yet Jane enjoyed some significant victories. In 1903, he published an article by an Italian officer outlining the concept for a revolutionary battleship. Three years later,

the Royal Navy launched it in the form of the big-gun HMS *Dreadnought*. In 1909, when a British official claimed ignorance of the extent of Germany's battleship build-up, a furious Jane pointed out that "anyone who cared to do so could find out German naval progress without the slightest trouble" by reading his *Fighting Ships*.

Unable to find official employment during World War I, Jane "undertook an exhausting series of lecture tours to explain his views on the conduct of the war," Brooks writes. After a bout of influenza, he died in 1916 of apparent heart failure. But his *Fighting Ships* lives on.

## ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

### *Share the Wealth!*

"The Spiral of Inequality" by Paul Krugman, in *Mother Jones* (Nov.-Dec. 1996), 731 Market St., Ste. 600, San Francisco, Calif. 94103.

The facts about growing income inequality in the United States are no longer much in dispute, says Krugman, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Consider this: in 1970, American families in the top five percent of earners enjoyed an average income 12 times that of families in the bottom 20 percent; by 1994, the rich were raking in more than 19 times as much as the poor.

The only real question remaining, Krugman says, is what's behind the shift. Foreign trade and "skill bias" (which skews pay toward brain workers) are not as important as many people assume, he argues. What's changed most is values. In 1970, the CEO of a typical *Fortune* 500 company earned about 35 times as much as the average manufacturing employee. "It would have been unthinkable to pay him 150 times the average, as is now common," Krugman says, "and downright outrageous to do so while announcing mass layoffs and cutting the real earnings of many of the company's workers."

Though America a quarter-century ago had large disparities between economic classes, it also had "an egalitarian ethic that limited those disparities," he maintains. The labor movement fostered those egalitarian values and enforced them at the bargaining table and in the political arena,



*Unions now represent less than 12 percent of the private work force.*

providing a counterweight to the political influence enjoyed by wealthy individuals and corporations.

How can America become again "the relatively decent society we had a generation ago"? Strengthen unions, Krugman says.