

# *Political Affairs*

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## **The New Corporate Skyline**

**ECOLOGY: NEW NEEDS AND NEW THINKING**

Howard L. Parsons

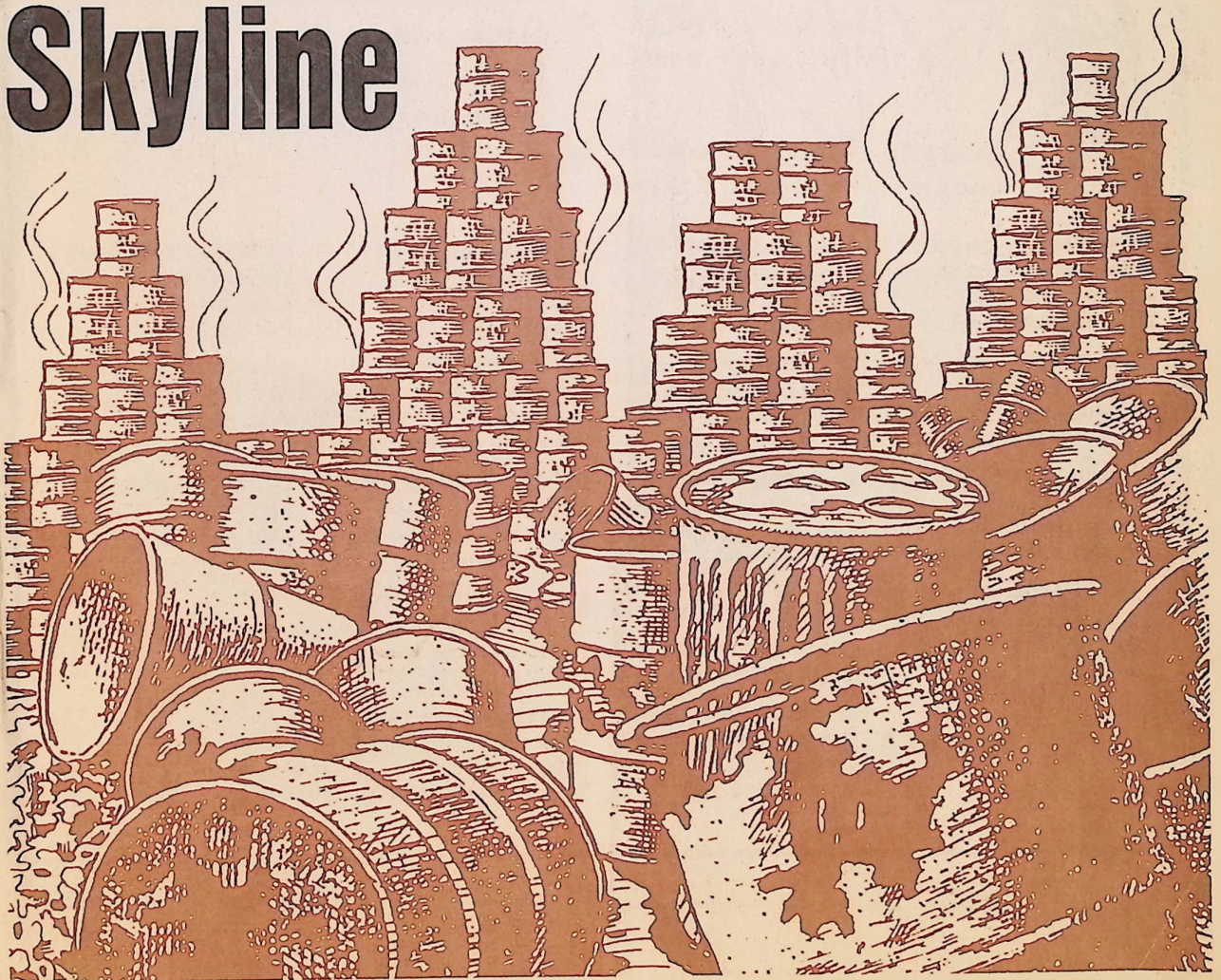
**THE DRUG EPIDEMIC: CAUSE, EFFECT & CURE**

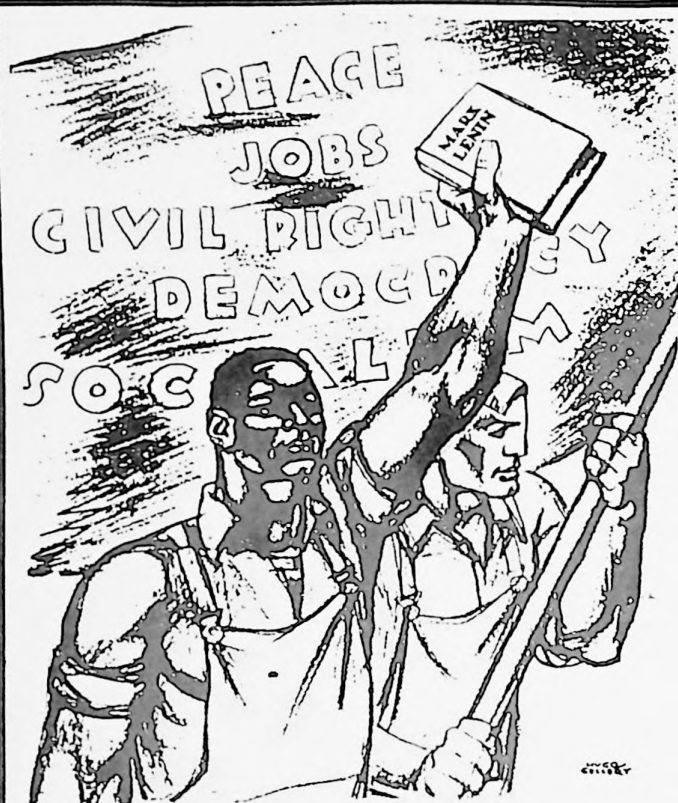
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# Ecology and New Thinking: The Requirements for a Livable Future

HOWARD L. PARSONS

**A**LL SENSIBLE PEOPLE AGREE THAT OUR PRE-eminent task—each day, for our lifetime—is to preserve ourselves and future generations from harm and destruction. At the same time, we know that our lives are intimately interwoven into the ecological texture of our globe. Therefore, we must preserve the system of planetary ecology from harm and destruction.

For those of us who live in class societies, this struggle to preserve our planetary life—from nuclear holocaust, other weapons of mass destruction, pollution and disorder, the injustice of poverty, hunger, illness, and suffering—must also be a class struggle. It must be a struggle for food, clothing, shelter, health care, jobs at living wages, education, and all else needed for a truly human life.<sup>1</sup>

The reason is that the ruling class structure is the main obstruction to disarmament, peace, justice and a sound ecological policy for planet Earth.<sup>2</sup> Hell-bent for maximizing profits, the ruling classes pile up ever more genocidal arms; threaten, invade and occupy countries; oppress and bleed their economies; sow hunger and disease and death among their people; wantonly damage the ecology of both developed and poor nations; deepen the inequalities between rich and poor throughout the world; and resist détente and peaceful coexistence.

The socialist countries, in essence, are not faced with such class-rooted problems. They have another set of problems. Yet the USSR, the most powerful of these countries, has proposed in its "new thinking" of perestroika, that there is a dialectical between the class struggle and the pursuit of all-human values (peace, disarmament, the conquest of hunger and poverty, and a restored ecology). It is important for us in the U.S. to understand this position of the USSR on ecology as it expresses the global cooperation needed to solve our global problems.

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For decades ecological mistakes and troubles have beset the Soviet Union. But it is not correct to equate them with those in the U.S. In the USSR, no ruling economic class has ever reigned with the driving obsession to reap profits at any cost, including toxification of the environment at home or in plundered countries.

After the revolution, in their deliberate haste to overcome underdevelopment, to achieve competitive parity in a hostile world of nations, to prepare for the invasion that they knew was coming from the West or Japan, and to construct an economy of socialism—the very first in history—the Soviet people and primary decision-makers had no time, energy, technology, or knowledge to pay much attention to ecological considerations. Similar attitudes and policies held sway during the period of reconstruction after the devastation suffered in the war against fascism.

Soviet socialism, moreover, has wrestled with contradictions arising from its unique nature and development: the conflict between ignorance and past habits—on the part of scientists, political leaders, and lay persons—and the demands of a rapidly evolving economic and the ecological environment; the tension between short-term interests of the people and long-term interests pertaining to ecological preservation and future needs and resources; and the clash between ecological values and the coercions of military production brought on by the cold war and the arms race.<sup>3</sup>

For years many Soviet scientists have been keenly aware of ecological problems in the USSR and throughout the planet. They have outlined necessary policies, but these have not been adequately considered by planners or carried out by managers and people.<sup>4</sup>

The ecological situation today in the USSR is mixed. Even before the powerful public campaign in the 1960s that succeeded in halting the pollution of Lake Baikal by a cellulose plant built on its shores, conservation was a popular avo-

cation for many. It is claimed that today the USSR's voluntary nature-conservation society has a membership of 60 million persons who engage in cleaning out undergrowth and planting new trees. But many difficulties are now officially recognized: pollution from chemical industries, thermal power stations, steel mills, nonferrous metallurgy enterprises, agriculture, mineral fertilizers, and pesticides.<sup>5</sup> Fyodor Morgun, chairman of the State Committee for Nature Conservation, has stated:

In 102 cities with an aggregate population of 50 million, the concentration of hazardous agents often surpasses the permissible norms tenfold or even more. We have raised a whole generation of people who do not realize that by destroying nature we are laying a time bomb for ourselves.<sup>6</sup>

Violations of environmental norms include large emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, lead, and fluoride, as well as coal surface-mining.

In the USSR, as in eastern Europe there is relatively little emission control. The Federal Republic of Germany has no automobile emission controls, and the U.S. and the United Kingdom have not joined other nations to agree to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions by 30 per cent.<sup>7</sup> Comparisons must also take size into account: the Soviet Union, responsible for 20 per cent of the world's industrial output, produces 10 per cent of all pollutants in the environment.<sup>8</sup>

The critical economic question is: Who will pay for these ecological controls? In market economies the theory is that markets "to a large degree . . . offer a self-administering check on resource waste; the resource user pays for inefficiency."<sup>9</sup> That means in practice that the cost—if care is taken by the private producer—is "passed on" to the consumer rather than taken out of the loot of surplus value. Ecological improvement under capitalism and in international cooperative efforts, calls for pressure from people in capitalist countries to force curbs and reductions on profits in order to pay for the costs of those improvements.

Now under consideration in the USSR is the assessment of "fees for the use of land, water, and other natural resources as well as fines for the discharge of pollutants"—fees assigned to ministries and departments, the principal agencies responsible for resources use. Thus producers conserving and reducing the consumption of

natural resources and lowering pollution would be rewarded; those not doing so would suffer. Fees and fines would be determined by cost-accounting, which is the direct result of perestroika and the new government decree, "On Radical Reorganization of Nature Conservation in the USSR."<sup>10</sup>

The leadership of the CPSU has recognized that the ecological problem calls for persistent popular initiative, realistic planning and management, and law enforcement, and it has given its support to "various societies dealing with the protection of the environment."<sup>11</sup>

In recent years, environmental groups have increased in numbers and effectiveness. Successful public and legal actions have eliminated pollution in the Moscow River, the Zhet River at Sverdlovsk, and the Sluch River in Byelorussia.<sup>12</sup> In 1986, a large public movement terminated the ten-year project of government agencies to reverse the northward flow of waters of Siberian rivers and to turn them southward to Central Asia. In 1987, local environmentalists, including many industrial workers blocked a plan to control water in the Kamchatka Peninsula.

Behind and accompanying these changes of practice and social policy is a shift of emphasis in the philosophy of ecology. The 1948 "Great Plan for the Transformation of Nature" projected a scheme of afforestation, power stations, irrigation, and improved agriculture. Yet it had limited success. Significant was the philosophy guiding it. Several British scientists at the time wrote a pamphlet about it whose title epitomized that philosophy: "Man Conquers Nature."<sup>13</sup>

At that point in Soviet history it seemed a required method of work: in the process of recovering from widespread razing of industrial and agricultural facilities during the war against fascism, the Soviet people needed to take swift and large-scale measures to develop their food production by making optimal use of the vast and hitherto dessicated lands of Central Asia and the South Ukraine. During the 1930s, through the collective Promethean will of many workers and peasants, the people had, in fact, plowed the soil and poured the steel to lay the foundations of the world's first socialist society.

But the troubles that accumulated during the post-war period in industry and agriculture, in production and management, and that reached a "pre-crisis" stage in the early 1970s, were accom-

panied by mounting problems in ecology. The realization grew among many that far-reaching measures were needed to deal with these interlinked problems as a whole. Perestroika, launched in 1985, opened the way for a new perspective, new policies and practices in all of Soviet life. Established ecological policy and practice came under sharp criticism.

In 1986 the CPSU Central Committee, affirming the capability of socialism to create "a harmonious balance between society and nature" and noting measures already implemented, acknowledged the criticism of the public and writers "calling for a more careful treatment of land and its riches, of lakes, rivers, and the plant and animal world." It criticized the "too slow" introduction of scientific and technical achievements into nature protection, the "outdated notions of enterprises," the "too small a scale" of wasteless and low-waste production techniques, and the wastage and pollution in the processing of minerals.<sup>14</sup>

Further, leaders have agreed that the questions of ecology so seriously affecting humanity have acquired global scope and now cry out for global cooperation. Mikhail Gorbachev, in February 1987, speaking of "the goal of humanizing international relations," and citing Vladimir Vernadsky's warning in 1922 about the dangers of atomic energy and self-destruction, observed:

At one time, the human ambition, without second thought, was to subdue the forces of Nature. Now, invading Nature without considering all consequences well in advance might turn it into a deadly enemy of humanity. The Chernobyl accident reminded us of that in a tragedy of relatively local proportions.<sup>15</sup>

International and U.S.-USSR cooperation on environmental problems was, in fact, in place even before the ecological program initiated in the 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev agreement. Since then it has accelerated in a global development marked by the epochal UN study, *Our Common Future* (1987), and by fresh joint initiatives from both sides in the era of perestroika and glasnost.<sup>16</sup>

In his historic speech to the United Nations, December 7, 1988, Gorbachev stressed the prospects for international elimination of the threat to the world's environment—prospects opened by the process of disarmament. He supported the conference on the environment in the framework

of the United Nations scheduled for 1992. He suggested a UN center for emergency environmental assistance.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, in his book *Perestroika, New Thinking for Our Country and the World*,<sup>18</sup> Gorbachev had repeatedly adduced environmental issues as an example of the "common interests" requiring the immediate and cooperative attention of the world's states and peoples.

Today, Soviet thinkers are taking a revised look at the ambition "to subdue the forces of Nature." Planners, managers, and workers must not "invade" nature "without considering all consequences well in advance." And the people, eternally vigilant, must see to it that such a policy is enforced. Whether the project is the construction of a nuclear plant, the spraying of pesticides on crops, the burning of fossil fuel, the mining of coal in the Donbas (with its dumping of huge quantities of rock), the making of steel in Sverdlovsk (and the pollution of the Zhet River with waste water)—or the shipment of oil in tankers on the high seas; the parasitic ravages of transnational corporations in poor countries (in the rain forest of Brazil; in Bhopal, India); military intervention against Nicaragua, Grenada, Libya, Palestine, and the CIA-knows-where; and the unabated escalation of weapons with holocaustic consequences to all life forms on earth—the original events ripple and rush out through space with widening and terrible effects on persons, societies, and ecosystems, and through the tide of time into a far distant and endangered future.

The emergent Soviet ecological position—which is organic to all other positions in economy, politics, international relations, military policy, cultural and scientific exchanges, etc.—has been well summarized by Georgi Arbatov, director of the Institute of the USA and Canadian Studies:

Enormous changes have taken place in the last few years in our attitude toward nature and our interrelations with it. I well remember (it wasn't really long ago) the slogans on our city streets—"We Cannot Wait for Nature's Favors, but Our Task is to Take Them from It."

Articles, official speeches, and even textbooks were full of such words as—"to conquer nature", "to enslave nature" and "to take from nature." We made quite a few errors and, having paid dearly for them, have started to realize that we should not combat na-

ture, or just coexist with it, but ably and intelligently cooperate with it. The global dimensions of the problem also became clearer, for it demands—under the threat of a general disaster—universal cooperation.<sup>19</sup>

The new world we live in necessitates “new thinking.” In one sense, however, in a profound sense, the world is not new. The interconnectedness, the complex, diversified, and changing unity of the human and natural world has always been there. Thanks to the sciences of ecology and the good sense of observant and reflective people, we are beginning to discover this unity.

What is new are the wounds and casualties inflicted on the ecological and social systems, on plant and animal and human life, by recent technologies in the hands of heedless private corporations, capitalist states, and certain policies in socialist countries—and the imminent menace to the very survival of life on our planet.

But our old way of thinking still blinds and imprisons us. We have erroneously assumed that we, as nations, states, and economies, live insulated from others and moreover that we live insulated from a nonhuman “nature.” That is a grave error, fraught with damaging and mortal consequences. Our national life is interdependent with all other national lives in an international economy and world military system. The old ways of national empires, of “sovereign” states that can violate working classes and colonial peoples with impunity and rampage over other races and cultures, are primal crimes in our new world community. Further, we are deeply interacting with the environment of non-human nature; and violence against this nature, as against an oppressed class, calls out resistance and even revenge from a violated nature.

Nature is all one—dialectically divided, infinitely varied, dynamic and oppositional—and we are creatures within it and co-creators of it, for better or for worse. “Human” problems such as mass starvation and incipient epidemics (like AIDS) are also “natural” problems, occurring at the permeable borders where our social arrangements have failed in their interactions with the world of soil and viruses.

So our opportunity and task, our freedom

and destiny, is “universal cooperation” for human life and struggle against the evils that vex our way. It is high time for us to be about our work, to join our Soviet and other partners in our global labor for peace and survival, in our struggle—a class struggle, a people’s struggle—for a world order that at one and the same time saves nature, ourselves, and our posterity for the good life. □

### Notes

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2. Gus Hall, *Ecology: Can We Survive Under Capitalism?* New York: International, 1972.
3. Virginia U. Warner Brodine, “The Environment: A Natural Terrain for Communists,” *Political Affairs*, January 1989, 28-33.
4. Drawing on his 30 years of study of Soviet science, Loren Graham has reported that there has been a long-time split between the theoretical and practical scientists in the USSR and that industrial enterprises have been inert toward initiatives in new technology. “How Good is Soviet Science?” Program originally broadcast by PBS on November 17, 1987, Boston: WGBH Transcripts, 1987. Gorbachev has made the same points.
5. *Yearbook USSR '87*, Moscow: Novosti, 1987, 59-60.
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7. William U. Chandler, “Designing Sustainable Economies,” in *State of the World 1987*, ed. Lester R. Brown, et al. New York: Norton, 1987, 185, 187-188.
8. *Yearbook USSR '87*, 56.
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10. “Perestroika in Nature Conservation is Essential,” 16.
11. “On Progress in Implementing the Decisions of the 27th Party Congress and the Tasks of Promoting Perestroika. Report of Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CC CPSU, at the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU, June 28, 1988,” *Moscow News* No. 27 (3327), July 10-17, 1988. Supplement, 10.
12. *Yearbook USSR '87*, 59.
13. *Man Conquers Nature*, London: Society for Cultural Relations With the USSR, 1952.
14. *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, delivered by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. February 25, 1986, Moscow, Novosti, 1986, 61.
15. “Mikhail Gorbachev’s Address to Participants in the International Forum for Nuclear-Free World, for Survival of Humanity,” *Moscow News* No. 8 (3526), March 1-8, 1987, Supplement, 4.
16. *Surviving Together*, No. 16 (Fall/Winter 1988), 66-88.
17. *People’s Daily World*, December 15, 1988, 11-A, 12-A, 21-A, 22-A.
18. Harper and Row, 1987.
19. “Changes in the World, in its Understanding, by the USSR, by the World Community,” *Moscow News* No. 39 (3339), October 2-9, 1988, 5.

# The Drug Epidemic Cause, Effect and Cure

JARVIS TYNER

**A**CCORDING TO OPINION POLL AFTER OPINION poll, one of the greatest, if not the greatest domestic concern of most Americans, is the alarming effect of the drug epidemic that's engulfing community after community throughout the country. This is one of the most horrible features of life today under declining U.S. capitalism.

Drugs are literally flooding the country and millions of people, especially young people, are being victimized and destroyed by their murderous effects. Thousands are being jailed. Families are being torn apart. Whole neighborhoods have been turned into drug war zones. Thousands are being killed annually. More than sixty percent of all street crimes are drug related. Many innocent people are being hurt, disoriented and permanently disabled. African-American and Latino communities are particularly being victimized. The dreaded AIDS disease is proliferating through drugs.

The government seems unable to do anything to decisively turn this situation around. The people are worried. The question is, why is this happening and who is responsible? In which direction do solutions lie?

There are many addiction problems that are plaguing U.S. society today, including alcoholism, but the drug that is the most available and is creating the most addicts and, therefore, the greatest havoc is cocaine, particularly in its "crack" form. Cocaine is the most potent of all the drugs and crack is the most addictive form of cocaine. For many people, all it takes is one experience with crack and they are hooked. That's how powerfully addictive crack is.

Cocaine was a rich person's drug, highly potent, supposedly non-addictive and very expensive. Crack is not only the most potent form of cocaine but, most dangerously, it is relatively inexpensive—so cheap that it is within reach of the unemployed and of children. It is possible for a

crack user to become quickly and totally intoxicated for only a few dollars, no more than what one might get for a tape deck stolen from someone's car.

Although crack was originally aimed at the Black and Latino communities, it is now present almost everywhere. Some experts claim that in some metropolitan areas over 50 percent of the crack consumption is actually in the suburbs. It is significant to note that the price of crack on the streets is actually going down as the demand goes up. This means that the supply is plentiful and the users are abundant. It's doubtful that this drug, designed to be used by poor folks, was developed by some "jailhouse chemist." It is more likely that it was the product of some highly placed and well financed research.

It is important to know that the coca leaf, which cocaine is derived from, cannot be grown in the United States. Seventy-five percent of the cocaine entering the United States is manufactured in Columbia from coca paste smuggled in from Bolivia and Peru.

Illegal drugs have to be imported and that's where the government comes in. While other countries are able to keep these drugs to a minimum or keep them out altogether, our government is only able, by its own admission to stop from 5 to 15 percent of what's smuggled in. This is an abysmal record for the two successive national administrations which claim to be totally committed to law and order and a drug-free society.

The Reagan/Bush record is sorry indeed. When Reagan took office in 1981, he launched a so-called "War on Drugs" and appointed George Bush to head the effort. At that time, 24 tons of cocaine was coming into the country annually, according to the 1985 report of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control.

By 1984, after four years of Reagan's "War on Drugs" and "Just Say No" campaign, the amount of imported cocaine more than tripled to over 85 tons annually. According to the 1988 re-

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port of the same Select Committee, well over 200 tons of cocaine is now coming into the country every year.

In New York City, in 1986, there were 182,000 cocaine abusers; by 1988, in just 2 years, the number grew to 600,000. Despite Mayor Koch's grandstanding all over the country about the drug problem, the fact is that the more it grew, the more the Koch Administration cut city funds for drug rehabilitation. This has left thousands of the victims who want to be free from their addiction without any place to go to be cured and saved from a life of tragedy.

The fact is that in no branch or level of government is the anti-drug record good. On the federal level, the record shows that either George Bush is a total incompetent or there really is no "war on drugs." It's my view that there is no "war on drugs" nor was it ever intended in the first place. There is now ample evidence to indicate that the smuggling and proliferation of illegal drugs is intrinsically a part of the foreign and domestic policies of the U.S. government.

The Reagan and Bush administrations' anti-communist, imperialist policies have linked our government and the CIA with the world's biggest drug cartels. Just as opium was used by the Britain, China and the U.S. during the Vietnam war, the Reagan and Bush administrations have been using drugs to help finance and perpetuate their policies abroad, while wreaking havoc here at home.

For example: to date, the U.S. government refuses to cut off aid to the "Mujahadeen," the so-called "freedom fighters" of Afghanistan. They supply the opium which produces most of the heroin that enters the United States. Despite the fact that such aid is in violation of the anti-drug laws that prohibit foreign aid to any country engaged in drug-smuggling, the military supplies keep pouring in.

According to *The New York Times* (March 26, 1989), "State Department officials acknowledge that if the rebels gain control, the [anti-drug] sanctions are likely to be waived on grounds of national interest."

The question is, in whose "national interest" is this being done? Certainly not that of the U.S. people who are being victimized by the drug epidemic, nor the great majority of the people of Afghanistan who are also being victimized by the continuation of this war. This is only in the inter-

est of those who want to continue to waste billions of U.S. tax dollars in order to turn Afghanistan into an anti-communist, U.S. colony. This money could be spent meeting the vital human needs of our people.

It's clear that this Administration's anti-communist goals supersede our real national interest, including stopping drugs. Also, the Iran-contra scandal has increasingly revealed the direct link between the U.S. government and the biggest drug cartels in Central America. The list of those involved in this conspiracy is quite long and shows some direct and indirect involvement with so-called heroes like Oliver North and George Bush who was then vice-president.

After passage of the Boland Amendment which prohibited aid to the contras, drugs were nevertheless exchanged for arms in order to aid the contras. General Noriega was on the CIA's payroll while he was involved in drug smuggling. The biggest Columbian drug cartel gave millions to the contras. These "contributions" were arranged by the CIA. The principal investigator who prepared the recent report of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Narcotics, Terrorism and International Operations said, "The real contra-drug story is that we simply did not crack down on the people that were doing us a favor" (*The New York Times* of April 14, 1989).

The question must be asked, how are we going to stop drugs when our government is allied with the principal drug smugglers? The government is using the great concern about drugs to create mass hysteria in order to impose a police state atmosphere in our country. Drugs are also effective to hold down the resistance of the people to poverty, unemployment, homelessness, etc. Drugs demoralize people and destabilize the fightback in working class communities.

**NOT A WAR ON DRUGS BUT ON THE POOR** ■ In city after city, all kinds of police-state measures are being put into effect that, at best, are only temporarily easing the drug problem while having a dramatic effect in curtailing democratic rights. In New York City, as in many other cities, drugs are being sold openly on the streets, quite often in clear sight of the police. Every twelve-year old usually knows where drugs are to be found. Periodically, heavily armed local police and drug enforcement people, after weeks of observing neighborhood drug sales, carry out military-style

raids resulting in mass arrests and community harassment. This is what is called "selective enforcement."

These efforts only temporarily drive the drugs off the streets. Usually, the major drug dealers in the community have been warned of impending raids. They and the police, who are taking bribes and in some cases selling drugs themselves, are rarely ever arrested—not to mention the big bankers who make millions laundering the billions in drug money.

It's the "small time" drug pushers and users who are flooding the jails. In 1985 there were some 10,000 people in New York City jails. Today, largely due to the drug epidemic that number is up to 18,000. The city courts and prison system are in a total crisis of overload. They are now putting prisoners in prison barges on the rivers. Most of these prisoners are African-American and Latino and most of the raids are carried out in the ghettos and barrios, even though a large percentage of drugs are also consumed in most white communities. Jailing the small time dealers and using police-state measures is not seriously curtailing the drug problem, but it is intensifying racist and political repression.

In New York City, as in many other cities, certain nationalities are singled out (for example, Jamaicans and Columbians) for special repression. Large numbers of 12- and 14-year olds are also being arrested, imprisoned and branded for life. According to the United States Bureau of Criminal Justice, nationally the number of women in State and Federal prisons has gone from 13,420 to 30,834 in the last eight years, largely due to massive drug arrests (*The New York Times*, April 17, 1989). In New York City it is estimated that 85 percent of the women prisoners have children.

The authorities are also using the drug problem to evict families and in to gentrify workingclass neighborhoods, to the delight of the real estate and banking interest. In public housing they are putting through all kinds of severe "anti-drug" measures to make it possible to evict whole families, e.g. if one member of the family is found to be involved with drugs. They are making people homeless in the name of fighting drugs. Also, in industry after industry drug testing is being used to harass and fire workers.

Meanwhile, the drugs keep coming into the country in massive quantities. What we are expe-

riencing is not a war on drugs but rather a use of drugs to make war on poor folks. In the ghettos and barrios it is genocidal. The shortening life-span of African-American males is largely an effect of the violence created by drug epidemic. In addition, Federal authorities are talking about imposing marshal law, especially in cities where there are African-American mayors.

It is of no small significance that more and more people are being won over to reinstatement of the death penalty because they feel it will help stop the drugs. Drug dealers who live on the edge of death everyday are not going to be seriously threatened by the death penalty. But the death penalty will undermine democratic rights.

It is estimated that the illegal trade in cocaine alone is generating over \$100 billion in profits. The money is going largely to the big drug cartels, to the bankers and corrupt politicians here and abroad.

At each end of the cocaine pipe line, human tragedy prevails. At the supply end, the peasants who cultivate and process the cocaine are mostly poverty stricken. They live and work under the terrorism of the drug overlords with their heavily armed private armies. Drugs play a large part in keeping the countries of Central America in a state of underdevelopment.

At the demand end of the pipeline, the users are mostly poor and workingclass with a disproportionate number of African-American and Latino people. Exploitation, oppression and racism have been intensified in their lives as a result of drug use.

Cocaine is producing super profits for the few and great pain for the many. That is the problem. Tons of drugs are brought in. Millions of people are victimized either as users or victims of users. Then the great fear of drugs is used to heighten racism and to carry out anti-working class repressive measures.

We have lived through two terms of the Reagan/Bush anti-working class and racist policies. The rich have gotten richer at the expense of the poor getting poorer. The massive introduction of drugs into the workingclass, especially racially oppressed communities, is designed to limit the kind of response that happened during the upsurge of the 1960s. To some extent it has succeeded.

The question remains, what can be done to stop drugs? Presently many communities are

mobilizing, trying to drive out drugs, often placing their lives in danger. In numbers there is strength. When enough people get together they can be effective in a given area.

There is a grassroots anti-drug movement springing up across the country. Many unions have anti-drug programs. Religious groups are organizing community patrols. Neighborhood groups are calling marches and rallies. People are trying to find a way to stop the carnage associated with the drug epidemic.

Most of these efforts are a reaction to the shameful collusion and/or indifference of the police. To be really effective, such efforts should avoid vigilantism and should politically attack the pro-drug, anti-working class policies of the government.

**SUPPLY AND DEMAND** ■ On the supply side of the drug epidemic, it is clear that the Bush Administration and Congress need to wage a real war on drugs. As Congressman Charles Rangel from Harlem put it (*New York Newsday*, May 1, 1989), "There is no war (on drugs). It's tragic, with the high hopes we had for the Bush administration, that we see they've been unable to get started."

A real war on drugs means, in the first place, an end to the Administration's political alignment with the world's biggest drug smugglers. When drugs are coming in by the hundreds of tons, it is a good guess that they are not being brought in on commercial airlines by "small time" smugglers.

There must be some way that massive amounts of drugs are coming in largely unharassed. Under the cover of national security, the CIA and the military are heavily involved, as well as organized crime. This involvement is another strong reason to totally dismantle the CIA. It is a lawless agency which consistently acts against the interest of the majority of the U.S. people. Congress must intervene to stop this.

Many conservative U.S. politicians are now hypocritically calling for the intervention of U.S. troops into other countries in the name of fighting drugs. They are trying to slander legitimate liberation movements by falsely associating them with drug smuggling. This must be rejected as an attempt to use the drug issue in order to cover up military aggression.

Drugs is another reason why there must be

an end to all aid to the contras in Nicaragua.

Any government official found involved at any level of drug dealing should be prosecuted to the maximum. The government must end its de-facto drug pushing in the name of national security.

New and stronger measures are needed to stop the laundering of billions in drug money by the big bankers. Big drug dealers depend on this to convert their profits into spendable dollars for themselves and for the bankers.

Hundreds of thousands of people in our country are now addicted to drugs. What is needed is a massive program of free rehabilitation, a humane program that will uplift people, not further degrade them. Initially, most feel that they can resist the dangers associated with drug use. Once they are hooked, however, they can't see the dangers because of the uncontrollable urge to get high. A major national campaign is needed to convince users to seek help. Indications are that thousands are ready to take this path, but tragically there are not enough spaces.

Contrary to the government's view, the drug problem cannot be solved by police methods alone because it is not simply a crime problem. Campaigns like the "Just Say No" drive don't work because there are enormous social problems resulting from the crisis of U.S. state monopoly capitalism that is at the root of why people take drugs. These problems must be dealt with. They are the fertile social ground in which the demand for drugs will continue to bear fruit.

Drugs are proliferating in communities where poverty is widespread. Poor people in general are not taking drugs or engaging in crime; in fact, overwhelmingly, most poor folks are drug-free and are most victimized by crime, both in the streets and in the suites. However, there is a link between poverty and drugs.

In our society there's too much unhappiness, dissatisfaction, anger and pain that's rooted in unemployment, underemployment, racism, male supremacy, oppression and exploitation. In the fight against drugs these things cannot be overlooked. Too many Americans have had their hopes crushed. They don't see any possibility for a good and happy life. For too many, in the face of a lifetime of pain, sadness and disappointment, a temporary state of euphoria seems like an attractive option.

**WHAT'S NEEDED TO WIN THE WAR** ■ The critical need is the removal of so much pain in our society. It's not enough to just say, "No." There must be something more to say "yes" to in society, in the form of a better life for all. This must not be lost sight of. What is required is a fight for jobs, quality education and housing, decent health care and an end to racism, male supremacy and union busting. Jesse Jackson's call for "Hope Over Dope," cannot be achieved without serious material incentives.

The military budget must be drastically cut in the spirit of the Soviet peace initiatives. Billions must be redirected to the home front to provide decent jobs, housing, schools, health care, recreational and cultural opportunities for all. A "Marshall Plan" is needed to rebuild our cities, small towns and rural areas. To the degree that this is done, the demand for drugs will decline. The growing neighborhood-based, anti-drug movements must be won to take up these vital workingclass issues in coalition with labor and others, if this situation is going to be turned around.

Because of selective enforcement and of local police involvement in the drug problem, civilian community control of the police is an urgent necessity.

Calls for the legalization of drugs should be rejected. If drugs are cheap and accessible, it is said that the crime aspect of the problem will diminish. But what about the other aspects of the problem? Drugs would spread even more. Large numbers of people will be dependent all of their lives. Hopelessness would deepen. This would be a way to contain and control working people, especially racially oppressed. The point is not to accommodate to the oppressive conditions of life

by making more drugs available; the point is to act in unity to change those conditions. Legalization will intensify exploitation and oppression in our society.

Drug use is not confined to poor folks and neither are meaningless lives. The "me only" instant-gratification greed syndrome, that has intensified with the rise of Reagan and Bush, is at the bottom of the dissatisfaction, unhappiness and emptiness in the lives of too many people.

So-called prosperous people are dehumanized in the quest for greater wealth. All but the most insensitive are bothered by having to step over a homeless person in order to buy a hundred-dollar meal at some restaurant. Many of them are alienated and are taking drugs too. One of the busiest drug selling markets in the country may be found at lunch time on Wall Street. There is very little difference in the greed mentality of an Ivan Boesky and that of a street drug dealer.

Along with the drug epidemic, there is a spread of the "drug culture." This is an outlook of extreme self-centeredness, instant gratification, and disdain for honest hard work. It is the apex of political he disregard of humanity, society, family, and co-workers. No one counts but one's self. This outlook, of course, leaves one hopelessly at the mercy of the capitalist system and the capitalist class.

The "me only" drug culture must be replaced by a humane and meaningful outlook of social responsibility, of caring for one's fellow human beings. Working and committing oneself to a peaceful world and a better U.S. society can give one a great resistance to drugs.

A socialist USA will make our society immune to drugs and the other destructive aspects of today's U.S. state monopoly capitalism. □



# The Young Communist League: Choice of a New Generation

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TERRIE ALBANO

**W**HAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PUT A LARGE number of young leaders and activists together with other young leaders and activists who are Communists from around the country, to discuss experiences and to plan for the future? Then you throw in some live performances of music—rock, rap, folk, country — some poetry, art, dance parties. And then you add a delegation from the Communist Party USA, and representatives from the Young Communist League of Canada, the Organization of Democratic Youth and Students of Iran, the FMLN-FDR of El Salvador, and the ANC of South Africa?

What you have is an explosive mixture of politics, excitement, unity, militancy, optimism, and fun. That's exactly what happened at the First National Conference of the Young Communist League USA. It was a breakthrough conference, a watershed event in the life of the YCL. And it marked an important development in the youth and student movement.

The conference slogan, "United Youth and Student Action to Turn Our Future Around," was the foundation on which the conference was built. The slogan was brought to life at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, April 21-23, 1989. From its opening, the YCL conference proved to be a unifying form in which all activists played an integral role.

The host Brown YCL club took the lead in reaching out beyond its ranks to other organizations and other campuses in Providence. They invited many organizations and activists to participate. The conference was welcomed by Brown University's Student Council and student organizations such as People for a Choice, Students against the CIA, African Students Association, Brown Environmental Network, INFACT/GE Boycott, Central America Solidarity Committee, and the Student Homeless Action Project. A total

of fifteen of these invitees participated in the conference workshops.

The guests at the conference—leaders from a broad cross section of national and regional youth and student organizations—represented hundreds of thousands of students and activists.

The fact that this was a breakthrough conference, and that the YCL has a new level of influence and of relations with broad forces, was shown by the impressive list of youth and student leaders who accepted invitations to attend. They included the president of the United States Student Association (USSA), the student coordinator of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the leadership of the New York Student Association of State Universities (SASU), a representative of the Georgia Black Student Association, the coordinator of the Peace and Justice Youth Outreach Project, and representation from the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students.

**THERE IS A NEW LEVEL OF UNITY** in the youth and student movement. The decline of anti-communism is reflected in the YCL's acceptance by so many youth and student leaders as a leading organization. This has come about as a direct result of the YCL's activity. Its work in the fight against racism, the World Youth Festivals, and its consistency in promoting labor/youth unity have all contributed to a new quality in the breadth of relations.

This new level of unity is part of a steadily developing process and was visible at a youth and student reception held the evening before the April 9th Women's Rights March. Fifteen national and regional organizations sponsored the event, including the YCL and other Festival endorsers.

The multi-racial unity and character of the First National Conference was a significant statement about this young generation.

Forty percent of the conference participants were racially and nationally oppressed youth,

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half of whom were African-American. The desire for multi-racial unity runs deep through a generation that grew-up under the most racist administration in our history.

Approximately forty percent of those at the conference were workers. Sixty-six percent were under the age of 25, forty-five percent between the ages of 15-21. These figures highlight the youthfulness and working class character of the YCL.

There is a growth in left thinking among young people. The conference showcased not only the YCL's activities but a general mood of militancy, especially in the student movement.

A call by the president of United States Student Association for youth and student unity to defeat the proposed National Service Act, as well as the remarks by the vice-president of the New York Student Association of State Universities on the recent 1,000-strong student lobby for higher education, expressed this mood. The many student sit-ins occurring across the country, youth and student participation at the April 9th march for women's equality, and the growing support for the striking Eastern workers also proved these new developments.

From the beginning of the conference, the participants' respect for the YCL and its leadership was apparent. Although tired from traveling long distances, comrades and friends took to their feet when national chairman John Bachtell was introduced. In his keynote address, he described the militant, left trend taking shape:

The young generation is a seething cauldron. The youth want to fight and are not content with the future that the Reagan's, the Bush's, the Nunn's, the corporate elite and others offer. When this seething cauldron finds a way to the surface, it boils up with great explosive force. First here, then there, then here again rejecting a future that is no future. To those who say that students are not standing up these days, what about those who are sitting-in at Howard, Sarah Lawrence, Penn State, Morris Brown, NYU, SUNY Binghamton and others. Explain the mass demonstrations against cuts in financial aid in state capital after state capital. Explain the fact that students made up at least a third of the April 9th demonstration and organized many acts of solidarity with the Eastern Strikers.

Unity of action was interwoven in every discussion. When the vice-president of the Student Association of State Universities of New York

took the floor, he held up the YCL's Youth and Student Bill of Rights. "This is an impressive document," he said. He then proceeded to read the ten de fight for.

The YCL proposed holding a youth and student congress that would bring together the broadest possible grouping of youth organizations, youth-serving organizations, young trade unionists, anti-drug organizations, student governments and student organizations to talk about problems and come up with common solutions. The proposal was accepted with great enthusiasm and discussed at length. The consensus was that there is a need for more unity and forms leading to united action.

Special attention was given to the fight against drugs. A YCL draft statement helped the conference to get a handle on how to combat this anti-human weapon. The conference called for a national march on Washington, DC to demand immediate action and funding to stop this scourge. A National Emergency Drug Act that would call for an immediate end to the flow of drugs into the country, emergency funds for rehabilitation and research, jobs, education, and recreational programs would be the focus of the march.

WORKSHOPS were lead by YCLers as well as activists from different movements. Gina Graziano, a San Francisco State University student, led the workshop on political independence. Last year, she ran for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors as a youth candidate and a YCLer. The style and content of her campaign rolled up 16,000 votes and won the campaign's concentration precinct at SF State.

Workshop panelists included a recently elected official who ran as an independent labor candidate, and a Communist Party member who ran on a left-independent ticket. The positive results showed that Communists and left candidates can roll up large and winning votes.

The workshop on organizing the unorganized, led by a YCLer who is a union organizer, dealt with the how-to's. A young steelworker from Ohio and a Howard University campus worker recounted their experiences in leading successful organizing drives.

Other workshops were on women's equality, peace and economic conversion, the fight against racism, the student movement, the

Youth Festival movement, the environment, drugs and AIDS, anti-apartheid and anti-intervention work, movement song, and discrimination based on sexual preference.

The environment and the struggle to preserve it has become a sharp issue for all young people. The horrendous and unnecessary Exxon oil spill, the lying and criminal actions of big business and government in managing nuclear weapons plants, and the crisis of the greenhouse effect and ozone layer brought on by years of unregulated industrial waste have made millions of people more environmentally aware. There are a lot of environmental organizations who focus on this issue, but the YCL adds a class approach—how to fight for solutions that will make the corporations pay.

Because discrimination based on sexual preference has become an issue on the campuses, the conference dealt with it. The YCL presented a draft statement that calls for an end to discrimination and to attacks on homosexuals and lesbians. It also includes a class explanation of the different forms of discrimination and oppression and their roots, placing this form in perspective.

**THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM** and for equality has been a cornerstone of the YCL's work. The clubs from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and Arizona State University have done outstanding work in this area.

Three years ago, after the 1986 World Series, there was a racist attack on the campus of U-Mass, Amherst. The YCL quickly responded with an anti-racism rally and a unity dance. This was the beginning of a long struggle against racist violence. Many victories have been won during this fight, led by the U-Mass YCL, including a 4,000 strong "Hands across Campus for Racial Equality," and the recent election of the first African-American woman president of the student body.

On the Arizona State University campus, the YCL helped to build an unprecedented coalition against the "English Only" law. When a racist attack occurred against two African-American students, this broad coalition immediately took action. Marc Almaraz, ASU YCL leader, chaired the meeting that organized a rally of over 300 and put together 12 demands to end such attacks. ASU leaders came to the conference fresh from the front lines. When they returned home they

learned that their coalition had won all 12 demands in a four-hour sit-in. Before the YCL took shape there, nothing much was happening on this campus. By uniting a broad cross section of activists and organizations, the YCL made things happen.

**THE 13th WORLD FESTIVAL OF YOUTH** and Students played a big part in our conference. The fight against recently imposed travel restrictions to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has become a rallying point for the festival movement. Joe Sims, coordinator of the U.S. National Preparatory Committee of the Youth Festival, said:

Dear Mr. President Bush, Dear Mr. Secretary Brady, Dear Mr. Secretary Baker, instead of making fine speeches about the right to free travel in the socialist countries, make a fine speech at home, here in the good old USA, for our free right to free travel. Do more. Lift the travel restrictions.

Dear Mr. President Bush, if you can go to the south of Korea and prop up a military dictatorship that murders its students and pays its workers a dollar a day, we can go to the North and see a society where youth and students lead meaningful lives and where workers own the factories where they work and determine their own way. Lift the restrictions.

The Communist Party USA was represented, at the Conference, by Judith LeBlanc, National Organizational Secretary and Carole Marks, National Board member. Communist Party representatives of Rhode Island and Massachusetts also attended.

Respect and admiration for the Party among the YCL membership is shown in the way YCLers approach the question of joining the Party. Many YCLers see the Party as a next step in life and as a serious commitment. People at the conference were visibly moved by Comrade LeBlanc's speech and the confidence placed in their generation to rise to the occasion and fight for our future:

Karl Marx said that humanity only approaches those problems it can solve. Our Party approaches all problems from that angle: that the seeds of the solutions are present, and through the struggle of the people those solutions will be found.

Many new political, tactical and philosophical questions are arising. We believe that in the course of united struggle will come an ever growing number of

people who believe as we do that socialism is not just another good idea, but a necessity.

Young people like yourselves from Alaska to Maine have a great cause, a great mission: to help save your generations and all future generations from the horrors of corporate-greed, from the horrors of capitalism. Just like slavery and feudalism, capitalism is now on its way off the stage of history. Socialism is waiting in the wings. Socialism USA is our future—yours and mine.

One new YCLer, a young worker, joined the Party after Comrade Leblanc's speech. The well-attended workshop on "Meet the CPUSA," led by Carole Marks, added another Party plus.

**A YCL CLUB AWARDS CEREMONY** was part of the festivities. The Academy Award ceremonies couldn't hold a candle to the excitement it generated. Seven awards were given to outstanding YCL clubs which had highlighted the depth and scope of the YCL's work. Recipients were: U-Mass, Amherst for the fight against racism and the ultra-right; Arizona State University for the fight against racism and the "English Only" laws; San Francisco for electoral work and the struggle to increase youth voter participation; Washington, DC for organizing unorganized workers and support given during the Howard sit-in; and Albany for outstanding YCL public presence, mobilizing buses to the April 9th Women's Equality march on Washington, D.C., and running for student government office—and winning!

The Brown YCL won an award for their outstanding work in preparation for the conference, leading the struggle against apartheid, and building labor/youth solidarity. It twice organized a broad group of organizations to take out full-page newspaper ads. The first ad was a statement of student support for campus workers during union contract negotiations. The second was an appeal to students to boycott Eastern/Continental airlines when traveling during spring break.

YCL clubs are traditionally organized geographically on campuses, in communities and high schools. A recent development is to organize clubs around specific group interests in order to expand the YCL's possibilities for influence and growth. For example, the desire to learn how to "DJ" parties gave birth to the new New York Dynamic DJ crew. This collective won an award

for contributions made in the cultural field, adding the "plus" to parties and resulted in outstanding fundraising.

Especially since its convention in June 1988, the YCL has discovered that it has a talent treasure chest of many precious jewels. Some are buried deep, hidden away, and have to be searched for. The search always leads to new riches.

YCL members perform and write music, recite poetry, and create works of art. They find an outlet for their talents at YCL events. Some comrades have such a high level of talent that the League is planning to set up concert tours. In New York, a coffeehouse is being organized for comrades to perform at and to reach out to progressive cultural performers.

Recently, the YCL has come to a basic conclusion that it is both an organization and a movement of youth and students. This fact came through clearly at the First National Conference.

A movement has many aspects. One thing a movement does is sing. The YCL has made it a principle that at every gathering culture should always play a big role. Politics is intertwined with song and festivities. Throughout the weekend people sang, danced, shouted, chanted, and hoorahed. There was also time for a soccer match. This concept is the YCL's unique "youth plus."

During the song-movement workshop, participants spent the first hour discussing the role of culture in the progressive movement, and the second hour, singing and learning songs.

An art exhibit was organized by YCL and non-YCL artists. This exhibit helped to get participation by many students from the Rhode Island School of Design. The conference hall was decorated beautifully with banners that were truly works of art.

Performers were not limited to YCL members. A multi-racial rock band from Cincinnati travelled 18 hours by van to perform.

A young rapper from Chicago came for the opportunity to rap at our party. He argued, throughout the trip, with the Chicago YCL club chair that "if socialism is so great than why are there so many people trying to leave the Soviet Union?" He was the first to hand in his application for YCL membership on Saturday night.

Another young musician, a student from Brown U., performed at the Saturday night con-



cert. He said, "I never had any contact with the YCL before this evening. This is my present to you." He went on to sing a beautiful Billy Bragg song about English workingclass life.

Another inseparable aspect of the youth movement is social. Old friends were reunited: teenagers who had met on a trip to Artek in the USSR last summer; classmates from former YCL schools; and acquaintances made during activities and struggles.

In the last few years there has been a drop in the influence of anti-communism. The election of a well-known Communist, Jason Rabinowitz, as co-president of the U-Mass Amherst student government illustrates this. Another example was the positive response of the leading youth and student organizations to the Conference, in comparison with some polite turn downs last year of invitations to the 3rd National YCL Convention.

The further decline of anti-communism was dramatically demonstrated by a high school senior who read out her application to Columbia University. In her essay, she had described why she joined the YCL. She stated that the YCL fights for socialism. With socialism people's needs will come before the drive for profit. She enclosed a copy of *Dynamic* with her application. he was accepted to Columbia.

This argues for more YCLers to be public. Wherever there is an open presence of the YCL, it acts as a magnet which draws youth to it. In the areas where the YCL is public, the response of non-YCLers to the Conference call was great. Where there was little YCL presence, the conference didn't reach beyond its ranks.

The YCL held this conference largely because its national convention had been so successful, inspiring the idea of holding at least one vent every year to really showcase the YCL and advance its public presence.

There is widespread interest in what Communists have to say. In fact, the mass media saw the conference as newsworthy. Coverage came from two television stations, three radio talk shows, AP, *Time* magazine, *The People's Daily World*, *The Guardian*, international press of the GDR and Czechoslovakia, and many articles in the Brown student papers.

The breadth of the Young Communist League's relations was a result of working with and constantly reaching out to others. The success of the conference shows the YCL accurately reflects the thought patterns of young people. As Gus Hall, CPUSA national chairman, put it, "The YCL is slowly but surely becoming the leader of a generation."

**A FINAL NOTE:** On the Monday after the conference, a group of City College students in New York took over the administration building to protest proposed New York state tuition increases and budget cuts. The New York YCL, without taking a minute to breathe, plunged headlong into what turned out to be New York's biggest and most exciting student struggle in the last 20 years.

The Young Communist League led four of the many sit-ins and demonstrations in New York City and upstate. Thousands of People's Daily Worlds were distributed, a YCL statement was written and distributed, and YCLers helped to organize a student march of 10,000 strong.

This struggle and victory over Governor Cuomo's proposed tuition hike changed the student movement forever in New York. The New York YCL will never be the same.

From the First National Conference to the student sit-ins, the YCL is helping to lead a unified and militant generation of fighters for a better future. □



# A Deeper Look at U.S. Agriculture

LEM HARRIS

**B**ACK IN THE 1920s, PRESIDENT COOLIDGE, when confronted by demands for farm relief legislation, was reported to have remarked: "So long as farmers continue to work the land, there is no farm problem." But farmers, those who have managed to escape foreclosure, have continued to farm the land and there is a big problem in rural America. And not rural America alone: the whole country is involved when agriculture is in distress. It is an old saying that national depressions begin in the countryside.

Rural America is suffering a deep depression. The problem is not lack of production of food and fibre; the problem stems from the fact that large numbers of the most productive and efficient farmers are operating at a loss and cannot meet their interest and accumulated debt payments. Delinquent payments on debts have forced many rural banks to close their doors, and federal rural credit agencies are petitioning for multi-billion-dollar subsidies to continue functioning. Farm-dependent industries, from rural stores to the manufacturers of farm implements and their dealers, are struggling to survive. The formerly mighty International Harvester Company no longer makes tractors or farm implements; today the manufacture of trucks is its sole operation.

The wonder of the situation is that more farmers don't throw in the sponge and quit farming. Certainly most farm youths have no intention of working the long hours—often for a net loss—that their parents have had to put up with. Here is a summary of the income picture divided into SMALL, MEDIUM and LARGE farm operations, as reported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1987: SMALL farms are classified as having annual sales of under \$40,000; MEDIUM farms—\$40,000 to \$250,000; LARGE farms—over \$250,000.

Averaging the net farm income of SMALL farms shows a loss of nearly \$5,000 per farm.

This category represents 1.6 million farms or 72 percent of all farms, but they make only 10 percent of total farm sales. Most of these depend upon supplemental income from one or more members of the family who earn income away from the farm. This brings their average income up to \$18,000. It should be noted that these average figures include "hobby" and "tax sheltering" farms whose outside income raises the average income figures unduly.

The MEDIUM farms dominate the dairy, grain, and cotton belts and are, for the most part, family operated. The net income from their operations, which generate sales of \$40,000 to \$250,000, averages \$19,000. Those in this group whose sales are under \$100,000 show a net annual income of just \$6,500. There are 544,000 MEDIUM farms, 24 percent of all farms, and they generate 41 percent of all farm sales. Large numbers of these farms require outside supplemental earnings that average an additional \$10,000 a year. The total equity of buildings, land, stock and machinery, in most instances, is well over a half million dollars, and many have or had an equity of several million. What owner of an industry would work incessantly throughout the year for so low a return on his investment?

LARGE farms, with over \$250,000 annual sales, number but 95,000 farms or 4 percent of the total, and their sales are 49 percent of all farm sales. They are the big winners, averaging \$256,000 net income. Even these LARGE farms gain additional non-farm income amounting to about \$12,000. It should be emphasized that these huge operations are, for the most part, producers of specialized crops—fruit, nuts, vegetables, citrus, etc. (The main staples like grain, soybeans, corn, and dairy, encounter too many hazards of weather, disease, and chronically low prices to be attractive for large capital investments.) These farms are large enough to exercise considerable control over the market for their specialized crops, such as raisins, canning-peaches or lettuce, harvested off-season in Cali-

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fornia's Imperial Valley.

It is the highly productive MEDIUM farmers, whose share of total farm production is 41 percent but whose share of the production of the major staples is much higher, probably 80 percent, who are fast disappearing and leaving general disaster in their wake. These are the farmers with families growing up on the farm. They are the mainstay of countless rural communities. Frequently the farm remains in one family from one generation to the next.

Why are these farmers failing in greater numbers? They have the advantage of some of the world's best soils and terrains. Extensive regions are singularly free of adverse climatic conditions. Soil scientists, plant and animal breeders, and agricultural engineers have contributed to impressive increases of production per acre and a reduction of the necessary hourly labor time to produce a crop.

So many factors appear favorable yet agriculture is in general distress. It cannot be claimed that these farmers are inefficient. Numerous studies by farm economists have shown that most SMALL farms do have higher costs per bushel because their limited production reflects underused inputs, i.e. machinery, feed, fertilizer, chemicals and petroleum products. But these studies show that SMALL farms can get maximum use of their inputs and keep their costs about level with the largest farms. If the measure of efficiency is the resources consumed per bushel harvested, then MEDIUM farms usually prove more efficient than the LARGE category.<sup>1</sup>

#### LOW PRICES & LOW LAND VALUES

If you ask debt-ridden farmers on beautiful land as to what went wrong, they will start by naming two factors: the low level of prices for the commodities they produce and the collapse of land values. They may add that, while these two factors are bad enough, the cost of inputs remains high. They are caught in the scissors of buying at retail prices and selling at wholesale prices.

They will point out that the government-calculated parity price levels for farm commodities, since the mid-1970's, have fallen to a level of about half the true costs of production, and this drop has made it impossible to meet payments on their loans. Each year of the past decade has seen the equity that farmers may have built up in the past rapidly disappear. They know that if

they cannot get fresh credit for each cropping season, they are out of business.

They will tell you that their farm organizations, the National Farmers Union, the National Farmers Organization, or the American Agricultural Movement, have been pleading with the federal government to enact legislation that would put a floor under commodity prices at not less than 75 percent of parity. But the agribusiness lobbies have thus far prevented any such legislation.

Farmers' ability to obtain fresh credit from lending agencies has been sharply curtailed by the fall in value of their greatest fixed asset—the land that they own. This is because lending agencies consider a farm's land value the main collateral. Prime Iowa farm land in 1981 was selling at \$2,147 per acre; in 1986 the price had fallen to \$787. About two-thirds of Iowa farm collateral has vanished.

Can it be argued that farmers brought evil days on themselves because they plunged into debt recklessly like gamblers and deserve to go down the drain? It is more realistic to say that all the influences of our "free enterprise" system pressed farmers during the '70s to take the plunge.

Earl Butz, Secretary of Agriculture, publicly warned farmers to "Get big or get out." Bankers and government credit agencies pressed farmers to buy more land and purchase high powered equipment in order to produce bigger crops. Beginning farmers, who had not inherited their land, could not avoid heavy initial debts for land and equipment.

Farmers cannot be blamed for the federal policies which have cost them dearly. For example, when the Soviet Union began to place giant orders for grain, the four major exporters of grain were given advance notice. This permitted them to buy huge tonnages of grain stored on farms before the inevitable price rise generated by these orders.

Similarly, when President Carter declared an embargo on shipments of grain to the Soviet Union, an exception was made for all the grain under contract for sale by these same exporters. In both these cases the farmers were the victims.

Farmers who accept the siren song that "bigger is better," expect to increase their incomes by heavy borrowing. They hope to leverage their farms into big and profitable operations. But le-

veraging is a dangerous game, mostly because farming is a hazardous business.

Consider the case of two farms, both with \$100,000 of capital. One does not borrow to expand its capital; the other borrows \$200,000 at 7 percent interest, a total capital investment of \$300,000. Here are the results under two hypotheses: if the farms succeed in earning 10 percent on capital; and if they lose 10 percent on total capital.

	Farm A	Farm B
Owner's capital	\$100,000	\$100,000
Borrowed capital	0	200,000
Total capital	100,000	300,000
If 10 % gain on capital	10,000	30,000
Less interest	0	-14,000
Net return	10,000	16,000
Rate of return on owned capital	10%	16%
If 10% loss on capital	-10,000	-30,000
Less interest	0	-14,000
Net loss on owned capital	-10,000	-44,000
Rate of loss on owned capital	-10%	-44%

In short, those who take the plunge risk a lot for a moderate gain but, in unfavorable years, they have heavy losses. Natural causes of unfavorable crop years do occur with periodic regularity. But, the real hazard of farming is that the market is anything but free. It is controlled by those who profit most through low commodity prices.

It is logical to ask why the federal government and its lending agencies, the private banking fraternity and the agricultural colleges, all joined in encouraging farmers to indulge in a sure-loss gamble. The situation becomes even more ironic in the light of the chorus of rhetoric from politicians expressing their devotion to the sturdy yeomen of the countryside. The answer to this anomaly has many facets.

During recent decades, farm bills that have become law set "target prices" that have normally been somewhat higher than the expected market level. Farmers would receive, as a government subsidy, the difference between their sales and the target price. This was helpful, but the targets were always so low that farm receipts

remained far below their costs of production. As a gesture to the family type of farm, limitations of subsidy to any one farm were set, for a time, at \$50,000. But this provision never stopped the giant operators. Frequently their farms would be divided up between members of their families. Each division would then qualify for the \$50,000 subsidy. Even more frequently, the limitation was simply ignored. There are a few "farms" that have collected over \$1,000,000 in subsidies per crop year.

Contrary to the rhetoric about the virtues of family operations, the effect of the farm aid bills has been to sharply favor the largest operations. In 1984, the Senate Committee on the Budget found that the distribution of benefits per farm from government subsidies, including those for taking part in acreage reduction programs, amounted to:

Size in Acres	Net Benefits
0 to 139	to \$4,700
550-999	30,000
2,000-2,499	76,000
25,000 +	99,000

As we have seen, the success of the largest operations is not due to superior efficiency or economics. Rather, these farms tend to concentrate on crops of which they can best control conditions of growth and the market price level. These include those crops that can be grown under irrigation, thus assuring ideal moisture conditions, and those perishable crops grown in climatic conditions where they can be harvested out of the usual season. Then, too, many family farms have lost all control of their operation because they have to farm under contract to processors. Thus: sugar cane and sugar beets are grown 100 percent under contract; vegetables for processing 95 percent; citrus fruits 85 percent; broilers 97 percent; and eggs 40 percent.<sup>4</sup>

#### FARMERS FIGHT BACK

We see that, rhetoric to the contrary, government measures have consistently encouraged the continued concentration of agriculture into larger and fewer units. The outlook is for the continued industrialization of agriculture, the continued separation of those who work the land from those who own the land. Some projections by farm

economists suggest that in the next decade, 90 percent of total U.S. farm production will be produced by not more than 300,000 farms, compared with the 650,000 farms in 1987. It is further suggested that today's family-operated farms are as obsolete as the Mom and Pop grocery stores that try to compete with the supermarkets.

But farmers do not give up their way of life and the land they work without a struggle. In the tradition of the Grangers and Populists of the nineteenth century, farm organizations and movements of today are vociferously demanding federal legislation which they believe can reverse this trend. Probably the most dramatic of the farmers' protests were the "tractorcades" to state capitals and to Washington, demanding price controls. When the participating farmers, who called themselves the American Agricultural Movement, confronted President Carter, he literally turned his back on them. When, later, they pressed their case with President-elect Reagan, he promised, "I won't let you down." But he and his Secretary of Agriculture refused to even consider their main demand for federal regulation of farm commodity prices. All but the largest farm operators were let down during the eight years of Reagan's Administration and the outlook under President Bush is for more of the same.

Confronted by indifferent federal administrations, exploited by monopolized suppliers of their inputs, forced to sell to monopolies that dominate the commodity markets, what chance do family farmers have for survival in our society? Whatever the unfavorable odds, a coalescing body of farm organizations is advancing demands they believe necessary for their survival. These include:

- Sharp write-downs of current debts balance lenders' losses with those that the farm borrowers have suffered through the shrinking of their equity in land values. Federal legislation has authorized government lending agencies to cancel portions of loans if there is an indication that the reduced debt can be manageable.

- Fresh credit through low interest, non-recourse loans from federal agencies.<sup>5</sup> In the case of storable crops, the loan-collateral is the crop, stored on the farm under government seal. The level of the loan is to be 90 percent of parity prices, which compares with present loan levels around 50 percent of parity. (Parity prices are computed by the Department of Agriculture with

a formula that reflects average cost of inputs per bushel, etc.)

- Recognizing that bumper harvests have caused price-depressing surpluses, farmers accept the principle of crop controls. This involves allotting production quotas per farm based on their past records and administered by local committees of farmers democratically elected. Loans would be limited to the farm's quota. In 1987-88, the government sponsored a referendum in the Midwest grain producing states to determine farmers' willingness to accept production controls. They were overwhelmingly approved.

- From the point of view of sound ecology, there is approval for reducing production on acreage subject to serious erosion.

The bill before Congress embodying these provisions, was known as Save the Family Farm Act, and was introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D.-IA) and Congressman Richard Gephardt (D.-MO). In addition to the widespread farm support for it, the measure is endorsed by many religious groups, including the Catholic Rural Life Association. It has labor support as well. Appearing before the Senate Committee on Agriculture in 1987, Ernest Dubester, Washington Legislative Director for the AFL-CIO, expressed its support for the Harkin/Gephardt Bill. He indicated labor's direct interest by stating, "During the last six years, over 65,000 jobs have been lost in the farm implement industry, probably forever." He added that that figure represents 62 percent of the employment in the entire farm implement industry.

To no one's surprise, the National Farm Bureau Federation, which has always reflected agribusiness opinion rather than its farmer membership, opposes the Harkin Bill. Testifying before the Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, Dean Kleckner, the Farm Bureau president, blasted the proposal that government should insure farm parity prices. Suggesting that there is something subversive about mandatory price and production controls, he stated:

Our representative form of government does not provide individuals the right to determine the level of direct government support through the referendum process. . . . Mandatory production controls . . . would cripple the American farm system as we know it.<sup>6</sup>

Kleckner also argued that farm commodity prices must be kept low in order to insure our

share of foreign export trade.

In the same hearing, Governor Rudy Perpich of Minnesota refuted this latter argument. He stated that, since 1981, federal legislation has kept farm prices low in order to increase exports. Farm prices were cut in half but exports of farm products fell 35 percent, from \$40 billion in 1980 to \$26 billion in 1986. "Lowering prices has meant suffering for the farmer producers," declared the Governor.

In the House hearing, John Nesbitt, an Indiana lawyer representing the Rural Lawyers Inc., startled the congresspeople by seriously urging cancellation of farm debts owned by federal credit agencies. He argued that this does not impair the constitutional right of property because the government has a right to delay or cancel such debts. He pointed out that these agencies are, in turn, asking for a bailout as proposed by Senator Richard Lugar (D.-IN) to the tune of \$4 billion. He also proposed that banks and insurance companies should write down their farm loans by 50 percent, in return for which the government could authorize tax breaks and depreciation incentives to protect their share- and bondholders.

Solid support for the principles of the Harkin Bill has come from a report by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI), sponsored by the Missouri State University and Iowa State University. The study assumes that prices on major farm commodities are guaranteed by non-recourse loans at 71 percent of parity and all other direct government payments are discontinued. The parity figure would be increased 1 percent per year for a limited number of years. The results would, at the start, raise the price of wheat to \$5.17 a bushel (compared with the October 1988 figure of \$3.84), corn \$3.77 (compared with 2.8 percent), and oats, \$9.32 (compared with \$7.53). This would mean, the study estimates, an increase of net farm income of \$21 billion per year through 1995. Government outlays would be lowered \$14.4 billion per year for the first three years. Export earnings for a lesser tonnage would rise \$12 billion each year. And if all the increases of raw farm products were passed on by the processors and distributors to the consumer (as they most certainly will try to do), this would only amount to an increase of 1.6 percent in prices of foods that contain these commodities.<sup>7</sup>

Cy Carpenter, president of the National Farmers Union, backed by the endorsement of his national convention, declared the Harkin Family Farm Bill to be the "best alternative before Congress so far." These approvals were backed by referenda conducted among farmers themselves and they added to the distress, noted above, of Farm Bureau President Kleckner.

Although this appears to be an effective way to stop the liquidation of basically efficient family farms, the likely danger remains that improvement of farm price levels will speed the trend for financially stronger farms to absorb their neighbors, and thus continue to liquidate family operations in favor of the industrialization of agriculture. New legislation can attempt to limit loans to amounts suitable for family operations—the medium size farms, even though such limitations have failed in the past. This alone would require a basic change in attitude by the Administration and its Department of Agriculture.

No one should claim that the enactment of one major bill will solve all problems facing family farms. No doubt a whole pattern of measures will be required to reverse present trends. In Walthill, Nebraska, a private research group known as The Center for Rural Affairs, is committed to the interests of the family producer and has advocated a federal plan which they believe to have features superior to the Harkin Bill.<sup>8</sup>

Like the Harkin Bill, the Walthill plan would set up production quotas per farm, based on the estimated domestic consumption needs and expected foreign sales; plus estimated food aid requirements for distressed areas like the Sudan; plus a reserve in case of crop failures, originally instituted under the Roosevelt Administration, as the "Ever-normal Grainery."

This plan, however, would not be based on specified storable commodities, but rather on a blend of the aggregate production of all crops produced on a farm. Farmers wishing to participate would receive a quota, good only on that farm's estimated share of products needed by the nation. For this purpose the cooperating farmer receives a premium which companies buying his products would have to pay in addition to the regular market price. The premium would be based on the full cost of production of the average farm in its particular region. This premium would include the farmers' labor and manage-

ment; in short, the true cost of production for that area. Subsequently, the government would reimburse the purchaser for the premium.

Imbedded in this plan are important features. Farmers could produce as much or little as they wanted, but any production of a given crop beyond its quota would receive no premium, only the market price, which has consistently been below the cost of production. This permits the general market to give its warning signals of crops in surplus. Thus, if wheat were in surplus supply and the market price depressed, farmers would be foolish to waste their premiums on wheat since these premiums plus the market price on crops in shorter supply would bring them more income.

In addition, the Walthill Plan requires that quotas would be allotted, not on the basis of past production, but rather on the ecologically sound use of the land of the particular farm. Quotas would be determined according to the farm's agronomic potential for producing crops by using the best conservation methods. This measure would exempt, therefore, land subject to water and wind erosion which make it only marginally productive. Current farm legislation actually includes a requirement that farmers meet conservation norms, but this provision only takes effect in 1990.

Finally, the plan proposes a proportionally smaller share of a farm's production capacity as its capacity is increased. Very large farms would receive premiums on a smaller share of their production.

The Walthill plan does appear to include features that help concentrate the benefits on farms run by working families, but they admit that there has not as yet been any widespread response to their proposals. And therein lies the problem: How to attract national popular support for such a program? The case is not hopeless.

The depressed condition of agriculture is one significant factor that presses for basic changes in our whole economy. It exists side by side with the falling standard of living that confronts labor, the anguish of our inner cities, the special repressions suffered by minorities due to pervasive racism, a monstrous burden of national debt and, even for the most prosperous,

the dangers of nuclear extinction and ecological disaster. In varying degree, everyone has concerns over this complex of threats to human life, but labor, farmers and victims of racism are on the cutting edge and share a common problem. There is coalescing among them, an understanding that they clearly have a common cause. This is in evidence when labor supports farmer protests against sheriff sales; when farmers ship donated food to strikers and join their picket lines; and when Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition show solidarity with labor and farmer actions.

There are those who discount the importance of the Harkin Bill. They miss the essential fact that it is a challenge to the whole profit structure of agribusiness. In its field it challenges the "establishment" as fundamentally as does the strike of the employees of Eastern Airlines. No one can expect that winning the strike will permanently solve the problems of the workers in the airline industry; no one should expect the passage of the Harkin Bill, even in an improved version, will permanently solve the problem of farmers. But such actions are steps on the way toward solving basic problems affecting all of us.

Our society may be like the building of an atomic pile. Nothing happens until a point known as the "critical mass" is reached; then energy occurs in huge quantities. As struggles for human rights continue in many different fields, our whole body politic may reach the point where seemingly immovable established forces give way to the pressures of people's energy.

### Notes

1. *Family Farming, A New Economic Vision*, Marty Strange, Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1988, 93, 98.
2. *Ibid*, Marty Strange, 108.
3. *Distribution of Benefits from Federal Crop Programs, Senate Committee on the Budget Hearing, Nov. 1984*, 45.
4. *Rural Society in the U.S.*, Dillman and Daryl Hobbs, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1982, 322.
5. "Non-recourse" loans, first offered when Franklin D. Roosevelt was president, specifically limited the government's right to collect overdue farm production loans to repossessing grain stored under government seal. No other property or resource could be touched.
6. *Current Status of Farm Programs*, Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, May/June 1987, 313, Sen. Hearing 100-415.
7. *Ibid*, *Current Status of Farm Programs*, 57-58
8. *Ibid*, Marty Strange, 270 ff.

# For the

## Ideological Conference of the Communist Party, USA

*The articles appearing below were submitted as pre-conference discussion contributions to the organizing committee for the Ideological Conference of the Communist Party, USA to be held in Chicago, IL, July 14-16, 1989. The announcement of the Conference and an article by Gus Hall, CPUSA national chairman, spelling out some aims and guidelines for it, appeared in Political Affairs, May 1989.*

### THE UNCHANGING MISSION OF THE WORKING CLASS

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*This is the report presented to the National Board of the CPUSA, in preparation for the Ideological Conference.*

Surveying the first half-century of Marxism, Lenin observed,

There is a well-known saying that, if geometrical axioms affected human interests, attempts would certainly be made to refute them. Theories of natural history which conflict with the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition. No wonder, therefore, that the Marxian doctrine, which directly serves to enlighten and organize the advanced class and demonstrates the inevitable replacement (by virtue of economic development) of the present system by a new order—no wonder that this doctrine has had to fight for every step forward in the course of its life. (*Collected Works*, in 3 volumes, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, 71)

Since those words were written, eight decades have passed. Yet, Lenin's observation has lost none of its essential validity. If anything, the struggle against concepts developed by Marx, Engels, and Lenin has grown more intense and broader in scale. But why?

Is it because technical changes and revolutions in the means of communications now make it possible to reach hundreds of millions in only a matter of seconds? Is it because literacy and inter-

est in world affairs have grown? Is it because the ruling circles in the contemporary world are meaner and nastier than their forebears?

Obviously, these are factors, but the main reason is found in the transformative capacity of scientific socialism. In this century this revolutionary science has not only inspired hundreds of millions, but has also brought about large scale changes in political, economic, and social life:

In one third of the globe, new societies without exploitation and corporate profits have grown up under the banner of revolutionary Marxism. Developing countries, like Nicaragua, which have been ruthlessly exploited by U.S. transnational corporations and banks, are now pursuing a non-capitalist path of development. And the working class whose historic mission is to eliminate exploitation and oppression grows, matures politically and challenges monopoly capital on a wide range of fronts.

Moreover, Marxism-Leninism is creatively examining new global problems threatening humankind's future and offering comprehensive, humane, and timely solutions to these contemporary planetwide concerns. This theoretical activity and the accompanying practical proposals are attracting the attention of tens of millions and heightening the prestige of socialism. In contrast, capitalism and bourgeois social science can make no such claim.

Indeed, most of the U.S. ruling class and the Bush Administration show little disposition for "new thinking." With their enormous financial resources, ownership of the mass media, and



control over the dominant institutions of capitalist society, they invoke old stereotypes and declare Marxism dead. One obvious target of this ideological barrage is the societies of socialism.

Apparent to any objective observer are the unparalleled efforts by the U.S. ruling class to distort the historical achievements of socialism and its present day process of renewal and restructuring. It's a rare day when *The New York Times*, for instance, does not run some disparaging item about socialism while completely ignoring U.S. capitalism's structural inability to solve the problems of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, racism, etc.

A less noticed feature of this ideological storm, however, is the wide ranging and concerted campaign to undermine the leading role of the working class in capitalist society and the pivotal role of the class struggle. This campaign is by no means new. It has been a constant feature of the ideological assault of monopoly on the forces of social progress for more than a century.

What is new is the intensity and substance of the attack. In the late 50's and 60's, for example, liberal critics, like John Kenneth Galbraith, and pseudo-revolutionaries, like Herbert Marcuse, doing the bidding of monopoly capital, argued that the working class was becoming affluent and, in turn, absorbed into the middle class.

From this assessment two conclusions logically followed. One was that the working class was no longer a revolutionary class. In fact, Marcuse and other petit-bourgeois theoreticians said that the majority of the U.S. working class had a material stake in imperialist exploitation and constituted a new labor aristocracy.

The other related conclusion was that the class struggle was no longer the pivot of change in our society.

Thus, with a few swipes and some broad strokes of the pen, the working class—with the possible exception of racially and nationally oppressed workers—was transformed from a gravedigger of capitalism to its social base of reaction, and, the struggle between contending and irreconcilable classes into a relic of history.

Today, the think tanks of big business and the mass media are digging up new arguments to negate the leading role of the working class and the centrality of the class struggle because objective conditions and mass thought patterns have changed markedly. With the structural crisis and

the struggles against Reaganism fresh in the thinking of U.S. workers, old arguments about an expanding economy and spreading affluence would hardly be convincing propaganda.

Rather than proclaiming capitalism's strength and viability, now the ideologists of monopoly capitalism speak about its competitive weaknesses in relation to Japanese and Western European capitalism. They claim that unfair trade practices and a sharp decline in the productivity of U.S. workers imperil the living standards of the American people and corporate competitiveness.

At the same time, these apologists claim that labor's numbers and strength are declining to the point where the survival of the trade union movement is now in question. From all this, these sycophants for the corporations and the super-rich assert that non-adversarial relations and consensus decision making in the workplace and tripartite (business-labor-government cooperation) arrangements in the political arena are imperative in today's and tomorrow's world.

They also maintain that solutions that favor corporate profits over the needs of the workers and people are a painful, but necessary reality of modern economic life. Otherwise, they say, the U.S. economy will not recapture its preeminence in the world economy nor will the jobs of U.S. workers be secure.

Clearly, there is no place for the class struggle or class-struggle-minded workers in such a world. Indeed, the working class and its allies would be condemned to seeking petty reforms or, to borrow a phrase from Lenin, "realistic tinkering" with the system of capitalism.

Because this outlook is at variance with the experience of the working class, few workers buy this bill of goods. In fact, the U.S. working class emerges from the eye of the Reaganite storm somewhat battered, but by no means beaten. It is in a fighting mood; its organizational structure is intact; it has a deeper understanding of the class realities of our society.

Moreover, broad left and progressive currents in labor, working with old and new forms have emerged in this fierce struggle against Reaganism. And along with the African-American people and a wide array of people and organizations victimized by monopoly's offensive they are step by step preparing for a people's counter-offensive against monopoly power.

This portends well for the future, but we would be naive if we thought that we were the only ones to take note of this development. Our class enemy does, too, and works to offset it with the able assistance of "objective" journalists, academics, right-social democrats and class collaborationist labor leaders. Together they spin new forms of class collaboration, racism and anti-communism on a massive scale in order to derail the positive shifts in the working class and its growing unity with other social forces.

To combat this ideological gangup calls for greater work in the ideological arena, day-to-day involvement in the immediate struggles of the working class and people, and practical initiatives to further strengthen workingclass, multi-racial unity, and all people's unity. It also requires the consolidation of the broad left trend at the grassroots in the mass production industries.

While the left and the Party reject these new concepts of class collaboration, other anti-workingclass ideological pressures, adapting themselves to the latest "turn of events," penetrate the thinking of the left and our ranks as well.

What are some of the main influences weakening the class approach and outlook in the broad left, including our own circles? One is a wrong interpretation of the implications of the changing profile of the working class. Some have incorrectly concluded that the basic industries have become marginal factors in the U.S. economy and industrial workers less and less important to the class and people's struggles.

But what are the grounds for reaching such a conclusion? Are basic industries a feature of a by-gone era? Are industrial workers disappearing from the economic landscape? Do they no longer produce the lion's share of surplus value? Do they no longer play a strategic role in the class and people's struggles?

Popular wisdom may say yes, but a closer look at the facts and the accumulated experience of the workingclass movement says the opposite. The old and new mass production industries still underpin the economy. Mass production workers still number into the millions, and produce the major share of surplus value. Furthermore, numerical size is not the decisive determinant of the role that a particular section of workers plays in the class struggle. Place in the overall system of social production *is*, along with the consciousness arising from it. Working collectively in facto-

ries, experiencing brutal exploitation daily, confronting monopoly directly at the point of production and reflecting the multi-racial, multi-national, male-female character of our people, these workers tend to have fewer illusions. They also tend to have a greater disposition for collective action and unity, appreciate more the necessity for allies, and see the need for radical anti-monopoly solutions to today's problems.

Thus, mass production workers tend to think and approach problems differently than other sectors of the class. They are also strategically placed to move and unify the class and its allies.

This is not a new idea. It's as old as Marx. Applicable, although in a different context, Lenin wrote,

The assumption that all "working people" are equally capable of doing this work would be an empty phrase, or the illusion of an antediluvian, pre-Marxist socialist; for this ability does not come of itself, but grows historically, and grows only out of the material conditions of large scale-production. This ability, at the beginning of the road from capitalism to socialism is possessed by the proletariat alone. (*Collected Works*, in 3 Volumes, Vol. 3, 231)

To say this is not to pose the mass production workers against other sectors of the working class. That would be wrong. The working class has grown by leaps and bounds. Women now make up close to half its members and workers in the service industries outnumber those in the goods producing sectors. The number of the racially and nationally oppressed as a percentage of the workforce also continues to grow, as does the percentage of immigrant workers and skilled workers. New sectors of the working population are joining the working class as well. And, most importantly, as the decade of the '80s graphically shows, only a united working class acting in concert with the African-American people and other allies of labor is capable of arresting the corporate offensive.

But in the struggle for class and multi-racial unity against monopoly, mass production workers in our time—as they were in Lenin's—are the key link to developing a broad, cohesive, anti-monopoly front. That doesn't mean that other sectors are not now playing a progressive and meaningful role in the class and people's struggles. Nor does it mean any lessening of their role

in the future. No one with any sense would make such an assertion.

But, it would be equally wrong to assert that the growth of the working class and the heightened activity of its non-industrial sectors replaces the strategic role of the industrial nucleus. That claim is at variance with the theory and experience of the world communist movement.

In addition, we should avoid a one-sided view of the changing profile and growth of the working class. Some of the new entrants will bring with them ideas reflecting the interests of other classes and class strata in capitalist society.

Again quoting Lenin,

One of the most profound causes that periodically give rise to differences over tactics is the very growth of the labor movement. If this movement is not measured by the criterion of some fantastic ideal, but is regarded as the practical movement of ordinary people, it will be clear that the enlistment of larger and larger numbers of "new recruits," the attraction of new sections of the working people must inevitably be accompanied by waverings in the sphere of theory and tactics, by the repetition of old mistakes, by the temporary reversion to antiquated views and antiquated methods and so forth. (*Collected Works* Vol. 16, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1967, 347-348)

Thus, a key task of the industrial core is to impart its traditions, its way of thinking and approach to problems to the newest entrants as well as to help unify the class and people as a whole.

Another influence potentially corroding our class concepts is the idea that new social movements and people's coalitions supplant the working class movement in today's setting. But life doesn't corroborate that. While these movements extend the front of struggle, open up broad alliance possibilities, and introduce new issues of common concern, none of them can substitute for the workingclass movement and its objectively determined revolutionary role.

Furthermore, the viability of these movements in large measure depends upon the extent to which they take into account the interests of the multi-racial, multi-national, male-female working class and solidify their relations with the trade union movement and other workingclass based organizations. Where they successfully do, the mutual payoff for the working class and these movements is great. The experience of "Jackson

'88" which included workers and interacted with substantial sections of organized labor confirms this contention.

The ideological flux in the world communist movement is another factor which potentially might loosen one's anchor to the class. As communist parties correctly shake off theoretical concepts which do not fit the present period, conceptualize new and old problems and search for solutions to new realities confronting humankind, it's natural that some of the probing will move down wrong ideological alleys.

In some cases basic class concepts will be challenged. It's also possible that new political thinking, developed on the basis of fundamental concepts of Marxism-Leninism, may be misinterpreted or "universal significance" may be attached to new concepts that are elaborated for a specific political reality.

Whatever the case may be, our Party will be affected to one degree or another. Lively discussions will ensue. Even some doubts may crop up in the minds of some comrades as to our Party's firm class approach to all phenomena in political, economic, and social life.

Therefore, we have to revalidate our views regarding the leading role of the working class and the class struggle as the mainspring of social development. Of course, we should not be satisfied with general declarations to prove our point. On the contrary, we need convincing arguments about the class realities of the modern day world.

We should also take into account the new domestic and world realities which have taken shape in recent decades and bear upon the class struggle in our country and internationally. A failure to do so would violate Lenin's appeal to "creatively develop Marxism in all directions" and would separate us from the mass thought patterns of tens of millions of workers and people.

To take one example of the new realities which now enter into the equation of workingclass politics: new global problems have arisen adding new dimensions to the historical mission of the working class. The growth of the instruments of mass destruction, the massive spoliation of the environment, the mounting problems in the developing countries portend terrifying consequences for humankind unless timely and humane solutions are found. Their resolution calls for, but cannot await the elimina-

tion of exploitation and victory of socialism on a world scale.

Consequently, the working class needs to further enlarge its vision and further extend its coalition relationships on an even broader scale in order to preserve the planet and make life liveable for its inhabitants. Without abandoning principle for a single moment, this will take considerable skill, flexibility, and compromise.

As the working class widens its range of concern and moves among varied class and social forces, it should keep in mind the critical remark of Marx directed to the labor movement in his time. The founder of scientific socialism said, "By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves from the initiating of any larger movement." (*Karl Marx/Frederick Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 20, International Publishers, New York, 1985)

The experience of the U.S. working class illustrates the validity of Marx's warning. Where top leaders of the trade union movement in the mass production industries advocate class partnership policies and negotiate concessions agreements without the least glimmer of struggle against the bosses, the ability of these same leaders to mobilize their membership and win allies on other issues is weakened.

By the same token, where the trade union leadership struggles at the point of production and in the contractual arena—even where it is forced to retreat—it earns the confidence and readiness of the rank and file and its allies to join it in struggle.

The Eastern Air strike offers a telling example. IAM's decision to "stand up" to Frank Lorenzo and the Bush Administration, brought it the respect of its own members and other sections of the labor movement. It also heightened the prestige of labor among broad sectors of the population thereby setting the ground for greater interaction of labor with other forces for social progress and peace.

Our task is to vigorously study new questions. No one questions that, but we must do it on the basis of a solid class foundation. Abandon that and we will find ourselves in ideological quicksand and our tactical and strategic concepts will limp at best. □

## PUERTO RICAN EQUALITY AND PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE

Willie, *Chairman of the National Commission on Puerto Rican Equality, CPUSA.*

This presentation deals with the ideology, the thought patterns of people in the United States, in relation to the struggle for full Puerto Rican equality, for the independence of Puerto Rico, and also with nationalist views among Puerto Ricans. The people in mind are the working class, the Left and Party circles.

Within this context, we will discuss what the Party's response should be to the ideological problems that are economic and political roadblocks to Puerto Rican equality in the U.S. and to building solidarity for self-determination and the independence of Puerto Rico.

As stated in our Party's 24th Convention Resolution, Puerto Ricans in the U.S. are a nationally and racially oppressed people. Within the white majority in the U.S., the ruling class ideology of racism and national chauvinism finds expression and is used as a tool to divide the working class. These expressions, although not as pernicious as in earlier decades, define Puerto Ricans as coming to the U.S. to live off public assistance (welfare); lacking motivation to get ahead ("as others have done"); and as not wanting to learn English. Puerto Rican people are seen as potentially criminal elements not to be trusted

In fact, the racist stereotypes are quite similar to those typically attributed to African-Americans by monopoly capitalism. It is no small wonder that all Puerto Ricans are lumped together as a race and are not seen as a nationality. Add to this the fact that they are not viewed as workers, but rather as lazy freeloaders looking for a hand-out.

Our response is to combat capitalist ideology that misleads and creates division. This means that the presence of Puerto Rican people in the U.S. cannot be seen separate from the expansionism of U.S. monopoly capitalist imperialism. For us, it means educating the public on the political economy of imperialism as it applies to Puerto Rico as a colony. It means explaining that Puerto Ricans have come here in search of jobs, a higher income and a good standard of living because their homeland was forcibly transformed to meet the needs of U.S. monopoly. They have come for a standard of living that welfare cannot

provide.

Although 30 percent of Puerto Ricans are on welfare—a figure too high to begin with because of oppression—it is not 70 percent, 80 percent or 90 percent as “popular” wisdom would have us believe. This 30 percent would be working if it could, alongside the overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans who are part of the working class.

Our response also requires educating the working class as a whole on the need for “Jobs with Justice,” affirmative action programs and to roll back discriminatory immigration laws along with the “English Only” movement. Our response also requires combating rightwing inspired acts of violence against all minorities, including Puerto Ricans, and the need to oppose this by coalition building. These are some of the ingredients that go into helping shape working-class consciousness.

Our response also means working towards shaping trade union consciousness and solidarity with the Puerto Rican people as the struggle against old patterns of thinking continues. Shaping this working class consciousness also helps combat the type of nationalism in the U.S. Puerto Rican community that, while it has nothing to do with furthering Puerto Rican independence, promotes sectarianism at a time when multi-national and multi-racial unity is required. This type of nationalism delivers the Puerto Rican vote to machine politicians and becomes an obstacle to independent politics.

Our response has to do with how we put out our Marxist-Leninist position on national liberation and how it applies to Puerto Rico. This calls for putting into print, for mass distribution, the views of the Party’s National Convention Resolution on this question. It also means taking the opportunity to educate Party members and the working class on a more frequent basis as we do, for example, during African-American history month, on questions of Puerto Rican history.

In places like New York City, the question of Puerto Rican equality has to be given central attention along with that of African-American equality. This is basically an internationalist duty that, as Comrade Gus Hall has pointed out, must be carried on by the vanguard in the oppressor nation. It basically calls for developing internationalist consciousness.

One of the first things a socialist USA would do is grant Puerto Rico independence. Puerto Ri-

can independence need not await that victory. It can be realized in this period of national liberation struggles with the help of democratic and progressive forces, those within the U.S. and in the international community.

Let us suppose that Puerto Ricans opt for annexation after suffering this last one hundred years of colonialism. Without the U.S. closing its military bases and eliminating its judicial and political stronghold, and without a UN supervised period to guaranty democratic exercise of freedom to choose a form of government, any talk of self-determination is a sham.

Our job will not be complete if we do not deal with what it takes to help shape certain thought patterns among the Puerto Rican people in the United States. We need to address the question in a way that leads to acceptance of the idea of self-determination and independence for a U.S. colony—not only in the minds of Puerto Ricans—but also for the entire working class and progressive forces as well. We need to deal persuasively with the concept of “armed struggle” that seems to be romanticized by some Puerto Rican independent and socialist-oriented forces in the USA.

Many Puerto Ricans now think that the present status of Puerto Rico is the only way possible, that Puerto Rico cannot be self-sufficient and independent too. To translate this as an exercise of self-determination is like saying that the U.S. working class has definitely chosen capitalist rule, and the Communist Party, USA should therefore liquidate itself.

Changing such thought patterns is a job that independence forces in Puerto Rico must undertake. It falls on us, the vanguard in the oppressor nation, to carry out parallel ideological work in the U.S. We need to forge stronger links with forces there, just as the era of transnational corporations and internationalization of the work force creates the need for stronger trade union solidarity among nations—from the oppressor nations to the oppressed nations.

We need to take an active role in more directly relating to the progressive and national liberation movement in Puerto Rico, especially in this present period of the so-called plebiscite. Theoretical struggle so that internationalist thinking prevails over nationalism is called for. This, with our trade union and community work, will help swell our ranks with more Puerto Rican

activists who have become Communists.

Our work to increase workingclass consciousness and socialist internationalism must increase. We need it for the growth of the Communist Party, USA. □

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## DISARMAMENT, IDEOLOGY AND THE TASKS OF COMMUNISTS

David Adams,

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The danger of nuclear war and world destruction poses a new challenge to humanity in general and to Marxist-Leninist ideology in particular. As Gus Hall has written in the *World Marxist Review*, the possibility of world destruction adds a "new dimension to the framework in which all questions must be dealt with. Developments have reached a point of profound qualitative change. We are living at a moment when the objective conditions are explosive."<sup>1</sup>

The central question posed for ideology is the relationship between the class and peace struggles. Hall concludes that "the greatest challenge is how to conduct the class struggle and the struggles for national liberation, against imperialism, oppression and exploitation, in ways that interlock with the greatest universal imperative of a world at peace, a world free from the fear of nuclear extinction." Similar formulations may be found in the *World Marxist Review*, from other parties and especially in the "new thinking" of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Any discussion of changing ideology must begin from an understanding of its vital role. Marxist-Leninist ideology today, no less than when Marx and Engels wrote the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* in 1848,<sup>2</sup> remains the science that unifies all who struggle to replace the exploitation and war of capitalism with the new humane, peaceful structure of socialism.

Marxist-Leninist ideology is not only an understanding of history, but it is also a political guide and psychological vision for action. As stated in the *Manifesto*, it gives us "the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the working class movement." It inspires the development of a "self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority." Therefore, every

ideological development should lead necessarily and immediately to political and organizational development, as will be suggested below.

Marxist-Leninist ideology is universal. As the *Manifesto* puts it, Communists "point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire working class, independently of all nationality." This means that no individual and no national party can make unilateral changes in Marxist-Leninist ideology, but such changes can only come in step with the entire world working class in general and the international Communist movement in particular.

The relationship of the class struggle to the peace struggle has always been central to Marxist-Leninist ideology. Marx cited the peace demonstrations by workers on both sides in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 as the first signs of a new society "whose International rule will be Peace, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—*Labor!*"<sup>3</sup> And the very first decree of the first socialist state, under the direction of Lenin, was the Decree of Peace.

The entire development of the historical relationship between socialism and peace needs to be studied and taught as a necessary background for the understanding of today's new challenge to ideology. To paraphrase Marx, the problem (the abolition of war) has appeared on the agenda of history only when the solution (socialism) has come to hand.

**DISARMAMENT: THE NEW PHASE** ■ The struggle for nuclear disarmament is a radically new phase of the peace struggle. As in other modern revolutions, the working class plays the leading role. But to a greater extent than in previous revolutions, people of all classes have a vital stake and a necessary role in its success. Like previous revolutions, there are key struggles in certain countries, especially the USA. But unlike past revolutions, disarmament is a world-wide process that cannot be achieved in isolation or unilaterally by any one nation or social system. Like all revolutionary processes that have gone before, it has arisen as a result of technological change, in this case the nuclear weapons that have made war self-defeating. But unlike previous revolutionary situations, the unprecedented danger of the technology gives a special urgency, a condition that is truly "explosive."

This all-class, world-wide, urgent nature of

the struggle for disarmament is unlike what history has seen before because history itself has changed.

History has speeded up. This may be seen most clearly in the acceleration of technological "turnover." Comprehensive changes in technology used to take centuries and decades; now they occur every few years. The internal contradictions that move history forward have become more complicated. We work now under conditions of "historical speedup." Instead of fighting on one front, we are faced with simultaneous fronts in the class and disarmament struggles. Instead of waiting to complete the transition from capitalism to socialism before beginning to abolish war, we must work on both tasks simultaneously. Changes that used to be localized are now world-wide in scope. Time itself seems to have speeded up, and humanity finds itself in a race against time to destroy nuclear weapons before they destroy us.

**'SYNERGIZING' STRUGGLES** ■ Interlocking or "synergizing"<sup>4</sup> the class and disarmament struggles is not an easy task. They are not identical, and sometimes they are carried out in a way that fails to develop the full power of unity. Sometimes we find that the splitting tactics of the military-industrial complex or misguided leadership have set up situations where the class and peace struggles work at cross purposes to each other.<sup>5</sup>

It is not a new challenge for us to synergize two struggles that are related but not identical. Take for example, the peace movement and the movement for national liberation. We understand the progressive direction of the national liberation struggle and its essential anti-war character. Others, however, often fail to see the connection. Only by showing disarmament activists how imperialism itself is a form of war, and how the anti-imperialist struggle is by its nature a struggle against war, can we build the unity that is necessary between disarmament and solidarity movements.

Synergizing the disarmament and class struggles is especially important when the military-industrial complex and their government allies try to pass the economic burden of disarmament onto the backs of defense workers. Instead of planning to convert to peacetime production, they threaten mass layoffs if defense contracts are cancelled, and they try to enlist workers as a

force against disarmament. Planning for economic conversion with guarantees of no job or income loss is essential to synergizing the disarmament and class struggles. Because Communists have one foot in the labor movement and one foot in the peace and solidarity movements, we are in a key position, in practice as well as in theory, to play a leading role in this important task.

Another source of disunity comes from the class attitudes of the new sectors that have increasingly joined the struggle for disarmament in recent years. Religious denominations, the environmental movement, and scientists and professionals are increasingly mobilizing. This is, of course, a healthy and necessary trend. However, they bring with them, in many cases, anti-working class and racist attitudes, as well as anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism, which can be especially divisive and sectarian.

Here, too, we have a special role to play as Communists. We should fight for workingclass leadership and for multi-racial unity in the disarmament struggle no less than in the class struggle. The anti-Soviet and anti-Communist attitudes and practices of these new sectors of disarmament activity are fed by myths about socialism in general and about U.S. Communists in particular. To the extent that we remain small or hidden or disengaged from peace and disarmament coalitions, we cannot directly combat these myths. To the extent that we play a public, constructive role in all peace coalitions, we can combat the myths and turn around the divisive anti-Communist, racist, anti-workingclass attitudes.

**WORLD-WIDE STRUGGLE** ■ Parties around the world are pointing out, as we can read in the *World Marxist Review*, that it is time for a new international framework of Communist and workers' parties. The reason most often given is the urgent need for unity and coordination of the disarmament struggle. A united international Communist movement is seen as the beginning and the basis for an even broader world disarmament movement, comparable to the united front against fascism in the 1930s.

A renewed international Communist movement is not just a tactical need; it reflects the profound globalization of historical change today. Above all there is the need for global coordination for nuclear disarmament, but there are also

needs for global environmental defense and international class struggle against the whip-lash tactics of the multi-national corporations.

As the Party most directly in confrontation with the center of imperialism, we have an especially great need and responsibility to help initiate and develop a new international unity of Communist and workers' parties. The challenge of Communist leadership for disarmament is too great for us or any other party to shoulder alone.

Not only strategy, but also tactics would be strengthened by the world-wide unity of Communists. For example, it could greatly assist the citizen diplomacy that wedges open the peace movement for a growing internationalism.<sup>6</sup>

**THE URGENCY OF DISARMAMENT** ■ Humanity is engaged in a life and death race against time to achieve disarmament. The urgency applies to us in a special way as Communists because of the key role that we can play. We are in the key position to synergize the peace and class struggles, to combat the divisiveness of anti-workingclass, racist, and anti-communist attitudes and practices, and to lead in the development of a world-wide disarmament movement.

There is only one way to meet the urgency of the challenge: our Party must be larger, more unified, more active, and more public. We must build the Party in both quantity and quality. We should recruit new comrades who have a burning desire for peace, who understand that the working class must play the leading role, and who have found our Party in the thick of peace and solidarity struggles. This is a dialectical process: by recruiting such comrades, we increase our role in the peace and solidarity work; and by increasing our role in this work, we can do more recruiting.

We must be more unified. Synergistic development of the class and the disarmament struggles must become the immediate task of each party member. It cannot be left until tomorrow or delegated to a special sector of the Party.<sup>7</sup> By incorporating this in the development of a common, Marxist-Leninist ideology, we can build the unity that is our strength.

To build the Party in the disarmament struggle, we must be more active and more visible. Why shouldn't we take a leading public role in all peace and solidarity movements? We need public Communists in peace movement coalitions. It

seems to me we should publish a Communist Party peace program. A good model would be the Party trade union program that we developed in consultation with the broad circles in which our comrades work. We should provide Communist analyses, pamphlets, and books for the disarmament struggle, to provide both political direction and psychological vision.

Communist educational materials on disarmament are needed for our own Party as well as for the broader movement. Shouldn't all our Party schools have a section on the peace struggle comparable to those on the class struggle? What should be read in such a section? To some extent we need to develop new materials.

Finally, we need more organizational development in the Party for peace and solidarity work. We have a National Peace and Solidarity Commission, but it has not yet received the full support that it needs. In some states peace and solidarity commissions have just begun to work, and in many states we have no commission at all.

In conclusion, the danger of world destruction has added to our ideological framework a new dimension that is more complex, world-wide and urgent. This ideological development demands immediate political and organizational development to meet the challenge. □

### Notes

1. *World Marxist Review*, May, 1988.
2. Karl Marx/Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1976, International Publishers, New York, 477.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, 3.
4. The word "synergize" comes from pharmacology where it describes how two drugs can interact and reinforce each others' effects. Unlike words such as integrate or interlock, it indicates that the combined effect is greater than the sum of its parts.
5. Two cases in Connecticut illustrate how tactical conflicts can arise between peace and class struggles. When Colt industrial workers went on strike in Hartford, we asked peace activist colleagues in SANE/Freeze to join the picket line. They refused, however, because Colt manufactures guns. Another case is in Groton where pacifist groups have picketed and protested for years against the launching of nuclear submarines. They have picketed against workers as much as against management and the Pentagon. As a result positions have hardened and the workers now have a deep resentment of the pacifists.
6. A related problem arises frequently in American-Soviet friendship and citizen diplomacy. On two separate delegations to the USSR of American activists in 1987, it was impossible to arrange meetings with Soviet trade unionists for the progressive American unionists in our delegation. Our Soviet hosts, two of the largest peace and friendship organizations, told me that "we have no relations with the trade unions." On a more general level, Soviet peace organizations tend to give priority to U.S. citizen initiatives that are exclusively bourgeois and petit-bourgeois and to



ignore initiatives that emphasize workingclass participation. Our Party should help reverse this situation and ensure workingclass leadership of citizen diplomacy, including free exchange of trade union delegations (which requires repeal of the Baker Amendment).

7. Published floor discussion from our 24th Convention contains no reference to the disarmament struggle, cf., *Political Affairs*, September, 1987.

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## IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE MOVEMENT FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Fern Winston

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The struggle for women's equality and the women's movement in general, is currently under fierce ideological attacks from a number of sources, particularly from the ultra-right. An example of this is the forthcoming new magazine, *The Family in America*, published by Richard A. Vaughn.

Mr. Vaughn, in an appeal for subscribers, assures us that this publication will show that "Father-led families are more resistant to drugs than mother-led families." He will do this, he says, by showing that "Grade school texts are filled with truck driving, fire fighting, adventure seeking women, with traditional mothers censored out of the pages." He will also show that

Researchers have made the shocking discovery that religion has not gone away, but some folks want to cover it up, . . . and that the gender gap turns out to be largely a "marriage gap" reflecting the different political attitudes of married and unmarried women. But most experts will see to it that the real beliefs of women are kept secret!

Mr. Vaughn is especially proud of the fact that this new publication will save us from the perils of Day Care. He warns us that "Day Care is the thalidomide of the 80's. Like the notorious drug of the 60's, Day Care has been termed completely safe." But now it can be proven that this new threat to children not only imperils the body, it also distorts and withers the spirit.

The United States Supreme Court is now reconsidering *Roe vs. Wade* which enables a woman to have a legal, medically safe abortion if she so chooses. The Bush Administration and lawyers from a number of right-wing groups have submitted briefs urging the court to, in effect, overturn *Roe vs. Wade*. In their arguments before the court the lawyers for the right-wing groups let loose the same type of ideological bar-

rage as did Mr. Vaughn.

In the past few years many books have been written by women authors expounding various ideological approaches to understanding the roots of women's inequality and outlining a strategy for women's "liberation." Many of these authors use Frederick Engels *Origin of the Family* as their basic source. In the course of their writings they agree with Engels, disagree with him, correct him, and in some cases revise him.

The conclusion of the Communist Party, USA, in the early '70s, that the basic cause of the oppression of women lies in their role as workers, has been borne out by history. This was demonstrated in the great March in Washington on April 9th, 1989.

The most important feature, ignored by the big business media in reporting the march, was the coming together of the women's movement and the labor movement. This accounted for the thousands of men who marched and for the fact that the number of African-Americans, men and women, was the largest ever in any demonstration on "women's issues." The media also failed to report that the march demanded, in addition to right of choice for women, action on child care, parental leave, pay equity, health care, adequate housing and cuts in military spending.

**WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK? ■** Some of the new ideological problems in the struggle for women's equality are not, strictly speaking, new—they have been around for a long time—but today are raised even more sharply and by new groupings. Take the question of wages for housewives. Those who advocate a campaign for wages for 14902housewives argue that the work a woman does in the home, taking care of her husband, makes it possible for him to return to work each day. Therefore she is producing labor power for which she should be paid. It cannot be disputed that the housewife works very hard taking care of her husband and the home, and her labor is most useful. However, in making it possible for her husband to return to work each day, she is not producing a commodity that her husband's employer can sell and make a profit from; she is performing a service. Then there is the question of who would pay the housewife her wages?

Speaking on this problem at a *New Masses* Reader's Forum in March, 1941, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn answered the question of who would pay

the housewife's wages:

John comes home on Saturday night and hands his wife the pay envelope. She pays the family's bills. They all subsist, including mother. But suppose John decided to go "equalitarian" and pay Mary wages, say half his earnings. Under capitalism it would be an immediate absurdity. They would both pay the same bills with the same money and be broke just as quickly.

The demand for wages for housewives is being raised not only by some feminists, but also by some welfare mothers' groups. The raising of this demand today, could become a distraction which would slow up the necessary battle for a family allowance. The United States is the only industrialized country in the world, with the exception of South Africa, that does not provide a non-means tested family allowance for young families.

The nature of the family has again become an important ideological question. In the early 1970's some feminists called for the abolition of the family, claiming it was obsolete, and that, in the family, the husband performed the role of a foreman for the boss.

Despite eight years of Reaganism, during which every federal program benefiting families was drastically cut, putting great stress on the family, it has survived although its form has changed. Today we can no longer refer to what was once called the nuclear family—Mom and Dad and a couple of children with Dad going to work every morning and Mom taking care of the house and kids—as a typical family. In the first place, in most cases Mom also goes to work. There are many single-parent families, including teen-age mothers. There are families headed by grandparents or one grandparent. Many families are homeless as a result of the loss of a job or eviction because of rent increases. The African-American family has shown great strength in surviving despite the added problems it faces because of racism.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** ■ During the eight years of Reaganism—and continuing under the Bush administration—there has been an increase in domestic violence against women and in incidents of child abuse and rape.

In September, 1987, the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families of the House of Representatives held hearings on women, vio-

lence and the law. In opening the hearings, Rep. George Miller [D.-CA], Chairman of the committee said the following:

In the United States a woman is beaten every 18 seconds. Every three and a half minutes a woman is the victim of rape or attempted rape . . . Nearly two thirds of the violent crimes committed against men are committed by strangers. In contrast, more than half of all the violent crimes against women are committed by people they know, including family members.

When I first expressed concern about domestic violence a decade ago, one of my colleagues accused me of trying to "take the fun out of marriage."

Rep. Miller then expressed satisfaction that a Sexual Abuse Act had been passed in 1986 and then went on to say,

The violence committed behind closed doors still gets an inconsistent response from our justice system, when it gets any response at all. . . . While domestic violence is considered a crime in most states, many police and judges continue to view spousal abuse as a purely private matter. (From the test of the Select Committee of the House of Representatives on Women, Violence and the Law, Sept. 1987.)

Our Party has not studied this question enough. We, of course, disagree with those who would say that this violence against women occurs because men feel themselves to be the "natural dominators" of women. But we have not done enough to expose the moral effects of the Rambo mentality romanticizing violence, that flourished under Reaganism and continues under Bush. According to an article in *The New York Times Magazine*, March 30, 1989, the majority of comic books widely read by teenagers and young adults, and even by some older men and women, are dominated by cartoons showing violence against women. The hard-core pornography industry also incites violence against women.

**WHY INSECURITY & DESPAIR?** ■ There is a general feeling of insecurity and uneasiness among the people of the USA, especially among workers who have no guarantees of job security. There is a great feeling of uneasiness about the possibility of losing one's home, of being evicted if the landlord raises the rent. Among African-American workers there are the effects of racism, while at the same time efforts are made by the Adminis-

tration in Washington to weaken affirmative action. Young people especially have great feelings of insecurity and despair about being able to get an education, to find and hold a job, and the lack of community centers providing safe places for recreation. Then there is the danger of nuclear war which constantly looms over us all. These are the primary reasons why men sometimes resort to violence. These feelings of insecurity and despair are also an underlying cause of child abuse.

These feelings of insecurity and despair are also among the main causes of drug abuse. This has become a very important question for the women's movement. Today, many babies are born addicted or with AIDS. Our Party must do much more to expose those responsible for bringing drugs into our communities, and their connections with high government officials. We must also do more to help build broad movements of women and men to fight for more educational programs and treatment centers.

In the last year or so, there has been a lot of discussion in the international women's movement on the question of women's equality. As we Communists of the U.S. approach our Ideological Conference, some of the views expressed in these writings might be helpful.

Gerry van Houten, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada, in an article in the *World Marxist Review*, January, 1989, writes:

In the past we treated women's issues as if they concerned only women and not men. This, in turn, reflected the attitude that women's issues, including those of the family and the home, were something apart from the struggle for social progress. . . .

It goes without saying that there are many aspects to the women's question, but central to them all is the issue of women's equality, or rather of the lack of equality between men and women. This inequality between the sexes has existed for so long that even among men who are otherwise revolutionary, archaic views about women's nature as a social and biological being are still held. . . .

No doubt, the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917 constituted a huge leap forward in the struggle for women's equality because, for the first time since the rise of class societies, a state was created which actually gave women complete juridical equality and enshrined it in the constitution. Keenly aware of

the fact that inequalities continued to exist under socialism, Lenin wrote that "equality before the law is not necessarily equality in fact," and he saw housework as the most obvious and blatant example of the continuing inequality between men and women. Even when women have full rights, they still remain factually downtrodden because all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman.

He continues:

Speaking about men, Lenin observed that "the proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women." How right he is! There will always be some housework and there will always be children who need and want parental care. Thus no true equality can be said to exist between the sexes until both men and women, with all other things being equal, share equally in housework and rearing of children.

In our Party I think it can be said that we have made progress in the fight against the ideology of male supremacy as well as petty bourgeois feminism, although this remains a continuing struggle. For example, one can still hear such ideas expressed as "men make wars," (Margaret Thatcher and Jean Kirkpatrick notwithstanding). Our greatest manifestation of male supremacy in the past couple of years was, I believe, our underestimation of the importance of mobilizing the entire Party to work for the success of the Family Day celebration organized by CLUW last year and repeated in the April 9th march this year. It was possible for us to have had contingents in both these events, and by not doing so we lost an important opportunity to greatly enhance the role of the Communist Party in the struggle for full equality for women. □

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## MASS STRUGGLE, ELECTORAL POLITICS AND ANTI-MONOPOLY COALITION

Jack Kurzweil,  
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I would like to participate in the evolving discussion on electoral politics, and do so from the point of view of the Program of the Communist Party, USA, (1970) that characterizes anti-mo-

nopoly struggle and anti-monopoly coalition as the strategic path to socialism in the United States.

It is appropriate to start by reasserting that, just as the development of capitalism gives rise to economic and democratic struggles by the working class, the development of state monopoly capitalism, which is closely tied to the military-industrial complex and the Cold War, gives rise to a broad range of anti-monopoly struggles. These unfold alongside of and in relation to the class struggle and involve increasingly broader sections of the population.

The cumulative effect of state monopoly capitalism has been to use the power of the state to enrich monopoly capital through a variety of mechanisms. The most glaring of these are: military spending, facilitating and underwriting the export of U.S. capital, undermining the economic and organizational status of the working class, generating a growing general social crisis in the country, and posing a persistent threat to world peace and human survival.

It is also important to note that U.S. imperialism, whose economic and political trajectory has been most closely involved with military spending and the Cold War, is in historic decline in relation to the other imperialist powers. In no small measure this is due to the economic, political and social consequences of the military industrial complex.

**CRISES & MASS STRUGGLE** ■ A fundamental proposition of Leninism, as I understand it, is that a cumulative crisis of the system generates divisions in the ruling class which, together with intensified mass struggle, create the opening for fundamental social change. Consider the range of anti-monopoly issues: peace and anti-intervention, the military budget, national economic policy, rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, the environmental and ecological crises, education, consumer protection, corporate regulation, public utilities, medical care and social services, welfare, agriculture, housing, public transportation, public health, child care, and the accelerating problems of the monopolization of agriculture.

It needs to be restated that the cutting edge of these crises is in the African-American and Latino communities, which are overwhelmingly workingclass. Undermining and exporting manufacturing industry and accelerating the growth

of lower paid service industry, are resulting in an economic polarization that leaves the ghettos and barrios as areas of economic and social devastation. The horrifying growth of drug use and AIDS among the unemployed and demoralized youth of these communities has to be labeled as the outcome of state monopoly capitalism.

The large-scale entry of women into the paid labor force has likewise placed them, especially workingclass women, and most particularly women of color, at the focal points of the crises of this society. Not only are women at the lower end of the wage scale, but they continue to bear the bulk of the economic and social burden of child care—especially a burden to single mothers. They continue to be the victims of all forms of sexist behavior and practice. In their struggle for social equality, which their entry into the labor force has placed for the first time on history's agenda for resolution, women of all classes and races are challenging the accumulated tyrannies, social structures, customs, beliefs, and restrictions of patriarchal society reaching back to the origins of civilization.

It is worth noting that much of the politics of the ultra-right derives not only from racism, but also from a pathological hatred of homosexuality and a recoiling from the social and sexual self-determination of women. The current struggles over AIDS and abortion are a case in point.

These anti-monopoly and democratic struggles, even though many of them do not originate with the working class or come directly from the essential relations of capitalism, increasingly intersect with the struggles of the working class.

It seems to me that the first thing to understand is that every one of these struggles is authentic, that every one of them emerges from a social system that is devoted to crushing the human body and spirit as well as the natural world.

We must welcome these struggles in all their variety and complexity. They emerge with all the markings of the society that gave birth to them: elitism, racism, sexism, and opportunism. It could not be otherwise. It is, of course, necessary to add that the social crisis that plays a large part in generating these movements also generates reaction. That also could not be otherwise.

**THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM, USA** ■ How should we relate to the mass of issues and movements and social strata that comprises the spontaneous anti-

monopoly struggle? I think that, in order to take hold of this question, it is necessary to restate what the Party Program delineates as the road to socialism in this country. We project a minimum program and a maximum program. The minimum program is the victory of an anti-monopoly government that will move decisively against the military-industrial complex and the transnationals, move to democratize all aspects of social and economic life, and, in so doing, open the door to the struggle for socialism. Our maximum program is the victory of socialism.

Our program makes sense because workingclass and anti-monopoly movements are engaged in struggle; as part of that struggle they seek coalition; and their struggles do have an electoral and legislative component. For reasons that ought to be clear and obvious, their electoral activity is typically in relation to the Democratic Party, where these forces come into increasing contest with the monopoly forces which control that party. Therefore, they move in a most complex and contradictory way toward the development of progressive coalitions within the Democratic Party.

These kinds of developments are the basic stuff of progressive and trade union politics on the local level, in the coalition politics that elects progressives of one sort or another to state legislatures and to Congress. They result in such formations as the Congressional Black Caucus whose annual alternative Federal Budget is an accurate ongoing indicator of the mass level of anti-monopoly politics.

As the Congressional Black Caucus increases in size and seniority it continues to develop as a central force for peace and anti-intervention, for social justice, and as an adversary of the military-industrial complex.

We should give some careful analysis to the new developments in the African-American equality movement. The emergence of autonomous Black politics in the South over the past number of years is perhaps the most important progressive development in this country in recent years. Its first major impact was the role that it played in forcing a majority of Southern Senators to vote against Bork.

Representing a third of the vote, African-American people in the South are taking the first steps toward the formation of a new coalition that has the potential of transforming national as

well as regional politics.

In this regard, it is useful to think about the Jesse Jackson campaign as a first crystallization of anti-monopoly politics on a national scale and the beginning of the organized challenge to monopoly control of the Democratic Party. This too is complex. The support given to Jackson by Jimmy Carter and Bert Lance is indicative of the interest in this process by certain sections of capital.

**ELECTORAL POLITICS** ■ We recognize that out of the diversity of social and political forces in the class and anti-monopoly struggles will come a variety of political agendas with which the anti-monopoly forces (including the Communist Party) will have to grapple. That's what politics is about.

One thing is for sure. We cannot decide in advance what stages, forms, and processes the anti-monopoly movement will go through. Reality is always richer, more unexpected, more complex, and more alive than any preconceptions about it. We have had and will continue to have an unending collection of experiences in which we may not be the first to recognize new realities, new possibilities, new issues, new forms of struggle. If we are to play a leading role in this movement it will not be by virtue of being know-it-alls speaking through an echo chamber like the Wizard of Oz. It will be because we participate in the movement fully, openly and carefully discuss the political issues of the day; operate in a principled way, and always think about the struggles of the moment in relation to the goal of a victorious anti-monopoly coalition.

The current discussion in the Party about electoral politics is a case in point. It is quite clear that the spontaneous development of anti-monopoly politics is overwhelmingly within the Democratic Party and that what we are now witnessing is the emergence, often in a most complex and often contradictory way (after all, that's dialectical), of a progressive challenge to monopoly politics in that party. This challenge is in its early stages and the social forces are not yet fully aligned. What will it take to more fully align these forces?

We have to be clear about our agenda. We say that various classes and social forces look at identical problems in differing ways and that the kinds of approaches they project reflect their

class position in society. Within the anti-monopoly movement there is an ongoing contest over the leadership and direction of the various movements.

We think that the leadership must come from the historic alliance of the working class, African-American people, and all nationally oppressed peoples. We think that because we believe that only with that leadership core can an anti-monopoly movement really develop a broad, consistent, encompassing political agenda and convincingly bid for political power.

We are persuaded that it is only from the point of view of a revolutionary workingclass movement, that the most universal alternatives to all forms of oppression and exploitation will be forthcoming. This is the historic mission of the working class.

That, of course, means a trade union movement that is more militant and aggressive, which has further isolated its right wing, which is organizing the unorganized, which is more involved in the struggle for peace, which leads in the struggle for the rights of women, which is an effective force against racism, etc. Further, it simply is not possible to think realistically about a struggle against the transnationals, or for transferring resources from the military to rebuilding the infrastructure of the country, or to challenge the parasitical use of union pension funds in underwriting corporate takeovers, without the participation of the trade unions.

As the labor movement moves in this direction it will become a more organic and leading

part of the effort to challenge monopoly rule of the Democratic Party. It isn't going to go anywhere else.

It seems to me that the place of our Party is right smack in the middle of this struggle and at every level of the struggle. It is our job to participate in giving leadership to this movement by taking it in a principled anti-monopoly direction. If part of this struggle is for control of the Democratic Party as a vehicle for anti-monopoly politics, our job is to make sure that the anti-monopoly forces fully understand the need for their own political independence from monopoly and are determined to be victorious. Our job is not to stand on the sidelines and argue that the game is somewhere else.

We have to formulate and push an agenda that addresses key areas of struggle and this agenda must be realistic and well thought through—no pie in the sky and unrealistic sloganeering. We have to work to give leadership to the process of moving masses of people in struggle. It is clear that electoral politics which does not relate to mass movements is easily diverted and absorbed. We are an integral part of the struggle, so we must maintain our autonomy in a public manner, including the increased running of our own candidates as part of coalition electoral politics.

In this way the Communist Party can help transform the anti-monopoly movement into one which is able to reach for power. And in the process we will transform ourselves.

I can't see any other way. □

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