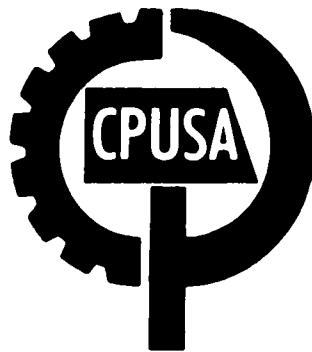


Keynote Report
to the
Second Extraordinary Conference
of the
Communist Party, U.S.A.

By
Gus Hall
General Secretary



Milwaukee, Wisconsin
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KEYNOTE REPORT TO THE SECOND EXTRAORDINARY
CONFERENCE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.

By

Gus Hall

APRIL 23-25, 1982, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

I. INTRODUCTION

WELCOME, DEAR COMRADES, FRIENDS AND GUESTS!

It is a privilege and a pleasure to welcome all of you to our Party's Second Extraordinary Conference.

Many of you may remember well, but many of you may not even know that throughout its proud and extraordinary 65-year history our Party has held only one Extraordinary Conference. Until today. That was almost 50 years ago, in July 1933.

The First Extraordinary Conference was called in the midst of the Great Depression to mobilize our Party to meet the challenges and tasks of the worst economic epidemic ever to strike our country.

It was called to help find solutions to the ravage and ruin of mass unemployment, hunger, homelessness and hopelessness destroying the lives of millions.

It was called to prepare our Party to help build and lead the mass movements, struggles and fierce battles that led our class and people out of the Great Depression and into the era of concessions and compromise, the New Deal.

It was called to deal with the rising menace of the worldwide fascist threat that was finally routed in the great victory of World War Two.

Among the extraordinary tasks the Party undertook was the organization of tens of millions of workers into the CIO industrial unions.

It undertook the organization of the unemployed into fighting councils that became a victorious mass movement, whose crowning achievement was passage of the Unemployment Compensation Act and Social Security.

It undertook to raise the struggle against racism, discrimination, bigotry and anti-Semitism to new, unprecedented heights, including the historic breakthrough in the sport of baseball.

Comm
Our Party's contributions in those terrible times were immeasurable and largely untold.

the Amer Com. Mgmt, Carter Grand, Mark K. Henrichs,
And, in the process of building these great mass struggles and movements, our Party grew into a mass organization, both in size and influence.

In a very profound way that First Extraordinary Conference was a qualitative turning point in the history of our Party.

the Party
Our Party shifted its gears and became a major force both in the organization of basic industrial workers and in the organization of the unemployed.

In a very real sense, we are here today to prepare to meet just such extraordinary challenges.

2nd Comm
The decision to call this Second Extraordinary Conference of our Party in *1981* 1982 was not made lightly.

Comm *at Amer. workers*
This Conference was called because our people, once again, are faced with the every day crises of another depression era, the most devastating economic epidemic since the 1930's.

And, also, because an equally horrible spectre is stalking our world, the spectre of a nuclear catastrophe - the most serious threat to world peace since World War II.

As in the 1930's, we are today faced with a crisis in every area of our lives.

As then, there are millions of jobless.

As then, there are millions of hungry and homeless.

As then, there are souplines in almost every city.

As then, we have a government that is hell-bent on cutting the living standards of our people - to the bone.

As then, the monopoly corporations are on an all-out offensive rampage against the working class and people.

As then, rampant racism is once again on the rise, taking its terrible toll.

But more important than anything else is the fact that as in the 1930's there is once again rising a mighty, militant people's fightback movement.

So, once again, we have come together for an Extraordinary Conference of our Party - to take stock, to gather and exchange experiences, to project, to plan and to discuss how we can raise to a new level our contributions to the people's struggles. How we can build a bigger, better Party and press. *APC 1982*

Just as we did in 1933, I have no doubt we will return home after this Conference extraordinarily rejuvenated, refreshed, recommitted, full of enthusiasm and confidence - ready to shift into high gear, on the road to new victories and a renewed Party.

2nd Guyana

2021

I have no doubts, this Second Extraordinary Party Conference, 1982, will turn into another landmark turning point in our Party's illustrious history.

Today, most Americans are fully and painfully aware that these are extraordinary times. *of panicking, almost weekly blue stocks in black green, or red* Most would agree that our country is in one helluva mess.

Gravely and years The majority of our people now agree that Reaganomics is a one-way ticket *Capitalism* to economic disaster. *the Trump era* And, that Reagan's election was a whopping historic blunder.

The thirty million Americans who are victims of depression-level unemployment are bitterly aware of these terrible times through their own personal suffering. One out of every three workers will suffer from unemployment this year.

Afro-Americans, who in ever greater numbers are forced to live below the poverty level, are sharply aware of the special racist nature of their oppression.

Our youth, who face a future of economic deadends, hopelessness and frustration are desperately aware of their aborted dreams.

American farmers, who are in the grip of the corporate vise, are facing foreclosures and bankruptcies at unprecedented rates.

All oppressed and victimized peoples - Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native-American and Asian-Americans - women, professionals, cultural workers and small business people are all feeling the crunch, the sickening anxiety that comes from the inability to make ends meet or plan a decent future.

The great majority of our people don't need conferences, seminars or teachers just to tell them their standards of living are being drastically cut. That they are in a chronic state of economic downward mobility. Not even the bourgeois politicians or the mass media can cover up or ignore the critical nature of the crisis problems.

We are here, therefore, not so much to describe and explain the crises. We are here to discuss what to do about them and how to do it. More than anything else we must make this a "how to" conference.

We have come together to exchange experiences of struggle, of new initiatives, to learn how to organize and explain better, how to mobilize for struggles in a new way.

together

We have come to Milwaukee so we can return to our homes, our communities, our shops, ready to make bigger and better contributions in the building of an all-^{*a new party*} people's fighting front, a fighting front that will halt and turn back the big business, double-barreled offensive of Reaganomics and corporate takeback-cutbacks.

We are here to become more effective fighters against the rising tide of racism that is being given legal status and executive sanction by the racist Reaganites.

We are here to mold our party into a more effective fighting force in the struggles to check the dangerous drift toward nuclear confrontation.

We are here to exchange ideas and experiences about how to elevate the work of our party, qualitatively and quantitatively, to measure up to the new challenges these extraordinary times are presenting us with.

We have come to Milwaukee to assess this extraordinary period, full of complicated and contradictory developments. To assess the challenging negative and positive features - ^{*from the last 4 years*} both the ominous dangers and exciting possibilities for advances and victories.

over the last 4 years

We are here to mold this conference into a landmark turning point for our Party, our class and people. To chart the course that will turn the defensive struggles into an offensive tidal wave of the all-people's front.

We are here to pledge our commitment to fulfilling the extraordinary tasks demanded of us by our times.

We are here because we are convinced this can be a turning point for our Party. We are convinced that together with our people we can turn our whole country around.

II. ERA OF ECONOMIC DEPRESSION

The Big Business-^{Trump}Reagan war against the people continues with increasing brutality on all fronts. The casualties and victims of this offensive are suffering all the ravages of the 1930's Great Depression.

Today, the "acid rain" from Reaganomics is pouring poison on the lives of millions.

Even while the impact of the last Reagan budget blitz is still gripping the nation, the new 1982 economic neutron budget-bomb - a budget-bomb that cripples and injures people but leaves the corporate profit structure intact - is already being processed through the Congressional hatchet committees.

Congress is buzzing with public relations rhetoric and polemics about a Reagan budget compromise. But so far all the talk is about reducing the deficit by cutting further into funds for social security, aid to dependent children, tuition loans, health care and housing.

The compromise talk is about increasing taxes on the people, while leaving the windfall tax writeoffs of the rich intact.

The plans are for new excise and individual income taxes on the workers and the poor, while increasing tax depreciation allowances for the corporations.

What is desperately needed are not more fake compromises, but a total rejection of the Reagan budget.

What is needed is a people before profits, butter not guns budget.

*S with inst of
new Democrat cabinet,
has brought Smith
back to the work*

Extraordinary Economic Times

The Reagan-Stockman Trojan Horse budgets have become history's most ruthless acts of confiscation and transfer of wealth from the working and poor people to the corporations and rich. They add a whole new dimension to the exploitation of the working class.

In a very basic sense these are truly extraordinary economic times. They call for new thinking, new assessments, new approaches.

We have rising double-digit unemployment rates.

We have rising, double-digit interest rates.

We have double-digit rent and utility increases.

We have growing, double-digit wage cuts.

We have continuing double-digit social service cuts.

We are also on our way back up to double-digit inflation rates.

And with all these double-digit economic crises we are being hit with double-digit increases in social disasters.

Double-digit malnutrition and hunger rates.

Double-digit suicide rates.

Double-digit child abuse rates.

Double-digit divorce rates.

Double-digit mental illness rates.

This depression is playing havoc in a myriad of open and hidden ways with the lives of our people.

We are in the grip of a double-barreled offensive by Reaganomics and the monster monopolies. They have pulled out all stops. There isn't one weapon they won't use to protect their rate of profit. That's what it's all about.

We are experiencing back-to-back, double-dip economic crises.

And, in a direct cause-and-effect relationship there are the opposites -- double-digit increases in corporate profits and double-digit increases in the military budgets.

The rate of exploitation of labor has increased sharply. Corporate profits continued to rise 8% during the back-to back crises. Dividend payments soared, rising 58% in the last four years. While interest payments to the banking-financial galaxies have become a huge parasitic drain, reaching a gross total of \$900 billion per year.

The economy is now in its third crisis within the last five years. And there are economic processes appearing on the scene which are already laying the basis for the next crisis.

More often than not, instead of prosperity right around the corner, we will turn smack into more economic crises.

These extraordinary economic developments are related to and are taking place within the framework of a new historic economic setting. We need to take a new, fresh look at this economic setting.

Era of Decline and Contraction

Economically, in a very basic sense, the United States is in a boomless era of decline and contraction. All economic activities and processes are now operating qualitatively and quantitatively on a declining scale.

There is now programmed into the economy a steady decline in the standard of living. In the capitalist world, the United States now ranks 10th on the list. Because of this declining scale

millions of jobs are now permanently lost, especially in the basic industries.

Added to this is that even when some new jobs open up, especially in the new technology industries, the robots will take over an increasing number of them. For instance the Reagan Administration is projecting that by 1990, 40% of all assembly tasks will be performed by robots.

We are not against robots, or scientific and technological advances in general, as long as they are not used against the workers for the sole purpose of maximizing profits. For instance, a federal law that would guarantee the transfer of benefits to the workers and people through commensurate price cuts and wage increases would help to insure workers against the destructive winds of the new chip-and-robot hurricane.

The U.S. economy is now in its fourth year of steady decline in production. The U.S. share of the world market is in decline. The U.S. share of world exports is below 25% and going down.

In the field of science and technology, the U.S. has lost its lead in many areas and is fast losing its front-runner status generally.

Basic industries such as steel, rubber and auto are suffering from an incurable, irreversible and chronic disease of decline and decay.

Even the so-called "growth industries" are experiencing very short growth and aborted life cycles.

U.S. monopoly capital as an economic system has been riding the crest of a 50-year wave of expansion, at home and abroad. But now it has been checkmated by the law of uneven development of world capitalism. It is caught foundering in the undertoe of the receding economic tides.

The U.S. economy is caught and buffeted by the centrifugal forces, the new level of internal and external contradictions set loose by the continually progressing general crisis of capitalism.

Factors Influencing New Economic Era

Some of the more basic factors influencing the era of economic decline and contraction are:

- 1) The huge locked-in military expenditures have turned into an uncontrollable dead weight on the economy. The planned pattern for the next three years is a 50% increase in military expenditures and a 50% additional cut in funds for welfare, housing and education.
- 2) The U.S.-based multinational corporations have become conduits for the export of capital, production and jobs to areas of higher rates of profit and lower wage scales.
- 3) The trade wars are becoming sharper.
- 4) The new dominating parasitic role and level of extortion by finance capital has become an impediment to any economic growth. The high interest rate and the over half-trillion dollar debt the corporations (especially the smaller ones) owe the banks has created what some call the financial gridlock, in which economic processes are locked within processes. Forty-five percent of the corporate cash flow goes to banks and other financial institutions as interest payments on the debts.

5) The law of capitalism that capital flows where the profits are highest results in sick basic industries and overall economic contraction.

6) The unprecedented controlling economic and political influence by the top monopoly conglomerates makes it possible for monopoly capital to extract increasing profits from a declining economy, which means a higher rate of exploitation and a sharpening of the class contradictions.

7) There is a worldwide capitalist economic crisis that impacts on economic developments in the United States.

These are some of the underlying economic factors molding the extraordinary economic developments.

Supply-side Reaganomics is specifically designed to serve the gluttonous greed of monopoly capital in the era of decline and contraction.

Reaganomics is designed to use the power of the State to maintain the high level of corporate profits in spite of the economic contractions. This is achieved through the elimination of all corporate taxes, repealing the anti-trust laws, bypassing and discarding health and safety regulations and the billions transferred by way of the cost-plus and overrun military contracts.

Supply-side Reaganomics is a scheme to saddle the workers and people with the cost of a declining economy.

The Corporate Offensive and the Working Class

While the offensive continues in full swing on the legislative front, the direct corporate offensive of cutbacks and take-backs has opened up a second front.

The contract re-openers in the auto industry have raised the corporate takeback and cutback offensive to a new level.

They are resulting in the most massive pocket-picking in the 100-year history of the trade union movement.

Based on the cutback contracts in auto, rubber and transport there has already taken place a \$200 billion transfer from the working class to the corporations.

These wage cuts are without precedent. Autoworkers wages will be cut by \$4,000 per year. The corporations will add \$10 billion to their profits. There will be fewer, not more jobs. And plant closings will continue.

These contracts call for profit-sharing with workers. But even this profit-sharing, both real and fake, will be taken out of the federal taxes the corporations are supposed to pay.

The concessions and takebacks by GM and Ford are both real, immediate and will continue for years to come. The concessions to the workers are iffy, vague and full of loopholes.

For example, on a trial basis in a few shops there is ^{2,000} supposed to be job security after 15 years seniority up to the age of 62. But with the proviso that workers must accept any job offered, anywhere, even at below-minimum wages. And then, these workers will only get 50% of their base pay anyway.

The root cause and the driving force behind the double-barreled offensive against the people is big business. And, as we Marxists know, the sole aim of the offensive is to maintain the maximum level of profits.

Because capitalism is in its historic period of decline and decay each economic crisis gives rise to new cyclical and long-range problems.

With each crisis the longer-range problems become more critical, the economic up-turns become shorter and weaker and more of the effects become more chronic.

One of the conclusions we must draw from this is that because the effects of the crises are of longer duration, the movements and struggles that are now emerging will also be of longer duration.

Because U.S. capitalism is in a period of decline and contraction the economic issues will continue to be the key links and all struggles will, in one way or another, relate to these economic issues.

These extraordinary developments are having profound effects on class relations and the class struggle. As Engels said, they compel the working class to move to the front ranks in the forward line of march.

This, in turn, refocuses the spotlight on our Party's industrial concentration policy. We are compelled to re-examine and to restructure our work so that industrial concentration becomes the focal point of our work. But, in a new way, scrapping all old attitudes and forms of routinism.

Our policy of industrial concentration has to be placed within the context of the new economic era and of helping the working class fulfill its role - a role it is significantly beginning to assume.

And, once we recognize and understand this new role of our class, we must then deal with how our Party will fulfill its role as the revolutionary party of the working class.

III. UPDATED ASSESSMENT: THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

New Counter-Force

While the double-barreled offensive continues, and even intensifies, there is a new force beginning to emerge on the scene. It is a counter-force that is beginning to tip the scales of both barrels.

Reagan's standing in the public opinion polls is sinking at a double-digit rate.

In both domestic and foreign policy, the Reagan Administration is more and more being forced on the defensive.

The popular resistance to the nuclear superiority, limited war and first-strike insanity is spreading like wildfire around the world. It has emerged as an offensive movement.

On the defensive, the Reaganites are forced to maneuver, but without much success. And these maneuvers are beginning to produce retreat in some areas.

A new source of strength and power for the counter-force is the fact that the domestic and foreign policy issues are becoming inseparably interconnected. They are emerging as a unified focus in the people's minds.

For instance, people are beginning to tie together the military budget, El Salvador, the nuclear freeze and cuts in social services and, thus, to fight on a united front. "Money for Jobs, Not for War" is a popular slogan symbolizing this combined struggle.

On the domestic scene, the contradictions are beginning to surface sharply.

Reaganomics for Rich

Reaganomics is doing exactly what it was designed to do. It has created a "zero option" tax bonanza for the rich and a welfare program for the corporations.

Reaganomics has created a severe cut-down in the living standards of the people, with the biggest gash reserved for the poorest who are being cut to the bone.

As most Americans now know, the Reagan Administration is not only slashing funds for social security and social service programs.

It is also well into the process of destroying wholesale the hard-won, established structure that has been the bedrock of a minimum base of economic security for many millions of Americans for 50 years.

The American people are still reeling from the shock of this broadside offensive. It has undercut the taken-for-granted minimum economic security base of "The American Dream."

Instead of expecting "prosperity around the corner" and "a car in every garage," most Americans are now scared to turn the corner, afraid they'll bump into the bill collector with a repossession notice for the car.

Rude Awakening Ripple Effects

This rude awakening has united and broadened the base of the people's upsurge. It is fast becoming an across-the-board all people's upsurge.

The rich and most of big business have been on a Reagan-omics binge. But as with all binges when it's over someone has to pay the piper.

The supply-side plan was that ONLY the people would pay. But now the Reaganomic ripple effects are spilling over and playing havoc with the whole economy. That wasn't in the monopoly master plan.

For instance, the tax cut bonanza is enriching the rich. But these tax cuts are also creating the huge budget deficit and high interest rates.

The bloated military budgets are filling the coffers of the arms merchants and pleasing the trigger-happy Pentagon. But, they are also added to the budget deficits and destabilizing the whole economic structure.

It is true, the cuts in social and human services cut down the size of the federal budget. But they also cut drastically into the buying power of the consumers and add fuel to the fires of economic crises.

The cuts in workers' wages, as in the new auto contracts, increase corporate profits. But with less wages the workers are able to buy less, including less cars.

By cutting down on people's living standards, the Reagan policies are adding to the ingredients of new and even deeper crises.

As a result of all these unplanned, unwelcome supply-side ripple effects, large sections of monopoly capital are now going through a sobering-up period. Many are beginning to feel that the side effects are worse than the Reagan cure for the crisis.

Reaganomics Spells Ruin

So, many on both sides of the class struggle are now saying Reaganomics is no solution for anyone. In fact, it has become a large part of the problem.

All this would not have surprised Karl Marx, who predicted long ago that in the final analysis the cause of economic crises is the pauperization of the people.

There's a law of economic cause and effect that proves Reaganomics spells ruin.

Cutting paychecks, unemployment checks, social security checks and food stamps means less money to buy. Therefore, less sales in the marketplace. And less sales means less production. And less production means less jobs. And the vicious cycle begins over again -- less paychecks, and so on and on.

Add up the new cuts in social security, the cut in buying power, the wage cuts, takebacks and the inflation eating into workers' buying power and you come up with a whopping \$300 billion that could have bought a lot of cars, homes, groceries while creating millions of new jobs.

Seems like a simple solution doesn't it? Not for the Reaganites. Not for the Democrats. They're just sitting on the sidelines waiting for the side effects and vicious cycles to take their toll. In the meantime, the only alternatives they're offering are proposals that would further compromise and sell out the interests of the people. They're trying to play it safe on the sidelines, not rocking the Reaganomic boat.

They are playing the traditional in-and-out game of the two old parties of big business.

And, many of the run-of-the-mill Democrats are sitting on the sidelines just watching while the people's fightback movements pass them by.

In a period of crises, politics as usual can be the politics of defeat at the polls.

The Reaganites and Reagan-types are moving on the defensive. Now is the time to put all the new factors and forces into our political and tactical computers and come up with an unbeatable fightback-offensive program.

IV. ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

On the one hand, the basic essence of the Reagan-Haig foreign policy remains one of military confrontation, military buildup, nuclear superiority, first-strike and limited nuclear war.

On the other, the popular resistance to these policies of aggression and militarism continues to build up a head of steam, both at home and abroad. This resistance is gathering unprecedented momentum and spreading like wildfire.

However, there are ominous signs and serious threats to world peace because U.S. policies are based on the conviction that U.S. imperialism can recapture world domination and halt its declining world stature. And, they believe this can be achieved only by way of gaining nuclear military superiority.

While declining influence and growing resistance is forcing the Reaganites to maneuver, this in no way diminishes its voracious appetite or its designs to regain its old position of world dominance.

The Master Plan

The long-term, Reagan-Haig-Pentagon master plan had three essential objectives.

One is to establish U.S. military domination by way of nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union.

The second is to organize, train and fund paramilitary hit squads, for covert operations all over the world, tied in with

the existing international goon squad, the Rapid Deployment Force.

The third is to corner as much as possible of the raw material resources and especially the declining energy resources of the world.

Many of the U.S. military moves and maneuvers are designed to control the sources of raw materials and energy worldwide. Direct profits are only one reason. Another is for the purpose of using this controlling power as a means of coercing its capitalist partners into line. This is precisely the dual purpose of U.S. policy in the Mideast, Persian Gulf and South Africa.

This explains the hostile behavior of Haig and Weinberger toward all the projects that will bring Siberian natural gas to the European capitalist countries. The Siberian gas pipeline will be a tremendous energy source for the European capitalist countries and one that U.S. imperialism will not be able to control.

A Losing Game

The Reagan-Haig-Pentagon foreign policies are policies that play with fire. They present serious threats to the peace of the world. But the policy is a losing game.

The Reagan-Haig-Weinberger forays, hostile maneuvers, threatening postures and belligerent positions are only further isolating the United States.

The furious attempts to draw the European capitalist countries into anti-Soviet and anti-Polish sanctions and boycotts never got off the ground. They are out of touch with the new world reality.

The contradictions between the United States, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and France have reached an all-time high. This new level of contradictions is reflected in sharpening trade wars, worldwide capitalist economic crises and convulsions in the monetary and credit systems.

There is an economic domino effect among capitalist countries because interest payments on loans have reached the point where inability to pay is becoming a major obstacle to further loans for trade based on credit. For many countries, the total profits from foreign trade go to pay the interest on past loans.

In today's world a foreign policy of aggression and militarism is both dangerous and extremely costly.

The huge military expenditures, which are non-productive and wasteful, are an important element in the "economic crises gridlock."

The increasing resistance to the military budget is a key link in the struggle for world peace and in the struggle against the ravages of Reaganomics.

Around the World

In Central and Latin America, especially in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Cuba, the basic U.S. policies of aggression and hostility continue. But the fast-rising tide of resistance and opposition by a majority of our people and the world has forced the Reagan Administration to slow down, re-calculate and maneuver. The tactical maneuvering is a direct response to the increasing pressures.

The maneuvers expose a crack, a weakness in the armor of

U.S. imperialism that can become a major factor in the defeat of policies of aggression.

In the Mideast, the Camp David Accords are fast becoming bare bones drying up in the desert sands.

But one vote away from a no-confidence vote in the Knesset, the Begin Government continues in power. With its power and popularity drastically declining, with peace demonstrations by Israelis and protest demonstrations by the oppressed Arab population, Begin pushes on with the brutal military aggression and annexation.

The Palestinian people's liberation forces and the Palestine Liberation Organization continue to gather strength and support. An important indication of this is the founding convention of the Communist Party of Palestine. Another is the growing and almost total isolation of Israel in the United Nations. Another is the increasing inability of the Reagan Administration to control the outrageous behavior of its Mideast puppet, to defend it and to protect it from world condemnation.

What is becoming undeniably clear is that Israel will be forced to give up its expansionist aims, to give back the territory it has annexed by force of arms, to cease hostilities against, and to make peace with its neighbors and to acquiesce finally in the just demands of the Palestinian people for an independent and sovereign homeland.

The China card in U.S. imperialism's game is now a deck full of jokers in a hand they thought held only aces.

In South Africa, the blatant, open support of the Reagan Administration for the apartheid racist regime is still in place. But this support has not strengthened the brutal regime. And it has not in any way blocked the movements of national liberation, both in South Africa and Namibia.

We must continue and step up our international solidarity work in support of all types of boycotts and sanctions against apartheid and oppression in the countries of all southern Africa.

In Puerto Rico, Reaganomics has hit the people like a thunderbolt. Already reeling from the effects of U.S. colonialism, Reaganomics is dealing a killing blow to the majority who are forced to depend on food stamps, health and welfare programs. It is inflicting multiple wounds on a country already suffering the oppression of colonialism. Increasingly, the people of Puerto Rico are protesting and demanding relief from the grip of the monopolies and the Reaganites.

The fact is that in every region of the world the Reagan Administration's record is dismal. It has scored zero in its foreign policy worldwide.

Conclusions

Increasingly, U.S. imperialism is forced to deal with problems and relationships within the context of a balance of world forces that continue to shift against it. And, there are special problems to deal with because of the declining U.S. position in the world.

And, while there are still problems to overcome in the socialist world as in Poland, world socialism continues on the path of progress and prosperity.

The Soviet Union continues its steadfast fight for policies of peace and detente, in spite of the reckless confrontation policies of the Reagan Administration.

The Soviet Union is not only the main bulwark and defender of world peace and national liberation, but the major roadblock to the war hawks, the counterrevolutionaries and nuclear maniacs.

The stepped-up cold war rhetoric, the huge military buildup and budgets, the intensified anti-Soviet, anti-communist campaigns worldwide, the zero option, limited nuclear war and nuclear military superiority concepts, the renewed attempts at boycotts, blockades and embargoes, and more, are all geared toward upsetting the existing nuclear military balance and changing the correlation of forces in the world. It is all part of the campaign to regain world domination. It is a doomed-to-failure campaign.

Proof of this is the U.S. and European mass peace movements, the nuclear freeze campaign taking hold worldwide, the widening gap in the NATO alliance, the growing split in the ranks of monopoly capital over nuclear policy, exemplified by the wide publicity given the ex-U.S. foreign policy strategists calling for no-first use, and the cracks in imperialist ranks worldwide.

All these factors, and more, are forcing Reagan-Haig-Weinberger-Pentagon into a defensive posture. Their policies are meeting with resistance, rejection and challenges in every region of the

world. The U.S. role as ruler and dictator of the capitalist world is over.

The U.S. has been unable to adjust to the new world realities in any consistent way. Therefore, its policies are a mixture of retreat, maneuver, manipulation, aggression and confrontation alternating with policies of moves toward arms negotiations, backtracking, defensiveness and peace posturing.

U.S. policy, trying to cope with new world realities and the real balance of world forces, behaves erratically, inconsistently, defensively and aggressively. This means new dangers, but also new possibilities for victories in the world revolutionary process.

The new moment calls for vigilance and the continuing mobilization of the peace majority. It calls for using all divisions that arise in the camp of imperialism to move the world back from the brink of nuclear disaster. It calls for the continuous linking and interlinking of movements on the domestic and international fronts to defeat militarism and Reaganomics.

The new moment calls for a new unity of the people of the U.S. with the peoples of the world in the movements for peace, disarmament, nuclear freeze, against imperialism, racism and injustice.

V. THE ALL PEOPLE'S FIGHTBACK FRONT

The direct-hit destruction, as well as the fallout, from the double-barreled offensive of big business is bombarding our land.

However, the impact and effects of the meat-axe budgets and Reaganomics are not uniform across the land.

Different regions of the country and different sectors of our population are feeling the crisis to varying degrees.

One thing is sure. All but the very rich are hurting in one way or another, to one degree or another. We are definitely now facing an across-the-board crisis.

Across-the-Board Human Toll

The range of human suffering runs the gamut from fear of losing one's job, to the real thing, to the unemployment line, to eviction, to a drastic cut in life-style, to bankruptcy, foreclosure and repossession, to hunger, homelessness and the soupline.

Therefore, the range of response and fightback is very broad and takes place on many different levels. It also differs from issue to issue.

For instance, at this point millions are still in a state of shock and disbelief that what they've taken for granted for so long is now being pulled from under their feet. Many are past shock and are beginning to feel anger and frustration. Many are already at full-bcil and ready to fight back. And, for many anger, and especially mass protest, is a completely new element in their lives. For many, it was something that only other people did.

There are many who still believe in the promise of an economic upturn in the Spring, or at the latest by Summer. And then, they think, everything will get better, will return to "the

good old days." Hope is still the dominant mood.

Victims of Reaganomics

The awful reality of life in the United States is that there are now new millions who are the humiliated out-of-sight hidden hungry, who are ashamed to apply for welfare or to stand in the soup kitchen lines.

There are the millions who are newly homeless, sleeping in bus stations, in subway cars and cardboard boxes on city streets. Millions who only recently had a job or a home.

There is a huge portion of our people who are working poor, who still have their jobs but at wages that don't pay the bills.

Inflation and taxes are turning people into paupers. These are the millions who have jobs paying below the minimum wage scales. And Reagan wants to add more millions by eliminating even the minimum wage and establishing the so-called "free enterprise zones."

There are the millions of workers whose wages have been cut up to 20%, under threat of plant closings and layoffs, who are now faced with the difficult downward-mobility adjustments in their lifestyles. The personal and psychological suffering from this downward mobility shows up in the divorce rates, the child abuse and abandonment rates, the suicide rates and crime rates.

There are the millions of mothers who have worked but are now either laid off or have had to quit because of the Reagan child care cuts and the slashes in the aid to dependent children and social security programs.

There are the millions of senior citizens living on minimum social security checks, who look at tomorrow with fear and anxiety because they can't make ends meet. They live under the constant

shadow of hunger, sickness and death.

There are the millions of schoolchildren and students who are being cut off from their right to a decent public school education and the opportunity to go to college, because the lifeline tuition loans are beyond their reach.

There are the millions who can no longer pay the skyrocketing utility bills, rents, home and car payments. Millions who are losing not only comforts, but necessities of life.

There are the growing number of boarded-up homes, including in middle class suburbs, because the owners couldn't keep up with the upkeep. Many have taken down the for sale sign because so few can afford to buy houses today.

There are millions of workers and their families whose lives have come to a dead end because of plant closings, whose communities have become ghost towns because the corporations closed down and moved out.

There are the tens of millions in crumbling, dying cities whose lives are made inconvenient, unsafe and insecure by cuts in human and social services, filthy streets, dangerous transit systems, polluted air and water, closed down hospitals, schools, libraries and recreation facilities.

Victims of Reaganite Racism

In all these different levels of poverty, deprivation, desperation, despair and anger, there are the special and deeper wounds inflicted on the victims of racial oppression. They are the suffering victims of the triple-barreled offensive.

The people of our land who are racially and nationally oppressed are subjected to the highest unemployment rates, hunger and poverty rates.

They are the majority of the working poor, the most sharply devastated by cuts in social security - by all the shock waves of crisis after crisis on top of crisis.

They are forced to live in ghettos and barrios which are now disaster areas and emergency enclaves of poverty and hopelessness.

All the advances in human and civil rights won with the blood, sweat and tears of years of struggle are being wiped out by the Reaganite racist offensive.

So, there are the millions who are losing what they have, the millions who live in constant fear of losing, and the millions who have no hope of ever having anything.

All of us, in one way or another, are now living in the grip of a chronic economic crunch. Whether they are being squeezed or choked, people everywhere are hurting bad.

If Reagan dared to ask today: "Are you better off today than you were a year ago?" the majority of Americans would answer, "Hell, no!"

These are the millions who on one level or another make up the people's fightback movements.

Although the economic epidemic spreads across the board, some issues affect most people. But the most burning issues that will move people into action are not the same for everyone.

Therefore, knowing the nature of the crisis in your community, the critical issues in your shop and accurately gauging the people's mood is important. This is the bottom line of effective leadership and tactics, of formulating demands, slogans and projecting forms

of struggle and organization.

Nature of the Fightback Movements

On the economic issues, the first actions are beginning to take shape.

The first public meetings of the unemployed are being organized by some trade unions.

A number of marches to state capitols and city halls have taken place and protest demonstrations are mushrooming all over.

There are militant protests against the skyrocketing utility rates in many parts of the country, with slogans like - "nationalize energy," and "people's power - nationalize energy."

With the coming of Spring, the first actions of farmers are taking place, in the spirit of the tractor march on Washington. Such a militant action has already taken place in Minnesota.

The senior fightback movement is in full swing, with conferences, demonstrations, petition campaigns and literally thousands of actions dealing with social security, Medicare and housing issues.

The April 4th youth actions commemorated the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with a week of demonstrations against Reaganomics.

Young people and students are organizing teach-ins against the draft, military budgets and war. Youth are a large sector of the peace majority fighting U.S. intervention in El Salvador. They are a large contingent of the nuclear freeze and anti-nuclear power movement taking hold in our country.

There are environmental groups organizing against the poisoning and raping of our land, seas and air.

And, we must include the dynamics and forces that gave rise to the September 19th march and demonstration, which was the high point in the fightback so far, both in size and composition.

At this point, however, we must keep in mind that movements such as those which came together on September 19th do not flow from one mass action directly to another. The ferment and anger, the spirit and new levels of thinking that propelled thousands to Washington - if tapped - will become the basis for a continuing process of mass actions.

We have examples of areas where the coalitions that organized for September 19th are still alive and kicking, on a higher level.

Today, people are becoming angrier and more radicalized daily, more and more ready to move into action. We must keep this in mind when we discuss tactics, demands and struggles in the coming period.

The Labor Movement Fightback

There are the strikes and walkouts of hospital, railroad, health care workers, teachers and others who are fighting against cutbacks and takebacks and for unionization.

There is the massive Houston drive to organize the unorganized. And there is the AFL-CIO initiative to participate in the 1982 elections to unseat the Reaganites.

While some 25% of Ford workers who cast ballots voted against the supply-the-rich-side contract, most showed their opposition by ignoring the ratification vote.

And, in spite of all the pressures, the majority of GM workers voted against their contract.

However, the resistance and opposition sentiment seething below the surface has not yet found fully organized and articulate expression. This is mainly because Ford, GM and American Motors, as well as the top UAW leadership, led by Douglas Fraser, used their skills and resources to mislead the workers into accepting the sell-out contracts.

But the autoworkers have not had their last say yet. It is clear that when the corporations begin putting these contracts into effect, both the open and hidden corporate clauses that benefit only the companies will hit the workers. The opposition will surface in new, militant rank and file movements. They are important factors in the people's fightback.

The Fight for Peace

The peace movement is literally busting out all over. June 12th will see the coming together of the great U.S. peace majority in a demonstration at the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament.

The no-nuke and nuclear freeze movements, the campaigns against Reagan's foreign policies, the movement against intervention in El Salvador, have all become a broad all people's united movement which has recently moved on the offensive. Even Reagan and Haig felt compelled to respond defensively to the U.S. peace majority.

This mass peace movement will continue to become a tremendous obstacle to U.S. policies of war and aggression.

The Reagan Administration's statements proclaiming they are for a nuclear freeze - after the U.S. nuclear and military buildup - are concessions to the popular and Congressional challenge.

They are at least forced to talk about freeze and arms reduction negotiations.

The movement to cut the military budget is also gaining momentum among the people and in Congress.

Future of Fightback

The mass upsurge is beginning to surface in actions and movements on many levels in many areas on many issues.

However, to make a correct assessment of the moment it is important not only to take note of these mass actions. It is also important to understand the scope and nature of the build-up of sentiment and mood that have not yet fully surfaced into protests and actions.

In this regard, a number of factors need to be considered.

It is important to realize that as the crisis problems deepen, as people realize that solutions are not forthcoming, increasing numbers will then be ready to move to the level of fightback, of taking a stand.

Turning Potential into Reality

This potential protest is building up. But it is important to understand that much of the potential that is building up will not turn into mass actions if it is not consciously stimulated, mobilized and organized.

The spontaneous element provides the mass sentiment. Mobilization, organization and planned, conscious initiatives move this sentiment onto the action level.

How to make the initial, sometimes tiny step, is a very important element of tactics.

Slogans, demands, programs and forms of organization and action must be geared toward convincing people that it is possible to fight back and win.

In the auto workers' case, the potential has not yet fully surfaced because what is still missing in the situation is program, organization and leadership.

A major weakness of the mass upsurge is the necessity to build more crystalized forms of the grass roots. Coalitions and committees of leading forces are necessary and important. But they will suffer from the mushroom weakness if they are not supported and sustained by organized grass roots.

It is absolutely necessary to get trade unions and other organizations to become involved with the problems of the unemployed. But that is not enough. The unemployed need organizations of the unemployed, led by the unemployed. Such forms can give the struggles the necessary grass roots base.

In order to gear up our Party to fully respond and make our full contribution to the movements and struggles that make up the people's fightback, we should take seriously the advise Lenin gave the Russian Communists during a period of mass upsurge.

He said:

"We must live in the midst of the people."

"We must know their sentiments."

"We must know everything."

"We must understand the masses."

"We must find the correct approach."

"We must win their absolute confidence."

This, too, is the challenge our Party must accept if we are to become a leading force in transforming the rising resistance into a winning all people's fightback front.

VI. WORKING CLASS COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

Both barrels of the Reagan-corporate offensive are aimed at our multi-racial, multi-national working class. Workers are being hit broadside and from all sides. They are taking it directly on the chin.

The ripple effect of every layoff slip is dubbed "the pink slip syndrome." It is the personal tragedies that strike the lives of layed off workers and their families.

Reaganomics: A Ruling Class Offensive

Reaganomics is an offensive, state-monopoly weapon of policies to cut wages and increase the rate of exploitation in the midst of economic crises and in an era of decline.

Reaganomics is a class weapon to maximize the corporate drive for private profits with supply-side economics.

The result is a sharpening of the class contradictions and the class struggle. It is force-feeding and accelerating the radicalization process.

As a result of this massive, all-out, all-sided offensive, the working class is still on the defensive. It continues to experience setbacks, especially in the form of takebacks such as the auto, rubber and teamster contracts.

Were the Takeback Setbacks Unavoidable?

To get a clear perspective, it is always necessary to ask a few basic questions: Were these setbacks unavoidable because the ruling class, monopoly capital, and the individual corporations are running out of resources and money?

The answer is obvious. U.S. Steel found 6 1/2 billion dollars, very quickly, when it decided to buy Marathon Oil. GM has no trouble paying its president \$490,000 plus a year, or racking up profits of one billion dollars in 1981 - a "bad year."

Was it necessary to take wage cuts to save jobs? Again, the answer is no.

From the viewpoint of the trade unions, it is sometimes necessary to make concessions to the corporations. At such moments, it may be necessary to limit demands to preserving gains already won.

However, in the present situation the fundamental flaw is the wrong attitude and cave-in positions of some trade union leaders.

In auto, rubber and the teamsters there is an attitude of retreating without a fight. An attitude that says to the bosses: "What can we do? We haven't got a chance. Everyone has to sacrifice. Times are tough for everyone." This is class collaboration in the era of decline and contraction of monopoly capitalism.

Blaming the Workers & Making Them Pay

The re-opened contracts are geared to saving the corporations. Not the industries. Not the jobs of workers. They will not stop plant closings. They will not bring down the price of cars.

These supply-side, Reaganomics contracts are part of the general anti-working class offensive that is out to reverse working class gains, destroy trade unions and class struggle victories of the past 50 years.

In these industries, the contracts signal a serious shift in class relations and the class struggle.

The contract negotiations were conducted as if the workers were the culprits and the corporations the victims of the workers' laziness and greed.

They lend credibility to the false idea that wages are the determining factor in raising prices. In reality, corporate profits are the main reason for raising profits.

They also give credibility to the capitalist argument that the working class is the cause of economic crises. Again, the reverse is true. It is the capitalists' insatiable drive for maximum private profits, by whatever means, that is destroying our economy.

What the New Contracts Mean for Workers

These are some of the things these contracts result in:

1) They establish a precedent that workers must save the corporations and industries through wage and benefit cuts;

2) They establish the concept of throwing workers to the corporate wolves - especially workers with less seniority, the racially and nationally oppressed workers, the young, women and unskilled workers;

3) They are a most serious blow to the concept of the trade union as an organization of all workers in the fight against racism.

They totally eliminate the provisions that fight for equality and affirmative action with teeth.

New Contracts & Class Unity

Because of these precedent-setting, class collaborationist concepts, these re-negotiated contracts become big obstacles to establishing working class unity in these industries. And working class unity at critical crises moments is a main ingredient for conducting an effective fightback.

The obstacles to class unity in these contracts include the setting up of such forms as "Mutual Growth Forums" that will take up such topics as "business developments."

The fact that the head of UAW's Ford Division "will be permitted to address Ford's Board of Directors twice a year" is proclaimed a victory for the union!

The contracts are peppered with phrases such as "the corporations will make every effort to..., including the replacement of workers when they close down plants." Which means they have all intentions of continuing to close down plants.

And here's the real clincher.

GM Vice President Warren, who signed the contract, hinted "We've only begun to attack the problem." The other takeback shoe will fall in the coming negotiations on local agreements.

Remarking on these local negotiations, a GM spokesman said that by raising production standards (translated: speedup, cutting wage rates and other such measures in each plant) the GM profit-take most likely will be bigger than the billions it is getting from the national UAW agreement.

But the narrow 52% to 48% ratification vote on the GM contract by workers is a solid base for the mobilization of a fightback struggle. A militant fightback by these workers can not only defeat the corporate offensive on a local level, but can be the beginning of a counter-offensive on an industry-wide basis. It can be the beginning of a movement that moves the whole working class onto a general offensive position.

Gearing Up for Going on the Offensive

Added to this potential base is the growing sentiment and movements of fightback in the labor movement generally.

Parallel with the Reagan-corporate offensive, there is a massive corporate campaign to promote the GM and Ford contracts as an established pattern for all labor contract negotiations.

But that is not the case. Outside of the teamsters and rubber, most unions are NOT accepting the no-struggle position.

There are strikes, walkouts and union organizing drives. And, there are many examples of victories, big and small.

Over one million workers went out on strike last year. The average wage increases were 8 1/2%.

Some contracts included victories against the negative effects of automation, for additional paid holidays, higher night shift pay, dental plans, etc.

The labor forces and the fighting spirit that organized, mobilized and led the September 19 march are still very much alive and kicking in many industrial cities.

The coalitions and committees that were built as part of the September 19 demonstration are additional spark plugs for many of the state and city protest actions happening around the country.

The protest demonstrations and picket lines that were set up wherever Reagan appeared - such as those in Minnesota, Iowa, Oklahoma and New York - were largely organized by the trade unions.

Many local unions, some central labor bodies and international unions are moving to organize the unemployed into a fightback force for jobs.

Within the defensive posture, the working class is developing movements and struggles that are preparing the ground for going on the offensive in the class struggle.

We must always keep in mind that the concept of militant fight-back struggles in the context of defense is not a contradiction.

In fact, in such a period as this it is inevitable that the working class counter-offensive will begin from a position of defending and protecting past gains.

The objective conditions and the fightback forces are moving in the direction of struggles that will shift the working class to an offensive posture.

Revitalization of Trade Union Movement

In this respect, most promising are the steps being taken by some central labor bodies to re-organize and re-structure the trade union centers in order to give the trade union movement more clout.

The plans include setting up task forces of union activists in all fields and areas of activity - political, legislative, organizational and educational.

This work is being organized with the aid of highly efficient computers. The aim is to train and promote trade unionists to become political personalities. The aim is to equip these activists with the skills and talents necessary to go out and influence people, to win elections, to become influential politicians on community, town, city, state and federal bodies of power.

With the aid of computerization and advanced methods, the goal is total mobilization of the trade union membership and labor's allies for actions such as all-out emergency strike support, organizing drives, political and legislative advocacy, etc.

From the working class viewpoint of moving from defensive to offensive struggles these re-organizing and re-structuring drives can be instrumental. The working class cannot go on the offensive in only one shop, one city, or even in one industry. It must win the active support of the public and the trade unions.

The many-sided nature of this revitalization drive is of great significance because it is difficult to move to an offensive in the economic sector without the support of the political sector.

What It Takes: Role and Tasks

We must become sensitive to the rising currents of the mass upsurge, especially as they emerge in the ranks of the working class.

However, this understanding and sensitivity is only the beginning of our tasks and responsibilities.

Applause and bouquets have never really contributed anything substantial to working class struggles. Watching and waiting for movements and struggles to arise and bloom spontaneously is a frustrating and a losing game.

Molding and welding the working class into a united fightback force that can move onto the offensive calls for some special and necessary preconditions.

Some Special Pre-requisites

One very basic pre-requisite is organized, active and militant rank and file movements. Any idea that rank and file movements have become outdated because of the changes taking place in the trade union movement is dead wrong.

The changing scene must be taken into account. The new situation calls for the rank and file movement to work more closely within the broad sweep of the working class fightback and less as an opposition force.

In other words, wherever possible the rank and file groups should work as a force within the mainstream majority and less as an anti-establishment minority.

As the fightback movement develops and the thinking and mood of workers shift, this approach becomes both possible and necessary.

Another pre-requisite is the organization of the fightback on the shop and department levels.

In many ways this is the most challenging of all tasks. It means convincing workers that the fight is winable. It means working with, supporting and strengthening the steward and grievance setup. It means meeting such challenges as the "Mutual Growth Forums" and the "Quality of Work Life Circles." It means dealing with the new level of racism.

In sum, it means working in a way that will build the base of unity, raise the sense of confidence and the level of class consciousness.

Building the Left and Left-Center Forms

The mounting fightback and the increasingly up-front role of the trade unions are extremely important developments.

However, we must not draw the erroneous conclusion that because of this there is no need for organized left-center forms. In fact, the need for such forms becomes greater. But again, the left-center forms must reflect the overall changes in the trade union movement.

In the new situation, the left-center forces, if organized, can be the leading forces influencing and determining the policies and actions of the whole trade union movement.

The Left Forces

During an upsurge the process of radicalization gathers momentum. It is a time of shifting and change. Increasing numbers of workers look more and more to the left, the more militant forces, for guidance and leadership.

Therefore, it is logical and necessary to constantly make updated estimates and attitudes toward the growing left forces. Narrowness, inflexibility and outdated approaches and relationships to the developing left forces can lead to isolation at a time when large numbers are in motion.

As in all areas, the developments in the trade union movement and the changes in the thought patterns of the working class dictate that we take a new, fresh look at our work.

Revolutionary Party of the Working Class

We must face the hard facts of the class struggle. If we do not take the necessary, concrete, initiating steps to set up rank and file movements, to build local and industry-wide left-center forms, as well as left forms, we are, in fact, leaving the fightback to spontaneity.

Leaving mass developments to spontaneity means neglecting our role and responsibilities to the trade union movement and the working class fightback.

It is true, "The People United Can Defeat Reaganism." But we must always keep up front that the working class is the key link that can unite and move the whole chain.

Organizing and mobilizing the growing militancy of the working class, helping to mold it into a cohesive, united fighting force is the main challenge our Party must accept in this period.

More than ever before, the working class is painfully conscious of the fact that it is the corporations and the ruling class who have gotten our country into the mess it is in. And, they are fast becoming conscious of the fact that it is the working class who will have to lead the way out of it.

As the working class struggles to win its historic place in the front ranks of the all people's front, more than ever before it needs the help, the experience, the politics, program and ideology, the guidance and leadership of its revolutionary party, the Communist Party, U.S.A.

This Conference must prepare our whole Party for this extraordinary, historic challenge.

VII. THE 1982 ANTI-REAGAN ELECTORAL WAVE

The growing people's fightback movements are beginning to take hold, to influence and mold the 1982 electoral arena.

As we predicted in December 1981, the anti-Reagan tidal wave is beginning to crest. And, it is bringing with it a very dramatic shift in the electoral weather patterns.

There is now sprouting up the shoots of an all people's anti-Reaganite electoral front.

There is already an unmistakable "Dump Reagan" mood blowing in the political winds. Reaganite trailblazers and frontrunners are fast turning into trailing-far-behind candidates in many key races.

All the latest public opinion polls reflect a fast-rising anti-Reagan sentiment.

Writing about these shifting winds of mis-fortune, a leading Ohio political columnist discussed the electoral scene.

In his column he wrote about the electoral chances of a leading Republican running for the U.S. Senate, John A. Ashbrook.

He wrote that, "a race which seemed so promising less than a year ago has taken on the aura of a political death march." And, he concluded, "Reagan's economic failure has caused Ashbrook's election prospects to plummet."

Mr. Ashbrook was such a sure bet only a few months ago that a leading Ohio Republican boasted that "All Republican candidates were going to run and win on Ashbrook's coat tails."

Completely changing his tune, this same politician now says "The other Republican Party candidates would treat Ashbrook as if he was a contagious disease."

Philosophically, the columnist ended with the prediction, "In Ashbrook's case, he may find that it was right to be right in 1981, but it is wrong to be right in 1982."

In a sense, this describes the stage setting for the 1982 elections. As we know, the stage setting is important. But by itself it does not create a Broadway hit!

There are also clear signs that the slumbering 50% of the voting public who did not participate in past elections are beginning to stir. Especially in areas where there are candidates who represent more than the usual "warmed over cabbage" Democrats.

In the 1982 elections, the non-voters of the past can become the decisive swing voters of today.

For this to happen means there must be a massive voter registration drive. It means a major, mass campaign, with special literature, registration tables, house-to-house and door-to-door canvassing, telephone work and getting out the vote activities.

New Electoral Coalitions

Already in a number of Congressional Districts anti-Reagan electoral coalitions are beginning to take shape. In fact, in primaries already held these coalitions were winning tickets.

In many of these coalitions the initiative came from the trade union forces. And, more than at any time in the past, some

Not in all, but in a number of districts, the coalitions and candidates are running on anti-Reagan and openly anti-monopoly platforms.

The new initiatives and activities by the trade union movement are important breaks with the past.

As they develop, these and many more elements can serve to move the working class into the front line of march in the political action/electoral arena.

For instance, the initiatives to organize coalitions in the primaries enhances labor's political independence in a new way.

There is a new emphasis on nominating working class candidates.

There is a new emphasis on concentrating electoral work in industrial working class districts.

There is a higher level of understanding the need to build the coalitions based on labor, Afro-Americans, Chicano, Puerto Rican, women, artists, professionals and young activists.

Some are taking special measures to involve the unemployed.

Black Electoral Politics - Lessons to Draw Upon

There are important new developments in Black electoral political independence.

For instance, the Parker-Coltrane Political Action Committee set up by the Congressional Black Caucus, is being organized for action in a number of southern states. In Mississippi, they have organized schools and seminars to train electoral field workers.

There is an important lesson in the election and re-election

This is also true of many of the Black mayors. In spite of concerted efforts to defeat Black incumbents through such schemes as gerrymandering, they have been repeatedly re-elected.

The efforts to defeat Black incumbents have failed because in most cases the candidates have built a strong political independent base. A political base that is independent of the Democratic Party machines.

Electoral Role of the Left and Party

These are all significant, positive developments. In many of these movements, left and Party forces are involved.

However, in too many areas the left, including our Party, are still sitting and waiting on the sidelines to see what happens. Waiting to see what kind of candidates will appear on the stage after the primaries.

Well, in the context of the present moment, the left and Party cannot afford to sit out the primary election process period. We can't afford to because that is where the mass upsurge is. And, it is the process that will determine the quality of anti-Reagan candidates who will win in November.

tactical Shift - for '82 Elections

Some comrades are having difficulties with the electoral tactical shift we projected at the last Central Committee meeting this past December. I think these difficulties lie more in the area of apprehension about making mistakes than in actual mistakes in the process of applying the policy. In a sense this was

Before discussing some of the problems, let me re-state the overall concept.

First, we are discussing a tactical shift only as it applies to the 1982 elections. After these elections we will have to take another tactical look. That is the nature of tactics. Tactical shifts do not necessarily mean policy shifts.

Secondly, we said that because of the extremely reactionary and racist policies of the Reagan Administration there will emerge a broad, all people's fightback movement that will hit the electoral scene as an anti-Reagan wave. As predicted, this is now taking place.

Thirdly, that this will then set the framework within which all electoral activities must be placed. Frankly, it could not be otherwise.

The Problems

Now, what are some of the problems. Some say we are adopting the lesser evil concept. No. What we are adopting is a tactic that will, in as many places as possible, provide alternative anti-Reaganite candidates - who are not evil.

With few exceptions, such candidates will run in the Democratic Party primaries. They will be labor, Afro-American, women, youth - spokespersons for all the victims of class, racial, national and monopoly oppression.

This is a correct tactic. And, it is a possible one because of the mass upsurge. It is a tactic of trying to break out of the less evil bind.

We should keep in mind that when we swim in large, uncharted seas there are always going to be problems about what strokes to use in swimming. There will be currents, cross-currents and under-currents. We must learn all the swim-strokes so that we are prepared to handle all currents. That way we'll eliminate the sink or swim syndrome.

One of the problems that has emerged already is that phony Democrats, who are not really against Reagan's policies, are jumping on the anti-Reagan bandwagon.

In such cases, the independent forces have to find ways of exposing and defeating such candidates.

The labor and independent forces must insist that candidates take stands on specific issues, such as racism, social security, jobs, the nuclear freeze and plant closings.

A good slogan might be:

"No Free Rides on the Anti-Reagan Bandwagon!"

Another problem is the fear some express that we will abandon our campaign for political independence. On this question there are weaknesses in both directions.

Political Independence '82

Some have drawn the wrong conclusion that for the time being we will put the campaign for political independence in moth balls. The other side is that some see political independence as something separate and apart from the rising anti-Reagan wave. Both are wrong.

Our 1982 tactical shift does not mean we will give up or mothball our advocacy of political independence, of a new labor-based political party. To do so would be a grave mistake. We must take these concepts into the mass anti-Reagan wave. They will gather new strength. They will be an important influence within the anti-Reagan wave.

Only if there are politically independent movements within the mass wave can there be a fully effective anti-Reagan electoral victory. Only independent and left forces can inject programs and issues that go beyond the run-of-the-mill candidates.

Whenever we project tactics we are talking about people, mobilizing people.

The application of tactics in real life situations always starts with the question: who and where are the people politically whom we must work with?

And for 1982, a necessary question is: where are the people who are politically independent, people who have no confidence in the two old parties?

The present situation makes it more complicated for independent politics. But it also opens the doors to a whole new electoral world. Our purpose, of course, is not to enter this big new world in order to be observers, or to get lost in it. The idea is to walk into it and to work with and influence the broader forces making up the anti-Reagan wave.

The big-wigs of the Democratic Party see political independence within the anti-Reagan sweep as a problem. At their last meeting they closed some of the doors and tightened the rules, in order to keep independent-minded Democrats out. But that is not possible because, like it or not, political independence is a growing phenomenon inside and outside the two old parties.

In the 1982 elections it is most important to pursue a tactic that unites the two. This is a viable tactic if it is pursued within the broad anti-Reagan sweep. Such a tactic is a most important feature in the building of an all people's front.

The '82 Tactical Shift: Correct Interpretation

Some comrades have interpreted the tactical shift to mean that we give up the fight for Communist candidates, or any participation of the Party in its own name.

How did we present the question? In "What the Reds Say Today," we said:

"This tactical shift does not in any way minimize the need for political independence. It does not minimize our projection and promotion of a new labor-led third party on the future horizon. It does not minimize the need for Communist election campaigns." (Page 89)

And,

"Is this tactical emphasis in contradiction with our understanding and emphasis on running Communists for public office?"

"It would be in contradiction only if we separate such campaigns from the mass upsurge and anti-Reagan wave." (Page 90)

So, wrong conclusions are not based on our December 1981 assessments. Rather, they are reflections of deeper and more general political and ideological weaknesses, which I will discuss later in my remarks.

Let me repeat again in another way. We cannot be an active, influential force in the movements and struggles against the Reagan policies and then when it comes to the electoral process, either hibernate or withdraw into a "Communist election campaign" that is outside, isolated from the movements within the anti-Reagan sweep.

We must avoid both mistakes. It is true, the present situation makes our electoral work more complex. But again, it also opens the doors to new opportunities. We must not hesitate to walk in.

There is now very little time left for helping political independents, trade unionists, Afro-Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, youth, women, seniors and the unemployed candidates to win in the primaries.

After the primaries, it is necessary to take a new look at each situation. The question then will be: how to pursue the same tactic in the new setting, but still within the overall anti-Reagan wave.

We should look for and participate in discussions with broader forces about running independent candidates outside the two old parties. And, we should investigate where there is a need to build independent forms in order to influence candidates who won in the primaries.

In periods of mounting mass movements political moods and thought patterns are - to use the bourgeois expression - very "volatile."

Tactics must reflect not only this obvious volatility, but also that which is still seething beneath the surface.

To be meaningful, discussions about tactics must be discussions about the nature and roots of this volatility in the mass upsurge.

Significance of '82 Elections

Because the 1982 elections can be an important turning point in the struggle to turn back Raganomics and the foreign policy of nuclear confrontation, we must work to keep the elections on the front burner. They can be the straw that breaks the back of the Reagan boll weevil coalition.

We must assign cadre that will make the elections their main and even only activity.

Most of the state primaries have not yet taken place. There is still time to influence their outcome. There is still time to help organize electoral coalitions that can influence and even determine the outcome of the primaries and the November elections.

We should be involved now with independent forces, helping to decide where independent candidates should run after the primaries.

Communist Electoral Campaigns

We must now make decisions where Communist candidates should run. Some campaigns are already under way, as is the case in Ohio and Connecticut. But, we must have Communists running for public office in such typical states as Michigan, New York, California and Wisconsin.

We must keep in mind that electoral politics will continue after November.

And, wherever possible, we should work towards keeping alive and active the electoral coalitions that are created. They can become the structure for political independence. They can become the forces that will be transformed into the foundation for a new mass people's party.

In all this we must keep in mind that the voting public is searching for Communists, for the radical programs, platforms and solutions that only Communists can contribute.

And, Communist election campaigns, Communist platforms and Communist candidates give the people a chance to get to know the Party publicly, to see it as a powerful, legitimate alternative on the electoral scene.

In past election campaigns there was a good response when we talked about radical change, socialist solutions and socialism.

Today, with capitalism in deep decline and ever-deepening crisis, with Reaganomics becoming part of the problem instead of the solution, the socialist solutions have become more interesting, more viable and even, to many, more urgent.

There are many good reasons why our Party runs Communist candidates. But the opportunity to talk about socialism, U.S.A. to millions of Americans is, in itself, a good enough reason to conduct Communist electoral campaigns.

VIII. REAGANOMICS AND RACISM

In the era of its decline, all the ugliest, most ruthless and criminal features of capitalism get uglier and more ruthless.

Racism is deeply imbedded, all-pervasive, persistent and widespread in the U.S. capitalist system - in its economy, its educational system, its government, its ideology, politics and culture.

Racism is so all-pervasive that every crisis, every corporate offensive, every retreat by class collaborationist labor leaders, every restriction or retreat on democratic rights, trade union, human and civil rights, every decline in the overall standard of living has a sharper and deeper racist cutting edge.

Reaganite Racism Cuts Deeper & Wider

Each month the gloomy economic statistics take their toll in human suffering. Each month the human suffering statistics go up. In March, joblessness among Afro-Americans had reached a devastating 20% and an unbelievable 60% among Black youth.

In an era of capitalist decline, the struggle for equality and justice takes on a new dimension because not only more Afro-Americans are among the job-seekers, but they are also disproportionately a higher number of the permanently unemployed and the hungry. They are a bigger sector of the unemployed who have run out of unemployment benefits. Among the students cut off from higher education, because of the tuition loan and federal aid funds cutoff, the greatest numbers are Black students. Among the hands replaced by robots, the highest percentage are Black hands.

For the struggle for equality to be meaningful it must take into account the crises effects of racism.

The Reaganite policies have a racist component in every area. But this racist Administration is further codifying, institutionalizing and legalizing racism and discrimination behind the most open demagoguery and racist rhetoric.

Old racist concepts, with a new Reagan-type twist, include: "The rights of every individual." "No special treatment for special groups."

Reaganomics tries to give racism and racist practices a "democratic face" with the demagoguery that "everybody must be treated equally." This has become the racist fig leaf behind which corporations, government agencies and educational institutions reject any new programs and cancel and retreat on established affirmative action programs.

It is the demagogic cover to leave the unequal, unjust discriminatory structure in place.

There is also the new advocacy of the legal concept requiring that victims of racism must prove the crime was motivated by racism. That the criminal's intent was racist.

In many of the southern states, counties and cities, officials are decertifying the voting rights of Black voters with schemes of so-called re-registration and the old gerrymandering.

And, the courts have upheld these racist schemes because "there was no proof of racist intent."

Impact of Racism in Era of Decline

Just how deeply racism is imbedded in the capitalist system shows up with the greatest impact in the era of decline and depression.

For Black auto workers and steel workers the gains of 50 years of struggle are being wiped out in a matter of a few months. And with these gains they are losing their homes, their cars, their hopes and dreams for a better life.

The cold-blooded police murder and official coverup of Ernest Lacy, a young Afro-American, in Milwaukee last July is a prime example of the brazen unleashing of police brutality and racism spearheaded by the Reaganites.

The police murder of Ernest Lacy is but the tip of the iceberg of rampant racism stalking our land.

How the racism of Reaganism encourages and emboldens the racists on all levels of our society was also demonstrated in the frameup arrest, conviction and sentencing of our Comrades Charlene Mitchell and Mike Welch in Gainesville, Georgia.

The struggle for the reversal of their conviction must be seen in the context of raising the vigilance and the struggle against racism and anti-communism to a new, higher level. It must be seen as a signal of the new threats to everyone's democratic rights.

The Black-white Coalition for Justice for Ernest Lacy and the boycott campaign in Milwaukee must also be seen as part of the nationwide struggle against racial and national oppression and the new possibilities for united fightback movements.

Special Problems of Nationally Oppressed

The economic decline and the crises are creating some very

special and emergency problems for those who are victims of national oppression. New millions of Chicano and Puerto Rican people are being forced below the poverty line. In ever greater numbers, they are jobless, homeless and hungry. In California alone, 18% of Chicano-Americans are unemployed.

Reaganomics is anti-working class, anti-Afro-American, anti-Chicano, anti-Puerto Rican, anti-Asian American, anti-Native American Indian.

More openly, brutally and brazenly, the Reaganites are racist to the core.

This is especially evident in the treatment of the millions of working people who do not have residency documents, the millions who are without any kind of "safety net."

The new refugees from hunger and brutal dictatorships in Central and Latin America are subjected either to imprisonment or driven back into the sea.

With or without documents, the new arrivals are quickly pushed into the ranks of the racially and nationally oppressed.

The special, emergency crises confronting the victims of racial and national oppression must become a critical concern for the whole working class, for all the people. And, in the first place, for our Party.

Basic Prerequisites

Here again, there are some very basic pre-requisites for a winning fight against the double-barreled offensive of big business.

A fightback movement that does not undertake special actions, struggles for special demands and programs against racism cannot become a winning movement.

A working class movement that does not take principled, concrete stands against racism, racist practices and national oppression cannot become a united, powerful fightback movement.

There can be no real, stable shift to offensive struggles without a shift in the struggle against racism, for justice and equality.

As the fightback movements build up, as the class struggle sharpens, the need for unity becomes more critical, and more obvious to new millions.

Therefore, the struggle against racial and national oppression must be placed within this new context.

As the crises deepen, as the fightback gains in breadth and scope, the ruling class puts ever greater efforts into creating divisions between Black and white, Chicano and Black.

There are many instances where the corporations are deliberately setting up situations where Chicano and Black workers are forced to compete for fewer available jobs. And there are some very fine examples where workers have defeated this vicious corporate scheme.

The Path of Unity

One of the conclusions we must draw is that we must greatly enhance our efforts toward finding the path of unity.

In this struggle the Party and its program becomes increasingly indispensable.

The Communist Party is the only political organization in our

in every area of life.

Our Party's history compels us to take the lead in finding that indispensable path to unity.

Our Party is the major force for uniting the very best fighters, Black and white, into a militant, fighting force on the front lines of the class struggle.

Communists must set the example for all progressive, anti-racist and democratic people in the struggle against all forms and expressions of racism.

Communists must take the lead in the struggle for justice and full equality.

The struggle against racism has emerged as a most critical prerequisite for working class unity and people's victories.

Therefore, this conference must raise the level of our Party's work on all fronts - economic, political and ideological - in the struggle to defeat all forms of racism and national oppression.

These extraordinary times demand that our Party make its special and unique contribution more effectively, more consistently, and in an extraordinary way.

IX. IMPORTANT FORCES & MOVEMENTS IN THE ALL PEOPLE'S FRONT

The reports and discussions in the workshops will deal with many of the specific areas of struggle.

These include an update and new questions in the struggle for full equality of women, the new developments on the youth front, the crisis problems faced by farmers and the explosions in the movements of our senior citizens.

While all these, and more, will be discussed in separate workshops, we must keep in mind that they are all very much a part of the whole. They are all important sectors of every phase of the people's upsurge. They are important sectors in every area of struggle - trade union, economic, electoral, political, the unemployed. They are important, indispensable sectors of the all people's front.

All these components must be discussed in the context of the new framework, the framework of the decline and crises.

Programs & Solutions

There is no shortage of programs dealing with the crisis. In fact, there are programs being proposed by almost everyone who has a bone to pick with Reaganomics.

But even the best of them falls far short of being realistic solutions in the interests of the people. Mainly because most of them do not tackle the deeper, longer range problems.

In addition to offering alternative budgets, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus are presenting many new alternate proposals, especially in the area of the socio-economic cuts.

Most of the trade unions are proposing programs which are in the direction of moving the trade union movement from a defensive to an offensive position. For the first time in a long time the AFL-CIO Executive Council adopted a program and a set of demands.

On the broad liberal-left there are some new approaches, attitudes and proposals which must be considered.

This liberal-left sector is emerging from the growing movements that are influenced by the developing anti-monopoly sentiments of the people.

Santa Monica and Santa Cruz, California have elected anti-monopoly mayors and City Councils. And the people of Burlington, Vermont have re-elected a young Socialist mayor and a socialist majority in the City Council.

Many of these movements are built around what some call the new concept of "the democratization of Corporate Control over basic investment and financial decisions."

Some even hail the new UAW-GM agreement as a step toward auto workers' control of corporate financial decisions.

Some trade union leaders are calling for some union control in the investment of pension funds which are now under the exclusive control of corporations and banks.

There are proposals for more trade union leaders to be on corporate boards, including trade union representation on the Federal Reserve Board.

In March 1982, two socialist groups - the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and the New America Movement (NAM)-merged.

Presenting the program and priorities for the new organization, Michael Harrington wrote in THE NEW YORK TIMES that the new group "not only agreed on basic principles, but made the democratic corporate control of investment their key domestic priority."

The proliferation and political significance of these groups based on "democratization of the corporate structure" can be seen in some cities in California (which I mentioned) where they have been elected to City Councils and as Mayors.

Our Approach

I think our approach should be that to the extent such movements and organizations pursue an anti-monopoly line they will be a positive factor in helping to solve people's problems.

For example, if they move in the direction of curbing and restricting the power of the monopolies and winning more decision-making power that results in restoring cuts in wages. If they move in this direction they will contribute to the anti-monopoly movements and coalitions.

But to the extent such movements go around, avoid and cover up questions related to the class struggle, including the class nature of monopoly corporations, and to the extent they present solutions in the context of no-struggle (such as putting trade union leaders on corporate boards for show), to that

extent they will sow seeds of disillusion and can become diversionary.

Ideas in the Context of Class Struggle

In a period of crises and sharpening struggles all ideas and concepts, even very good ideas, can turn into their opposites if they are not presented in relationship to and in context of the struggles against the monopolies and the corporate offensive.

It is counterproductive and illusory to appeal to the patriotism, the common sense, morality, sense of justice or humanitarianism of the capitalist class.

All this is not to deny that workers should fight for a greater role in decisions that affect their working and personal lives.

But the only really effective struggles to achieve this are those based on the reality of the irreconcilable, antagonistic class interests between the workers and the bosses.

Thus, if groups and struggles for more decision-making power move in the direction of diverting workers from the class struggle, then these become negative schemes that serve the same purposes as the "quality of work life circles," the "labor-management cooperation teams," etc. They become variants of class collaboration.

In other words, we have to be on guard to see that movements do not turn anti-monopoly sentiments into channels of no-struggle.

Building Existing Forces in New Times

We must also work harder to see that organizations such as

the National Coalition for Economic Justice and its Youth Council become more effective organizations in building the all people's front.

Organizations such as Trade Unions for Action and Democracy (TUAD), Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) need to be strengthened in order to play their special roles in the trade union movement.

Organizations such as Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE), National Organization of Women (NOW), Women Strike for Peace (WSP), and many other mass women's organizations need to be developed and helped to play their special role in all the women's movements.

Organizations like the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (NAARPR) and the National Anti-Imperialist Movement in Solidarity with African Liberation (NAIMSAL), and many other organizations fighting against racism, repression and for national liberation need our stepped-up support.

On the peace front, organizations such as the U.S. Peace Council, Mobilization for Survival, SANE, all the nuclear freeze groups, Laity and Clergy Concerned and many more must be seen as creating the basic foundation for the mass struggles around peace.

All these organizations and more need to be re-examined in light of these new and extraordinary times. They need to be assessed within the framework of building the all people's front and helping our class and people to move on to offensive struggles.

All existing forces, organizations and movements need to be re-examined in light of these extraordinary times.

Our Party needs to re-examine our relationship to these forces and movements within the same context. And specifically our Party's very unique contribution to all these organizations and movements must be to help them establish local grass roots forms.

X. OUR PARTY: UP FRONT IN THE ALL PEOPLE'S FRONT

By now I hope all of you are convinced that we are now living in most extraordinary times, times that call for our Party to make extraordinary decisions and take extraordinary actions.

And, also, by now I hope you are convinced that your long journey was right and necessary.

It follows, that if we agree with the new assessment of the nature of this moment -

If we agree to accept the challenge of the fightback struggle against Reaganomics -

If we accept the need to raise the struggle against racism to a new level -

If we accept the task of helping to defeat the Reagan-Haig war policies -

If we accept the job of joining in the electoral campaigns to defeat the Reaganites in '82 -

If we accept the responsibility to champion, to fully support the working class and trade unions in their fight to shift to offensive struggles -

If we agree, and if we accept all these challenges as serious Party responsibilities, then we must logically, and dialectically, also agree to accept another, precondition challenge.

And that is the most basic, and in some ways the most difficult, of all the challenges to our Party - the building of a

Our Party

bigger, better and more effective Communist Party, U.S.A.

We can not avoid or postpone undertaking this primary task because we can not even begin to seriously meet all our new responsibilities without taking a new , fresh, bold look at our Party.

Looking back for one moment to our First Extraordinary Conference, especially younger comrades may be interested in one of the results. Our Party recruited about 70,000 new members in the short period from 1933 to 1940. History, of course, never repeats itself in the same way. But one cannot resist raising the question in these times. Life and reality, as well as history, persistently and stubbornly keeps putting these questions on our agenda:

* Can we break through and establish the public and legitimate place of our Party on every American scene - economic, electoral, political and social?

* Can we establish new relationships with mass organizations and movements, a new relationship with the American people?

* Can we begin here and now to shift our gears, to re-structure our Party and clubs in a way that will put our Party on the high road?

Well, if we are all agreed, if we have a concensus that we're all here in Milwaukee to gear-up, to meet the new challenges of our extraordinary times, then we must face the hard fact that our Party at this moment, and for this moment, is not big enough or effective enough to do the job.

The times and our people are demanding to see and hear Communists. We must adapt ourselves to being a Party in demand.

To meet these demands our Party, our leadership, our clubs must here and now take extraordinary steps outward and upward. That's the only way to grow. And grow we must!

Conference Workshops: Focus & Emphasis

The main emphasis in our discussions must be on probing how we are responding to the depression crises, not in words but in deeds, in action. How are we measuring up in the specific situations?

We must examine to what extent we have really begun to shift gears. Have we yet passed from first gear, the discussion stage, to second gear, specific initiatives, to high gear, application of our tactics, policies and program to life?

In our workshops it is necessary to place the main emphasis not on the quantity, but on how effective we are, on the quality of our mass work.

In our December 1981 Central Committee meeting and in the Main Report, "What The Reds Say Today," we projected some concrete tasks and problems at the conclusion of each section. (See-X-3-A insert)

Our workshops should follow up and check on implementation; how we have interpreted and transformed our program into life and action.

I have not repeated any of those proposals because they are all as current today as they were in December. Of course, the workshops should stimulate offshoots and especially new creative, imaginative ideas for us to take home.

Tomorrow evening at our public mass meeting I will present a Resolution calling for a basic, comprehensive economic program, including -

- from job application to first pay check unemployment insurance;

- federal construction projects for 15 million new jobs;

- special measures in the struggle against racism, for affirmative action and equality.

In the workshops we should give top billing to comrades who can talk about their personal and first-hand experiences, positive experiences that can serve as examples and models for others.

However, it would be a mistake to talk only about positive, successful experiences. We must also learn from, draw conclusions from the initiatives that did not succeed. We must discuss mistakes, wrong tactics and incorrect interpretations. We should frankly and openly discuss what our hangups are. What are the obstacles in the path of our forward progress?

We have to probe, to search for solutions of all obstacles and for ways to constantly improve our work on all levels of our Party.

Rooting Out Routinism

We need to do much more to get the National Center of our Party to respond to the dynamic, fast-moving developments.

The same is true on state and district levels of our leadership.

Routinism has a deadening effect. It sustains an inner bureaucratic style of work.

Routinism does not inspire or build a sense of confidence. And certainly not a spirit of enthusiasm.

Routinism prevents the Party from responding to the mass upsurge.

When leadership is in close touch with the mass developments it will be influenced and sensitized by the exciting and

antidote for routinism.

We need to take a bold, self-critical look at how we, in the leadership levels of our Party, are functioning. For example, have we yet shifted our gears?

The Club Is The Party

At this conference we must concentrate our attention on how our Party clubs are meeting the challenge.

We must answer these questions:

- How do our clubs function as catalysts, initiators, stimulators, mobilizers and organizers of grass roots mass activities, actions and movements?
- How do individual members of our clubs contribute to meeting this challenge?
- How do our clubs, in their own names, influence people and their actions?
- How do our clubs give leadership in communities and shops - as clubs of the Communist Party?

These questions, and similar ones included in the special letter I sent to clubs on this subject, are most difficult questions.

Some clubs have already begun a probe for the answers. These are vital, basic and most timely questions. They are in accord and mesh with the tenor of our times and the mood of our people.

They are timely because this is the moment we can make a qualitative change in how our clubs function - in our work, in our club life, in our relationships, in our whole approach toward ourselves as Communists and Communist clubs.

As we well know, it is in the work of our clubs that our line, our policies, our program and tactics evaporate, stagnate, vegetate or become translated or transformed into a living handbook and guidelines for activities, movements and organizations.

It is only on the club level where we can try out and test whether our assessments, our line, our tactics and policies are correct and viable.

Specifically, the challenge is - How to? How to fulfill our leading role as a revolutionary working class party - on the club level - in these times of depression and crises?

A "Typical" Communist Party Club

While I do not believe there is really a typical Party club, the responses to my two letters to the clubs, do form a pattern, a particular style of work which is very close to what can be called "typical."

So, with this in mind, let us look at a "typical Communist Party club."

Our "typical" club is a community or neighborhood club. Its area of concentration or responsibility, its territory or turf is not well defined, except in such broad, sweeping terms as - Suffolk County, North Brooklyn, South Chicago, the Bay Area and Harlem.

As a consequence, there are very few concentration efforts in specific well-defined geographical areas. The club responsibility is very general, vague and abstract. Just thinking about the size of club responsibility is a heavy burden and creates a sense of frustration, of being overwhelmed and tired.

The lack of a club concentration area becomes a fig leaf for not taking up some of the questions I have raised.

Communists As Mass Activists

In most cases, if there are, say, 15 members in a club they are involved in 10 to 15 different mass movements or organizations. This is a very positive side of the club's work.

In these mass organizations most of our comrades are not known as members of the Communist Party. In some cases, a select few of the mass activists are informed by our comrades - privately and secretly - that they are Communists. In most cases, our comrades are known as radicals, progressives, on the left, someone who leans toward Communist positions, someone who is always selling raffle tickets or someone who knows a lot about world affairs.

As a rule, the discussions in our club meetings do not relate directly to the work of our members who are in these mass organizations.

These comrades just go their own way, working hard, attending meetings, demonstrations, fund raising and other events of their mass organizations.

Their clubs usually know very little about what they are doing, what questions, issues, etc., they are dealing with.

Mass work is not on the agendas of most club meetings. It is not on the agendas of most executive meetings. Thus, the important question of how our comrades are dealing with questions does not become a learning experience for all the club members. The good work of individual Communists does not become the property of the whole club.

Some comrades who make contacts with others in their mass work carry on one-to-one confidential talks as Communists. They may even extend one-to-one invitations to these contacts to "Communist functions, etc."

An interesting and revealing phenomenon is that the closer an event is to the Party, i.e., May Day, both attendance by comrades and their one-to-one invitations decline accordingly.

Communists as Communists

Most of our members have never attended any kind of Party school, on any level. And, many have never even attended classes of any kind.

My rough estimate is that about 50% of our clubs work on circulation and distribution of our DAILY WORLD or PEOPLE'S WORLD, in one way or another.

About 10% of our clubs make efforts to circulate and get subs to POLITICAL AFFAIRS.

About 85% of our clubs do not have such an elementary outreach tool as a mailing list, a list used by the club to mail Party literature on a regular basis, invitations to events or club leaflets.

Our typical Communist club does not function in its own name. In other words, we have very few Communists who live and work as Communists.

The closest some come to being themselves is a club meeting to which non-members are invited perhaps every two or three years. And, most clubs do not have such meetings.

Of course there are some who do. And some even on a regular basis. But this is an exception.

There are no Party-sponsored public mass meetings or forums held by our clubs.

There are no Communist-sponsored mass rallies on a regular basis. And, I can't remember when I last heard tell about a Communist street corner meeting.

There are no social affairs, public or otherwise, called in the name of the local Party. The closest we come to this are socials called under the auspices of "Friends of the DAILY WORLD."

A typical club does not issue leaflets in their own name, on local issues. There are a few who do. But, again, they are the exceptions.

Most of our clubs limit Party literature sales to their own members only.

In the last three months there has been a 1,000% increase in "Letters to the Editor" activities. Through this campaign, millions have been reading our views in local newspapers all over the country.

Shop and industrial clubs generally follow the same pattern. But because of more serious security problems the question of how the clubs function is even more difficult.

Reviewing Our Mass Work

The fact that most members of our Party are active members of at least one mass organization is a most positive development. We must encourage, expand and improve this work.

There are some aspects of this work I think the clubs should examine periodically. Such as -

- Are comrades in the most important mass organizations, given this period, the local situation and conditions?

- Besides being members of trade unions, are comrades in movements and mass organizations that deal with the economic issues.

Based on this kind of review, it may be necessary for a club to consider some re-deployment of its forces.

On a continuing checkup basis, the clubs need to discuss concretely such critical questions as:

- How do our comrades working in mass organizations and movements discuss such questions as the anti-monopoly concepts, political independence, the all people's front?

- How do our comrades deal with anti-communism, anti-Sovietism, the big lie and the military budget?

- How do our comrades in mass organizations carry on the struggle against racism?

- How do comrades connect up their work in mass organizations with building the Party?

In addition to strengthening the work of its members, it seems to me that a well-prepared checkup discussion dealing with any of these questions would make an excellent educational for the club.

Communist Party as Local, Public Organization

There is the other, most indispensable aspect of our Party's work that we must examine. Not as a trade off with some other work, but in addition to all the other work. We must see it for its own merit.

How does the Communist Party appear as an organization, an organization with a program, with positions on issues, Communist election campaigns, activities, functions, etc.?

We do have some wonderful, positive experiences and developments in this area. But again, they do not begin to take advantage of the open door possibilities waiting for us out there.

Based on responses from the clubs to my last letter, we must conclude that most of our clubs do not function on this level.

I want to share some quotes from these letters with you.

But first, I want to express my appreciation for the way in which so many of our clubs responded. They reflected a most serious, honest and enthusiastic willingness to probe these problems. In fact, many expressed an appreciation that these questions are being raised at this moment, and some even thanked us for the opportunity they opened up.

How Our Clubs Respond

The following quotes are each from a letter, but each also represents more than one response, some are typical of many.

In response to the question: "What does your club do in its name as a club of the Communist Party?" here are some of the replies that were repeated in different ways in most letters:

"Our club does virtually nothing in the name of the Party."

"Our club has no public identity." This club added: "How might we safely identify our presence?"

"We are all known as activists, but not as Communists."

"Nothing appears in our club's name."

"Until your letter we never even thought it was a problem."

In response to my inquiry as to the reasons for the lack of public expression by the club, most of the answers were similar to the following:

"Fear of loss of job."

"Fear of isolation and not being able to win people over."

"In our club the problem is not a security problem, in the sense of losing a job."

"Members are hesitant because they are active in mass organizations."

In answer to the question as to whether comrades are reluctant to speak as Party representatives, almost everyone said:

"Yes, of course we are. Because of the experiences of the McCarthy period and having to answer the anti-Soviet falsehoods."

Another response argues that, "the anti-Communist influence is often overstated. The fact is two who are the most known Communists now sit on the executive board of a union."

Many said they didn't feel politically qualified enough to speak in the Party's name or to represent the Party.

I think you can see from just these quotes that the comrades have stated the case clearly and accurately. The problems are real. The concerns are warranted. In any discussion of solutions they must be taken into consideration.

Some Guidelines for Discussion

As a basis for probing these questions, I hope we can agree on a framework that includes the following:

- We cannot fulfill our responsibilities without some public appearance of the Party. This includes all levels, including the clubs. This public appearance must not be a one-night stand, but an organization that appears and re-appears till it becomes part of the scene, the neighborhood, the community or shop.

- In spite of the many serious problems, once we are convinced that we need to we will find the specific forms that will reflect the specific situation, problems and needs of each club.

Now that, hopefully, we have reached a consensus, let us take a new look at some of the old problems.

Security

First, are there real security problems, especially job security problems? Of course there are. To deny or ignore them would be the height of irresponsibility.

This discussion must not be confused with enemy provocation that prods us to "stand up and be counted."

So the very real question is: Are the security problems of such a nature that there is no way the club can overcome them?

No. Experience proves the club can overcome security problems. If this were not so then the Parties in Chile, Uruguay, South Africa and many others, where extreme reaction and repression exist, would be completely silenced. And this is certainly not the case.

Security problems should dictate how the Party appears as a public organization, not whether or not it should do so.

Yes, we must be sensitive to the security problems of comrades. But we must also argue against use of "security problems" as an excuse where it is not a valid problem, but instead covers up other problems and weaknesses.

As you can see from the letters, many raise questions related to their mass work.

Without question, these are also legitimate concerns. We should do nothing that would disrupt comrades' relationships with contacts and other forces.

In the present situation there are lots of people and organizations who are willing, happy and even seek out working with Communists in mass organizations - as long as it is not a public matter. These questions should be periodically reviewed. They are not static questions. People and situations, as well as objective conditions, are constantly changing. We must change with them.

Other Fears & Hangups

What about the real problems of those who are reluctant to be involved in a Communist Party that goes public, even where job security is not involved?

Some express fear of physical attack, harassment and threats related to anti-communism.

Some express fear of being slandered, fear of not being accepted and respected by neighbors, shop mates and friends. Rejection and isolation are expressed concerns.

We have to patiently help comrades to overcome such fears. And, there are two effective antidotes that we can begin to apply immediately.

Antidotes

The first is political and ideological education. Our National Education Department must develop and distribute outlines that zero in on and come to grips with the causes of weaknesses. We must give much higher priority to strengthening working class attitudes, especially toward struggle.

The second remedy is that time-tested good old personal contact, with people in movements and struggles.

Many of these fears, hesitations and hangups are rubber bands tied to old experiences from another era.

The lifestyle and style of work of many Party clubs is of the McCarthy period vintage. Many clubs have not yet made the transition into today's world. They have not yet adjusted to the new American scene - the mass upsurge.

In Touch, In Tune & Reach Out

I think most comrades would agree that the objective conditions are very different now. The thought patterns and mood of the people have drastically changed.

Not everywhere, but in many areas, there's been a flip-flop. People are looking for us. And, when we do go out there and tell people who we are people are often surprised, but pleasantly surprised. And, unfortunately, so are we!

Because of the new depression situation increasingly people are really becoming desperate for a way out, for real solutions. They are literally looking for us because they almost instinctively know these times call for more radical, more militant struggles.

The people's gut instincts are usually correct. They know Communists are good organizers and effective fighters.

It is this new mood, these new levels of mass thought patterns that many of our members and clubs are not responding to. If we were really aware of all the dramatic and drastic changes taking place there would be many more examples of clubs now testing the new, fresh political waters.

For instance, our clubs and districts would be re-establishing regular Communist-sponsored mass meetings in every major city, at least twice a year. In fact, we must make the organizing of public mass meetings in the name of the Party mandatory activity, especially in the major cities.

If there was a correct assessment of mass work generally in our Party, our clubs would now be holding regular outdoor street-corner rallies on the most burning local issue in the community at the moment. Instead of exceptions, we would be getting regular reports of these rallies all around the country. If we were really in tune with the times and in touch with the masses - our clubs would own mass work equipment, such as bullhorns, loudspeaking equipment and speaker's stands - we would be renting storefronts and setting up community centers and unemployed councils.

As a rule, when hesitant comrades do jump or step gingerly into the waters - for instance, when they go out signature collecting, to shop gate distributions, house-to-house canvassing, street tables, without exception they find themselves pleasantly surprised, even happy and enthusiastic. This is how to grow a new feeling of pride and confidence in ourselves, in the Party and press. It is also literally the ways our Party will grow.

Naturally, in the course of these activities comrades come across verbal and even some anti-communist hysteria from some. This is still inevitable in our work among people.

However, if we look back even to six months ago, comrades who have been doing outreach work will verify that the atmosphere has changed radically.

Granted, it is unpleasant to be insulted, abused or harassed. On the other hand, the satisfaction and sense of confidence and achievement we get from the majority who respond positively to us becomes the dominant feeling. This comes from comrades who consistently work with people. Comrades who don't give up, report that their fears, hangups, hesitations and anxieties all begin to diminish as they get more deeply involved.

In fact, these comrades tell us that mass work becomes a necessary, satisfying part of their lives, as Communist activists.

Bottom Line: Ways & Means

So, what's the bottom line? What are some ways and means we can use to begin to get around, over and under the obstacles that are hanging us up and holding us back?

First, let's put on the table the simple fact of life that the shift in gears we've been talking about won't take place overnight. It will happen through patient, persistent, planned and purposeful efforts. Hard work. Hard thinking. And some hard times.

Let's take the worst case scenario. Let's look at a club whose members all have security problems. Or problems with relationships in their mass work and cannot legitimately identify themselves with the Party's public activities. We do not have many such clubs. But we do have a few.

So the question here is: Should such a club be able to find ways to express its viewpoint beyond what each member is doing on a one-to-one basis as a part of their mass work?

Now, not all clubs can carry on work in the same way. But all our clubs must seek for ways of public expression, public identification.

Something for Every Club

There are many ways to skin a cat. There are many ways to reach the same goal. But, there are some things every club can work on.

For instance, building the circulation of the DAILY WORLD, PEOPLE'S WORLD and VOZ DEL PUEBLO.

- Putting out leaflets in the club's name.

- Developing and keeping up a club mailing list and sending our Party material.

- In one way or another, every club can organize forums and social events.

- Every club can build around it support groups. These can include local organizations or both left-led and non-left national organizations and ad hoc committees on all kinds of issues. For instance, in the shop it can be rank and file committees or electoral coalitions.

- Club meetings, to which guests are invited, can become a regular feature of club life - not only as a way of winning new members, but as a form of mass work.

- We can organize more and regular Party building drives, such as the one during which Central Committee members were invited to speak at open club meetings. This was a most successful campaign.

- Some of the most recent successful Party building has taken place on the basis of small study groups. The experiences show that they must be sociable, informal and enjoyable. No lectures or formal class structure. The discussion on all questions must be related to people's life experiences, not only to the instructor's prepared outline.

Every club can have some kind of on-going study group. Its size and scope can be adjusted to the particular club's needs and resources.

And, after these study group participants join our Party, there should be on-going new members' classes they can take part in.

The consolidation of every new member is an integral and essential part of winning new members who will stay. Getting a person to sign a membership card is only the first crucial step.

Yes, of course we must continue and improve one-to-one recruiting into our Party.

But, the times and some new exciting experiences tell us we can now raise our sights.

We now have some examples where groups and whole families have come into our Party together. Some of these groups have joined and set up their own club. Many find it easier and more seem to join as a group of friends who already know each other. As a comrade said in one of the letters: "We must cast a wider net."

Industrial Concentration

We must also examine in a fresh, new way all phases of our work. In a very special way, we must examine closely our work in

the area of industrial concentration.

It is obvious we can have a viable industrial concentration policy only if we structure it to now deal with the new problems faced by the working class -

Only if our tactics are fashioned to give guidance and leadership in the fightback movements -

Only if we are an every day force and major factor in the organization of rank and file movements -

Only if we are an integral part of the left-center and left movements.

It is in this sense that we must see our industrial clubs as transitional forms. The outlook and approach must be to build shop clubs as soon as it is humanly possible.

Very often it is better to organize a small shop club than to continue with a larger industrial club.

I believe we can all agree that if the results of this conference are going to be truly extra-ordinary, more than anything else all of us must resolve to do away with routinism.

We must try things we have never tried before. In this period the word "boldness" takes on a new meaning. Yesterday's boldness is today's timidity. We must not be afraid of trying something new because it may not be successful. The new calls for new approaches.

All of them will not work. But we can learn from those that don't.

Shifting political gears is not the same as shifting car gears. It is more of a process. And, not all comrades can shift gears as fast or as easily.

So we must have patience. And at the same time we must have impatience. Impatience with routinism, negativism, cynicism, factionalism and obstructionism.

We must be patient with comrades who have weaknesses, hesitations, fears and problems. We must be impatient only with comrades who won't try the process.

Our Press

Just like all of us, our DAILY WORLD and PEOPLE'S WORLD comrades must also struggle to publish papers that are working to shift gears.

In many ways, our press is responding to the issues, activities, demonstrations and fightback movements. Without question, they are the best on the left.

Our aim and determination must be to make our papers the accepted, respected voice of all the victims of Reaganomics -

- the mobilizing voice of the broad peace movement;
- the clearest voice in the electoral arena;
- the strongest, most consistent voice in the struggle against racism;
- the voice of solidarity with the national liberation and anti-imperialist movements;
- the voice of unity in the building of the all people's fightback front.

I know it is difficult for New Yorkers, but our press comrades must also become the voice for the farmers getting plowed under by Reaganomics.

Our papers are good, but we must have even greater coverage of the fightback movements, the demonstrations, the human tragedies and crises facing our people.

Our class and people are on the move. Our country is a beehive of activity. We must tell our readers all about it. No one else will.

We need more in-depth articles about the gut issues, the trends, developments, actions and questions related to movements. We need more human interest stories about how working people and their families are dealing with the every day crises.

We must re-establish the "Ask An Expert," questions and answers page. But we must now focus on dealing more with questions related to the fightback.

Our coverage should be couched in clearer, working class terms. Class partisanship must come through loud and clear. It must be a hallmark of a Communist press.

It is also obvious that here, too, we must put an end to routinism in the circulation of our papers. We must find ways of raising shop gate and neighborhood circulation. We must also break down the barriers to getting our press on the newsstands.

Our press must also gear up to reflect the new mass Communist Party that we will begin to build here this weekend.

Our Country Needs a Mass Communist Party

Our country needs a mass Communist Party to help build the mass all people's front.

Our class needs a mass political party to take its place beside the working class in the front lines of the all people's fightback.

Our Party needs a bigger, a mass party to accomplish all the extraordinary tasks we have undertaken at this turning point, landmark conference.

Our Party needs to build an out-there, up-front mass party - to take its place among the many mass organizations accepted and respected in every community in our country.

How to achieve this? I have full and unqualified confidence this conference will give us that needed shove, that reach-out spirit and enthusiasm, and many of the tools we'll need to begin that new beginning in the streamlining and shifting of our Party's gears.

But, just in case we need that extra-ordinary push, that little extra spirit-lifter for the big job ahead, our National Party has a special proposal we hope will help kick off a special Extraordinary Party and Press Building Contest.

Extraordinary Party and Press Building Contest

We have not yet worked out all the details, but we are proposing something like this:

The first five (5) clubs that recruit five (5) new members each will select one or two comrades from each club who will be winners of a vacation trip to a socialist country.

The first ten (10) clubs who get fifteen (15) new subscriptions to the DAILY WORLD will also select one or two members as winners of a trip to a socialist country.

And, based on the size of districts, the district that wins the most TOTAL new members and TOTAL new subscriptions will choose two from among these Party-Press Builders winners of a trip to a socialist country.

There will also be Second Prizes, such as complete sets of the new Marx-Engels Collected Works and complete sets of Lenin's Collected Works.

We are proposing that our DAILY WORLD also get into the act and cover this Extraordinary Party/Press Building Contest just as they would an election campaign - reporting on progress, announcing winners and writing stories about experiences.

We're betting this contest will help to bring out the best recruiters in all our comrades - the best socialist competitiveness, the best socialist aggressiveness, the best go-get-em Communist traits in all of us.

We hope this breakthrough campaign will bring out all the latent and blatant talents, the skills, arts and crafts we know our Party is chock full of.

We also hope it will bring out and down from all the closets, attics, basements and shopping bags all the Party literature you've stored and never needed till now.

We believe this breakthrough campaign will launch a period of extraordinarily upward and outward times for our Party.

We believe this breakthrough conference will signal new victories for our class, our country and our Party.

We believe this Second Extraordinary Conference and the future will prove, once again, how very extraordinary are our Party, our clubs and all our comrades - how very extraordinary is our Party's press.

This Second Extraordinary Conference will, we have no doubt, live up to the great example set way back in 1933 when our First Extraordinary Party Conference set us on the high road, in high gear.