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OF THE
DAY**

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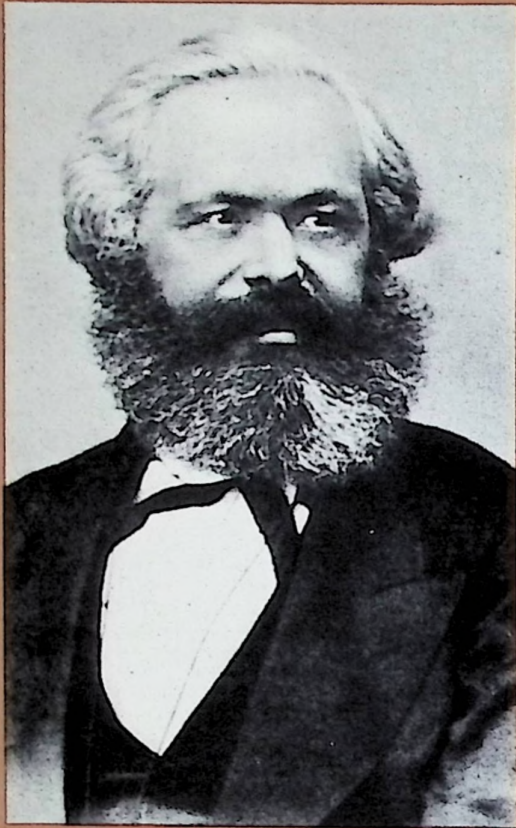
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Urgent Questions of the Day

GUS HALL

Q. A growing number of people, from ultra-Rightists in the Reagan Administration to, more recently, Pope John Paul II, have been referring to the present period as one of transition from "post-war" to "pre-war."

In view of the Korean spy plane provocation, the pending Euro-missile deployments, the intensification of U.S. involvement in Lebanon, the evident preparations for greater U.S. intervention in Central America, how would you characterize the war danger today?

A. The world is now in a most serious crisis due to the escalating war danger. The struggle to preserve peace has literally become a struggle to preserve the world. This has emerged as the most critical challenge for all humanity.

The danger is indeed grave. However, we are not in a "pre-war" period. To speak of a pre-war period is to accept the idea that war, including nuclear war, is inevitable. This concept promotes a fatalistic, nothing-can-be-done attitude. Such fatalism itself adds to the danger of war.

The fact is that while the danger increases, the very acuteness of the threat is giving rise to a more powerful opposition to war. Never before in our history have such a great number of Americans expressed opposition to a government war policy. The close to 400,000 who marched in Washington on August 27 are the most determined and conscious of the tens of millions who oppose the Reagan war policy.

A clear majority of our people favor a complete freeze in nuclear weapons testing, production and deployment, as was shown in numerous referendums across the country last November.

The Twenty-third National Convention of the Communist Party, USA will be held in Cleveland in November 1983. The convention will evaluate the present political situation and chart a course of activity for the coming period. In preparation for the convention, *Political Affairs* conducted the following interview with Gus Hall, general secretary of the CPUSA.

The millions who took part in Labor Day actions across the country came out against all Reagan's policies, including his policies of war. The warhawks in the top leadership of the AFL-CIO were not able to prevent these anti-war expressions.

This fall, on October 21-24, demonstrations against deployment of Pershing and cruise nuclear missiles in Europe are planned for 300 U.S. cities. They are being organized by all the major U.S. peace organizations.

And in spite of unprecedented efforts, led by Reagan and the mass media, to incite hysteria over the Korean spy plane provocation, the U.S. people, in their great majority, remain firm in their opposition to the Reagan policies of war and aggression.

As the danger of war mounts, the culprits become more visible and exposed. It is now obvious to most that the source of the war danger is the Reagan Administration. It is also clear that that it is the Reagan Administration and its policies which are the obstacle to political solutions in such countries as El Salvador, Lebanon and Namibia. This government is pushing for military rather than political solutions.

The next critical moment of this crisis will come when the Pentagon is scheduled to plant Pershing II and cruise nuclear missiles on European soil.

It would be a grave mistake for Americans to think of this as a European crisis. The installation of these strategic weapons will intensify the war crisis on a global scale. The launching of nuclear weapons from European soil would inevitably involve the U.S. itself in a full-scale nuclear war. That is why the attempt to escalate the deployment of U.S. nuclear missiles in any part of the world is, from the beginning, a global crisis. It is as much a crisis for the United States as for Europe.

There is a cumulative effect of the policies of establishing new military bases and escalating

military actions by the United States government. Each new military base, each new escalation, each new provocation adds to the level of the war danger.

As we approach the 1984 elections, there is, of course, the danger of some new provocative acts of war. However, there is also the opposite tendency. There is a growing concern by the politicians that the peace sentiment will defeat candidates who support the Reagan war policies. Therefore, the election campaign that is now beginning to heat up can become a powerful movement to block the war drive. The election campaign can become a peace campaign.

Q. Many prominent figures, both conservative and liberal, proclaim that "detente is dead," and that it was, in fact, a historical anomaly, an unnatural state of relations between the capitalist and socialist states. What in your opinion, is the future of detente?

A. Detente has been and is today a historic necessity. The concepts of detente rest on the conviction that war is not inevitable, that it is preventable. In the long period of transition from capitalism to socialism around the world, detente provides the only basis for preserving the peace and preventing a nuclear catastrophe.

Detente is not automatic, but it can be won. The laws of socio-economic development and the world relationship of forces are such that in spite of the Reagan policies, this is not a "post-detente" period. It is a historic period of detente.

Q. Which forces in the U.S. ruling class are pushing toward greater international tension, aggression, even open warfare? What will be the main front on which the peace forces can try to check the war danger in this period?

A. The main forces that support the Reagan-Pentagon war policies are the financial and industrial institutions and military forces which are gathered in the military-industrial complex. The main force opposing the war policies is the broad, across-the-board, all-people's movement.

The sections of monopoly capital which are

concerned about the present trend of events and resist the dangerous steps toward war are those which are negatively affected by huge budget deficits, militarization of the economy and the ensuing capitalist-world financial crisis. This concern and resistance is also spreading to the middle layers and small business sectors.

The opposition of the working class to the war policies has been growing, and this process is aided to the extent that workers see the connection between the military budgets and economic problems, including higher taxes and higher prices and wage cuts. Showing the people the interrelations of these struggles and movements is the most effective way of winning against the warhawks and war policies.

Q. What is the real story behind the "economic recovery" ballyhoo? What is the real state of the economy?

A. Those who believed the economic crisis was at least partially caused by psychological factors now obviously believe they can affect the "recovery" by psyching people up to buy. This has been a flop.

The "recovery" is spotty and faltering. It is taking place on the unstable foundation of economic quicksand.

The structural crisis (especially its effects in such industries as steel, auto, foundry, rubber), the high budget deficits, the escalating government debts, the climbing military budget, the continuing cuts in funds for socio-economic programs, the continuing decline in real take-home wages, the deepening world capitalist crisis, the near-bankruptcy of the developing countries, the high level of permanently unemployed, the continuing crisis on the farms — all this is anything but a stable, real economic recovery. Therefore, we can not speak — at this moment — of a stable, lasting economic upturn.

Q. In the struggle on the economic front, and in particular in contract negotiations, what is the trend at this time?

A. For almost three years the American peo-

ple have suffered economic setbacks. The standard of living has continually declined. The concessions by trade unions have resulted in unprecedented wage cuts. The savage Reagan cuts in funds for socio-economic programs have created hunger and poverty on a scale without precedent.

Monopoly capital and the Reagan Administration have been on the offensive against the people. The people — the working class — have been on the defensive. We are now in a period of shifting winds in the class struggle. We are in the initial period of moving from defensive to offensive struggles.

The rank and file are moving into a position of insisting on no more concessions and are demanding a recouping of past losses. The rank-and-file teamsters, steelworkers, electrical, communication and copper workers are giving the class struggle a stiffer backbone.

So the trend is toward offensive struggles. And this trend is going to continue. It will develop on all fronts. This was expressed in the August 27 demonstration as well as the Labor Day actions in hundreds of cities.

Q. How can the Left contribute to putting the labor movement on the offensive, to begin to recoup losses of recent years?

A. Growing militancy and offensive struggles always give rise to Left thought patterns. For the working class to boldly and effectively move onto an offensive tack it needs an organized Left sector. The Left must lead in finding new forms of struggle. It must give a lead in finding ways to infuse the picket line with the electoral and legislative line. It must help to stimulate labor to take up the demands and aid the organization of the unemployed and unorganized. It must take the lead in finding new and more effective forms of affirmative action. It is key in relating economic struggles to struggles for peace.

The Left is a necessary ideological force against the persistent concepts of class collaboration, racism and anti-Communism. Policies and tactics molded and guided by ideas of class collaboration can not result in winning, offensive

struggles. Class-struggle trade unionism is necessary, now more than ever.

For the trade union movement to move on to offensive struggles, especially on the shop level, the union grievance structure has to be rebuilt and in many cases reestablished. This structure has fallen victim to the process of concessions and takebacks. Of necessity, the initiatives for this process must come from the Left forces. Class-struggle trade unionism needs a strong grievance structure. Class collaboration does not need any structure that facilitates struggles of the rank and file.

Q. In the 1984 election, the Communist Party has advanced the goal of defeating Reagan. Can Reaganism be defeated without defeating Reagan? And, on the other hand, does the defeat of Reagan guarantee the defeat of Reaganism? What course of struggle can insure the best possible advance toward both of these goals?

A. The 1984 presidential elections will have the most far-reaching effects, no matter which way they go. In other words, the potential results can be either very positive, or very negative. The dominant issue, of course, will be the need to defeat the reactionary, anti-working class, racist, warmongering policies of the Reagan Administration. In one way or another, all forces will affect the outcome.

Nothing could be more negative than the reelection of Reagan and the reactionary candidates who will be seeking to ride on his coattails. The defeat of Reagan and those on his coattails would be a resounding defeat for monopoly capital, for the far Right and for their extreme policies of war and racism. Therefore, it makes good sense and it is sound tactics that all people's forces place the defeat of Reagan as an overall backdrop of their electoral activities.

Reagan and his hangers-on can go down to defeat if all forces unite to expose the extreme demagoguery of Reagan. The more united the forces of labor, the racially and nationally oppressed, the women, farmers and youth are, the greater will be their influence on all the other forces in the anti-Reagan camp.

In this sense, the primary election campaigns of candidates who take more advanced positions, such as Jesse Jackson, Alan Cranston and Gary Hart, can have a very good effect on the whole campaign, including after the primaries.

It is clear that the voter registration drives will have the greatest impact on the outcome of most campaigns, including the presidential campaign. It follows that the voter registration drives by the trade unions, by the Afro-American, Chicano and women's movements, can become outstanding factors.

What is needed is a more united, closer-knit, operative, day-to-day coalition of the all-people's front. Whatever else the various people's movement's focus on, they can be effective if they are united on the issue of defeating Reagan and his coattail hangers-on.

Q. What will be main theme, issues and aims posed by the Twenty-Third National Convention of the Communist Party, USA?

A. The Twenty-Third Convention of our Party will focus on the issues we have been discussing in this interview. The delegates will focus their attention on where and how the members of our Party, most of whom are who are workers and members of trade unions, can be most effective

in the struggles of the working class. The delegates will discuss how the Party can be more effective in the struggle against the dangerous war policy of the Reagan Administration. The convention will take up the question of raising the struggle against racism to new levels. The struggle for full equality of women, the problems of youth, the farm crisis, will all get the convention's attention.

The convention will discuss how to develop closer working relations between Communists and other Left forces, which has become not only possible, but absolutely necessary at this moment.

During moments of challenge by forces of reaction, those who understand the full measure of the danger must put all secondary questions in second place and unite in the struggles around the main challenge. The policies of the Reagan Administration present such a challenge.

For all these reasons the convention will discuss and make plans to build a mass Communist Party. As never before, the possibilities for building a mass revolutionary party of the working class grow day by day. The convention will explore new and more popular ways to project socialism as the very best solution to today's crisis of capitalism.

The New Cold-War 'Scholarship'

NORMAN MARKOWITZ

Try to imagine for a moment the source of the following string of incredible assertions:

One uncomfortable aspect of the historical truth we had to deal with from the beginning was that the Communist Party USA had indeed served as a recruiting ground for spies . . . After Bolshevization of the party in the late 1920s, the political strategy of the party was determined according to the dictates of Soviet policy rather than by the special needs of the American working class.

The above quotation reads like a pronouncement from Richard Nixon or J. Edgar Hoover, warning the citizenry about the "Red Menace" thirty years ago. Or it could have come from a scene in *The FBI in Peace and War* or Philbrick's *I Led Three Lives* — potboilers which typified the attempts to whip up a spy hysteria at the height of the cold war, "McCarthy" period of the 1950s.

Yet it comes from a recent work by a well-known, if not well-respected, New Left scholar which attempts to "prove" both the FBI's case against the Rosenbergs and the Congress for Cultural Freedom's case against the CPUSA and the Soviet Union. (Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, *The Rosenberg File*, 1983, uncorrected page proofs.) Indeed, this is only one of a number of recent historical studies which attempt to refute or ignore the "revisionist," anti-cold war, anti-imperialist and anti-domestic repression scholarship of the last twenty years.

"Revisionist" work emerged from and in turn furthered the elimination of the "McCarthyite" climate, and contributed to the outpouring of opposition to the Vietnam War, the exposure of FBI and CIA crimes at home and abroad, the Watergate revelations and the strengthening of the Freedom of Information Act. Many young scholars and graduate students continue to work along these lines, particularly in women's studies, labor studies, minority studies, and, to a less-

er extent, in U.S. diplomatic history. But at the same time, cold war scholarship, like the cold war itself, is being revived, and the themes of the "new" cold war scholarship are making their way into the popular media, the bibliographies of standard textbooks and the assigned readings of standard courses. These are often portrayed as the "new" work, based on "new materials," even from the very files that were opened by the Freedom of Information Act.(1)

Theoretically, and for the most part empirically, there is little that is "new" about the cold war revival scholarship. Whether it attempts to blame the Soviets for the development of the cold war, Vietnamese for the Vietnam War, or Communists and progressives for the "McCarthy" purges after World War II, this scholarship follows the general tactic of "blaming the victim," projecting onto the victims the aggressive aims and often conspiratorial actions of the victimizers.

Thus, in the cold-war revival scholarship, even conventional liberal analyses of vested U.S. economic interests, attempts to use anti-Communism as a shield for overseas corporate expansion, and concrete FBI and CIA abuses of civil liberties are either ignored completely or pushed to the periphery in favor of all-purpose abstractions like "totalitarianism," "Stalinism" and "Communist aggression." In essence, the cold war revivalists attempt to throw the scholarly "debate" back to the 1950s, to contend that the only relevant questions concern the "degree of danger" that Communists and the Soviet Union represent, just as Reagan defines the "debate" over Central America as a matter of the degree of "danger" posed by the movements of the people of those countries.

For both the cold-war revival scholars and the makers of Reagan foreign policy, the standard of danger is how "pro-Soviet" a specific party, movement or organization is. A "pro-Soviet" position is used as evidence that it is "foreign" and "controlled" by the Soviets, an "anti-

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Soviet" position is used to portray it as indigenous, "democratic," and, in the U.S. context, "American."(2) This, of course, attempts to reduce both the scholarly "debate" and foreign policy questions to a renewed cold-war consensus based on the categories of the Smith and McCarran Acts. Under these conditions, Communists and progressives are subjects, not participants, and the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint is taboo. Anti-Reagan forces who concede this definition of the question find themselves locked into a historical straightjacket, as they again look for "something better than Communism" and to dubious "third forces" in Central America and other regions of the world as an "alternative" to Reaganite militarism.

While these new cold war trends are not hegemonic today, they are significant. Indeed, the "conspiracy of silence" against the Communist Party of the United States on the part of establishment liberals and many New Leftists acts as a continuing testament to the influence of the political repression of the 1950s and the simplistic anti-Communist stereotypes of the 1960s, when many young activists sought to free themselves and progressive thought of the red-baiting and ritualistic anti-Sovietism that wreaked such havoc in the United States after World War II.

In the 1950s a small group of anti-Communist intellectuals, many from Left and even Communist backgrounds, became semi-official "caretakers" of the American intelligentsia for the ruling class, defining the limits of "acceptable thought" on such subjects as the CPUSA, Marxism and related topics. Sidney Hook, Irving Howe, Arthur Schlesinger, Theodore Draper and Daniel Bell were among the leading lights of this coterie. They occasionally disagreed with each other over anti-Communist tactics, but not on a fundamental equation of the CPUSA with "Stalinist tyranny" and "Soviet imperialism."

In the 1960s, these caretakers were largely discredited by their attempts to red-bait the emerging anti-war movement, the youth and civil rights movements, and by the exposure of their connections with CIA-funded organizations and publications. However, a number of them, particularly Schlesinger and Howe, rolled with the po-

litical punches and retained their positions in establishment circles.

Today, a new group of anti-Communist caretakers, Maurice Isserman, William O'Neill, Ronald Radosh and Harvey Klehr among them, seem to be moving into position to replace Howe, Schlesinger, Hook and Draper. These writers, like the caretakers of the 1950s, review each other's books in selected journals and newspapers in ways that close off debate on major questions of history and politics at a time when, given the events of the last two decades and the scholarship of the last two decades, the debate over the American Left's past and present should just be beginning.(3)

I will analyze here recent works by Maurice Isserman, William O'Neill and Ronald Radosh which throw some light on cold-war revival scholarship. Harvey Klehr's history of the CPUSA during the Roosevelt years (his orientation, following Theodore Draper and the Fund for the Republic's savagely anti-Communist "Communism in America Life" series, has been expressed in *The New York Review of Books* and other forums) will be published by Basic Books in early 1984, and was unavailable to me for this essay.

☆ ☆ ☆

Since the publication of *Which Side Are You On? The American Communist Party During World War II* (1982), Maurice Isserman has emerged as a reviewer for the *Nation*, still the major holdout among liberal journals against the cold war revival. A self-proclaimed "red diaper" baby, Isserman appears to reflect in some degree the point of view of former Party activists who left the CPUSA from the Right after 1956. This position usually combines a professed sympathy for the Party's past achievements with scorn for the contemporary Party leadership and hostility to the Soviet Union, past and present. Isserman also appears as a rather simplistic defender of Earl Browder's revisionist policies of forty years ago.

In his introduction, Isserman claims that his aim is to challenge the Fund for the Republic's

cold-war Communism in American Life series, which had shown only the "bad side" of Communist actions (which he accepts as true) but had failed to show the "good side" which led Party members to see their actions as contributing to the struggle for socialism and against fascism. Also, Isserman, noting his own connections with the New Left, claims to be writing a "generational study" of American Communists from 1930 to 1956.

In reality, he neither shows the "good side" of the CPUSA nor presents a generational account of the Party's activists. Rather, he presents a descriptive, topically-mechanical and often jumbled anti-Communist history of the CPUSA during World War II that shows little understanding of Marxism-Leninism as theory or practice or of the complex new world situation created by the war. From the work, a general reader could, at best, see Party members as pawns of a leadership that he divides between the "good guys," the young "Americanizers" led by Earl Browder, and the "bad guys," older activists led by William Z. Foster, who "often seemed more concerned with how a leaflet would sound when read by a supervisory committee of the Communist International in Moscow than how it would go over with American readers." (5)

Portraying the Popular Front positively and proclaiming the Browder leadership a "major asset," Isserman treats the background of the Party's role in the struggles of the 1930s in a shallow way, ignoring the cadre of activists that the Party had developed in the struggles of the 1920s and 1930s, the specific tactics of Communists in the unions and the mass organizations which played such a decisive role in the working-class upsurge of 1934-1938, the formation of the CIO, and the securing of major gains by the working class and the American people as a whole from these struggles — social security, unemployment compensation, trade union recognition and picketing rights, minimum wages, work relief under the WPA, the beginnings of federal public housing, and effective mass opposition to native fascist movements. Indeed, Isserman sees the value of the popular front less in its specific accomplishments than in its provision of an alternative to the "catastrophic model of revolution." (6)

Thus, Isserman confuses the broad-based popular front's pro-labor and anti-fascist mobilizations with a "non-catastrophic" or "nonrevolutionary" model of revolution, as Browder did in the CPA period. Also, Isserman continually falls back on the stereotypes of the 1950s, portraying Communist activists in the unions as conspirators, occasionally using terms like "infiltration" and "fronts" to explain Communists' activities in mass organizations, and resorting to anti-Sovietism in an ignorant manner when all else fails. (7)

In essence, Isserman appears to be writing an apologetic book for a red-baiting establishment, accepting their biases in order to gain special dispensation for some ex-Reds.

The historical background of proletarian internationalism, its logic and accomplishments, simply have no meaning for him. Nowhere is this more evident than in his uncritical acceptance of the concept of "Stalinism," his portrayal of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in terms that renew standard cold-war stereotypes, and his hints that the Soviets and the Germans were fighting only for position in Eastern Europe and that the Soviets were even contemplating joining the Axis in exchange for territorial concessions. This essentially Kremlinologist account of Soviet policy ignores points even establishment scholars must contend with: the campaigns of the Soviet Union and of Communist Parties around the world for united fronts against fascism and for international collective security in the late 1930s; the betrayal by England, France and the U.S. of the Soviet-supported Spanish Republic; the acceptance by the major non-fascist capitalist states of Nazi annexations in Central and Eastern Europe (these states, whatever their fears of Hitler, found him and the capitalist dictatorship he led preferable to accepting aid from the Soviet Union); the "phony war" of 1939-1940, when the capitalist states of Western Europe first boasted about their lack of casualties while Hitler crushed Poland, and then failed to offer anything but the most token resistance to the German blitzkrieg of the spring of 1940. Sections of the Western European bourgeoisie joined with Hitler against their own working classes rather than unite against

him on people's front and collective security principles.

Isserman shows as little understanding of the imperialist ambitions of the Anglo-American allies during World War II as did Browder. Thus, he portrays Churchill's role in vetoing a second front in 1942 as a result of memories of the British bloodletting in World War I, rather than a desire to bleed the Soviets to the fullest. Even Churchill, given his subsequent relations with Stalin and schemes to encircle the Soviets and smash the Left in Europe, would have been amused at such statements.

After a treatment of the Duclos article based on very dubious ex-Communist and Browderite sources,(8) and a blindness concerning the origins and development of the cold war, Isserman concludes that Browderism may have represented the beginnings of an "American road to socialism" (even though he concedes that socialism was the last thing that Browder had in mind in 1945). That Browder's CPA policy weakened the Party for the onslaught of the cold warriors, that its class collaborationism at best would have transformed U.S. Communism into a Fabian Society even if there had been no cold war, seems to be lost on Isserman.

In his epilogue, Isserman runs ahead to 1956, avoiding the history of the cold war, praising those elements of the CPUSA that continued Browder's quest to liquidate the Party. He ignores the central point that experience has proven that that course is a separation from Marxism, from struggles for socialism and national liberation.

☆ ☆ ☆

When William O'Neill's *A Better World: The Great Schism: Stalinism and American Intellectuals* (New York, 1982) was published, Isserman reviewed it negatively from a social democratic perspective. Isserman's own work was reviewed critically from the "Right" by Harvey Klehr in the *New York Review of Book*, prompting a defense from Max Gordon. When O'Neill, who reviews for the bitterly anti-Communist *New Leader*, was reviewed negatively by Allen Brinkley, a young

scholar at Harvard, from a traditional liberal perspective, Martin Peretz's cold-war revival oriented *New Republic* went to the unpluralistic extreme of attacking Brinkley in a major editorial. And Ronald Radosh, self-styled "man of the democratic left" and contemporary camp follower of the FBI, wrote a red-baiting pro-O'Neill letter to the *Times*. In a sense, this whole "debate" in the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *New York Review of Books* and the *New York Times* reminds one of the 1950s. Communist analyses of events involving Communists are systematically precluded in the name of "freedom and pluralism" until the only question open to debate is how to be a good anti-Communist. Given the contemporary balance of forces in the world, U.S. policies of military interventionism and the real threat of eventual nuclear war that those policies represent, the quixotic quest to restore the stereotypes of the 1950s is more dangerous than it is absurd and farcical.

William O'Neill's *A Better World* is a rather flat attempt to stand history on its head by making the empty homilies best represented in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s *The Vital Center* stand as eternal truths, denying almost everything that has been learned about the history of the cold war and the effects of the postwar purges and repression on American politics and culture. Claiming to write "a book about the struggle of non-Communist leftists and liberals over American relations with the Soviet Union from 1939 through the 1950s," O'Neill consistently praises the "anti-Stalinists" and condemns the "Stalinists." It is a biased, poorly-researched, idiosyncratic account based largely on published primary sources that the author categorizes with little understanding of the American Left, the larger political context or the internal conflicts of the journals and individuals he comments on.

O'Neill's work is a cold-war cartoon, an extended loyalty investigation in which the author becomes a sort of self-appointed armchair J. Edgar Hoover, attacking all those who deviate from his "correct anti-Stalinist" line. Lacking decent primary sources or a sophisticated historical perspective to inform his work, O'Neill also becomes something of a political Hedda Hopper, writing

an extended and occasionally abusive gossip column on the life and work of political intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s.

O'Neill begins with the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact of 1939, failing to take account of the trade union and anti-fascist struggles that drew intellectuals into popular front activities in the late 1930s or the complicated and shifting political alliances of the period. Also, Munich doesn't exist for O'Neill. He refers to Louis Fisher's crazily anti-Soviet view of the Pact, i.e., that the Soviets were turning the Nazis loose on England and France so they could make territorial conquests in Eastern Europe, as "grim but accurate." (10) Sidney Hook, a sort of Inspector Gilbert of the red-baiters and blacklists from the late 1930s on, is portrayed as a brave fighter for truth, while a wide variety of popular front intellectuals and scholars — Upton Sinclair, Harry Ward, Frederick L. Schuman, Lillian Hellman, and F.O. Matthiessen, are subject to trivializing putdowns and nasty gossip. (11) For O'Neill, World War II becomes a struggle between "Stalinists" and "anti-Stalinists" fought out in liberal journals under "Stalinist" occupation. The cold war becomes a liberation from "Stalinism," which is held responsible for the HUAC investigations and the subsequent blacklisting.

For O'Neill, as for the cold-war caretakers of the 1950s, "Stalin" is another name for Lucifer. Communists are devil's agents who deserve their fate, and those who sign Left petitions, support Left causes, march in demonstrations and contribute funds, are being dishonest when they proclaim their "innocence." To expect O'Neill to have any appreciation of the contributions of the CPUSA and its allies to the gains made in the New Deal period or of the role played by the Soviet Union and the revolutionary Left throughout the world to the victory over fascism and to the subsequent creation of a postwar socialist community and movements for national liberation would be rather like expecting George Fitzhugh to appreciate the virtues of abolitionism.

One should note that "Stalinism" is little more than an incantation for O'Neill, a fig leaf for his ugly, naked and sometimes contradictory anti-Communism. (12) His attempt to use "anti-

Stalinism," as it is often used, as a euphemism to separate red-baiting intellectuals from their cruder brethren in the mass press, the various police agencies and the military, merely displays the emptiness of the term. Indeed, O'Neill notes, Candide-fashion, that "Anti-Stalinists sought to be fair, unlike general anti-Communists who were often as bad as American Communists, even if in a better cause." (13)

Of course, the real history of O'Neill's "anti-Stalinists" has as much to do with his account as *The Three Penny Opera* has to do with *Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm*. Had he done his research, O'Neill might have discovered that his heroes allied themselves with rightwingers as "premature cold warriors" during World War II, and rose in influence after the war because their fanatical anti-Communism (which they continue to trumpet as "anti-Stalinism" decades after the death of Stalin) made them ideal cold-war caretakers.

Furthermore, O'Neill's conclusions that his "anti-Stalinists" opposed the "four great evils" facing Americans — Hitlerism, "Stalinism" (which he calls the greatest evil), McCarthyism and the Vietnam War — shows how far his work is divorced from real history. In reality, in the late 1930s many of his anti-Communists actively opposed the united front and collective security policies that were the only ways to prevent Hitler from launching WW II. They sought during the war to undercut anti-fascist unity, spreading discord in the name of "anti-Stalinism." They failed for years to oppose McCarthy, and then opposed the far Right only on the grounds that it was discrediting anti-Communist and anti-Soviet politics with its quackery — a view epitomized by Sidney Hook and justified by O'Neill. Finally, O'Neill's anti-Communists, with a few outstanding exceptions, followed Lyndon Johnson into the Big Muddy of Vietnam with flags flying and red-baited those who opposed their position until after mass opposition to the war developed.

O'Neill's tilting after cold-war windmills should not obscure the fact that he represents in extreme form the prejudices that still exist against Communists in academic and intellectual circles, areas where the postwar purges and repression produced extensive self-censorship.

One might state, in language that William O'Neill, Norman Podhoretz, Martin Peretz and even Ronald Radosh might understand, that there has never been such a thing as "Stalinism." The Trotskyists developed the term as a pathetic attempt to identify their rejection by the Communist movement with mere factional squabbles. Subsequently, the term was employed by the whole claque of red-baiters in a giant guilt-by-association ritual, blaming the entire Communist movement for every injustice, real or imagined, associated with Stalin. Indeed, the concept, as used by anti-Communists, is no more than a convenient ideological club with which to beat their political opponents, divorced from any historical or empirical evidence.(14)

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During World War II, the vast majority of Americans, who never read the *Nation*, the *New Republic* or even the *New York Times*, saw conservative newspapers refer to the Soviets as heroic allies.(15) U.S.-Soviet friendship and alliance against fascism were vital necessities and a potent reality. Afterwards, when the U.S. was breaking this alliance and launching the cold war, anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism were sold to the American public by two great spy stories, the Alger Hiss case and the Rosenberg atomic spy case. In movie serials, radio programs and newspaper accounts, the public was bombarded with accounts of traitors in high places and spies attempting to steal the biggest "secret" of all, the secret of the atomic bomb.

The Truman Administration campaigned to remilitarize the U.S. and Western Europe, defeat revolutionary movements in Europe and Asia, and re-encircle the Soviet Union, using the rationale of "containing Communism." In this context, the spy stories set the stage for the worst of the cold-war hysteria and strengthened the crackpot views of Senator Joseph McCarthy and other Rightists that linked even such ardent cold warriors as Dean Acheson with "subversion and treason."

Along with the extensive reexamination of cold-war history in the 1960s and 1970s, there

also came a new questioning of these spy stories, which contained huge flaws in their original presentation and were never accepted by progressives. Also in the 1970s, the Freedom of Information Act revealed a mass of evidence of FBI espionage and provocation against American citizens and organizations, including forgery of documents appearing in the press, radio and television, harassment of families and deliberate instigation of violence (the CPUSA, the record shows, was and is the major target of these provocations).

However, the cold-war revival, which began under Carter and escalated tremendously under Reagan, has produced a flood of popular accounts of the "KGB" as the evil arm of the "Soviet conspiracy" and a justification for removing the Watergate-induced restrictions on the CIA. All this is embellished by accusations of Soviet "disinformation" campaigns (a wonderful term for information capitalists don't want disseminated) and endless little lies and big lies about Soviet plots to infiltrate peace organizations, assassinate the Pope, form a gun-running "Axis" to Central America with Cuba and Nicaragua and use deadly chemical weapons in Afghanistan.

Along with this primitive scare propaganda have come two major scholarly works attempting to reinterpret the evidence in the two great post-war spy cases to vindicate the FBI and the U.S. government, Allen Weinstein's *Perjury* (New York, 1979) and Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton's *The Rosenberg File*.

Essentially, Weinstein used FBI sources and interviews to do everything in his power to prove Whittaker Chambers' account of Alger Hiss' involvement in a "Communist underground" controlled by Soviet agents, while conceding some of the evidence of Chamber's unreliability, which had long been established. Although Weinstein was sharply criticized by Victor Navasky (editor of the *Nation*) and others and Alger Hiss has won readmission to the Massachusetts bar after decades of disbarment, Weinstein did succeed in reviving the discredited spy story and pushing to the periphery the larger cold-war political story.

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Weinstein has never claimed to be a Marxist or a socialist or a radical of any kind. Indeed, his condemnation of Alger Hiss, despite protestations of having earlier believed in Hiss' innocence, fits his political orientation. Ronald Radosh, however, makes different claims for himself. Long associated with the New Left in its various forms, Radosh has called himself a "libertarian socialist" (while collaborating with the Right-wing "libertarian," Murray Rothbard), a "democratic socialist" and, in *The Rosenberg File*, a "man of the democratic left."

It was my misfortune to run into Ronald Radosh eleven years ago, when his slanderous comments about my doctoral dissertation compelled me to demand a written apology from him (which I received) or face legal action. Now Radosh, with the assistance of Joyce Milton (she has apparently done much of the writing, given the disparity between its *Time*-like prose and Radosh's turgid previous books) has written a huge, relentless, anti-Rosenberg, anti-Communist and anti-Soviet polemic masquerading as a search for "historical truth."

The early, predictable, pro-Radosh reviews in the *New York Times* point to the authors' opposition to the death penalty and rehash of long-established and documented accounts of FBI abuses, violations of judicial ethics by Judge Kaufman and others, to contend that the work will satisfy "neither side." (16) What is ignored is the extent to which the authors use every scrap of evidence from FBI files, interviews with FBI agents and various informers, to discredit the Rosenbergs and their supporters. They portray the Communist Party in classic stereotypic terms that go back to attacks on the Party for its defense of Sacco and Vanzetti and the Scottsboro Boys, as using the cases to make martyrs and thus contributing to their deaths. In *The Rosenberg File* it is not the U.S. government and the FBI which are trying to execute the Rosenbergs and hound their supporters; the Rosenbergs, rather, in the most grotesque example of "blaming the victim," are spies whose deaths result from a "propaganda war" between the U.S. government and the international Communist movement.

Much of the "new" evidence which Radosh presents is from FBI and informer sources that

have much the same problems as the old evidence. (17)

The specific historic background of the cold war and the Korean War and the savage repression directed against the CPUSA are largely invisible in this work, in which the authors literally hunt with the victimizers against the victims. The authors' portrayal of Julius Rosenberg as a brooding, fanatical master spy, and their characterization of the tone of the Rosenbergs' prison letters as "shrill" are examples of the lengths that they will go to support the anti-Rosenberg side. (18) Their defense of the Greenglasses, Harry Gold and the wildly-improbable prison informer Jerry Tartakaw, seizing upon every point from FBI documents to buttress their position and explaining away every incongruity in those documents, is evidence that they have written a cold-war polemic that combines intellectual shallowness with the plot of a bad spy movie. It is a shame that Manny Bloch, the Rosenberg's lawyer, is not alive to take Radosh and Milton to court for suggesting that he threw the case and lost the appeals because the CPUSA wanted the Rosenbergs to die so that they could "preside at the wake of two martyred heroes." (19)

Indeed, the portrayal of Julius Rosenberg in the book — as conniving, clannish, fanatical, promising Greenglass big contracts from AMTORG for their postwar business as he hunted for space stations and other scientific marvels to give the Soviets — is not only stereotypically anti-Communist, but subtly anti-Semitic — the clannish, secretive, disloyal, international Jew. Rarely has history been, in Voltaire's phrase, more a "pack of tricks played on the dead" than in this contemptible, sensationalistic dance on the grave of the Rosenbergs.

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When Communists defend their political positions, they are not being foreign agents or puppets, except in the minds of red-baiters for whom any conduct that is not anti-Soviet is "subversive." Also, the Party's early low profile role in the Rosenberg case had much more to do with the fact that the Party was being legislated against, prosecuted and persecuted by the very

FBI that provides Radosh with his "evidence." A more open campaign by the Party in what many considered the American Reichstag fire trial may have done more harm than good to the Rosenberg defense movement and accelerated the drive for mass arrests of Communists. Indeed, what little chance the Rosenbergs had to live (they considered the false confession and cooperation with the FBI to incriminate other innocent people as less than living) came from the international mass defense movement that Communists helped to

1) On the CPUSA and labor, the best example would be Roger Keeran's *The Communist Party and the Automobile Workers Unions* (Bloomington, Ind., 1980) which puts CPUSA and CIO politics in a meaningful historical context. Harvey Levenstein's *Communism and Anti-Communism in the CIO* (Middleport, Conn., 1981) while by no means pro-CPUSA, is a useful empirical study. On anti-Communism, Michael Parenti's *The Anti-Communist Impulse* (New York, 1970) is a fine example of the scholarship produced by the 1960s. David Cauter, *The Great Fear* (New York, 1978) chronicles the effect and extent of the postwar repression. On FBI abuses, the many books and articles of Athan Theoharis, particularly the most recent, *Beyond The Hiss Case* (Philadelphia, 1982) are examples of fine progressive scholarship. Progressive scholarship on the origins and development of the cold war is huge, but two postwar general histories, Lawrence Wittner, *Cold War America* (New York, 1978) and Melvyn Dubofsky and Athan Theoharis, *Imperial Democracy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1983) are worth special mention for general readers.

(2) Thus, Marshal Tito was reviled as a Communist bandit in early cold-war media until his conflict with the Soviet leadership made him a partisan once more. Mao Tse-tung and the CCP were vilified on a level comparable to the Soviets for two decades until their anti-Soviet and anti-Marxist-Leninist outlook made them, in U.S. media, authentic "national" revolutionaries. Similarly, Earl Browder, in the old anti-Communist scholarship of the 1950s, was considered more "American" than his Party opponents because of his Rightist orientation.

(3) A perusal of *Dissent Magazine* and the *Partisan Review* during the 1950s (*Dissent*, of course, for the middle and late 1950s) is perhaps the best introduction to the poses and postures of this "caretaker" scholarship. Lewis Coser and Irving Howe, *The American Communist Party* (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1957) is the "best" secondary account of the caretakers' view of the CPUSA. One should note that this caretaker scholarship of the 1950s was not only ritualistically anti-Communist, but denied any independent role for the working class outside of Democratic Party politics.

(4) While many of the writers associated with the caretaker Left of the 1950s followed their anti-Communism into open support for Reagan's domestic and foreign policies, e.g., Norman Podhoretz, Max Kampelman, Nathan Glazer, et. al., Lewis Coser and Irving Howe, among others, joined Michael Harrington, himself an understudy to Norman Thomas in the late 1950s and 1960s as a leader of the "tolerated" Left, in founding the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and

develop, and which Radosh and Milton hold in such great contempt.

In conclusion, one might note that the world revolutionary process has gone too far and is moving much too fast for either the cold war revival scholars or the Reagan Administration to effectively turn back the historical clock. Yet Marxist and progressive scholars must engage this work in mainstream academic and popular media, if significant damage is not to be done to the perceptions of today's young generation.

then the Democratic Socialists of America. There they have attempted to moderate the radical critique of New Left scholars who have joined DSA, encouraging a policy of support for the "Left wing" of the Democratic Party at home and Polish "Solidarity" abroad as the standard of "democratic socialism."

(5) Isserman, *Which Side Are You On?*, p.11. Even the book jacket, which shows a picture of Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, respectively superimposed over a picture of William Z. Foster, Browder and Robert Minor, is an example of the book's playing to old stereotypes.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 15.

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 115, *passim*. Also, Isserman literally defends "Americanizers" like Al Richmond, Max Gorden and Browder for "pro-Soviet" statements, while criticizing Foster, Robert Minor and others for similar statements.

(8) That the Duclos article constituted any signal from Stalin to the U.S. government that he would "use" West European Communists to make trouble for them, as Isserman implies, is a revival of the charges made by the ADA, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and other early cold-war liberals (not to mention some Browderites) with no basis in fact. See Isserman, *Which Side Are You On?*, p. 219.

(9) William L. O'Neill, *A Better World* (New York, 1982), p.12.

(10) *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17. This view was, of course, a wild projection and inversion of what numerous bourgeois scholars and commentators knew to be the truth, that England and France, in line with a policy of encircling the Soviet Union that had its roots in the intervention of 1918-1920 in the Russian Civil War, had sought to turn Hitler loose on the Soviets and thereby either complete their larger counter-revolutionary project or, at the very least, avoid being drawn into a new war, which they feared would spawn new socialist revolutions.

(11) Lillian Hellman, whose anti-repression *Scoundrel Time* reached a large audience, is a particular target of O'Neill and of such *New York Times* cold-war revival worthies as Hilton Kramer and Walter Goodman. O'Neill's abuse of Matthiessen's religious sentiments ("it was evident that Christ was not enough for him; he needed Lenin and Stalin too") and baseless gossip-mongering that his suicide may have been the result of his inability to withstand the revelations about "Stalinism," rather than the ruthless baiting and harassment he was being subjected to by cold warriors is, perhaps, the low point of work that goes merrily from one calumny to another. O'Neill, *A Better World*, p. 181.

(12) O'Neill, who keeps up with contemporary fashions, praises Leftists who pointed to the indigenous basis of the Chinese revolution and the complexities of the Korean War, not to mention the opponents of the Vietnam War. This is perhaps the best example of the fact that O'Neill is merely trying to repeat, in an often foolish way, the conventional wisdom and conformist opinions of the cold-war generation, as modified for some by the Vietnam experience and the "China turn" of the 1970s.

(13) *Ibid.*, p. 377. O'Neill also concludes that Congress of Cultural Freedom subsidies from the CIA weren't so bad, since they took the money "to fight Stalinism at home and abroad" and that "criticism" of McCarthy and McCarthyism was evidence that there was no reign of terror in the U.S. In such ways does his work mirror the intellectual bankruptcy of the period and the people he celebrates. O'Neill, *Better World*, p. 313.

(14) One might also note that for a variety of anti-Communists, Communists are perpetually Red Fascists, "totalitarians" indistinguishable from fascists, even though the values, social class basis, social system, of socialist and fascist states are diametrically opposed. For today's bitter anti-Communists, the Communist-fascist equation and the "totalitarian" concept remain major ideological props.

(15) It should be remembered that the (relatively few) news accounts, plays and films of World War II which portrayed the Soviet Union in a favorable light followed a generation of mass media anti-Sovietism. Their success is an example of the democratizing effects of popular front culture in the 1930s and 1940s and the growing awareness of U.S. workers, developing out of the struggles of the Depression period. It was, after all, to suppress that people's movement that anti-Communism assumed such hysterical proportions after World War II.

(16) My account of this work is based on a close reading of the uncorrected page proofs. It is possible that changes have been made, if only to prevent legal action. However, substantive changes in either content or tone are very improbable. The work appears, given its sensationalistic spy-story approach, to be aimed at a large market.

(17) Radosh and Milton, *Rosenberg File*, p. 70. The authors fall into straight HUAC phrases, calling the Civil Rights Congress the "legal-political arm" of the CPUSA, snipe at Morton Sobel as "by no means as innocent as he claimed to be" and quote unnamed former Party leaders that "Julius Rosenberg's background fit the general pattern of those who were recruited for this kind of work" (Radosh introduction, unpagined in the uncorrected proofs).

(18) *Ibid.* Although the Soviet state security agency was referred to as the NKVD at the time, the authors use the term "KGB" throughout, claiming it is done for consistency. It seems more likely that it is done to feed contemporary spy fears in the U.S.

(19) *Ibid.* In the page proofs, the authors quote John Gates that Manny Bloch was "assigned the case because he was not one of the very competent Party lawyers and the whole idea was that he should not win the case." (P. 315.) They also report with no comment the FBI report that New York policemen were overjoyed that Manny Bloch died in red pajamas, an example of the sewer of political persecution from which they have learned nothing. Radosh and Milton, p. 404.

(20) It is possible that in their eagerness to present the FBI case, the authors express (even if unconsciously) the anti-Semitic stereotypes that always lurked around the case.

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Barry Cohen, Associate Editor

The American Heritage of Karl Marx

JOHN PITTMAN

We are now amidst an ongoing, year-long commemoration of the life of Karl Marx on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his death, March 14, 1883. It is fair to say that in most countries working people are observing this occasion.

And justly so. Few are the individuals who have stamped the events of *their* time and *ours* with a deeper and more lasting imprint than Karl Marx. The youth who, at the age of 17, realized that "our relations in society have begun to crystallize more or less before we are in a position to determine them"(1) wrote 17 years later that "the traditions of all the dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living,"(2) and after 15 more years again wrote that "alongside of modern evils, a whole series of inherited evils oppress us, arising from the passive survival of antiquated modes of production, with their inevitable train of social and political anachronisms. We suffer not only from the living, but from the dead."(3) Clearly, this lifelong conviction exercised a determining influence on Marx's life and work.

The young Marx defied this enfeebling tyranny of the past. He produced for all humankind the science of liberation from the tyranny of the past and the present, the science of changing the world.

Marx bequeathed the towering edifice of theoretical and organizational principles for ending for all time man's inhumanity to man. His bequest confounds the misanthropes and skeptics and self-designated "practical" ones who disdain as foolhardy illusions all really serious efforts to rid society of its paralyzing fetters.

Besides Marx's science for changing the world there stands today, in the eighth decade of the twentieth century, mighty achievements of himself and his followers. They are: first, real, existing socialism, societies of working-class power which steadily advance on four continents

of our planet toward the Marxist goals of the abolition of classes and the practical realization of the principle "from each according to his or her abilities, to each according to his or her needs"; and second, more than 50 million followers in more than 100 Communist and Workers', and national democratic, parties.

However, for us, what Marx *said* and *did* for and *about* the working class and its allies in the United States of America has particular interest and relevance.

Marx was a journalist and publicist. In his work in these fields, and as a leader of organizations and movements of the working people, as a founder of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International), Marx dealt with the development of capitalism and the problems and prospects of workers in the United States. Moreover, he not only reported and commented on events relating to the working class in the United States. He also directly and indirectly influenced their course.

Marx's contributions to the working-class movement in the United States coincide with three main periods.

First, Marx clarified for the workers the law-governed character of capitalism's development in the United States. This knowledge enables the workers to see their line of advance and prepare for the struggles that lie ahead.

Second, Marx intervened in the American Civil War on the side of the Union and against the slaveholders, utilizing his considerable influence among the workers of Europe to defeat efforts of the European ruling classes to intervene on the side of the slaveholders. He consistently advocated emancipation and unconditional full citizenship for the former African slaves as a mandatory condition for unifying all regions of the country and eliminating the slave system's threat to the international working class.

Third, Marx and his followers of the First International gave practical help to working men and women of the United States in their struggles

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for security from the ripoffs inherent in capitalism, and for their eventual capture of state power with which to build a socialist United States of America.



In his prevision of the development of capitalism in the United States, Marx helped the workers to understand the conditions of their lives and how to influence their development. He counterposed to the notions of the utopians, the agrarian reformers and the ruling bourgeois elite the economic law of motion of capitalist society, of "tendencies working with iron necessity toward inevitable results,"(4) —always opposed by countertendencies, yet foreshadowing the decline, contraction and extinction of "the last antagonistic form of the social process of production."(5)

The colonies set up under the aegis of the Owen movement in the 1820s and the Fourier movement in the 1840s were shortlived. Their utopian socialist illusions, however, penetrated the ranks of the early workers' organizations, including the first political parties of American workers — the Republican Political Association of the Workingmen of the City of Philadelphia, and the New York Workingmen's Party. Vestiges of these ideas as well as those of the agrarian reformers still survive among small, sectarian and objectively reactionary sects in today's conditions of state-monopoly capitalism. Historical experience has substantiated the criticism by Marx and Engels of these movements and ideas in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

Notions of the ruling bourgeois elite are a different matter. Certainly, it is tempting to relegate so-called supply-side economics, with its "trickle-down" rationale, to the category of Marx's "inherited evils" that "oppress us." Even more evil and dangerous is another notion of the bourgeois ruling elite — the notion of American exceptionalism. The ruling elite's leading ideologues and propagandists, who propagate this idea, contend that capitalism in the United States is exempt from the law-governed development of capitalism, which Marx investigated and brought

to light. According to them, there is no class struggle in the United States, not even antagonistic classes, but only relations of harmony and peaceful cooperation between the workers and the capitalist owners of the means of production.

Paradoxically, a number of trade union leaders endorse this view, which is identical to the view of the most predatory members of the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce. These policymakers would have us believe that capitalism is self-reforming, obviating the need for an emancipatory struggle of the working class. The leading position of the United States, they say, is attributable to its system of "free enterprise."

It is also noteworthy that the idea of American exceptionalism is propagated not only to justify the existing system of state monopoly capitalism, which is anything but "free enterprise," but also to assert the claim of United States ruling circles to global hegemony and the right of intervention in the affairs of other countries — the role of capitalism's self-appointed gunman.

Obviously these views clash head-on with Marxism. They amount to a total rejection of everything Marx discovered and produced. As early as 1846, a year before publishing the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx found it necessary to rebuke, in the name of the German communists, the propaganda of one of his young co-workers who had gone to the United States and launched a journal. Marx considered the propaganda in his journal a discredit to communism because Hermann Kriege, its publisher, speaking as a communist, had exaggerated the specific features of American capitalism and overlooked its features which are characteristic of capitalism as a whole. Kriege's view, an early expression of American exceptionalism and agrarian reformism, had betrayed him, a communist, into advocating what Marx called an unrealizable utopian dream.

Unfortunately, Kriege was not the last individual professing adherence to Marxism while exaggerating the historical and sociopolitical peculiarities of capitalism in the United States and ignoring or minimizing its basic capitalist features, its law-governed development. American

exceptionalist tendencies remain today a dangerous source of error for the working class and its leaders, not to speak of their threat to world peace and security.

Marx also took issue with the official and conventional versions of the origin of capitalism in the United States. These self-serving versions invariably portrayed the colonists and the early governing circles as brave, virtuous and self-sacrificing figures, conquering the wilderness and laying the foundations of the Republic's future greatness. Marx showed that the historical process of primitive accumulation, which laid the foundations for capitalist development, occurred in America as it had in Europe. It was, he wrote, "written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire."⁽⁶⁾ In *Capital* he elaborated this idea with these words: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation."⁽⁷⁾

Marx focussed attention on another element of primitive accumulation — the slave trade. Conventional opinion among ruling circles in those days, as today, denied or belittled labor's contribution to the country's development. If the labor of the European immigrants was discredited, that of the African slaves was altogether disregarded. Marx took exception to these racist notions. He wrote that "direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery you have no cotton, without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that gave the colonies their value; it is the colonies that created world trade, and it is world-trade that is the precondition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance."⁽⁸⁾

At the same time, Marx noted the barbarities and cruelties inflicted on the slaves. He wrote that "Negro labor in the Southern States of the American Union preserved something of a patri-

archal character, so long as production was chiefly directed to immediate local consumption. But in proportion as the export of cotton became of vital interest to these states, the over-working of the Negro and sometimes the using up of his life in seven years of labor became a factor in a calculated and calculating system."⁽⁹⁾ Marx scorned the hypocrisy with which the apologists of racism sought to justify their crimes. He wrote that "the treatment of the aborigines was, naturally, most frightful in plantation colonies destined for export trade only . . . But even in colonies properly so called, the Christian character of primitive accumulation did not belie itself. Those sober virtuosi of Protestantism, the Puritans of New England, in 1703, by decrees of their assembly set a premium of 40 pounds on every Indian scalp and every captured red-skin: in 1720 a premium of 100 pounds on every scalp; in 1744 . . . the following prices: for a male scalp of 12 years and upwards 100 pounds (new currency), for a male prisoner 105 pounds, for women and children prisoners 50 pounds, for scalps of women and children, 50 pounds." Marx asserted that "the treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother country and were there turned into capital," which comes into the world "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt."⁽¹¹⁾ Those who reject the application of such a generalization of capitalism's origin to the United States may prefer other terms for the near-extirpation of the Native American Indians, the debasement and savage treatment of the African slaves, the seizure of half the territory of Mexico and the dispossession of its inhabitants of their land; and the merciless exploitation of European immigrant workers.

Marx exposed this secret life of capitalism, which the ruling circles try to hide or glamorize so as to keep the masses gulled by their self-portrayal as paragons of virtue and progress. By revealing the skeletons in the closet of capitalism, Marx helped to free the minds of the masses of this false and stupefying idea.



Does this mean that Marx saw nothing progressive in capitalist development in the United States? No, it means nothing of the kind. Marx appraised the development of the United States in terms which neither the John Birch Society nor the super-patriots of the Moral Majority can reject. In the "Address of the International Workingmen's Association to Abraham Lincoln," which Marx drafted to acclaim Lincoln's re-election and which the London *Beehive* published on January 7, 1875, he characterized the United States as the country "where hardly a century ago the idea of one great democratic republic had first sprung up, whence the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the eighteenth century."(12)

Yet, while construction of the preconditions of developed capitalism proceeded rapidly, development of the working class lagged behind. Marx took note of this relatively slow growth of the working class. In his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, written in the first months of 1852 — and first published, incidentally, in the New York journal *Die Revolution* — Marx observed that "in the United States of North America . . . though classes already exist, they have not yet become fixed, but continually change and interchange their elements in constant flux."(13) Some years later his observation was confirmed by Engels, who said in a letter written in 1892 that "up to 1848 one could only speak of the permanent native working class as an exception; the small beginnings of it in the cities of the East always had still the hope of becoming farmers or bourgeois."(14)

Also in 1852, in a letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, his comrade and friend who became a pioneer Marxist in the United States, Marx wrote: "That bourgeois society in the United States has not yet developed far enough to make the class struggle obvious and comprehensible is most strikingly proved by H.C. Carey (of Philadelphia), the only American economist of importance." Marx said Carey attempted to demonstrate that profit, rent and wages are derived from conditions of cooperation and harmony, rather than conditions of struggle and antagonism."(15)

In 1882, a year before his death, Marx, in collaboration with Engels, wrote a preface to the Russian edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. In this they provided an overview of capitalist development in the United States. They wrote that "European immigration fitted North America for a gigantic agricultural production." However, they noted that "step by step the small and middle land ownership of the farmers, the basis of the whole political constitution, is succumbing to the competition of giant farms; simultaneously, a mass proletariat and a fabulous concentration of capitals are developing for the first time in the industrial regions."(16)

This "fabulous concentration of capitals" cited by Marx and Engels presaged the rise of monopoly capitalism in the United States. Thirty-five years later, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Marx's most renowned follower and continuator, analyzed this phase of capitalist development in his celebrated work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

In short, Marx investigated capitalist development in the United States from its inception in primitive accumulation to its maturity as developed capitalism and conversion into monopoly capitalism. He took into account the specific historical and socio-political features of United States society. He concentrated first and foremost at every stage of development on its consequences for working people. Even from this brief sketch of his thinking in this sphere one can perceive the present-day relevance of his conclusions.



Marx and his followers helped the Union forces defeat the slave power and win the emancipation of the slaves. Their contribution was threefold: First, clarification of the issues involved and the statement of the combatants' war aims; second, active participation in the Union war effort; and third, the mobilization of international support for the Union and of international opposition to the slaveholders.

In the period of 1851 to 1861, Marx and Engels wrote nearly 500 articles for the *New York Da-*

ily Tribune. From 1861 to 1865 they wrote some 35 articles on the Civil War in the United States for the *Vienna Presse*. At the beginning of the Civil War they encountered much muddle-headed thinking about its causes and essential character.

In his letters to his comrades in the United States and in his articles to *Die Presse*, Marx elaborated his thinking on both of these points. He brushed aside the many rationalizations and circumlocutions with which the slaveowners and their supporters in the United States and in Europe sought to mask the real nature of the war. For *Die Presse* he wrote in November 1861: "The present struggle between the South and the North is . . . nothing but a struggle between two social systems, between the system of slavery and the system of free labor . . . The Confederate Congress boasted that its newfangled Constitution, as distinguished from the Constitution of the Washingtons, Jeffersons and Adamses, had recognized for the first time slavery as a thing good in itself, a bulwark of civilization, and a divine institution. If the North professed to fight for the Union, the South gloried in rebellion for the supremacy of slavery."(17)

Of decisive importance for the oligarchy of slaveholders were two facts which Marx emphasized: First, the ever-present threat of slave uprisings, which Marx, in a letter to Engels as early as January 1860, said were "one of the biggest things that are happening in the world today"(18); and second, the mounting restlessness of the five million non-slaveowning poor whites, over whom the slaveowning oligarchy maintained sway by constantly throwing out the bait of prospective conquests of new territory and the opportunity of becoming slaveowners themselves.

With the election of Abraham Lincoln on a Republican Party platform of no further concessions of territory to the slaveholders, no more filibustering abroad, and no re-opening of the slave trade, the die was cast for the slaveowning oligarchs. By attacking the Union they sped the end of their historically doomed social system.

Marx also differed from most other commentators of the day on the progress and outcome of

the Civil War. He even chided Engels when his friend expressed anxiety for the Union cause after certain blunders and defeats of the Union forces. For *Die Presse* he wrote: "The secessionist conspiracy, organized, patronized and supported long before its outbreak by Buchanan's administration, gave the South an advantage, by which alone it could hope to achieve its aim. Endangered by its slave population and by a strong Unionist element among the whites themselves, with a number of free men two-thirds smaller than the North . . . for the South everything depended on a swift, bold, almost foolhardy offensive . . . If this first onslaught failed, at least at the decisive points, their position then would become daily worse, simultaneously with the development of the strength of the North."(19) Marx consistently agitated for emancipation of the slaves and their incorporation in the Union war machine. He remarked that a single Negro regiment in the Union forces would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves.

However, Marx gave his main attention to mobilizing support for the Union cause among workers in Europe, and encouraging his followers in the United States to help defeat the slaveowners. Numbers of the latter joined the Union armies, and a few advanced to posts of leadership. Weydemeyer was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in command of a volunteer artillery regiment and helped to rout the slaveholders' guerilla forces in Missouri.

In the "Address of the International Workingmen's Association to Abraham Lincoln" Marx summed up the success of efforts to prevent Europe's pro-slavery circles from aiding the slaveholders' counter-revolution. The working classes of Europe understood that the slaveholders' rebellion, he wrote to Lincoln, "was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labor, and that for the men of labor, with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous conflict on the other side of the Atlantic. Everywhere they bore, therefore, patiently the hardships imposed upon them by the cotton crisis, opposed enthusiastically the pro-slavery intervention . . . and from most parts of Europe contributed their

quota of blood to the good cause.”(20)

Then Marx added to this statement a new and revolutionary idea, which remains relevant today. It was the idea that emancipation of the slaves was at the same time an emancipatory act for the white workers. He said: “While the workingmen, the true political power of the North, allowed slavery to defile their own republic, while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell *himself* and choose his own master, they were unable to attain the true freedom of labor or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation.”

Marx expressed this idea in other contexts as well. In an article for the *New York Daily Tribune* on the British cotton trade, he remarked that slave-grown cotton of the United States was one of the two main pivots of English industry. “As long as the English cotton manufacturers depended on slave-grown cotton,” he wrote, “it could be truthfully asserted that they rested on a twofold slavery, the indirect slavery of the white man in England and the direct slavery of the black man on the other side of the Atlantic.”(21) In another article he observed that the industry in Lancashire and Yorkshire rested on the sovereignty of the slave-whip in Georgia and Alabama.

It should not be forgotten that in discussing an analogous situation, Marx linked the fate of the English workers to the liberation of Ireland from the English yoke. He likened the antagonism between Irish and English workers to that between white and Black workers in the United States. In both cases the antagonism was systematically fostered by the ruling elite, because it was the source of their power.

Marx's statements of these instances of common interests of workers of different races and nationalities influenced Lenin's elaboration of the principles of the right of nations to self-determination. Lenin linked the Great Russian nation's liberation from tsarist despotism to their struggle for the right of the subject nations of Russia to self-determination.

That such common interests of working people were fundamental in Marx's view of the fu-

ture of the working class of the United States was expressed in a classic statement of the inter-relationship. Stating the significance of the abolition of slavery for the working class, Marx wrote: “In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor can not emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose. The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight hours' agitation that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California.”(22)



The Civil War itself accelerated the development of capitalism in the United States. The number of industrial workers swiftly increased and exploitation intensified. There was a rapid growth of the trade union movement. In 1863 there were 79 local unions in 20 crafts, but the number rose to 270 locals in 53 crafts a year later. And in Baltimore on August 26, 1866, the prototype of a national organization of workers came into being with establishment of the National Labor Union.

Marx paid close attention to the founding congress of the National Labor Union. He hailed it enthusiastically, and instructed delegates from the London Council of the First International to the Geneva Congress of that organization to propose that eight hours be the legal limit of the working day. “This limitation being generally claimed by the workingmen of the United States of America,” he told the delegates, “the vote of the Congress (the Geneva Congress of the First International, that is) will raise it to the common platform of the working classes all over the world.”(23) The Congress adopted Marx's proposal.

In the last but one paragraph of the first volume of *Capital*, first published in 1867, Marx previewed problems confronting the young North American working class. He wrote, “the American Civil War brought in its train a colossal na-

tional debt, and with it pressure of taxes, the rise of the vilest financial aristocracy, the squandering of a huge part of the public land on speculative companies for the exploitation of railways, mines, etcetera, in brief, the most rapid centralization of capital . . . Capitalist production advances there with giant strides."(24)



We come now to what Marx said and did to help workers of the United States defend their livelihood, their rights and interests, and their preparation for capturing state power. It should be known, even in the land where everything pertaining to Marx is censored, that under Marx's leadership the First International's headquarters were shifted from London to New York in October 1872. Philip Foner, historian of the United States labor movement, estimates that by 1872 there were 5,000 members of the International, organized in about 30 sections and locals in major cities.

The United States was destined to be the home base of the world's first organizational embodiment of proletarian internationalism for the four remaining years of its existence. Its members functioned as popularizers of the world outlook developed by Marx and Engels. They influenced the development of the labor movement in the United States, and on the International's dissolution in July 1876, they formed, together with followers of Lassalle, the Workingmen's Party of America, the first Marxist party of this country and progenitor of the Communist Party of the United States.

In correspondence with members of the First International's organizations in the United States, Marx considered many ideas of interest to workers in general and to American workers in particular. On November 23, 1871, he wrote to Friedrich Bolte, the secretary of the Federal Council of North American sections of the International, and reiterated certain ideas which retain their relevance today. Marx told Bolte:

The political movement of the working class has as its ultimate object, of course, the conquest of political power for this class,

and this naturally requires a previous organization of the working class developed up to a certain point and arising precisely from its economic struggles.

On the other hand, however, every movement in which the working class comes out as a *class* against the ruling classes and tries to coerce them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt in a particular factory or even in a particular trade to force a shorter working day out of individual capitalists by strikes, and so forth, is a purely economic movement. On the other hand the movement to force through an eight-hour, etcetera, *law*, is a political movement.

And in this way, out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a *political* movement, that is to say, a movement of the *class*, with the object of enforcing its interests in a general form, in a form possessing general, socially coercive force. While these movements presuppose a certain degree of previous organization, they are in turn equally a means of developing this organization.(25)

Marx's activities had been foreshadowed earlier in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, first published in London in February 1848. In that work, Marx and Engels had distinguished Communists from the other working-class parties "by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole."(26) And further, the *Manifesto* states: "In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to."(27) In light of these views, it was not out of character for Marx to urge Americans to "declare your fellow citizens [meaning the emancipated Afro-Americans] from this day forth, free and equal, without any reserve. If you refuse them citizens' rights while you exact from

them citizens' duties, you will sooner or later face a new struggle which will once more drench your country in blood."(28) One might ask: Is not this exhortation of Marx in 1865 still relevant today?



At the Hague Congress of the First International in September 1872, where Marx announced the transfer of the International's headquarters to New York, he also stated that the International had never asserted that the working-class goal of winning political supremacy would be achieved everywhere by identical means. "We know of the allowances we must make for the institutions, customs and traditions of the various countries," he said, in perhaps the earliest statement concerning different paths to socialism, "and we do not deny that there are countries such as America . . . where the working people may achieve their goal by peaceful means."(29)

Most relevant and pertinent for Americans today, however, is an address in which Marx notes that although the working classes of the various countries possessed numbers, numbers were not enough. They were effective only "if united by combination and led by knowledge," he wrote. "Past experience has shown how disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts."(30) So proletarian internationalism is a requirement for victory in the workers' struggles for emancipation.

And besides internationalism, something further. "If the emancipation of the working classes requires their fraternal concurrence," Marx asked, "how are they to fulfill that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon national prejudices, and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure?" Historical experiences, he said, "have taught the working classes the duty to master themselves the mysteries of international politics . . . and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice which ought to govern

the relations of private individuals as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations. The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes. Proletarians of all countries, Unite!"(31)



These words of Marx, which might have been addressed to the people of the United States at the present moment, conclude the drastically shortened survey of what he said and did

for and about the working class and people of the United States. This survey can not claim even to list the numerous achievements of Marx's prodigious genius. He bequeathed to humankind scientifically and historically validated principles by which the working class of every country may liberate itself from exploitation, racial and national oppression and the present threat of a global nuclear war. His bequest comes to the workers and their allies in the form of an integral system of philosophical, socio-political and economic views, among which Engels, Lenin and Marx himself designated several pillars:

First, the materialist conception of history, or historical materialism, which embodies the concepts of class antagonism and class struggle, and the masses as the makers of history. Engels accorded this concept first place among Marx's discoveries.

Second, as Engels explained, "the demonstration how, within present society and under the existing capitalist mode of production, the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist takes place," that is, the theory of surplus value.

Third, the exposition of the dialectical doctrine of development, that is, development not as a simple, straight-line process of quantitative changes, but a complex process with breaks in continuity, leaps, the conflict of opposites, changes of quantity into quality, and the closest indissoluble connection between all aspects of any phenomenon.

Fourth, the achievement of the objectively inevitable transformation of capitalism into socialism.

This priceless inheritance, which could mean so much for the people of the United States, particularly for the working class and its allies, is denied to a majority of the population. Everything Marx wrote and did has been suppressed altogether or distorted and maligned by ideologists of the exploiting class, including the mass media. Marx himself has been vilified and slandered.

(1) Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx*, Covice-Friede Publishers, New York, 1935, p. 33.

(2) K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), 1969, Vol. 1, p. 398.

(3) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 1, p. 20.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 19.

(5) *Selected Works*, op. cit., Vol 1, p. 504.

(6) *Capital*, op. cit. p. 669.

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 703.

(8) Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 97.

(9) *Capital*, op cit. p. 226.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 705.

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 712.

(12) *Selected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 22.

(13) *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 405.

(14) Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans*, International Publishers, New York, 1953, p. 242.

However, growing numbers of Americans have weighed and verified the truth of Marxism in their own lives and experiences. Growing numbers of Americans have come to realize that Marxism is fully applicable to the United States.

During this year-long commemoration of Marx's life and work, more Americans will deepen their understanding of his bequests and will strive to emulate his lifelong activities which changed the world.

(15) *Ibid.*, p. 45.

(16) *Selected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 100.

(17) Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, International Publishers, New York, 1937, p. 81.

(18) *Ibid.*, p. 221.

(19) *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

(20) *Selected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 22.

(21) *The Civil War in the United States*, op. cit., p. 19.

(22) *Capital*, op. cit., p. 284.

(23) *Ibid.*, p. 285.

(24) *Ibid.*, pp. 723-724.

(25) *Letters to Americans*, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

(26) *Selected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 120.

(27) *Ibid.*, p. 125.

(28) William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, International Publishers, New York, 1952, p. 51.

(29) *Selected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 293.

(30) *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

(31) *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Save Our Cities: A Call To Reformism or Class Struggle?

MORRIS ZETLIN

The Use of Reform

History has confirmed Marxist theory and fixed a new axiom: Nothing can deliver humanity from the evils of capitalism save a revolutionary change to a socialist society. Then, some may ask, isn't a call to save the cities of capitalism in fact a call to futile reform?

No. On two grounds:

First, it should be self-evident, the cities belong not to capitalism but to the people. The people build them, live in them, work in them, maintain and renew them. What happens to the cities affects people's lives — every day. Capitalism only rules them, exploits them, and often leads them to ruin. Saving the cities is inseparable from the struggle against the life-menacing evils which capitalism, in its race to maximize profits, inflicts on the people. Its vanguard is duty bound to lead the struggle of the working class where it lives, as where it works, for at both the points of production and consumption the working class learns to free itself and humanity from capitalist rule. Indeed, in our time, points of consumption loom large in the political school. Wide home and car ownership, job demands for high education, rising medical costs, crucial need for child and infirm care in all-worker families, put city services right next in importance to jobs, wages and decent working conditions.

Secondly, the call to save our cities is not one to futile reform when raised to build a people's coalition to resist monopoly capital's oppression and thus advance the people's movement toward revolutionary social transformation. For when the ruling class can no longer secure work and decent life in the cities for masses of people, reform must necessarily challenge the political process by which capital rules. It must necessarily get around appearances and question the very structure and purpose of government.

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In a cogent article written some years back, William Weinstone, interpreting Lenin, thus considered the revolutionary use of reform in capitalism:

The working class is not organized enough, not class-conscious enough, not unified enough; nor are its allies prepared to make the struggle for socialism the immediate political task. The task is to raise the level of class consciousness and mass struggle in order to lead to the stage of placing socialism on the order of the day. And that . . . can be done only through the combination of knowledge and experience by the working people and that means through mass struggle, at the present time directed against the monopolies.(1)

Further, he said:

. . . along with the workers, millions of small capitalists and bourgeois-minded people, or large sections of them, can be drawn into the fight against monopolies because they oppose and oppress the entire people. . . . Success in establishing such an alliance depends on the aggressive pursuit of such unity and the role of labor in fighting for the interests of all oppressed by monopoly.

And still further:

Lenin considered that the fight for democracy is imperative in order to educate the workers to fight for the needs of the oppressed . . . that without fighting for democracy . . . the working class does not develop ideologically and politically to enable it to administer the affairs of state not alone in their own interests but for the advance of society as a whole. In the fight for democracy, therefore, the working class goes through a school of political education.

This political wisdom should inspire our struggle in the cities, where the most oppressed sections of the people now organize, unite and

mature. In the process, progressive alliances, formed to fight for the rights of the people and for democratic reforms, must necessarily oppose the oppressive maneuvers of monopoly capital at home and abroad.

The struggle of many for progressive democratic reforms in the cities, however, is often hindered by the ideological smokescreen bourgeois ideologues and the mass media lay to veil the political-economic reality of our cities. Refuting their false notions about the city, city government and city politics should help clear the battle terrain and expose what the class enemy is up to.

What a City Is and Isn't

Bourgeois ideology has widely sown typical simplistic ideas of what a city is. It depicts the city as largely an autonomous, spatial-political entity that is pretty much a master of its own fate and responsible for its own growth, stability or decline. It views a city's people as a conglomeration of diverse individuals, groups and organizations, interrelated in accidental and variable ways, all competitively pursuing their own special interests. The resulting turbulence of limitless conflicts and movements shape urban life, growth, decline and inevitable crises, leading to crises in the larger "urban society."

This vague, superficial, historically-unfounded conception pretends to explain, but in fact conceals, the causes for urban decline in a moribund social order. Historical evidence points to a far clearer perception.

Progressive urban scholars have shown that cities have long depended on and been shaped by regional and national social forces. Indeed, they can not be understood in isolation from the larger political economy of which they are integral parts. Our cities are primary spatial units within which a capitalist political economy concentrates and organizes production forces for production, reproduction, distribution, marketing and overall development for capital accumulation. And their populations divide into social classes whose economic and political communalities objectively predominate over their racial, national or cultural differences. Capitalist cities, then, are places where capitalist production rela-

tions create class inequalities, class interests, and class struggle. The social contradictions and conflicts that emerge in the cities are not caused by the cities; they originate in the larger political economy. The general decline of our cities today results not from the class struggle within them but from the general crisis of the capitalist political economy and the way monopoly capital operates in the city, region, nation and abroad.(2)

The ruling and ruled classes, therefore, value the city for radically different reasons. The first views the city as a social form subsidiary and subordinate to its corporate system, whose major functions are to provide, coordinate and control infrastructural facilities — the street, water, sanitary, energy and transport systems — that individual corporations can not provide for themselves; to coordinate and control local land resources and production facilities; to manipulate social classes and groups to facilitate profit accumulation. It views all other functions of cities — the provision of housing, health, education, cultural and social services and facilities — as auxiliary to the profit-enabling functions.(3)

To the working class and its allies precisely the latter city functions are most important. Improving human life through better housing, health, education, cultural and social services is the prized end for which production and wealth accumulation are but the means.

These vital needs, monopoly capital today places in jeopardy. For it constantly shifts capital to geographic locations where new resources, technologies, production forces and markets present new and greater profit opportunities. In the process, it abandons production facilities and parts, or all, of established old cities, cutting the life lines of millions.(4)

What City Government Is and Isn't

The city, dominant political theory holds, controls the economic and political acts of corporations and persons within its boundaries through its own autonomous municipal government. Thus a city manages or solves its problems — be they economic, capital-labor, infrastructure, or other — through laws, administration and piecemeal reforms.

This notion hangs on despite repeated interventions by state and federal governments, and even creditor banks, riding roughshod over city councils and mayors. It veils its basic fallacy by simply evading such basic questions as: What social classes raise and decide the daily issues in cities, or what keeps our cities in perpetual trouble?

History teaches, of course, that just as our cities are parts of the national capitalist political economy, city governments are parts of the national capitalist state. They can not be understood outside the purpose and function of the state in a society composed of antagonistic classes with conflicting interests. Long ago, Frederick Engels neatly summed up the origin, function and nature of the state in this sentence: "In order that [antagonistic] classes with conflicting interests may not consume themselves and society in sterile struggles, a power apparently standing above society became necessary, whose purpose is to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power arising out of society, but placing itself above, and increasingly separating itself from it, is the state."⁽⁵⁾

Throughout history, ruling classes have refined the state into a tool for social restraint. In its capitalist-democratic form, monopoly capital has effectively governed by indirectly controlling political institutions structured to safeguard its rule. Deluding the people with illusory democracy, beguiling symbols and play on traditions, monopoly capital generates the belief that elected representatives run the state when in fact all important decisions are made by agents of real power outside legislative chambers and brought there merely for formal debate and enactment.

With all their variety in form, city governments carry the traits common to the monopoly capitalist state. They have two distinct functions: first, to promote economic processes for wealth accumulation, and second, to integrate the city's classes and groups into these processes. They must, then, first provide and regulate the opportunities and infrastructure for profit-generating activities, and second, manage and control demands rising from among the city's people.

These often contradictory functions required structuring city government in ways to separate

the two. For in big cities, an organized working class and deprived social groups often made profit promotion at the expense of the people quite difficult. City governments have therefore come to comprise two kinds of agencies: municipal and supramunicipal.

The municipal agencies (or departments) are limited in power and confined to issues steering clear of profit-accumulation functions. They allow for some democratic participation to absorb and appease (or corrupt and coopt) opposition from the working class and other subordinate groups. But they channel representation, patronage and public services on the basis of neighborhoods and minorities to incite rivalry and thus divide and divert the people from the political unity that would disturb or threaten the chief function — promotion of wealth accumulation.⁽⁶⁾ The concessions granted from time to time to powerful challenges by the people often result in untidy layers of seemingly contradictory bureaus within city departments created at different times to placate opposition. Some city governments develop a crazy-quilt of obsolete bureaus — the fossilized legal remnants of past political battles.⁽⁷⁾

The supramunicipal agencies comprise special authorities and quasi-public economic development corporations empowered to autonomously promote and finance profit-generating ventures, insulated from the normal political process and possible public intervention. Monopoly corporations usually dominate these bodies (like the New York Port Authority or the Bay Area Rapid Transit District in California), staff them with corporate personnel and control their internal structures, policies and operations.⁽⁸⁾ Besides, city government freely responds to the wants of dominant monopoly-capitalist corporations. Detroit, for example, panders to the automobile giants, St. Louis to the Busch interests, Pittsburgh to the Mellons, New York City to the Rockefellers.⁽⁹⁾

City Services and Expenses

Essentially social Darwinist, dominant bourgeois political theory sees no classes and no class relations in cities, only a natural competition between "interest groups." The rivalry between

"interest groups" for shares of a city budget and for control of its size and financing determines, it teaches, where, what kind, and how much services a city provides. Thus the lion's share "naturally" goes to the "fittest interest groups." And the smallest goes to those who are "least fit" and therefore "naturally" least able to survive. It blames the failure of city government to solve "human problems" or create "desirable conditions" on "poor demand articulation and interest representation" of "lower classes."

To force elected city officials to do as it bids, Big Business wields a big stick. It threatens to cut city revenues and the officials' political prestige by moving large tax-paying operations to more pliable cities. Thus playing one city against another, monopoly capital dictates the size and scope of municipal services and controls the political responsiveness of a city's officials and people. Its command unchallenged, monopoly capital goes on playing this game. "Punished" city officials are either politically doomed and replaced by "wiser" ones or forced to concede and cut social expenses. Capital then continues, or returns, to profit from the "improved business climate" in yielding cities, disinvesting in other, less profitable, ones. Thus monopoly capital keeps alive the illusion of "democratic government" while in fact holding cities in a tight dictatorial grip.(11)

Urban Fiscal Crisis: Fact or Fraud?

The tricky handling of social and non-social expenses and the deceptive dual city agencies cast doubts on the validity of periodically sounded alarms of a supposed municipal "crisis" requiring drastic action and public sacrifices to avoid fiscal disaster. The symptoms of such "crisis" are always the same: widening gaps between city revenues and rising social expenses.

But these are not marks of a sudden crisis; they are perpetual problems common to most cities in capitalist society. Yet, with each "crisis," politicians and the media fill the air and the press with anguished tales of a special misfortune and trite excuses for its occurrence: poor municipal leadership, a city's special functional difficulties, or inefficiencies of fragmented government in

metropolitan areas.

Even the more plausible excuse that changing interregional investment patterns erode the municipal tax base of some cities hides two salient facts: the very same cities suffered fiscal strains even in their heydays when capital concentrated within them; and, not all fiscally strained cities suffer from shifts in capital investment. While establishment apologists can dig up all sorts of empirical "proof" for all kinds of excuses, none of them explain the perennial and widespread occurrence of fiscal stress in our cities.

These stresses, of course, are local manifestations of capitalism's built-in contradictions and general political-economic crisis. But they take forms specific to the fiscal arrangements in each city. In our country the method of financing city government is ruled by the relationship between the capitalist state and profit accumulation. Only private enterprise may accumulate wealth and reinvest it to produce further wealth. Government may not. Its mandate is to promote conditions favorable to private accumulation and depends for revenues on its success in executing this mandate.

Also, city governments operate within the federal system and the constitutional rules of their respective states. Some state constitutions limit the taxable sources and tax rates of cities and prohibit their governments from borrowing to finance operating expenses. Consequently, the methods of raising (and spending) municipal revenues vary in many cities as their and their states' political, economic and social structures and histories vary.(12) Thus, periodic gaps between revenues and expenses (or fiscal "crisis") normally occur at different times in different cities, causing the national system of cities to function like a sputtering motor.

The current urban fiscal crisis, however, differs from the norm in that it simultaneously grips most cities, and occurs in the midst of a general ruling-class offensive forcing the working class to bear the burden of a sharpened general capitalist crisis. Progressive urban scholars demonstrate that the current urban fiscal crisis is fraudulent, caused by the government's own acts. The estab-

lishment's "organic" explanation, they note, has it that economic and population movements inevitably result when private enterprise follows the most profitable opportunities wherever they occur. But the capitalist state helps create such opportunities, then stimulates and aids such movements with tax and loan incentives and provision of infrastructures in new locations — a process in which wealth is transferred from the public to the private sector.

This unbalances the economies of many cities by lowering their revenues and raising their social costs. In effect, the crisis is not "organic" or inevitable but contrived, for the government's consequent transfer of resources from the public to the private sector creates its own fiscal distress. Clearly, the state could, if it wished, ease the distress by shifting some resources from the private back to the public sector. Its evident policy, however, is to maximize accumulation, shifting funds from social to non-social expenses by cutting social services to low-income groups and the poor; privatizing education and sanitation; pushing self-help housing rehabilitation and apartment sales to tenants in lieu of public housing and rent subsidies and controls; and "shrinking" cities in the name of efficiency by abandoning selected working-class districts.

Just as clearly, the state will advance this policy as long as the "organic" explanation keeps public opposition politically manageable. The "organic" explanation thus serves as an ideological weapon to perpetuate the fraudulent "crisis" and target the costs of its alleged solution against municipal workers, the unemployed, and the poor — the politically most vulnerable sections of the working class.(13) Left to its devices, state monopoly capitalist government multiplies fraud, in a basically fraudulent capitalist democracy, robbing the nation of its wealth to bloat monopoly capital and throwing most cities into a permanent fiscal crisis.

Politics in the City

As long as sections of the working class stay clear of or pursue divided city politics, monopoly capital can pick them off separately. Their united challenge, however, can turn urban political are-

nas from a sport field for only capitalist victories to one where the people can do battle and win.

But "playing politics" has become a dishonored idea in many working-class circles for whom corrupt politicians have turned "politics" into an ugly word. The repugnant acts of common politicians, however, should not distort its meaning or deter working-class politicians from engaging in politics on the people's behalf. "Politics," Roscoe Proctor once wrote, "is the relation between classes . . . Politics is a kind of activity aimed at *defending* class interests. The basic economic interests of a given class find their fullest expression in the politics of that class."(14) There stands the true meaning of the word and what it stands for to the working class.

Organized labor in our country has tended to shun independent politics in the mistaken belief that "friends of labor" among bourgeois politicians can represent its class interest in political arenas well enough. Most "friendly" politicians, however, repeatedly prove unreliable, for they are bound up with the politics of one or another capitalist group. They feign friendship when their political masters need labor's support in their intra-class rivalry, or when they try to appease labor militancy to secure "social order." Labor's political vulnerability results from abdicating its own independent politics, with its own politicians loyally defending its own class interests.

These interests may be ranked in two main groups. First, interests at the point of production — jobs, job safety, and the right to organize, bargain collectively, strike and picket — defended mainly in direct struggle against employers, but safeguarded through political action. Second, interests at the points of consumption — housing, public education, health protection, sanitation, transportation and social welfare. In this group, political action has won significant concessions for the people, delivered mostly in the form of expanded city services. These have importantly augmented the people's real income, especially that of the unemployed, underemployed and destitute, who depend on city services for their very survival.

Won mainly in struggle with the higher lev-

els of the capitalist state, the concessions are implemented by city governments which can undermine them by misdirecting allocated funds or by bureaucratic flim-flam. The struggle for public services is not won until the concessions are honored at the points of delivery. And that can best be assured at the city government level, for of all the capitalist state organs, city government, ruling as it does geographically closest to the people, is the most visible and accessible to them. It offers the people the best fighting advantage and the greatest potential to win.

The need for independent working-class politics becomes increasingly obvious. State monopoly capital's policies to cut services to the people and practically impose its dictatorship over their hard-pressed cities gives final proof of the unreliability of "labor's friends" in the capitalist political parties. Monopoly capital is clearly determined to annul the concessions the working class has won in the postwar years. The new types of supramunicipal agencies like the Emergency Financial Control Board and the Municipal Assistance Corporation forced upon New York City portend things to come. New York City, it seems, is but the testing ground for repressive measures being devised to undermine democracy in cities throughout the nation.

But can people's politics prevent highly mobile monopoly capital from whipping a city into submission on pain of disinvestment; from moving tax-yielding economic activities and jobs out of the city?

Bourgeois politicians have argued that a financially troubled city's resistance to big business will only make matters worse. For city revenues lost when big-business moves will weaken the urban infrastructure essential to business activity, escalating the flight. Instead, they have urged cities to cut business taxes and offer other incentives at the expense of the people's living standards. Either way, of course, the people lose. Both the flight and the urged appeasement cut city services and the people's real income. Neither leaves the people any choice but to dig in and resist.

In fact, the advice to yield to Big Business rests on the false assumption that redistributing

wealth from the people to the rich will improve the economy. But that will only aggravate the capitalist contradiction between production and consumption — the built-in tendency to produce more than the starved market can bear — resulting in business decline. Indeed, an opposite course would be wiser. Shifting wealth from monopoly capital to the people would increase their buying power and stimulate economic activity. Spending on vitally needed city services and public works, not cutting them, would best serve the interests of cities and their people.⁽¹⁵⁾ Not surrender to monopoly threats but a counterattack is indicated — an imposition of severe penalties on corporations committing economic crimes against cities.

People's Politics and Problems in Cities

Politics, it has been said, is the art of the possible — an art of timely grasping and seizing new possibilities emerging with changes in objective conditions. In the cities, that takes steady watch over the myriad specifics of their socio-economic-political life.

Let's look, for example, at some current objective conditions in urban development and note some specifics and problems relevant to the conduct of people's politics.

Population. The salient objective condition in our urban development is the overwhelming proportion of the working class in the nation, hence its enormous political possibilities. About three out of four workers live in urban areas where most work places, hence most of the working class, are concentrated.⁽¹⁶⁾

The concentrations vary in size and in the composition of working-class strata depending on a city's type, that is, on whether its dominant activities are industrial, commercial, administrative, or other. This, in turn, affects the relative importance of different city services in people's politics, which changes as economic activities, hence working-class strata, change in the city. In each city, therefore, working-class politicians must know the needs of the several class strata and keep track of changes in the city's economic activities and their consequent effects on the composition and needs of the people. Following

national and local economic and population dynamics, they must plan the optimal mix of issues and tactics that will unite the several working-class strata for a common political struggle.

But precisely what are the special needs and the differences, real or perceived, between working-class strata in the city? How to bridge them? How to overcome their special prejudices by *proving* the community of their larger class interests and the promise of common benefit inherent in unity?

Manufacturing and City Revenues. To every city, industry is important for the jobs it creates and the tax income it generates to finance social services. Economists estimate that the 500,000 manufacturing jobs New York lost between 1969 and 1975 cost that city \$1.5 billion in tax revenues.(17)

The loss of jobs in our cities by runaway shops imperils millions of working-class lives.

The potential danger that portends to their social order rushed bourgeois politicians and thinkers into a desperate search for preventive remedies. There has been much talk about "re-industrialization," and some attempts to set up manufacturing cooperatives in depressed communities, and community economic development corporations. Who backs such schemes and why? Can they relieve unemployment? More importantly, how can cities restrain corporations from moving jobs out or, at least, reduce the damage they inflict? Some West European cities require advance notice, severance pay and consultation with municipal authorities prior to plant closing. How effective have such measures been? What other ways can people's politics take to address the problem?

Perhaps, in some cities, the time has come for bold steps. Since monopoly capital prevents cities from providing for the people's general welfare, their exclusion from profit-generating activities may be raised as a practical political issue. Indeed, some West European cities raise revenues from nationalized industries and utilities. Why not municipally-owned and -run banks, municipal power and gas companies, or even municipal manufacturing plants in our cities?

The whole system of city revenue raising

through taxes, in fact, needs a fresh look: Who underpays and who overpays? How to close the tax loopholes the rich enjoy and set up strong democratic controls to assume progressive taxation and tax collection? How to simplify the system and eliminate its negative effects on rents and the housing stock? Does the solution lie, as some propose, in replacing property taxes entirely with a progressive income tax?

Central Business District Renewal. Our general urban decline slides not on a downward curve but jounces on a downward zigzagging line. Occasional upswings of urban renewal occur in our cities. In recent years, there has been considerable development of central business districts (CBDs), even in the older urban Northeast. Officialdom and the media see in CBD renewals signs of an "urban renaissance." But that "renaissance" is a mirage — the mere reflection of mammoth concentration of specialized monopoly corporation activities in the CBDs of strategic urban centers. The "renaissance" generally stops near CBD borders. In the vast stretches of cities, especially in working-class communities, decline and decay continue. Indeed, city governments have been accelerating the decline by diverting funds from social expenses to renewal and maintenance of CBDs, ostensibly to provide construction, office and maintenance jobs to make up job losses in declining production.

However long it may last, the current economic vitality of CBDs is real; it does provide partial relief from rising unemployment. Thus working-class politics faces some practical questions: How significant a relief from unemployment, present and potential, does CBD renewal provide, especially to the most depressed strata of the people? Does, or can, CBD renewal raise city revenues enough to restore and expand city services to the people? What specific measures should people's politics fight for to extend CBD renewal to the infrastructure and economies in working-class districts?

Gentrification. CBD development creates the related problem of gentrification — the speculative conversion of nearby old housing to exploit the market of young professionals and clerical workers attracted to new CBD jobs. The conse-

quent displacement of low-income families arouses their hostility to the speculators and the new occupants alike, creating enmity between strata of the working class at the extreme poles of its income scale.

Here, people's politics faces the question of how to avoid, minimize or reconcile division aroused by conflicting short-run interests within the working class. Can the pain of displacement be reduced by pushing city government to compensate the victims of capitalist urban redevelopment, or to subsidize low-income homeowners to modernize their homes into compatible neighbors of renovated ones, or by inducing developed redevelopment over larger areas beyond CBDs? More basically, how to control real estate and developer operations to cut their negative effects on housing and land use in the city?

Lack of a National Urban Policy. When all city needs are considered, it soon becomes clear that without a people-directed national urban policy cities can not fully meet them. Politicians in power avoid framing a national urban policy lest they disclose their capital-oriented political strategies. There have therefore been only ad hoc urban policies in recent decades, when people's anger in cities reached the point of explosion: once in the 1930s when widespread foreclosures threatened collapse of home ownership; a second time when the delayed family building of millions of returning WWII veterans was stymied by a housing shortage; and a third time when the mass civil right struggles of the 1960s forced concessions to the millions living in poor ghettos and slums.

But no sooner were ad hoc reforms enacted than other government actions began to whittle them down.

One of the cardinal tasks of working-class city politics, therefore, is to wage a struggle for a strong national urban policy addressing the needs of the people: well-funded people-controlled national programs for housing, health care, education, social services and people-targeted urban renewal. But this fight requires a national people's league for radical urban reform; one that can provide an alternative to the "one-class two-party system" and a launching pad for

a people's party with a political clout able to win and defend significant victories.

Community Unity. Building a people's league of cities depends on the cooperative unity among the racial, national and cultural minorities comprising the working class in the neighborhoods and communities of our cities. A unity that springs from seeing that the common long-range welfare of the whole people requires the good will of each of its parts to coordinate their immediate priorities; from seeing the futility of competing over rewards the ruling class bestows upon one or another to dupe, divide and rule over the whole. Labor unions, with their skills in building working-class unity, must become the shakers and movers in building the league. Combining their know-how and means with that of community organizations can create an unbeatable power block for working-class politics.

All this awaits the informed guidance of a vanguard. It demands, first, diligent study of the political economy of cities and the social dynamics in urban communities. The people's politicians must know what transpires in their cities and why; what local community organizations stand for, where their leaders come from and where they tend to go. And it demands a political plan that can stir the vision and spirits of masses of people in the unions and community organizations.

Electoral Politics and Structural Reforms. To monopoly capital, "some of the problems of governance in the United States stem from an excess of democracy" (18) — of course. To the people, however, extending democracy is vital — naturally.

Electoral restrictions and restraints on speech and press designed to exclude the people from politics severely hampers defense of their interests in cities. By dint of its united strength, however, a people's league can overcome and break down the maze of laws, rules and regulations imposed on access to the ballot. Experience has shown that the people can win, and best defend, electoral reforms in the cities where people's political coalitions are built and "the fight for genuinely democratic election laws will be seen as an essential part of the total struggle for

democratic advance.”(19) A struggle for democratic advance in the cities must proceed, however, beyond electoral reforms to alter the very structure of city government and lay bare all its agencies to public view and control.

But what are the specific electoral restrictions in the various cities? How are they imposed? By what means best to attack and overcome them? How do the undemocratic supramunicipal agencies function? How to effect a democratic distribution of their revenues?

Conclusions: The Party and People's Politics in the Cities

Conclusions from the aforesaid might well be prefaced by what Jim West wrote back in 1978.

Uniting the working class on the basis of mutual economic and social needs requires a fight on such economic issues as taxes, sewers, street repairs, snow removal, mass transportation, consumer rip-offs of all kind, schools, utility rates, rent gouging, etc. These are big issues in the daily lives of working-class families. None of these issues is too small to command the attention, time and concern of Communists and progressives. They call for united movements of struggle, for coalitions based on principles of Left-Center unity in the communities and neighborhoods . . . the need to build and extend the rank-and-file movements . . . not only in the mills and factories but also in the communities, to enable the labor movement to do battle with the monopolist employers both on the job and in the affairs of government . . . and to promote the idea of electing working men and women, Black, white, Hispanic and others, to public office.

The problem of how to build indepen-

(1) "Lenin and the Anti-Monopoly Concept," *Political Affairs*, July 1972.

(2) John H. Mollenkopf, "The Postwar Politics of Urban Development," in William K. Tabb and Larry Sawyers, eds., *Marxism and the Metropolis*, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 118-119; John M. Goering, "Marx and the City: Are there any New Directions for Urban Theory?" *Comparative Urban Research*, Vol. VI, Nos. 2-3, 1978, pp. 76-85; Stephen L. Elkin, "Castells, Marxism and the New Urban Politics," *Comparative Urban Research*, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1974, p. 22; Richard C.

dent, people's political formations into existence . . . calls . . . for the most thoroughgoing, concrete study and intimate knowledge of local politics, economics and issues, an understanding of the relationships of social forces in terms of where they are coming from, where they are and where they are likely to go under mass pressure. Above all, it calls for the closest ties with the workers *both* in the shops and in the communities. It means elevating local problems and politics to a new high level and for skill in processing their linkage with national and international issues and politics.(20)

It is in this context that the call "save our cities" must be heard. It calls not to revise a moribund social order but to arouse the people to struggle to save themselves from its galloping rot and acquire, in the process, the skills needed to build a saner society.

Jim West's proposition invites its corollary: the need to move from recognized general principles to dealing with their specifics in life. Only when we get to work with them, relate them, and interpret them can we effectively lead the class struggle on urban issues and convincingly show that the ills of our cities are endemic to capitalism; that they can be relieved but not cured without a revolutionary change to a socialist society.

Modern cities are complex social artifacts; they need Marxist analysis to be understood. Though some progressive scholars have shed considerable light on the modern urban complexity, their efforts have been diffused, and often confused. The time has come for a Party commission on urban affairs that would systematically study the urban scene to inform the class struggle in the cities of state monopolist capitalist USA.

Hill, "Fiscal Collapse and Political Struggle in Decaying Central Cities in the United States," in William K. Tabb and Larry Sawyers, eds., *Marxism and the Metropolis*, 1978, pp. 213-214, 249.

(3) Henry Etzkowitz and Roger Mack, "Corporations and the City: Oligopolies and Urbanization," *Comparative Urban Research*, Vol. VI, Nos. 2-3, 1978, p. 47.

(4) Richard C. Hill, "State Capitalism and the Urban Fiscal Crisis in the United States," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1977, p. 42.

- (5) *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, International Publishers, 1942, p. 155.
- (6) Roger Friedland, Frances Fox Piven and Robert R. Alford, "Political Conflict, Urban Structure, and the Fiscal Crisis," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 1, No. 3, October, 1977, pp. 449-462.
- (7) Ruth Fincher, "Analysis of the Local Level Capitalist State," *Antipode*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1981, pp. 26-27.
- (8) Friedland, et. al., op. cit., p. 463; James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*, St. Martin's Press, 1973, p. 87.
- (9) O'Connor, op. cit., p. 81.
- (10) Richard C. Rich, "The Political Economy of Public Services," in Norman and Susan Feinstein, eds., *Urban Policy Under Capitalism*, Vol. 22 of Urban Affairs Annual Reviews, Sage Publications, 1982. pp. 193-206.
- (11) *Ibid.*, pp. 195-197, 206.
- (12) Richard C. Hill, "Fiscal Collapse and Political Struggle in Decaying Central Cities in the United States," in *Marxism and the Metropolis*, op. cit., pp. 218-219.
- (13) Peter Marcuse, "The Targeted Crisis: On the Ideology of the Urban Fiscal Crisis and its Uses," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 5, No. 3, September 1981, pp. 330-354.

- (14) "New Forms of Accommodation to Racism," *Political Affairs*, October 1972, p. 22.
- (15) Daniel Rubin, "The Economy and the 1976 Elections," *Political Affairs*, July 1976, p. 9.
- (16) By definition, the working class embraces those in the population who earn their living by selling their labor for wages or salaries.
- (17) William K. Tabb, "The New York Fiscal Crisis," *Marxism and the Metropolis*, op. cit., pp. 241-242.
- (18) Michael Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington and Joji Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission*, New York University Press, New York, 1975, p. 113.
- (19) Si Gerson, "The People's Fight for Ballot Rights," *Political Affairs*, August 1976, p. 23.
- (20) "The Cleveland Municipal Elections," *Political Affairs*, January 1978. p. 17.

(Cont. from p. 40)

no principles save two: political power and anti-Communism. But they could not escape the restraints placed upon them by the world balance of power, Congress and the bureaucracy, and mass public opinion. They were forced to withdraw from Vietnam. They were forced to sign the SALT agreement with the Soviet Union. In these cases, Nixon and Kissinger had to suppress their anti-Communism in the interest of preserving their political power. The opening to China, on the other hand, was a triumph for both principles. The Chinese leaders were all too willing to sell out Vietnam and international solidarity to forge a strategic alliance with imperialism, as Hersh documents.

The book is strongest in the chapters dealing with the Vietnam War and should be read if only for these sections. It is weakest on the SALT treaty. Chapter 25, which attempts to link the SALT treaty with the U.S.-Soviet grain deal, is a complete failure. Hersh bases his entire claim — that the USSR demanded grain in return for SALT — on the meager testimony of a single source: born-again White House hatchetman Charles Colson. In his effort to debunk every major activity of

Kissinger's, Hersh fails to substantiate these claims from any other source.

What was Kissinger's secret of success? In Hersh's view, it was three-fold. First, his ability to manipulate the press. A significant sub-theme of *The Price of Power* is the shamefully gullible toadying of the nation's "free" press to the White House — Watergate notwithstanding. Henry played them like a guitar. Second, his ability, enhanced by his press relations, to appear liberal in public and reactionary inside the White House. Third, in Hersh's words, "he was an oasis of intellect and of knowledge about foreign policy in the Nixon White House." As Haig once told Erlichman, "The President needs Henry . . . It's only Henry who pulls us through the summit conferences." In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

We don't have a president these days, we have an interlocutor, who makes jokes and reads from the monitor while his henchmen tear apart the social and economic progress we have made over the last century. Henry should get along well with his new master; he has the instinctive ability to serve that belongs to the truly corrupt.



NATIONAL CONVENTION, CPUSA

PRE-CONVENTION
DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

Ethnos and the African-American Nationality

TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

One of the fundamental tenets of the Marxist-Leninist world view is that everything is in a constant state of change. Just as the world around us is in constant motion, so is our knowledge and understanding of the world constantly developing. Nothing stands still. This fundamental tenet is the basis upon which we rest when we note that Marxist-Leninism itself is in a constant state of change, that Marxism-Leninism is a living science, constantly being enriched as our knowledge of the world deepens.

As Boris Ponomarev expressed it,

Marxism-Leninism derives its vitality and force primarily from the essence of its scientific method of knowing and transforming the world. This method enables it to absorb the new experiences of mankind, the new facts of science and practice, and to develop theory in keeping with changes in the surrounding world.(1)

As the science of Marxism-Leninism develops, it is imperative that we keep abreast of those developments. Recently, there has been a considerable number of developments in the Marxist-Leninist conception of the national question. In particular, Marxist-Leninist ethnographers in the Soviet Union have been making enormous strides in deepening the understanding of this question. It is of the utmost importance that we take a careful look at these theoretical developments in order to ascertain how they can be used to increase our understanding of national processes in the United States.

The national question is one of the most complex questions of theory. In part this is ascribable to the fact that imperialism has created a state of national and ethnic animosities of unthinkable proportions. However, it is also due to the fact that the world is composed of such a myriad of ethnic and national groups.

James E. Jackson has enunciated the purview of the national question in his essay entitled, "On

the Theory of Black Liberation in the U.S." There, he stated that,

The national question exists in an infinite variety of forms, and Marxist science provides guidelines for the theoretical representation and solution of each particular manifestation and formation of the national question. Within the scope of the national question, there is included not only the question of the nation, but the question of national minorities, national and ethnic groups, national-ethnic minority questions and national communal (religious) group questions, etc. Marxism provides a guide to the characterization and developmental outlook for each of these manifestations of the national question.(2)

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels laid the foundation for the understanding of the national question. Their contributions were summarized by V.Y. Zevin thusly,

. . . Marx and Engels defined the main lines of the proletarian party's program and policy on the national question: proletarian internationalism, the declaration of the rights of nations to self-determination and the struggle to achieve this, the exposure of the colonial oppression of nations by the exploiting classes, support for the national liberation movements and the linking of these movements with the revolutionary struggle of the working class. Marx and Engels resolutely opposed ignoring the national question, while at the same time stressing the fact that the national question was of secondary importance compared with the general and basic question of the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.(3)

V.I. Lenin built upon the foundation laid by Marx and Engels. Among his contributions was the clarification of the role and relation of national movements to the proletarian revolution in the

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epoch of imperialism. This was most evident in the approach Lenin took to the national question. Commenting upon this approach, Boris Ponomarev stated,

...Lenin demonstrated the danger both of nationalist attempts to obscure or distort the class content of ethnic problems, and of ethnic nihilism. Lenin's approach in no way ignored national distinctions or underestimated the significance and role of the history, culture and traditions of any nation. He stressed that the striving to advance all the progressive, democratic and good that inspired national pride, completely coincided with rather than contradicted the interests of socialism, the interests of the working class.(4)

The theoretical work of Soviet ethnographers on ethnic processes and the national question is especially valuable for two reasons. First, the Soviet Union covers one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the world. As such, it is a laboratory almost unequaled for the study of ethnography. Secondly, and most importantly, the nature of the Soviet state is such that it is committed to the solution of ethnic and national problems in a democratic way that insures the equality of peoples.

The successful implementation of a Leninist nationalities policy has served as an impetus for studies on the national question in the Soviet Union. While much work has been focused on the development of nations, recently Soviet ethnographers have been concerned with the typology of ethnic communities.(5)

The general consensus among Soviet ethnographers is that the nation is merely the form of an ethnic community. Other historical forms of ethnic communities are the tribe and the nationality. Thus, a typology of ethnic communities consists of tribe, nationality and nation.

As types of ethnic communities, the thread running through all of these concepts (tribe, nationality and nation) is that of ethnicity, or ethnos. Marxist-Leninist ethnographers have defined an ethnoi as,

...a stable aggregate of people, historically formed on a certain territory, posses-

sing common, relatively stable features of language and psyche, and a consciousness of their unity and difference from other similar formations (identity), fixed in a name for themselves (ethnonym).(6)

The two key features in the existence of an ethnoi are stability and identity. It is clear that identity, often expressed in the "we-they" antithesis, is a necessary component of an ethnoi. That is, a people must be aware of itself as a distinct group. However, not all groups of people with a collective self-identity are an ethnoi. Opposing members of sports teams, joggers, and even left-handed people may share a collective self-identity, but they are not an ethnoi. Therefore, another aspect of ethnos is stability.

One quantitative measure of stability is in endogamy rates (rates of intra-ethnic marriage), which must of necessity be sufficiently high for the reproduction of the community. The stability and reproduction of an ethnoi provides the foundation upon which language and cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the next.

As was stated above, nationalities were initially formed during the slaveholding and feudal periods. Many nationalities developed into nations with their ethnos relatively intact. Others, in the process of forging a nation, went through processes of convergence or amalgamation with other nationalities to form a new ethnoi. Still other nationalities remained intact but never developed into nations. These latter nationalities continued their development as national minorities within the nation of another dominant ethnoi.(7)

Thus, Marxist-Leninists define nationalities as,

... ethnic formations that are no longer defined by the parameters of the slavery and feudal epochs but do not come under the concept of nation.(8)

Nationality, in a broad, popular sense, is a descriptive term referring to any group sharing an ethnos. Hence, we can speak of the French nationality, the English nationality, etc. However, in a more narrow, scientific sense, a nationality is an ethnic community that has developed past the tribal stage but has not formed as a nation.

extremely complex due to (1) ethnic diversity, and (2) ethnic animosity reinforced by capitalist exploitation. Nowhere are these two factors more apparent than in the United States. Fomenting and exploiting divisiveness between ethnic and national groups has been a potent weapon in the arsenal of the U.S. ruling class since its inception. This is in addition to the fact that the U.S. is extremely ethnically diverse. This diversity is a natural outgrowth of the fact that over 95 per cent of the U.S. population has immigrant roots.

The ethogenesis of the Afro-American people had its origins in the rural South during slavery. Although Afro-Americans were drawn from different tribes and nationalities in Africa, there was a significant commonality among them. Historians have often noted that the vast majority of African slaves came from a relatively well-defined section of West Africa where one finds very similar language and cultural patterns.

It was during the period of slavery that the process of ethnic consolidation took place among the slaves. While one aspect of this process was cultural and linguistic commonality, referred to above, another aspect was the fact that the Africans occupied the same place in the socio-economic system of slavery. Thus, while the process of ethnic consolidation was taking place among the Africans, it was taking place in America and was profoundly influenced by that fact. This "slave community," as it has been called, became the crucible within which an ethnos was formed.

It was in the "slave community" that a dialect, grounded in West African grammatical patterns but using English words, was hammered out that allowed the slaves to communicate with the master as well as each other. It also saw the development of a music, based on African rhythms and harmonic scales, that incorporated much of Western musical tradition. Most importantly it witnessed the development of a peculiar religion, outwardly a Western religion, Christianity, but indelibly stamped by the influence of the slavers' lash and resistance to it, as well as African beliefs and modes of worship.

The stability and identity of the Afro-American people are readily apparent. One reflection of this is that the endogamy rate is over 95 per cent.

This, coupled with segregation and a particularly harsh form of national oppression, has resulted in a stable community.

The feature of identity is even clearer. Afro-American people have long had a sense of collective identity. In part, this is reflected in the continual struggles for a consensus on a correct name for Afro-Americans. From early names such as Ethiopian, to colored, Negro, and finally Black or Afro-American, this struggle, more than anything else, graphically illustrates a sense of collective identity. While there has never been a consensus around who Afro-Americans are (by what term do they define themselves), there has never been any question about the fact that they are.

Soviet ethnographers have pointed to "community of territory" as being the *sine qua non* of ethogenesis. In relation to Afro-Americans, this common territory was what is frequently referred to as the Black Belt South. In this well-defined area there was a high concentration of Afro-Americans. This concentration lasted from the late 1700s until the mass migrations northward of the 1920s and 1940s. The concentration of Afro-Americans in the Black Belt South was critical to the formation of an Afro-American ethnos.

In the past, many Marxist-Leninists looked at this concentration and erroneously identified it as a nation. This view is problematic for many reasons. Most importantly, it ignores the economic factors that are necessary for the formation of a nation, i.e., a developing capitalist economy. However, it is close to the truth insofar as it recognized the developing national character of the Afro-American people.

In short, in every important aspect, the Afro-American people conform to the concept of an ethnos, and consequently, of a nationality.

However, there is one important point that must be mentioned. That point is the intersection between race and nationality. Although much work remains to be done on this crucial point, the research of Soviet ethnographers can help to shed some light on this question.

In his essay entitled, "The Term 'Ethnos' and its Definition," Y. V. Bromely asserts,

... racial distinctions in most cases are not essential ethnic features. And not so

much because there are no "pure" racially unmixed ethnoid, but rather because there are no clearcut physical-anthropological boundaries between adjacent ethnic communities.(13)

Thus, we see that while race and ethnicity are not the same thing, they are also not, in every case, mutually exclusive. In some circumstances, as in the U.S., they can be parallel. In the U.S. one is confronted with a separate ethnoid (Afro-Americans) that is surrounded by another ethnoid (Euro-Americans) of a different race. However, the essence of the difference between these two groups is not simply one of color, but one of a different ethnoid.

The color aspect of national oppression becomes a factor as the exploiting class latches onto it in order to justify, or legitimate, national oppression. The Indian Marxist-Leninist, Shivdan Singh Chauhan, noted this phenomenon when he explained that,

Racialism . . . represents [an] attitude of mind which extends to national (ethnic, cultural) differences to the biological field in order to justify . . . oppression of other ethnic groups in the era of imperialism.(14)

Scientifically speaking, there is no such thing as racial oppression. There is only national oppression that is justified and supported by the ideology of racialism. Viewed through this prism we understand that the essence of Afro-American oppression is national oppression, although it takes the appearance of being racial.

(1) B.N. Ponomarev, *The Living and Effective Teaching of Marxism-Leninism*, Progress, Moscow, 1978, p. 129.

(2) James E. Jackson, "On the Theory of Black Liberation in the U.S.," in *Revolutionary Tracings*, International Publishers, New York, 1974, p. 151.

(3) V.Y. Zevin, "Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions," in *Lenin the Great Theoretician*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, pp. 305-306.

(4) B.N. Ponomarev, "Soviet Nationalities Policy at the Stage of Developed Socialism," *Political Affairs*, October 1982, p. 31.

(5) Some of the more recent works of Soviet ethnographers are *Races and Peoples*, *Ethnocultural Processes and Na-*

It is clear that there is a color line operative in the U.S. and that racialism operates in the realm of that ideology to reinforce and harshen the form of national oppression faced by minority nationalities of color. Sorting out the intersection of racist ideology and the national oppression of nationalities of color is an important task that must be undertaken. However, an analysis of racism that does not start from the perspective of the national question is useless and bound to end in the quagmire of Trotskyist and neo-Trotskyist errors.

A scientific understanding of the national aspect of the Afro-American people is necessary for several reasons. First, it is only with this scientific understanding as a foundation that we can guard against nihilistic tendencies. One tendency would have us believe that Afro-Americans are simply Americans with black skins. This viewpoint leads to a refusal to support the special demands of Afro-Americans and an inability to put those special demands into a framework that encourages the unity of the entire working class. The other tendency is to view Afro-Americans as a nation. This view results in undercutting the democratic content of the Afro-American struggle by uncritically supporting nationalist demands.

Secondly, it is only a scientific view that can allow us to develop a perspective on the different currents in the Afro-American people's struggle and place these currents in a correct context vis-a-vis the growing anti-monopoly movement and the struggle for proletarian revolution.

tional Problems in the Modern World and Present-Day Ethnic Processes in the USSR.

(6) *Present-Day Ethnic Processes in the USSR*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1982, p. 11.

(7) An excellent discussion of national and ethnic consolidation processes is found in V.S. Semyonov's *Nations and Internationalism*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979.

(8) Op. cit., p. 12.

(9) I.R. Grigulevich and S.Y. Kozlov, *Races and Peoples*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, pp. 25-26.

(10) Ibid., p. 26.

(11) Shivdan Singh Chauhan, *Nationalities Question in the USA and USSR*, Sterling, New Delhi, 1976, p. 27.



BOOK ENDS



A Book for All Good People

Art Shields, *My Shaping-Up Years*, International Publishers, 381 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016, 1983, 240 pp., paperback \$4.95.

Do you know why the Chukhotan people (the Russian Eskimos) from the Soviet Asian arctic value wolverine fur from Alaska so highly?

You will know when you read the first three lines top of page 231 in the most delightful, chock-full-of-joy book you are ever likely to read. In *My Shaping-Up Years*, Art Shields takes you with him along a very private footpath through the ravished virgin years of the nation's upbringing.

Here is the story of the life of a man pulsing with the wonder and joy of being and partaking and relating to the growing-up times of the American nation. The story begins when he was in knee-pants and romping over fields with pink blushing spreads of clover, and down smoke-shrouded industrial valleys, and out and over the billowing sea to the Old World.

He found old England full of new wonders. He encountered an occurrence of World War 1: the awesome roar of Zeppeline-dropped bombs making eerie echoes in the city's canyons, like wailers forseeing a sorrow that was yet to come.

The book ends with Art Shields, the young journalist, so able and eager, and so encompassing and perceptive about this country and the

James E. Jackson is a member of the Political Bureau of the CPUSA.

James E. Jackson

fond hopes and dire needs of its working people, and so aware of its relationship to a wide, wide world of peoples with proud national cultures and profoundly kindred needs.

Art Shields goes on a long wagon trip to Oklahoma as a young boy, and you ride with him while fancying yourself aboard a buccaneer's buckboard crossing the prairies heading for the golden West with the vision of glittering nuggets dancing in your head.

Another time, you take another trip with Art, this time to visit Art's brother Walter in Nome, Alaska, where he is the school superintendent of the Northern Eskimo School District, as well as the reindeer industry's inspector from Nome to Point Barrow. While the sled caroms across the frozen, snow-blanketed tundra, you are precariously balancing on the footboard of a sled pulled by a stretched-out team of Malamute huskies. You are on a dog-sled mushing across the landscape in the Valley of the Yukon; you are in Jack London country.

You travel with Art Shields and you go where this nation went in the last decades of the past century and the first two decades of this one, and your guide, commentator and most jovial companion is one of this nation's greatest reporters.

While working on the Tuscarawas River dam in southeastern Ohio in 1908, Art became friendly with an old man in his work-gang. His name was Bob Edwards, and he opened a knot hole in a pinewood fence, as it

were, through which Art was able to view remarkable scenes from his country's history which had been long hidden behind a racist pale. His friend was a Black veteran of the Civil War and the bitter struggle for democracy and a progressive Reconstruction of the South.

The sixteen pages of Chapter 16, entitled "Black Veterans," is a brilliant cameo of a heroic epic, the still barely-told history of the Afro-Americans in battle for their own liberation and in the making of the nation into what it now is not, yet must be, before it is truly the land of the free.

Art never forgot, during all the years that followed, the moral of the talks with the old soldier who had such a noble role in the forging of the country's unity on the higher ground of people emancipated from chattel slavery. Wherever he was, Art would always thoughtfully take into account the developments and contributions of those whose struggle goes on from the other side of the fence — or railroad tracks, as it were. Indeed, this wonderful book is a tribute to his old friend Bob and a teaching tool for all who are partisans of the goal of a genuine social reconstruction. It is a stout blow against the racist barriers which yet so meanly divide and torment the toilers in service to their exploiters. The firmness of his conviction is pushed by the necessity of history: "Still, will they overcome it all."

Art Shields is the respected doyen of labor reporters. Clear-eyed, ever-smiling, tight-cheeked, lean-jawed, beanpole-straight and middling tall; at 95, Art Shields is still that indefatigable scribe of the working class whose every dispatch from the field of the class struggle affirms his love and devotion to the sharp fo-

cus of his constant concern — the working class and allied popular forces in battle for social progress.

With this book, Art Shields has cut himself a big watermelon slice of the history of our country. Taking about two decades from each side of the Twentieth Century line, he has squeezed out the water and pressed the real essence of it all into a remarkable work of 240 pages. It is something to savor, to relish each morsel, to delight oneself with the ease with which one can digest so much wit and wisdom at a single sitting from our genial teacher.

He invokes in the reader nostalgic days of childhood, the dare-to-do years of youth; and also there comes alive — in fancy or memory — a march past of heroes and heroines of labor's pantheon of leaders. Art Shields has seen them all — Eugene Victor Debs, Bill Foster, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Ben Davis, Jr., and on and on.

This book is indeed Art Shields. At the same time there is profiled

Behind the Kissinger Mask

Seymour Hersh, *The Price of Power*, Summit Books, 1983, \$16.95.

I began reading *The Price of Power* during a frightening week that began with a proposal for peace. On Sunday, July 17, Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia and Panama, the "Contadora Group," called for peaceful negotiations to end the Central American crisis.

The Reagan Administration was quick to react to the threat of peace. Within 14 hours, it announced massive military maneuvers surrounding Nicaragua by land, sea and air, while Reagan officially declared the civil war in El Salvador to be "the first real Communist aggression on the American mainland."

here a big segment in the life of a class and a nation. Art Shields is a humanist because he is a revolutionary optimist and a Communist; he is a people-lover and a lover of the wonderment of all living things, and of nature's structures, sights and sounds, which backdrop and impact upon the scenes of his memories in warm and vivid natural colors.

Peggy Lipshutz, the well-known Chicago artist-illustrator, has spangled Art's book with insightful and delightful pen-and-ink renderings of scenes chosen from the story. They anticipate the choice passages that the reader will want to savor and return to again and again.

Art Shield's book is a fine-honed exhibit of his superb craftsmanship as a writer. His use of short sentences, of just the right choice of words, will stimulate long chains of liberating ideas and produce sunbursts of wonderment and good feelings for our people, our class and the race of humankind.

TERRY CANNON

On Tuesday, Nicaragua put forth its own peace plan, including a ban on all arms shipments to the area, which was followed the next day by a parallel call for Central American countries to "solve their own problems" by the foreign ministers of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica.

With every country in the region now calling for negotiations, Reagan escalated, announcing that the mere existence of a Sandinista government in Nicaragua made all Central America "unstable," and raising the possibility of a naval blockade of that country. After Fidel Castro, on whom Reagan blames every Latin development he dislikes, announced

his support of the Contadora initiative and condemned the "substitution of confrontation for dialogue," the Pentagon asked Reagan to double the U.S. military advisors in El Salvador.

One week from the day of the Contadora peace proposal, the *New York Times* reported that Reagan was preparing "a major expansion of covert intelligence operations in Central America," which officials said would make the activities of the CIA in that region "the most extensive covert operations mounted by the United States since the Vietnam War." Like Nixon before the Christmas bombing of Hanoi, Reagan wanted anything but peace.

As the nation focused on the threat of a new Vietnam, there in the middle of it all — suddenly — was Henry A. Kissinger, appointed by Reagan to head a "bipartisan presidential commission" to legitimize U.S. military aid and aggression against Nicaragua and the popular insurrection in El Salvador.

Kissinger, one more time. "A less appropriate person to act as arbiter of policy anywhere in Latin America could not be found this side of General Pinochet," commented columnist Tom Wicker. Though Henry the K's reincarnation may have surprised some, it should shock no one, for as Seymour Hersh documents unflinchingly in *The Price of Power*, toadying to Right-wing presidents, rationalizing mass murder, controlling and misleading the press, engaging in secret, devious international negotiations in the cause of anti-Communism and repression, and bouncing back from defeat have been Kissinger's stock in trade since he entered public life 15 years ago.

Wicker's comment is more than apt, for Kissinger is better remembered in Latin America as the godfather of Chilean fascism than as the Christmas bomber of Hanoi. Nor has his attitude changed one iota since the bloody days of Pinochet's coup

against President Salvador Allende. Asked after his appointment by Reagan if he backed covert aid to anti-Sandinista military groups, Kissinger replied that he did, adding, "if covert operations have to be justified in a public debate, they stop being covert and we will wind up losing public support." Henry has lost none of his contempt for the democratic process.

Hersh reports a conversation between Kissinger and a pre-Allende, pro-Washington foreign minister of Chile in 1969. "Mr. Minister," Kissinger said, "you come here speaking of Latin America, but this is not important. Nothing important can come from the South. History has never been produced in the South . . . You're wasting your time."

The Chilean protested that Kissinger knew nothing about Latin America. "No," Kissinger replied, "and I don't care."

This attitude, which can best be labeled racist and stupid, is still in force. In a recent interview in the Right-wing magazine *Public Opinion*, Kissinger said, "If we can not manage Central America, it will be impossible to convince threatened nations in the Persian Gulf and other places that we know how to manage the global equilibrium." To Kissinger, Central America (about which he mentions not one word in his 2,700 page memoirs) is nothing more than an example of global management. How we "manage" it is a message to the more important areas of the world, as the overthrow of Allende was a message to the social-democratic governments of Europe not to share power with the Communist Parties.

The racism of the Nixon White House ran deep, and Kissinger fit in virulently with the stream of anti-Black jokes, racial slurs, and crude derogatory comments about Africa and African political leaders. Less expected, but not surprising, as Hersh reveals, was the degree to which Kis-

singer accommodated his boss's anti-Semitism. Kissinger carefully distanced himself from other Jewish members of the White House staff and was the first to pounce on them if he thought it politically expedient, cutting people out, for example, if he thought there were "too many Jews" on a committee.

Kissinger's mystique, which spared him prosecution and even investigation during Watergate, also remains a political force. Commenting on his July appointment, Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash) said, "It's a good appointment, one that will bring prestige to the commission." Sen. Charles MacC. Mathias (R-Md) said, "Kissinger has the ability to be totally objective and totally independent." Neither opinion could be more in conflict with the 700 pages of evidence in Hersh's book, which portray Kissinger as a paranoid, subjective, deceitful, lying, manipulative politician who alternated between grovelling and betrayal in his attitude toward political leaders in Washington and around the world.

Not that his colleagues in the White House were any better. We know them all from Watergate. Nixon appears to have been drunk much of the time, and not too tightly wrapped when sober. Egil Krogh, co-director of the White House "plumbers," is quoted as listening in on a phone conversation between Nixon and Kissinger about Vietnam (everyone was wiretapping everyone else in the Nixon White House). Nixon was drunk. "Henry," he said, "we've got to nuke them." We should credit the survival instincts of many top officials — including Kissinger — that they ignored the President of the United States when he was completely over the edge.

Hersh's narrative is densely woven with facts, background, quotes and reportage, using many sources not known or employed before — including extensive interviews in 1979 with Vietnamese leaders. The text is

often too dense to read easily, the product of the author's effort to be authoritative and unassailable. The portrait that emerges is ugly and validates almost every suspicion we ever had about what was going on during the Nixon years. If you thought it was bad — it was worse.

It is ironic that what toppled Nixon and Kissinger was Watergate — barely touched upon by Hersh. Kissinger secured his position as National Security Adviser in the first place by leaking secret information about Johnson's peace talks to the Republicans. Nixon and Kissinger developed the "madman theory" by which Vietnam (and other countries by extension) were to be threatened with the specter of an unstable president with his finger on the nuclear button (the number of times that Nixon casually and seriously discussed the "nuclear option" is absolutely shocking, and these are just the ones Hersh uncovered). Nixon was taking huge cash contributions for his 1968 campaign from the fascist military junta in Greece. In 1970 Nixon ordered the bombing of PLO forces inside Jordan — an order fortunately ignored by Defense Secretary Laird. Nixon planned and Kissinger carried out massive secret bombings of Cambodia. Together they sponsored the overthrow of Allende. They created false crises for political purposes, including one over a non-existent Soviet base in Cuba. And most important, they protracted the Vietnam War while thousands of U.S. soldiers and Vietnamese died. They reneged on the October 1972 peace agreement (after Nixon cabled Hanoi two times accepting it) and ordered the Christmas bombing of Hanoi, killing thousands of civilians. These were the crimes of the Nixon White House, far overshadowing the break-in at the Watergate complex.

Kissinger and Nixon emerge as alienated, ruthless, violent men with

(cont. on p. 33)

CENTRAL AMERICA

ON THE EDGE OF DISASTER

A New Vietnam.

President Reagan, at his July 26 news conference, said, "First of all, there is no comparison with Vietnam and there's not going to be anything of that kind in this."

Unfortunately, there already is. Like Vietnam, Central America has a long history of economic and political repression going back to colonial times. "Outside forces," whether China or Cuba, are not the cause of the upheavals in either of these regions. Like Vietnam, unpopular regimes are backed by US money, arms, and military advisers, one of whom has already been killed in El Salvador. Now thousands of US combat soldiers are committed to maneuvers in Honduras, and a fleet of twenty ships is stationed off both coasts of Nicaragua. Will there be a new Tonkin Gulf incident, like the one that deceived Congress in 1964? Americans have memories, and they know a disaster when they see one. We are on

the verge of another war . . . and the time has come to stop it.

A President Out of Control.

By large majorities the American people have made it clear they do not want US military involvement in Central America. But a divided Congress has failed to stop an administration bent on the worst kind of "gunboat diplomacy."

Don't let Congress fail again. Tell your Senators and Representative they must cut off all funds for military aid, overt or covert, in the whole region. They will be home for recess this month: go see them. Tell them the administration must be brought under control.

The Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy represents millions of Americans who want to reassert popular control over a reckless and inhumane foreign policy. The *Congressional Quarterly* last year called the Coalition "the nerve-

center of citizen pressure on Congress" to change Central American policy. For five years the Coalition has coordinated virtually all constituency work on Central America and built up a network of thousands nationwide.

Our fifty-one member organizations include ten Protestant denominations, five Catholic groups, three Jewish groups, the National Council of Churches, several ecumenical organizations, ADA, SANE, US Student Association, YWCA, and several other human rights and peace groups.

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COALITION

For a New Foreign and Military Policy

120 Maryland Ave. N.E. Washington D.C. 20002

Richard Healey, Director

YES! Sign me up for the Coalition's network and send me regular Action Alerts on key legislation, Action Guides on the issues and resources for local organizing work. Here's my \$20 for one year of Coalition materials.

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Dear _____:

I urge you to oppose all further U.S. military aid, exercises, and covert action in Central America. I urge you to press the administration to suspend current military support and actively engage in unconditional negotiations to bring lasting peace and justice to Central America. We can no longer support governments at war with their own people. Please stop this dangerous spiral of intervention.

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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Your Senator
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510



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