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DETENTE AND ITS ENEMIES

Gus Hall

ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE HOUSEWIFE

Editorial Comment

SOME PROBLEMS FACING THE AUTO WORKERS

Thomas Dennis

AN END TO THE NEGLECT OF THE PROBLEMS OF NEGRO WOMEN!

Claudia Jones

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On the Economic Status Of the Housewife

March, the month of International Women's Day (March 8), is a special occasion for emphasizing the struggle for women's rights. We mark the occasion, first, by reprinting an article by the late Claudia Jones which originally appeared in these pages in 1949. A Black woman, she was at the time a leading figure in the Communist Party and head of the National Women's Commission. She served a prison term with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Betty Gannett under the infamous Smith Act and was subsequently deported to Jamaica, her place of birth. We feel that her article is as pertinent today as when it was written.

We take this occasion also to express our views on a discussion which has taken place in the pages of *Political Affairs* beginning with the publication of the articles "Toward a Science of Women's Liberation" by Isabel Largaia and John Dumoulin in the issues of June and August, 1972. We wish to deal particularly with a central question raised in these articles and in the subsequent discussion, including the communication of Beatrice Ferneyhough which appears in this issue. The question is that of the economic status of the housewife.

Housework, it is said, is an unrecognized form of social labor, whose produce is the commodity labor power. Largaia and Dumoulin write: "Women, expelled from the universe where surplus is produced, nonetheless fulfilled an essential economic function. The division of labor assigned them the task of replacing the greater part of the economy's labor power. . . ." They add: "The housewife's invisible product is *labor power*, and only under capitalism does labor power become a commodity, with the creation of the working class." What economists generally omit is that "economic reproduction takes place on two distinct levels, and that one of these is still that most primitive form of enterprise, the household." (*Political Affairs*, June 1972.)

"Women," they say, "have become the *invisible* economic underpinning of class society." And further, "if the proletariat were not seated firmly on this feminine base which provides it with food, clothing, etc., in a world which lacks sufficient services to replace

its labor power collectively, the number of hours of surplus-labor would be significantly reduced." In other words, part of the surplus value obtained by the capitalist comes from exploitation of the housewife, who receives no wages but only her subsistence out of her husband's wages. They say: "The worker who is militant in his place of work is unaware that part of the surplus value the boss extracts from him comes from his wife, and that he acts as a foreman in this exploitation."

These ideas did not originate with Larguia and Dumoulin. They were projected in the writings of Mary Inman in the forties and are repeated in her communication published in *Political Affairs* (January 1973). She writes, for example: "Marx's labor theory of value, the very essence of Marxism, loses its validity when the labor of women in the production of labor-power is denied. On the other hand, when women's labor in one form of social production is implemented, Marxism is strengthened. The subsistence of these women comes out of labor's wage and this can only be so because *their labor contributes to the value of labor-power that is exchanged for that wage. . .*" In fact, she maintains that the husband sells as his own the labor power his wife has created.

The same ideas are echoed in the communication by Ferneyhough. She maintains that the major part of the surplus value obtained by the capitalist class comes from the exploitation of housewives, who are paid nothing for their labors. In fact, she speaks of the housewife as a "chattel slave."

These ideas are, we submit, basically wrong.

An answer to them has already been presented by Margaret Cowl ("Economic Role of the Housewife," *Political Affairs*, August 1972.) We propose only to emphasize and elaborate certain points.

To begin with, far from being a form of participation in social production, the confinement of women to housework constitutes a *removal* from social production. Engels spells this out in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* in these words:

. . . In the old communistic household, which comprised many couples and their families, the task entrusted to women of managing the household was as much a public and socially necessary industry as the procuring of food by men. With the patriarchal family, and still more with the single monogamous family, a change came. Household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a *private service*; the wife became the head servant, excluded from all participation in social production. Not until the coming of modern

large-scale industry was the road to social production opened to her again—and then only to the proletarian wife. But it was opened in such a manner that, if she carries out her duties in the private service of the family, she remains excluded from public production and unable to earn; and if she wants to take part in public production and earn independently, she cannot carry out family duties. And the wife's position in the factory is the position of all women in all branches of business, right up to medicine and the law. The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife, and modern society is composed of these individual families as its molecules. . . .

In the industrial world, the specific character of the economic oppression burdening the proletariat is visible in all its sharpness only when all special legal privileges of the capitalist class have been abolished and complete legal equality of both classes established. . . . And in the same way the peculiar supremacy of the husband over the wife in the modern family, the necessity of creating real social equality between them, and the way to do it, will be seen in the clear light of day when both possess legally complete equality of rights. Then it will be plain that the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry, and that this in turn demands the abolition of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society. (International Publishers, New York, 1942, 65-66.)

On this point Lenin adds:

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labor on barbarously unproductive petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real communism, will begin only where and when an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into a large-scale socialist economy begins. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 429.)

In short, housework is a form of private service, wholly separated from social production. The emancipation of women, therefore, lies in freeing them from household drudgery and opening the doors to full participation in social production.

What of the contention that housework is a form of commodity production—of the production of labor power? This is an erroneous idea, based on a misconception of the nature of labor power, which is unique among commodities in that its utilization results in the

creation of new values. It is not an inanimate object turned out on an assembly line but a property of living human beings. Capitalist production *presupposes* the existence of a body of workers, ready and able to do what is demanded of them. The replenishment of their labor power is not a part of the process of social production but a *prerequisite* to it. It occurs *outside* of the labor process. Its function is the maintenance of human existence which is the ultimate purpose of production in all societies.

For the capitalists, the workers' labor is productive in that it serves to increase their capital. For the workers, however, their labor is not productive, for they emerge from a day's work no better off than when they started. They receive for their labor only, on the average, the value of their labor power, that is, the value of the goods and services required to maintain themselves and their families and to keep them available for work on the next and succeeding days.

Correspondingly, while the consumption of the capitalist as such (*i.e.*, of the capitalist enterprise) is productive consumption, that of the worker and his or her family is individual consumption. It yields no surplus but on the contrary is an expense, paid for out of existing income. The surplus is created at the workplace, not in the household, and it goes to the capitalist class as surplus value, whose source is the unpaid labor of the worker.

In short, the housewife as such does not work for the capitalist and she produces no surplus value for him. And it is wrong, therefore, to regard the husband as an unwitting "foreman" who assists the capitalist in exploiting his wife. This does not mean that she does not suffer exploitation *as a housewife*; rather, it means that the exploitation is of a different character. In the words of A. Landy:

... The fact remains that the housewife does expend energy from which the capitalist clearly benefits, without spending an extra penny for it. This is possible because the social result of the housewife's energy, which is spent exclusively in the service of the worker's family and its consumption, is to help reproduce the worker as a wage worker for the capitalist. The point is that, in a society dominated by capital and capitalist relations, this is true of everything on which the maintenance of capitalist institutions depends.

In the last analysis therefore, everybody works for the capitalist class, and the individual capitalist not only profits from the work of his own employees, but benefits from all other activities in society which reproduce its specific capitalist character. (*Marxism*

and the Woman Question, Workers Library Publishers, New York, 1943, p. 30.)

What the housewife contributes, in Engels' words, is a *private service*. Of course, such service can be procured from outside the household through service industries (restaurants, laundries, child care centers, etc.), or through employment of servants or domestic workers. But in any case their immediate product is services, not commodities. They are intended not for further exchange, not as a means of multiplying capital, but for direct individual consumption by their purchasers.

To be sure, the special oppression of women is rooted in capitalist exploitation of wage labor, which is the basis of all other forms of exploitation and oppression. The special exploitation of the housewife lies in her exclusion from social production, placing her in a status of inferiority and condemning her to household drudgery—to a form of labor which today is not socially necessary since the means of eliminating it exist, though they are for the most part not available to working-class housewives. Alva Buxenbaum describes the housewife's status in these words:

Monopoly goes to great lengths to conceal the fact that housewives are in very large part unemployed workers. By forcing the family to depend primarily on the husband's wages, monopoly perpetuates the myth that "woman's place is in the home." In that way it keeps most women out of the job market and avoids responsibility for the extra burdens placed on the worker's family and on the women in particular. Expenditures for child care, public education, health care, housing and other social needs that should and can be public services, even under capitalism, are opposed and blocked because they don't produce profits. ("Women's Rights and the Class Struggle," *Political Affairs*, May 1973.)

Growing out of this status of economic inequality is a pervasive pattern of discrimination against women—economic, political, social. Thus, a growing proportion of women—particularly married women—have entered into social production. Today women constitute about 40 per cent of the labor force. But in large measure this has been due to inability to make ends meet on the husband's wages alone, necessitating a second breadwinner in the family. "Consequently," says Alva Buxenbaum, "when the housewife in capitalist countries seeks employment she is by no means escaping the drudgery of household work to become a creative contributing member of society. Instead she works two jobs, eight hours or more on the job outside the home and again when she gets home." (*Ibid.*)

In addition, she suffers discrimination in employment. She is excluded wholly or largely from many occupations and is paid substantially less than men for doing the same work. Like racial and national discrimination, this discrimination against women workers is perpetuated by the monopolists because it is a source of superprofits for them.

Growing out of the basic inequality imposed on women in capitalism and earlier exploiting societies, and serving as an instrument for maintaining the special oppression of women is the ideology of male supremacy. Like racism, chauvinism and nationalism, it is an instrument for dividing the working class and pitting one part against another. It is a potent weapon because it is deep-rooted and of long standing and because there is little serious struggle against it. It permeates even the most advanced sections of the working class.

The struggle for the emancipation of women, it is clear, must be based on the class struggle, on the struggle against capitalist exploitation. Gus Hall writes "that the special forms of oppression and exploitation cannot be fully eliminated until the overall struggle is victorious. . . . Any attempt to deal with the liberation of women as a thing in itself, separated from the overall struggle is self-defeating—it becomes a classless dead-end." ("Class Approach to Women's Liberation," *Political Affairs*, February 1970.)

But this does not mean that no significant gains can be won under capitalism. The struggle is a three-pronged one. First, there is the fight to free women of the burden of housework and to make it possible for them to enter into social production on a plane of equality with men. This involves, first of all, the fight for a family income adequate to make possible the utilization of commercial services and mechanized appliances which greatly reduce the burden of household drudgery. Of particular importance in this connection is the growing demand for a guaranteed minimum annual income for all families. There is also the fight for government-financed public services, foremost among them adequate child care centers. And not least is the fight against male supremacy in the home, which leads to placing the main burden of housework on the wife.

Second, there is the battle against discrimination in employment, a battle in which major responsibility rests with the trade union movement. And third, basic to the advancement of the struggle in these two areas is the fight to remove the roadblock of male supremacy in all its aspects. This last has been in the main a neglected fight—in the pages of *Political Affairs* as well as elsewhere. But the cudgels must be taken up not only in the interests of women's rights but in

(Continued on p. 64)

Detente and Its Enemies

After some 30 years of the cold war and almost as many years of continuous U.S. military aggression in one part of the world or another, the people welcomed the end of U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. They have also welcomed each of the steps towards ending the cold war and its policies. Detente has been received as a new front of the struggle for peace. Detente is seen by the people as a way out of a dead-end nightmare. It appears as a light at the end of the cold-war tunnel. It is seen as a break in the wall that was isolating and closing in on the United States. Detente is seen as opening up the way of getting out from under the increasingly heavy burden of huge military budgets. These developments have brought about a sigh of relief. The fear of a nuclear confrontation has receded. There has been a relaxation of tensions. Detente has been the victor in local elections. It has received overwhelming support in all opinion polls. Workers have hailed the trade agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States. The trade agreements have resulted in preserving old jobs and creating new jobs. Detente has been welcomed across class and party lines. Masses do not see detente as a solution to all problems, but as an opportunity to seek for the solutions in an atmosphere of more relaxed relationships.

The Objective Framework

But the struggle for detente is not easy. It raises some very fundamental questions, both strategic and tactical. It brings to the surface many old contradictions.

For the U.S. detente means retreat from some of its positions of imperialist aggression. It means a change in some of its plans.

The cold-war policy is one of imperialist aggression. The acceptance of detente means giving up some of the old cold-war bunkers.

The cold war is not just a policy. It has become a way of life. It has been the main ingredient of the ideological output of U.S. imperialism. There is a cold-war culture, a cold-war literature, cold-war school curricula. It is the framework of the news and commentary by the mass media. The top trade union leadership is a cold-war cadre. The cold war has molded a military-industrial complex. The economy, politics, the military, the government and the major political parties have all operated on cold-war values and priorities. Our society has a cold war structure. It would be naive not to recognize that the

cold-war mentality has affected large sections of the people. Therefore, to change such a way of life, to change directions, is not easy. Detente does not automatically change all this. But it does open the doors. It creates a better atmosphere in which the struggle can take place.

Retreat is the most difficult of all operations. It is difficult even when the retreat is tactical or executed as a maneuver. But it is many times more difficult when the retreat is strategic. Such a retreat is much more painful and traumatic.

It is taking a lot of treading for the ruling class to backtrack from its cold war positions. Some accept detente as a necessary tactical maneuver. Others see the strategic handwriting on the wall. Many in monopoly circles hesitate to give up the idea of "dealing from a position of strength." To retreat means to give up some plans and some delusions of grandeur.

Since the end of World War II the pivotal hub of world imperialism has been the U.S. The command post for the policies of aggression, including the cold war, has always been manned by U.S. imperialism. But the cold war did not stop "at the water's edge." Some countries because of their own greedy ambitions, some because they were coerced or bribed—but mainly because of their class urge to wage a united struggle against world socialism and against the national liberation movements—all the major capitalist countries united and adopted the cold war as their guiding star. To one extent or another they were all accessories to the crimes of imperialism.

As the balance of world forces shifted against imperialism the cold war star began to fade. The cold war imperialist alliance began to show cracks. The contradictions increased and sharpened.

The cold-war propaganda, including the "domino theories," lost their effectiveness. The proposals of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries for peaceful coexistence continued to gain popular support. Other imperialist countries soon began to break from the cold-war ranks. This created a crisis for the world imperialist alliance.

Such was the objective backdrop for detente. The world imperialist powers were forced to maneuver and retreat. As the center of world imperialism, the shift in the world situation had its deepest effect in the U.S. This was the objective framework for Nixon's trips to Moscow and Peking. Since then each concrete step towards detente has been welcomed and supported by the people of the United States.

The Enemies of Detente

The signing of agreements in the fields of trade, culture, science

and military technology were very important steps and enhanced the struggle for detente. But it was obvious from the beginning that it was not going to be merely a matter of signing agreements.

It was clear that detente would not get the support of all sections of monopoly capital, or the support of the top trade union leadership. It was clear there was going to be maneuvering, wavering and struggle.

And detente is a struggle—a struggle against policies of imperialist aggression, a struggle against the cold war. Imperialism will not change its inherent characteristics. To rob and exploit is its very essence. The policies of aggression reflect this inner nature. Therefore, the struggle against imperialist policies of aggression is, of necessity, a continuous one.

For some time the forces opposing detente in the U.S. were in disarray. They were not able to unite their ranks. They had difficulties in finding the appropriate demagogic issues. They felt themselves isolated. But now they are beginning to swarm.

The campaign against detente is gaining some momentum. If not challenged by the people it can switch U.S. foreign policy back to the cold war rails.

The new anti-detente barrage is obviously timed to wreck the new round of SALT talks. It is one thing to put a ceiling on defensive weapons, but it is quite another to negotiate a cutback in offensive strategic weapons. Such negotiations raise basic questions about longer-range policies. Many sections of monopoly capital are not about to accept peace as a long-range outlook.

This present round of discussions will be taking up the matter of reducing offensive strategic weapons. The war hawks are getting frantic. The matter of strategic weapons touches the very nerve center of imperialism.

The war hawks were relatively silent as long as the Pentagon was permitted to go full speed ahead with the development and stockpiling of offensive weapons. They were silent because they were aware that under such circumstances the basic policy could switch from detente to the old policy of frontal confrontation overnight. But now the new SALT talks touch on the very essence of the arms race. This explains the frantic mobilization against detente. The attack is from all sides.

In spite of the foreboding editorials of the *New York Times*, Leonid Brezhnev did make his historic visit to the U.S. Important agreements were signed. But now the *Times* editors are at it again. They are again warning about the serious consequences for the U.S.

if Kissinger, and later Nixon, visit Moscow again. They are warning about "making too many concessions." What is the possible nature of these "concessions" the *New York Times* is so frantic about? They include a mutual reduction in nuclear weapons, a mutual reduction in armed forces, plans for more mutually beneficial trade, a further relaxation of world tensions, the further implementation of U.N. Middle East Resolution 242. Such steps would make it possible for both nations to cut their war budgets. The editors of the *New York Times* obviously think that such "concessions" would be disastrous for the U.S. They do not admit this openly, but it is obvious by inference that they do not believe U.S. capitalism can exist very long in a world at peace. They might be right! But what could be a better reason to discard a social and economic system than that it can continue to exist only by feeding on wars and war production?

The *New York Times* is not alone on the cold war barricades. Senator Goldwater has also picked up his old rusty saber. And Senator Goldwater must do more because after all he is on two public payrolls; he is paid by the Senate and by the Pentagon—they call it "Army Reserve pay." He says:

I'm very worried about [our national defense], because we have obviously entered a period where some of our leaders in Congress feel that we have detente with the Soviet. In fact, we've never been in a worse position to talk about detente than we are today.

The Soviets are now superior to us in every category of military equipment . . . and with that strength they're going to have the ability to convince our allies and our enemies that we are not going to stand up. The only answer is to have a President and a State Department who will answer these confrontations, and to have a military capable of going through with whatever is necessary. . . .

We have to rebuild our military posture. The military budget next year will be over \$90 billion. Fine, if it's going to take \$90 or \$95 or \$100 billion, let's spend it until we have built ourselves up into a stronger nation. (Quoted in editorial, *New York Sunday News*, February 10, 1974.)

Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, in a conspiracy with the Pentagon generals and corporate executives of the war industries, is restructuring the U.S. nuclear weapons system into an offensive posture. The new system is based on a strike-first concept. It is a conspiracy because it is being done without the consent of Congress or the people.

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, considers detente limited to a form of "communications." His theory is that in order to make detente work the U.S. must build its military machine to the maximum, and adds: "No foreign policy can be supported without the military." Admiral Moorer's opposition to detente makes clear why he is charged with the spying operation that was geared to get the essence of secret State Department discussions leading to detente. The Pentagon considered detente so dangerous that it set up a system of spying on the Presidency.

George Meany, one of the most consistent cold warriors, has also been called upon to do his little bit:

In the name of detente, let the Administration call upon Russia to join the U.S. in an effort to end the oil blackmail. Should Russia refuse cooperation for peace and economic security, we should suspend all Moscow-Washington scientific cooperation and all trade and credit arrangements she seeks or has already secured from our country. (*AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, January 1974.)

The top Zionists continue their campaign against detente. They see detente as an obstacle to the imperialist policies of Israel. The *American Zionist* (October-November 1973) states editorially: "It is essential that the U.S. not delude itself by pursuing an elusive detente." "We trust that the fears that have been expressed regarding Secretary of State Kissinger's possible desire to save what is left of detente by forcing Israel into compromises detrimental to her security will prove unfounded." "It is therefore salutary that the administration has shelved Soviet-American trade legislation." "Only those who believed you could do business with Hitler can doubt that the Soviet rulers have inherited the Nazi mantle and constitute today the same kind of threat to freedom—now in a 'distant place' (that is how Chamberlain described Czechoslovakia in 1938), but ultimately we ourselves will be the target."

These are forces acting in the ranks of the two capitalist parties and in the trade union movement. They have a big lobby operation in Washington. They are active in electoral districts.

The Right-wing social democrats are the ideological shock troops against detente. They are the special breed of maggots who operate out of the Meany-Lovestone-Shanker corner. They run anti-Soviet ideological massage parlors. The more vile and slanderous are the Solzhenitsyn diatribes the bigger are the ads in the *New York Times*,

which has become the official organ of the ideological massage parlors.

The anti-detente cabal is made up of the various strains of extreme reaction. Under the same cover there are the most vicious anti-Semitic elements, but also the leadership of some big Jewish organizations. There are the most reactionary anti-labor forces, but also Meany and Shanker. There are most vicious racist forces, together with A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin. There are the ultra-Right fascist forces and there are liberals. It is an alliance of various political strains coming together on the one issue—the struggle against detente.

Democratic Party War Hawks

Not to be outdone, the war hawks and the cold warriors in the Democratic Party are getting ready to swarm also. The vehicle they have picked is the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. It is generally staffed by a cold-war conglomerate of Senator Jackson's appointees, some leftovers from Johnson's Administration, Zionist politicians, social democrats, some Meany-Lovestone people, and a few of Senator Humphrey's gang. They have set up a 15-man foreign policy task force.

The queen bee for the swarming of the Democratic Party's cold warriors is none of other than Eugene V. Rostow. Rostow has the distinction of having been the most war-oriented influence in the Johnson Administration. When most in that Administration gave up trying to defend the ugly war in Vietnam, Rostow continued to do so. As a preview, he gave some of his thoughts in the February issue of *Commentary*: "But there is no detente." "The October War shattered the illusion that detente with the Soviet Union had actually been achieved."

Speaking about the European countries he said: "Will they accept the October War as an unequivocal *Pearl Harbor*, a warning requiring their massive, energetic and effective response?" "It follows that the American nuclear umbrella requires the permanent presence of conventional forces in and near Europe and in and near other areas vital to our security." "The Soviet Union is pursuing a policy of 18th or 19th century imperialism with some 20th century ideological overtones." "If we really were living in a state of detente there would be no harm in Europe's concentrating *for a while* on the task of European gestation. But we are not living in a state of detente." "Many of the ablest Western oil experts have long urged our sluggish and unwilling governments to face the issue and do something about it." (Emphasis

added.) And so Rostow's cold war rhetoric goes on and on.

The purpose of the task force headed by Eugene Rostow is to establish guidelines for the 1974 congressional elections. It is an attempt to make the struggle against detente a major plank in the platform of the Democratic Party's congressional candidates. If accepted, this will be a major miscalculation, a misreading of the times. It will be a repetition of the error that McGovern and the McGovern people made in the presidential elections. The aim of Senator Jackson and Rostow is to push the whole political spectrum, and the 1974 congressional elections, toward an anti-detente position.

This has the makings of an anti-detente conspiracy with serious consequences. The scenario that Rostow's task force is writing goes something like this:

- Because of the Watergate scandals the Republican candidates in the 1974 elections are going to suffer serious defeats.
- Because of the energy crisis, inflation—"the crisis of everyday living"—the Republican candidates are most likely going to suffer the biggest defeat in the history of the Republican Party.
- The Democratic Party task force is going to work in an effort to get as many Democratic candidates as possible to take a position against detente.
- This will set the stage, after the defeats of the Republican candidates and the victory of Democratic candidates, for the Jacksons, Rostows, Humphreys and Wallaces to hail the election results as a popular vote against detente.

This of course is a fraud. The vote in the 1974 elections will be against the policies of inflation, high prices, high taxes and rents, the crisis of shortages, energy crisis, food crisis, the Watergate scandals, the police state development behind the Watergate developments, and wherever possible for detente.

And these will be the key issues in the course of the election campaign. This year the Democratic Party will call mini-conventions on a Congressional District level, followed by a national convention. These will not be nominating conventions but will deal solely with issues. They offer an unusual opportunity for widespread popular participation in the debate. The Rostow and Wallace forces are going full steam ahead to try to put their imprint on these gatherings, but this effort can be defeated.

Detente or no detente can be the determining factor in whether there will be peace or no peace. In a world of stockpiled nuclear

weapons with arsenals of overkill, detente is literally a matter of life and death. But detente or no detente is not a matter affecting only world affairs, matters of war or peace. Detente is a serious domestic matter. It is a matter affecting the everyday lives of our people. The anti-detente position leads to supporting ever larger war budgets. Higher war budgets become a major pressure for increased inflation and higher taxes. Anti-detente leads to supporting further militarization, to supporting a growth of the powers of the military-industrial complex. Anti-detente leads to support of reactionary policies in general. Anti-detente policies can be supported only by repression and racism. Anti-detente can lead to a cutback in foreign trade, to a loss of jobs. Such positions can be sustained only by anti-labor policies.

The Nixon-Kissinger Policy

The top monopoly circles are split over the issue of detente. Reflecting this ruling-class split the Nixon Administration is schizophrenic.

Most monopoly circles would like to increase trade with the Soviet Union, but they are not willing to put the pressure on Congress to change the laws that would make such trade possible on the basis of equality. The "most favored nation" tariff arrangement is a misleading term. The obstacle to trade with the socialist countries is a law that prescribes special discriminatory tariffs on the goods that would come from the Soviet Union, Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, and which also bans the sale of a long list of "strategic" items to these countries. And of course there is a total ban on trade with Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Korea and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In addition, while most monopoly circles want to sign trade agreements, they are not ready to press Congress to change the laws that would make credit available on a nondiscriminatory basis. Most monopoly circles are for some reduction in arms, but they are not willing to take the meaningful step that would lead not only to a reduction in nuclear arms, but a reduction of a kind that would force a change in policy, a change from maneuvering with detente, with an eye to switching back to a policy of frontal confrontation, to a policy of meaningfully pursuing detente and peaceful coexistence. The Nixon-Kissinger policies reflect the waverings and contradictions in the ranks of monopoly capital.

The Nixon-Kissinger policy is an attempt to maneuver in the face of the new world balance of forces by trying to balance off forces against each other. In some parts of the world the Nixon-Kissinger

balancing act is having some success. The Kissinger shuttle in the Middle East was just such an act. The absence of face-to-face meetings between the leaders of the Arab countries and Israel provides Kissinger with a perfect opportunity to keep delivering his own interpretations of the positions taken on both sides. President Sadat does not know what Premier Meir and Defense Minister Dayan said to Kissinger. And they, in turn, have to take Kissinger's word as to the agreements between him and Sadat. But this type of maneuvering is short-lived. In the end the Mid-East situation will be resolved only on the basis of the UN Resolution 242, which calls for Israel's withdrawal to the borders that existed prior to the 1967 war. The purpose of the shuttling and the maneuvering is to get the U.S. into a position where the U.S. oil corporations will continue getting Mid-East oil at colonial prices. We are for Israel's withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders, but our reasons are different from Kissinger's.

The Nixon-Kissinger policy is an attempt to maneuver by balancing China against the U.S., China against Bangladesh, China against the European Security Treaty, China against the national liberation movements, China as a force to split the developing nations from the socialist world, China as an instrument to split the socialist world, China as an instrument in getting support for the bloody military junta in Chile, China as a disruptive and divisive factor in the world Communist and working class movement, China as the main ideological instrument in its anti-Communist and anti-Soviet campaign. The aim of Nixon-Kissinger is to balance a counterrevolutionary force against the forces of the world revolutionary process. Here the balancing act of U.S. imperialism is having its greatest success. The Maoists are not only responding. In many areas they are taking the initiative. The Maoist forces are as active against detente as Senators Goldwater and Jackson. If that is not counterrevolution the class struggle has lost all of its meaning.

Rostow states very jubilantly that: "The inherent position of the Atlantic allies and of Japan is stronger indeed than has been the case for many years, because of the change in China's policy." And he states further: "As China, Japan and the U.S. have now made abundantly clear, they share a profound national interest in preventing Soviet hegemony in East Asia. *China desires a strong, credible, forward American presence in East Asia and a strong NATO as well. China wants U.S. forces to remain in South Korea and has publicly endorsed the Security Treaty between Japan and the U.S.*" (*Op. cit.* Emphasis added.)

Thus, it is obvious that the spokesmen of U.S. imperialism have

even greater expectations for the Maoist policies the world over.

To some, these counterrevolutionary policies of Maoism seem unbelievable. But the fact is that the transition was not that difficult. Maoism has never been a revolutionary working-class concept. It has always been a petty-bourgeois ideology strongly influenced by Chinese bourgeois nationalism, covered by radical and Marxist phrases. Its accommodation and capitulation to imperialism were an inevitable end result of the policies based on rank opportunism. In a basic sense the path was not much different than that followed by the social democrats before the First World War. Their opportunism also led to open betrayal. The big difference is that now the betrayal takes place at a moment when there are two world social and economic systems. The betrayal leads to the camp of imperialism. At this moment the betrayal takes the form of fighting against detente.

The essence of detente is anti-imperialism. It is a struggle against the central, basic, inherent characteristic of imperialism. One of the oldest Maoist efforts has been to provoke war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and on its part the United States seeks to provoke China into war with the Soviet Union. The warped Maoist logic behind this effort is that if the U.S. and Soviet Union destroy each other Mao would fulfill his dream of Chinese great power chauvinism. This was the meaning of his projection that on the ruins of a nuclear disaster there would grow up a better world.

The Maoists pursued this effort throughout the struggle against U.S. aggression in Indochina. They kept closing and disrupting the rail service carrying arms to the Vietnamese in an effort to force the Soviet Union to ship all of the aid to the forces fighting against imperialism through waters where a confrontation was possible. It is therefore not surprising that the Maoists, in bold editorial letters, denounce detente between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. They have gleefully announced that "detente has collapsed."

Detente in the 1974 Elections

Detente is a bread-and-butter issue. Detente is a struggle for a better political climate. Detente is a struggle against reaction.

The struggle for detente is a struggle in the very best self-interests of the people of the U.S.

It is clear that the issue of detente is going to emerge as an important issue in the 1974 elections. The contradiction of the moment will be reflected in these Congressional elections. The question will be how to campaign and vote for detente and also against Watergate; how to vote and campaign against inflation, the policies that have

resulted in the "crisis of everyday living," and also against the wage freeze supported by the leading candidates of both old parties; how to campaign against Democratic candidates who are against detente, who are also for impeachment of Nixon; how to campaign against Republican candidates who are for detente but are also for Nixon's Watergate policies and against impeachment. These will be serious problems in the campaign.

For the people the "dilemma" is the old one of choosing between two major parties representing the interests of one class. It is a dilemma, but it should make it easier for voters to see the need to break out of the two-party ring. It can be resolved only by an independent movement outside of the two-party system because to be for detente and peace and against the policies that led to Watergate and inflation, to fight against racism, to be for impeachment, are not in contradiction to one another. In fact they are all in the best self-interests of the working class.

What is needed is an alliance that breaks out of the "dilemma." What is needed is an alliance that represents the unity of these issues. The independent movements must provide the candidates and the political vehicles for this alliance. The independent movements must become the bridge that closes the gap between those who are for detente and also against war.

The people's movements must now raise the flag of warning: "Anyone who has political ambitions, be on notice—the old cold war snake oil will not find takers in the electoral marketplace of 1974."

The motto of the 1974 elections should be: The struggle against inflation, the energy crisis, racism, Watergate, imperialism, for world peace and detente, is indivisible. Detente must become an everyday, household word.

The swarming of the cold war maggots must be seen as a serious danger signal. The longer-range aim of the anti-detente forces is to regroup the extreme reactionary forces for an overall new offensive. This is the calculated aim of the more reactionary sections of monopoly capital. In this sense the anti-detente forces are in agreement with many of the forces that are behind the Watergate scandals. This is not only the aim of the anti-detente forces, it is also the inner logic of their swarming.

McCarthyism, that reactionary, ultra-Right, fascist-like witchhunt, was an integral feature of the cold war. It had an input-output relationship with the cold war policies. In that period of history the reactionary elements also started to gather their forces, while the first concrete step, the preparation for the indictments and the arrest

of the leadership of the Communist Party took place at the same time as U.S. imperialism was preparing for military action against the People's Republic of Korea. The military action gave impetus to the McCarthyite persecutions. Thus the drive for war and the drive against the democratic rights of the people grew simultaneously.

If not stopped the anti-detente movement can spin off its own McCarthy-like reactionary wave. The anti-detente movement is a magnet for all reactionary elements. The use of the Solzhenitsyn affair by the anti-detente and other most extreme reactionary elements is very much in keeping with the early stages of the reactionary McCarthyite drive.

On the other hand the struggle for detente provides an issue and the vehicle for the broad democratic forces, the anti-imperialist forces, for the forces fighting against racism and oppression, for the forces of the working class. It can unite the forces who understand and see the police-state dangers behind Watergate and the cold war dangers behind the anti-detente drive, with the forces in the struggle against inflation and the "crisis of everyday living."

What can unify the struggles is the question of monopoly domination. It is an urgent matter that needs urgent initiatives. What is needed is people's unity conferences that will inject into the political arena the united self-interests of the people.

The objective factors that have given impetus to the struggle for detente will continue to grow and develop. The forces fighting against detente are fighting an uphill battle against the stream of history. There are dangers, but there are opportunities. Opportunities become realities, however, only as a result of movement and struggle.

Some Problems Facing The Auto Workers

The Unemployment Problem

Before the ink was barely dry on the new auto pact, the auto workers were faced with new problems created by massive layoffs in the industry. The automobile monopolies are trying to place the entire blame for the small-car buying switch on the "energy crisis." But the switch was on long before the Arab oil embargo gave the energy monopolies an excuse to promote the crisis scene.

Robert J. Hampson, Executive Vice President of Ford Motor Company revealed in *American Road*, company magazine for salaried workers, that the company knew nine years ago that there was going to be a fuel shortage along about now. He said: "We began getting ready as far back as 1967." Ford has been preparing to meet a demand for small cars of up to 45 per cent of the passenger car market in this model year. The energy crisis ballyhoo has raised the small car share to 50 per cent and it is still going up.

The steady decline in sales is due to several causes. First, it is a reflection of the fact the United States economic boom seems to have run its course. The chain reaction set in motion by these auto and energy layoffs has not yet had its full impact on the economy. About one-sixth of the employment in the country is dependent, directly or indirectly, on the health of the auto industry.

Second, the inflationary spiral is eating up more and more of the worker's paycheck for necessities. There is less and less left for non-necessities and luxuries such as a new car. More and more the old one is being patched up to make it do another year or so.

Third, the continuously rising price of new cars and ballooning interest rates are pricing more and more people out of the new car market. Today a compact car starts at nearly \$3,000. By the time the so-called extras are added on, the sticker price, even without air conditioning, is some \$4,000. Intermediate and full-sized models are now in the \$5,000 to \$6,000 class.

The monthly payments add up in the neighborhood of \$100 or more for three years, unless one has a healthy down payment or a good car to trade in.

The pricing policy of the auto barons is designed to make the sub-

compact and the compact high profit-per-unit items, like the bigger cars.

Fourth, the scare about the "energy crisis," the monumental plunder and extortion by the energy monopolies has accelerated the switch in the car-buying habits of millions. These huge multinational oil monopolies have not only used the media and public officials at all levels to put across the scare but have systematically manipulated supply shortages in areas calculated to get the most public reaction.

Most severely hit has been the standard-size and luxury car market. This is the most profitable area for the auto trusts. General Motors workers have been hardest hit because the company has the highest percentage of its production in the gas guzzlers.

True to form, these super-rich monopolies are shifting as much of the burden as possible onto the backs of the workers on the production lines. The companies are laying off hundreds of thousands. Tens of thousands have no prospect of ever getting back. These families face a future of welfare or starvation or both.

The corporations are using the weekly announcements of layoffs and the resultant insecurity to accelerate even more their drive to squeeze ever greater productivity from each worker. Workers are already being worked almost to the limit of physical endurance. The estimated 250,000 auto workers on the streets serve as a pool of experienced workers for the companies to draw on. This makes it easier to replace those who are injured or worked into an early grave by these monopolist gangsters.

The shift to small car production means that less workers will be needed to produce them. They use less parts and the assembly process is simpler, so they can be produced faster. (Line speeds at plants like Lordstown are running at 100 cars per hour as against 55 to 65 in other plants.) This means that about one-third of those being laid off have very little chance of getting back in the plant.

There is a lot of publicity about the jobless auto workers getting 95 per cent of their 40-hour take-home pay while they are not working. But workers with less than one year of seniority do not get *any* supplemental unemployment benefits (SUB), and these are the ones who are laid off first and for the longest time, most of them permanently. You must have at least two years to get the full SUB.

Contrary to all the publicity, laid-off hourly workers do not end up with 95 per cent of their take-home pay. After federal, state and local income taxes are deducted from their SUB payment, the combined income from unemployment compensation and SUB is only about 80-85 per cent of the 40-hour take-home, depending on the number of dependents.

Those who are eligible will receive payments only as long as the fund holds out. At the present time it is estimated that if there is any significant increase in permanent layoffs or that the "temporary" layoffs are for an extended period of time, there is a danger that the SUB fund will be exhausted by mid-year.

As layoffs spread beyond the Big Three to other members of the union they will be harder hit because many of them are not covered by SUB agreements. These families will have to get along on the meager state unemployment payments.

When the SUB fund runs out so does the \$80 or \$90 monthly hospitalization payment. What that family will do after that if illness strikes, in the absence of federal health coverage, is anybody's guess.

So far the answer of the union leadership to this growing problem is a no-struggle one. It is confined to issuing statements, advancing programs and leaving it to their lobbyists in Washington and Lansing to do the rest. The President of the union, Leonard Woodcock, still sits on Nixon's wage freeze and productivity committees.

The New Contract

The workers in the plants are saddled with a weak contract in which management prerogatives are left untouched. The no-strike and company security clauses remain and serve as effective shackles on stewards and on the right to strike on health, safety and work standards grievances.

The new contract makes overtime compulsory under the guise of being voluntary. The contract puts in writing union sanction of a nine- or ten-hour day and a 54- or 60-hour week. This is a serious setback to the fight for the shorter workday and the shorter work week. This provision allows the companies to run their plants on 9- and 10-hour shifts while thousands of union members are out of work.

The compulsory nature of the overtime is strengthened by the emphasis "on the prohibition against concerted action among employees refusing overtime." To our knowledge, this is the first conspiracy clause ever written into a UAW contract.

The new contract increased the pay differential of new employees from 20¢ to 45¢ an hour. Coupled with the 90-day probationary period, this clause gave the corporations another club to drive down wage standards and to increase their already immense profits. The current layoffs have, in fact, made this clause inoperative for the time being.

This type of agreement makes the young worker the chief victim. Besides being grossly underpaid, the probationary is almost at the complete mercy of the foreman in the drive for more and more

production.

The large differential and the long probationary periods make it profitable for the companies to maintain a revolving pool of underpaid workers constantly fearful of losing their jobs. The maximum pay difference that should be allowed is 10¢ per hour and the probationary period, if any, should not be more than two weeks.

The union leaders and the company have developed something they call "letters of understanding." These are agreements worked out with management and incorporated in a letter from one to the other. These "letters" have the same validity as the contract. The workers never see or get to vote on these "letters of understanding."

The economic package was designed to stay within Nixon's wage freeze guidelines. It did just that. Even with the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) payments during the life of the previous contract, the real wages of auto workers declined. Just to catch up they should have gotten at least 10¢ in new money.

The 25¢ or 26¢ that auto workers are supposed to have won breaks down something like this. The 3 per cent Annual Improvement Factor (AIP) raise, for an assembler, was carried over from the old contract. Eight cents was the COLA raise for the quarter ending September 1, also a carry-over payable under the old contract. So actually only 4¢ or 5¢ represented increases over the old contract, or catchup money.

The change in the COLA formula from 1¢ for each 0.4 points increase in the BLS Consumer Price Index (CPI) to 1¢ for each 0.35 points increase represents virtually no increase in the pay check. First, the difference is minimal. Second, 1¢ of any COLA paid each quarter will go to pay for the Dental Plan and the "very costly new fringe benefits." Third, the GM workers' COLA is 1¢ for every 0.3 points change in the combined U.S.-Canadian Index. Fourth, a slight change in the weighing of the items that are used to make up the CPI by the state-monopoly government could easily wipe out whatever small advantage was gained by the new formula. The workers would never know they had been dealt another wage cut from Washington.

Because of this, some rank and file groups are already raising the demand for a wage reopener even before the contract is one year old.

All of the gains in the new contract are in the area of fringes with four notable exceptions. The first is that now women workers will be able to receive pregnancy pay equivalent to what they were entitled to from state unemployment compensation. Second, the Ford workers won an improvement in their steward system. Third, they got full-time health and safety representatives in the plant. Fourth, they ob-

tained company recognition of union fair employment practices committees.

Higher pensions were won for those who are already retired and for those retiring now and in the future. After 30 years of service regardless of age a worker can retire and get \$625 month, including social security, beginning October 1, 1974. Foundry workers will now be able to get the same benefits after 25 years of service. There is no COLA for pensioners.

The Family Dental Health Care Program is a new fringe benefit. It pays full costs of preventative services, such as teeth cleaning and emergency treatments. It pays 50 per cent of the cost of dentures and of orthodontics up to "a maximum one-time plan liability of \$500." It will pay 85 per cent of "the reasonable and customary charges for all other dental services up to a maximum of \$750 per person per year."

For a Policy of Struggle

There are some who say that in light of the power of monopoly and with Nixon in the White House that the union got as much as was possible. To say that is to ignore the fact that class collaboration is the guiding policy of the leadership of the UAW.

The members of the UAW are among the most militant in the U.S. labor movement. They were ready to take on these giants in a real fight to get some real improvements in their working conditions.

The militancy of the membership prevented even greater erosion of the worker's rights, such as giving up the right to strike over health and safety and production standards. The strong opposition to the final settlements could have sent the negotiators back to the bargaining table had it been organized. Thus, skilled trades workers, though more organized, are no longer able to go it alone and because of the influence of racism they have alienated large sections of the production workers who are Black and majorities in key and decisive plants.

Because this militancy and dissatisfaction was not organized, therefore, the production workers were not able to change the class-partnership direction of the leadership.

Distribution and sale of the *Daily World* and shop papers at the gates helped workers see the issues more clearly and gave their opposition to the settlement more substance. The weakness was that the opposition was almost entirely spontaneous. Spontaneity that remains unorganized leads to feelings of futility and frustration in struggle and produces very few victories.

The main lesson to be learned is that an organized rank-and-file

movement could have sent the negotiators back to the bargaining table and changed some of the worst features of the agreement. Without organization of the rank and file there can be no real progress in the UAW.

A program based mainly on an anti-leadership stance falls flat on its face in a struggle against the company.

The auto union has more credits among broad masses of the people, in their organizations and in the labor movement than any other union in the country. Its support of the civil rights struggle and the fight for peace, its positive legislative program, its support of other unions, etc., put this union in a unique position in its ability to go to these forces for help in the fight against Nixon and the auto trusts. It has also taken a good position on such questions as the impeachment of Nixon, the causes of the energy crisis, trade with the Soviet Union and against the fascist dictatorship in Chile. There is little doubt that the people would respond, but not the least effort has been made to ask for or mobilize this support. To give effect to these positions is an important task for the rank and file.

In addition to being a large and powerful union in its own right, the relations of the UAW with the other unions in the mass production industries has been very good. Unions like Steel, Rubber, Oil and Chemical, Teamsters and others have direct and indirect self-interest in what happens to the auto workers. The UAW usually sets the pattern for the others. Had the leadership of this union been on a path of struggle rather than a path of no struggle there could have been forged a unity of action among the major unions that could have broken Nixon's wage freeze guidelines.

There is no other union in this country that has the combination of factors necessary to defeat monopoly on the economic front and the political front to the degree that this one does. The bulk of this potential is dissipated because of the class-collaboration no-struggle policies of the leadership.

With each announcement of further auto sales decline there are announcements of more layoffs. There are some predictions of a reversal of this trend come spring. But with the persistent, accelerating inflation, and with at least an 80-day supply of unsold new cars on dealers' lots as of mid-February—*the highest oversupply in history*, this seems unlikely. And it seems even more unlikely since the auto manufacturers are threatening to raise their prices even higher.

The Big Three are not only placing the burden of their declining sales on the backs of the car buyers but also are taking it out of the hides of the already overworked production workers.

"The change to small car production will drastically reduce the

number of auto workers in the U.S.," says an article in the *Daily World* of February 12, 1974, headlined SMALL CAR LOOMING AS A JOB CUTTING OGRE. The assembly lines will be running faster with less workers.

The bosses are using the excuses of the "energy crisis" to cut off heat, cut down on the lighting in the plants, turn off ventilation fans, postpone any expenditures for health and safety and make further cuts in janitorial workers, thus leaving the work place even dirtier and more dangerous than before. Hence in-plant accidents can be expected to increase, respiratory and skin diseases to multiply, as part of the sacrifice on the altar of record profits.

Some Handles for Rank-and-File Struggle

This stepped-up onslaught on the workers by the manufacturers makes it more imperative to organize the rank and file in struggle. There are a few handles remaining in the contract that an organized rank-and-file can grab hold of to fight the company.

One of these is that health and safety grievances are still strikeable issues and there are full-time representatives in the plants. The fight against automated intensification of labor can be based on the fact that the pace of the job is destroying the health of the worker and increasing the danger to life and limb.

This a struggle against management prerogatives. The right of management to run the factory as it pleases is no longer sacred. Gus Hall put it this way: "This struggle must start from the premise that it can no longer remain in the realm of management prerogatives. . . . Workers' control over the machines is a legitimate demand. . . . In general, the nature of the new problems facing the working class narrows down to areas of management prerogatives and increasing the areas of workers' control." (*The High Crimes and Misdemeanors of Monopoly Capitalism*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1974, p. 32.)

Another handle is that, for the first time, union FEP committees are recognized by the company. They now can be used to investigate on-the-job complaints about company discrimination and racism. These committees offer a way to fight discrimination against women and other minority workers.

Though these committees have no powers of enforcement they can be used to challenge and expose management prerogative to discriminate and spread racism in the plant. Some local union FEP committees have been able to have an impact on the fight against racism in the plant and in the union even though they were not recognized.

Another area of struggle that requires an organized rank and file

is the fight to prevent the accumulation of unsettled grievances. In addition to groups of workers demanding the settlement of complaints on the line with the foreman and filing joint grievances, other means of organized pressure to force the company to settle grievances have to be found. The quality of the grievance procedure is directly proportional to the organized strength of the rank and file.

Stewards can appoint an assistant or deputy for each foreman. Or the workers can select one of their own people to represent them until the steward can be gotten. This can and should be done even though there is no provision for it in the contract.

There is still the struggle to win local union demands. The companies have not yet come to agreement with many of the locals. Since most of these demands go to the question of management prerogatives, it is an important arena of rank-and-file struggle.

Another matter that needs the attention of an organized rank and file is to get the local union to organize its unemployed members in a joint struggle with those employed for a 30-hour week at 40 hours' pay and other job-making demands, for a roll-back of prices, higher unemployment compensation continuing for the full duration of joblessness, a moratorium on all debts and interest payments as long as the unemployment continues, and prohibition of all overtime as long as any members are laid off. It is also necessary to press the campaigns for impeachment of Nixon and for new elections, for the reversal of spending priorities, for making the Party's program for the nationalization of the energy, food and transportation industries the property of the union.

The campaign for the election of rank-and-file delegates to the coming UAW Constitutional Convention provides an excellent opportunity to raise a number of issues and mobilize the workers in support of them. Some are mentioned above. Since this is a constitutional convention all matters of union policy are up for discussion and action.

In the area of union democracy, several issues need to be raised. Some of them are:

- Removal of the anti-Communist clause from the constitution.
- Printing and distribution of the contract to the workers at least ten days before the ratification vote.
- Elimination of voting by retirees in local union elections.
- Outlawing of "letters of understanding" or other secret agreements and requirement that all such agreements must be submitted to a membership vote.
- Referendum vote for regional directors and international re-

- representatives by the locals they service.
- Production workers' conferences with elected, not appointed delegates.

Trade union unity in the struggle against the conglomerates and multinational monopoly giants is a must for the whole labor movement. The UAW should take the lead in this direction. The one-at-a-time policy in the fight against the auto magnates is no longer a winning strategy. The auto companies stand together as one against the union. The union must develop new strategies and tactics to deal effectively with this monolith.

International trade union solidarity with the Black workers in South Africa and the workers in Chili needs to be emphasized and backed up by action. Developing more exchange and friendship with the trade unions of the socialist countries should be the subject of local resolutions.

Conditions in the auto plants are rotten ripe for organizing the rank-and-file groups and for building the Party. Says Gus Hall:

In our trade union policy our approach is to replace the policies of collaboration with policies of class struggle. Our aim is to change the relationship of forces in the trade union movement . . .

There is no meaningful Communist shop work without efforts to organize rank-and-file groups. A Communist in the shop cannot be a militant without being part of such a formation. A Communist in the shop cannot be a Communist without being related to some organized detachment of workers. For a Communist to be related, to be involved, means to give leadership. Shop work is united front work. (*Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40-41.)

This means the most consistent implementation of industrial concentration policies and plans. It means the regular sale and distribution of our press and literature to shop workers. It means discussion groups, forums, affairs, parties where workers are brought together. But most important of all in helping to build the Party in the shop is that the workers see more and more Communists and the Communist Party in the struggle for the welfare of the working class and the people.

An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women!*

An outstanding feature of the present stage of the Negro liberation movement is the growth in the militant participation of Negro women in all aspects of the struggle for peace, civil rights, and economic security. Symptomatic of this new militancy is the fact that Negro women have become symbols of many present-day struggles of the Negro people. This growth of militancy among Negro women has profound meaning, both for the Negro liberation movement and for the emerging anti-fascist, anti-imperialist coalition.

To understand this militancy correctly, to deepen and extend the role of Negro women in the struggle for peace and for all interests of the working class and the Negro people, means primarily to overcome the gross neglect of the special problems of Negro women. This neglect has too long permeated the ranks of the labor movement generally, of Left-progressives, and also of the Communist Party. The most serious assessment of these shortcomings by progressives, especially by Marxist-Leninists, is vitally necessary if we are to help accelerate this development and integrate Negro women in the progressive and labor movement and in our own Party.

The bourgeoisie is fearful of the militancy of the Negro woman, and for good reason. The capitalists know, far better than many progressives seem to know, that once Negro women undertake action, the militancy of the whole Negro people, and thus of the anti-imperialist coalition, is greatly enhanced.

Historically, the Negro woman has been the guardian, the protector, of the Negro family. From the days of the slave traders down to the present, the Negro woman has had the responsibility of caring for the needs of the family, of militantly shielding it from the blows of Jim-Crow insults, of rearing children in an atmosphere of lynch terror, segregation, and police brutality, and of fighting for an education for the children. The intensified oppression of the Negro people, which has been the hallmark of the postwar reactionary offensive, cannot therefore but lead to an acceleration of

* Reprinted from *Political Affairs*, June 1949. The original terminology has been retained.

the militancy of the Negro woman. As mother, as Negro, and as worker, the Negro woman fights against the wiping out of the Negro family, against the Jim-Crow ghetto existence which destroys the health, morale, and very life of millions of her sisters, brothers, and children.

Viewed in this light, it is not accidental that the American bourgeoisie has intensified its oppression, not only of the Negro people in general, but of Negro women in particular. Nothing so exposes the drive to fascization in the nation as the callous attitude which the bourgeoisie displays and cultivates toward Negro women. The vaunted boast of the ideologists of Big Business—that American women possess “the greatest equality” in the world is exposed in all its hypocrisy when one sees that in many parts of the world, particularly in the Soviet Union, the New Democracies and the formerly oppressed land of China, women are attaining new heights of equality. But above all else, Wall Street’s boast stops at the water’s edge where Negro and working-class women are concerned. Not equality, but degradation and super-exploitation: this is the actual lot of Negro women!

Consider the hypocrisy of the Truman Administration, which boasts about “exporting democracy throughout the world” while the state of Georgia keeps a widowed Negro mother of twelve children under lock and key. Her crime? She defended her life and dignity—aided by her two sons—from the attacks of a “white supremacist.” Or ponder the mute silence with which the Department of Justice has greeted Mrs. Amy Mallard, widowed Negro school-teacher, since her husband was lynched in Georgia because he had bought a new Cadillac and become, in the opinion of the “white supremacists,” “too uppity.” Contrast this with the crocodile tears shed by the U.S. delegation to the United Nations for Cardinal Mindszenty, who collaborated with the enemies of the Hungarian People’s Republic and sought to hinder the forward march to fuller democracy by the formerly oppressed workers and peasants of Hungary. Only recently, President Truman spoke solicitously in a Mother’s Day Proclamation about the manifestation of “our love and reverence” for all mothers of the land. The so-called “love and reverence” for the mothers of the land by no means includes Negro mothers who, like Rosa Lee Ingram, Amy Mallard, the wives and mothers of the Trenton Six, or the other countless victims, dare to fight back against lynch law and “white supremacy” violence.

Economic Hardships

Very much to the contrary, Negro women—as workers, as Negroes,

and as women—are the most oppressed stratum of the whole population.

In 1940, two out of every five Negro women, in contrast to two out of every eight white women, worked for a living. By virtue of their majority status among the Negro people, Negro women not only constitute the largest percentage of women heads of families, but are the main breadwinners of the Negro family. The large proportion of Negro women in the labor market is primarily a result of the low-scale earnings of Negro men. This disproportion also has its roots in the treatment and position of Negro women over the centuries.

Following emancipation, and persisting to the present day, a large percentage of Negro women—married as well as single—were forced to work for a living. But despite the shift in employment of Negro women from rural to urban areas, Negro women are still generally confined to the lowest-paying jobs. The Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, *Handbook of Facts for Women Workers* (1948, Bulletin 225), shows white women workers as having median earnings more than twice as high as those of non-white women, and non-white women workers (mainly Negro women) as earning less than \$500 a year! In the rural South, the earnings of women are even less. In three large Northern industrial communities, the median income of white families (\$1,720) is also 60 percent higher than that of Negro families (\$1,095). The super-exploitation of the Negro woman worker is thus revealed not only in that she receives, as woman, less than equal pay for equal work with men, but in that the majority of Negro women get less than half the pay of white women. Little wonder, then, that in Negro communities the conditions of ghetto-living—low salaries, high rents, high prices, etc.—virtually become an iron curtain hemming in the lives of Negro children and undermining their health and spirit! Little wonder that the maternity death rate for Negro women is triple that of white women! Little wonder that one out of every ten Negro children born in the United States does not grow to manhood or womanhood!

The low scale of earnings of the Negro woman is directly related to her almost complete exclusion from virtually all fields of work except the most menial and underpaid, namely, domestic service. Revealing are the following data given in the report of 1945, *Negro Women War Workers* (Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, Bulletin 205): Of a total 7½ million Negro women, over a million are in domestic and personal service. The overwhelming bulk—about 918,000—of these women workers are employed in private families, and some 98,000 are employed as cooks, waitresses, and in

like services in other than private homes. The remaining 60,000 workers in service trades are in miscellaneous personal service occupations (beauticians, boarding house and lodging-house keepers, charwomen, janitors, practical nurses, housekeepers, hostesses, and elevator operators).

The next largest number of Negro women workers are engaged in agricultural work. In 1940, about 245,000 were agricultural workers. Of them, some 128,000 were unpaid family workers.

Industrial and other workers numbered more than 96,000 of the Negro women reported. Thirty-six thousand of these women were in manufacturing, the chief groups being 11,300 in apparel and other fabricated textile products, 1,000 in tobacco manufactures, and 5,600 in food and related products.

Clerical and kindred workers in general numbered only 13,000. There were only 8,300 Negro women workers in civil service.

The rest of the Negro women who work for a living were distributed along the following lines: teachers, 50,000; nurses and student nurses, 6,700; social and welfare workers, 1,700; dentists, pharmacists, and veterinarians, 120; physicians and surgeons, 129; actresses, 200; authors, editors, and reporters, 100; lawyers and judges, 39; librarians, 400; and other categories likewise illustrating the large-scale exclusion of Negro women from the professions.

During the anti-Axis war, Negro women for the first time in history had an opportunity to utilize their skills and talents in occupations other than domestic and personal service. They became trail blazers in many fields. Since the end of the war, however, this has given way to growing unemployment, to the wholesale firing of Negro women, particularly in basic industry.

This process has been intensified with the development of the economic crisis. Today, Negro women are being forced back into domestic work in great numbers. In New York State, for example, this trend was officially confirmed recently when Edward Corsi, Commissioner of the State Labor Department, revealed that for the first time since the war, domestic help is readily obtainable. Corsi in effect admitted that Negro women are not voluntarily giving up jobs, but rather are being systematically pushed out of industry. Unemployment, which has always hit the Negro woman first and hardest, plus the high cost of living, is what compels Negro women to re-enter domestic service today. Accompanying this trend is an ideological campaign to make domestic work palatable. Daily newspaper advertisements which base their arguments on the claim that most domestic workers who apply for jobs through U.S.E.S. "prefer this type of work to work in industry," are propagandizing the

"virtues" of domestic work, especially of "sleep-in positions."

Inherently connected with the question of job opportunities where the Negro woman is concerned, is the special oppression she faces as Negro, as woman, and as worker. She is the victim of the white chauvinist stereotype as to where her place should be. In the film, radio, and press, the Negro woman is not pictured in her real role as breadwinner, mother, and protector of the family, but as a traditional "mammy" who puts the care of children and families of others above her own. This traditional stereotype of the Negro slave mother, which to this day appears in commercial advertisements, must be combatted and rejected as a device of the imperialists to perpetuate the white chauvinist ideology that Negro women are "backward," "inferior," and the "natural slaves" of others.

Historical Aspects

Actually, the history of the Negro woman shows that the Negro mother under slavery held a key position and played a dominant role in her own family grouping. This was due primarily to two factors: the conditions of slavery, under which marriage, as such, was non-existent, and the Negro's social status was derived from the mother and not the father; and the fact that most of the Negro people brought to these shores by the slave traders came from West Africa where the position of women, based on active participation in property control, was relatively higher in the family than that of European women.

Early historians of the slave trade recall the testimony of travelers indicating that the love of the African mother for her child was unsurpassed in any part of the world. There are numerous stories attesting to the self-sacrificial way in which East African mothers offered themselves to the slave traders in order to save their sons and Hottentot women refused food during famines until after their children were fed.

It is impossible within the confines of this article to relate the terrible sufferings and degradation undergone by Negro mothers and Negro women generally under slavery. Subject to legalized rape by the slaveowners, confined to slave pens, forced to march for eight to fourteen hours with loads on their backs and to perform back-breaking work even during pregnancy, Negro women bore a burning hatred for slavery, and undertook a large share of the responsibility for defending and nurturing the Negro family.

The Negro mother was mistress in the slave cabin, and despite the interference of master or overseer, her wishes in regard to mating and in family matters were paramount. During and after slavery,

Negro women had to support themselves and the children, necessarily playing an important role in the economic and social life of her people.

The Negro Woman Worker

The negligible participation of Negro women in progressive and trade-union circles is thus all the more startling. In union after union, even in those unions where a large concentration of workers are Negro women, few Negro women are to be found as leaders or active workers. The outstanding exceptions to this are the Food and Tobacco Workers' Union and the United Office and Professional Workers' Union.

But why should these be exceptions? Negro women are among the most militant trade unionists. The sharecroppers' strikes of the '30's were sparkplugged by Negro women. Subject to the terror of the landlord and white supremacist, they waged magnificent battles together with Negro men and white progressives in that struggle of great tradition led by the Communist Party. Negro women played a magnificent part in the pre-C.I.O. days in strikes and other struggles, both as workers and as wives of workers, to win recognition of the principle of industrial unionism, in such industries as auto, packing, steel, etc. More recently, the militancy of Negro women unionists is shown in the strike of the packing-house workers, and even more so, in the tobacco workers' strike—in which such leaders as Moranda Smith and Velma Hopkins emerged as outstanding trade unionists. The struggle of the tobacco workers led by Negro women later merged with the political action of Negro and white which led to the election of the first Negro in the South (in Winston-Salem, N. C.) since Reconstruction days.

It is incumbent on progressive unionists to realize that in the fight for equal rights for Negro workers, it is necessary to have a special approach to Negro women workers, who, far out of proportion to other women workers, are the main bread-winners in their families. The fight to retain the Negro woman in industry and to upgrade her on the job, is a major way of struggling for the basic and special interests of the Negro woman worker. Not to recognize this feature is to miss the special aspects of the effects of the growing economic crisis, which is penalizing Negro workers, particularly Negro women workers, with special severity.

The Domestic Worker

One of the crassest manifestations of trade-union neglect of the problems of the Negro woman worker has been the failure, not only

to fight against relegation of the Negro woman to domestic and similar menial work, but to *organize* the domestic worker. It is merely lip-service for progressive unionists to speak of organizing the unorganized without turning their eyes to the serious plight of the domestic worker, who, unprotected by union standards, is also the victim of exclusion from all social and labor legislation. Only about one in ten of all Negro women workers are to be found in states having minimum-wage laws. All of the arguments heretofore projected with regard to the real difficulties of organizing the domestic workers—such as the “casual” nature of their employment, the difficulties of organizing day workers, the problem of organizing people who work in individual households, etc.—must be overcome forthwith. There is a danger that Social-Democratic forces may enter this field to do their work of spreading disunity and demagoguery, unless progressives act quickly.

The lot of the domestic worker is one of unbearable misery. Usually, she has no definition of tasks in the household where she works. Domestic workers may have “thrown in,” in addition to cleaning and scrubbing, such tasks as washing windows, caring for the children, laundering, cooking, etc., and all at the lowest pay. The Negro domestic worker must suffer the additional indignity, in some areas, of having to seek work in virtual “slave markets” on the streets where bids are made, as from a slave block, for the hardiest workers. Many a domestic worker, on returning to her own household, must begin housework anew to keep her own family together.

Who was not enraged when it was revealed in California, in the heinous case of Dora Jones, that a Negro woman domestic was enslaved for more than 40 years in “civilized” America? Her “employer” was given a minimum sentence of a few years and complained that the sentence was for “such a long period of time.” But could Dora Jones, Negro domestic worker, be repaid for more than 40 years of her life under such conditions of exploitation and degradation? And how many cases, partaking in varying degrees of the condition of Dora Jones, are still tolerated by progressives themselves!

Only recently, in the New York State Legislature, legislative proposals were made to “fingerprint” domestic workers. The Martinez Bill did not see the light of day, because the reactionaries were concentrating on other repressive legislative measures; but here we see clearly the imprint of the African “pass” system of British imperialism (and of the German Reich in relation to the Jewish people!) being attempted in relation to women domestic workers.

It is incumbent on the trade unions to assist the Domestic Workers' Union in every possible way to accomplish the task of organizing

the exploited domestic workers, the majority of whom are Negro women. Simultaneously, a legislative fight for the inclusion of domestic workers under the benefits of the Social Security Law is vitally urgent and necessary. Here, too, recurrent questions regarding "administrative problems" of applying the law to domestic workers should be challenged and solutions found.

The continued relegation of Negro women to domestic work has helped to perpetuate and intensify chauvinism directed against all Negro women. Despite the fact that Negro women may be grandmothers or mothers, the use of the chauvinist term "girl" for adult Negro women is a common expression. The very economic relationship of Negro women to white women, which perpetuates "madam-maid" relationships, feeds chauvinist attitudes and makes it incumbent on white women progressives, and particularly Communists, to fight consciously against all manifestations of white chauvinism, open and subtle.

Chauvinism on the part of progressive white women is often expressed in their failure to have close ties of friendship with Negro women and to realize that this fight for equality of Negro women is in their own self-interest, inasmuch as the super-exploitation and oppression of Negro women tends to depress the standards of all women. Too many progressives, and even some Communists, are still guilty of exploiting Negro domestic workers, of refusing to hire them through the Domestic Workers' Union (or of refusing to help in its expansion into those areas where it does not yet exist), and generally of participating in the vilification of "maids" when speaking to their bourgeois neighbors and their own families. Then, there is the expressed "concern" that the exploited Negro domestic worker does not "talk" to, or is not "friendly" with, her employer, or the habit of assuming that the duty of the white progressive employer is to "inform" the Negro woman of her exploitation and her oppression which she undoubtedly knows quite intimately. Persistent challenge to every chauvinist remark as concerns the Negro woman is vitally necessary, if we are to break down the understandable distress on the part of Negro women who are repelled by the white chauvinism they often find expressed in progressive circles.

Manifestations of White Chauvinism

Some of the crassest expressions of chauvinism are to be found at social affairs, where, all too often, white men and women and Negro men participate in dancing, but Negro women are neglected. The acceptance of white ruling-class standards of "desirability" for women (such as light skin), the failure to extend courtesy to Negro women

and to integrate Negro women into organizational leadership, are other forms of chauvinism.

Another rabid aspect of the Jim Crow oppression of the Negro woman is expressed in the numerous laws which are directed against her as regards property rights, inter-marriage (originally designed to prevent white men in the South from marrying Negro women), and laws which hinder and deny the right of choice, not only to Negro women, but Negro and white men and women.

For white progressive women and men, and especially for Communists, the question of social relations with Negro men and women is above all a question of strictly adhering to social equality. This means ridding ourselves of the position which sometimes finds certain progressives and Communists fighting on the economic and political issues facing the Negro people, but "drawing the line" when it comes to social intercourse or inter-marriage. To place the question as a "personal" and not a political matter, when such questions arise, is to be guilty of the worst kind of Social-Democratic, bourgeois-liberal thinking as regards the Negro question in American life; it is to be guilty of imbibing the poisonous white-chauvinist "theories" of a Bilbo or a Rankin. Similarly, too, with regard to guaranteeing the "security" of children. This security will be enhanced only through the struggle for the liberation and equality of all nations and peoples, and not by shielding children from the knowledge of this struggle. This means ridding ourselves of the bourgeois-liberal attitudes which "permit" Negro and white children of progressives to play together at camps when young, but draw the line when the children reach teen-age and establish boy-girl relationships.

The bourgeois ideologists have not failed, of course, to develop a special ideological offensive aimed at degrading Negro women, as part and parcel of the general reactionary ideological offensive against women of "kitchen, church, and children." They cannot, however, with equanimity or credibility, speak of the Negro woman's "place" as in the home; for Negro women are in other peoples' kitchens. Hence, their task has been to intensify their theories of male "superiority" as regards the Negro woman by developing introspective attitudes which coincide with the "new school" of "psychological inferiority" of women. The whole intent of a host of articles, books, etc., has been to obscure the main responsibility for the oppression of Negro women by spreading the rotten bourgeois notion about a "battle of the sexes" and "ignoring" the fight of both Negro men and women—the whole Negro people—against their common oppressors, the white ruling class.

Chauvinist expressions also include paternalistic surprise when it is learned that Negroes are professional people. Negro professional women workers are often confronted with such remarks as "Isn't your family proud of you?" Then, there is the reverse practice of inquiring of Negro women professionals whether "someone in the family" would like to take a job as a domestic worker.

The responsibility for overcoming these special forms of white chauvinism rests, not with the "subjectivity" of Negro women, as it is often put, but squarely on the shoulders of white men and white women. Negro men have a special responsibility particularly in relation to rooting out attitudes of male superiority as regards women in general. There is need to root out all "humanitarian" and patronizing attitudes toward Negro women. In one community, a leading Negro trade unionist, the treasurer of her Party section, would be told by a white progressive woman after every social function: "Let me have the money; something may happen to you." In another instance, a Negro domestic worker who wanted to join the Party was told by her employer, a Communist, that she was "too backward" and "wasn't ready" to join the Party. In yet another community, which since the war has been populated in the proportion of sixty per cent Negro to forty per cent white, white progressive mothers maneuvered to get their children out of the school in this community. To the credit of the initiative of the Party section organizer, a Negro woman, a struggle was begun which forced a change in arrangements which the school principal, yielding to the mothers' and to his own prejudices, had established. These arrangements involved a special class in which a few white children were isolated with "selected Negro kids" in what was termed an "experimental class in race relations."

These chauvinist attitudes, particularly as expressed toward the Negro woman, are undoubtedly an important reason for the grossly insufficient participation of Negro women in progressive organizations and in our Party as members and leaders.

The American bourgeoisie, we must remember, is aware of the present and even greater potential role of the masses of Negro women, and is therefore not loathe to throw plums to Negroes who betray their people and do the bidding of imperialism.

Faced with the exposure of their callous attitude to Negro women, faced with the growing protests against unpunished lynchings and the legal lynchings "Northern style," Wall Street is giving a few token positions to Negro women. Thus, Anna Arnold Hergeman, who played a key role in the Democratic National Negro Committee to Elect Truman, was rewarded with the appointment as Assistant to Federal Security Administrator Ewing. Thus, too, Governor Dewey

appointed Irene Diggs to a high post in the New York State Administration.

Another straw in the wind showing attempts to whittle down the militancy of Negro women was the State Department's invitation to a representative of the National Council of Negro Women—the only Negro organization so designated—to witness the signing of the Atlantic Pact.

Key Issues of Struggle

There are many key issues facing Negro women around which struggles can and must be waged.

But none so dramatizes the oppressed status of Negro womanhood as does the case of Rosa Lee Ingram, widowed Negro mother of fourteen children—two of them dead—who faces life imprisonment in a Georgia jail for defending herself from the indecent advances of a "white supremacist." The Ingram case illustrates the landless, Jim-Crow, oppressed status of the Negro family in America. It illumines particularly the degradation of Negro women today under American bourgeois democracy moving to fascism and war. It reflects the daily insults to which Negro women are subjected in public places, no matter what their class, status, or position. It exposes the hypocritical alibi of the lynchers of Negro manhood who have historically hidden behind the skirts of white women when they try to cover up their foul crimes with the "chivalry" of "protecting white womanhood." But white women, today, no less than their sisters in the abolitionist and suffrage movements, must rise to challenge this lie and the whole system of Negro oppression.

American history is rich in examples of the cost—to the democratic rights of both women and men—of failure to wage this fight. The suffragists, during their first jailings, were purposely placed on cots next to Negro prostitutes to "humiliate" them. They had the wisdom to understand that the intent was to make it so painful, that no women would dare to fight for her rights if she had to face such consequences. But it was the historic shortcoming of the women's suffrage leaders, predominantly drawn as they were from the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie, that they failed to link their own struggles to the struggles for the full democratic rights of the Negro people following emancipation.

A developing consciousness on the woman question today, therefore, must not fail to recognize that the Negro question in the United States is *prior* to, and not equal to, the woman question; that only to the extent that we fight all chauvinist expressions and actions as regards the Negro people and fight for the full equality of the Negro

people, can women as a whole advance their struggle for equal rights. For the progressive women's movement, the Negro woman, who combines in her status the worker, the Negro, and the woman, is the vital link to this heightened political consciousness. To the extent, further, that the cause of the Negro woman worker is promoted, she will be enabled to take her rightful place in the Negro-proletarian leadership of the national liberation movement, and by her active participation contribute to the entire American working class, whose historic mission is the achievement of a Socialist America—the final and full guarantee of woman's emancipation.

The fight for Rosa Lee Ingram's freedom is a challenge to all white women and to all progressive forces, who must begin to ask themselves: How long shall we allow this dastardly crime against all womanhood, against the Negro people, to go unchallenged? Rosa Lee Ingram's plight and that of her sisters also carries with it a challenge to progressive cultural workers to write and sing of the Negro woman in her full courage and dignity.

The recent establishment of the National Committee to Free the Ingram Family fulfills a need long felt since the early movement which forced commutation to life imprisonment of Mrs. Ingram's original sentence of execution. This National Committee, headed by Mary Church Terrell, a founder of the National Association of Colored Women, includes among its leaders such prominent women, Negro and white, as Therese Robinson, National Grand Directress of the Civil Liberties Committee of the Elks, Ada B. Jackson, and Dr. Gene Weltfish.

One of the first steps of the Committee was the visit of a delegation of Negro and white citizens to this courageous, militant Negro mother imprisoned in a Georgia cell. The measure of support was so great that the Georgia authorities allowed the delegation to see her unimpeded. Since that time, however, in retaliation against the developing mass movement, the Georgia officials have moved Mrs. Ingram, who is suffering from a severe heart condition, to a worse penitentiary, at Reidsville.

Support to the work of this committee becomes a prime necessity for all progressives, particularly women. President Truman must be stripped of his pretense of "know-nothing" about the Ingram case. To free the Ingrams, support must be rallied for the success of the million-signatures campaign, and for U.N. action on the Ingram brief soon to be filed.

The struggle for jobs for Negro women is a prime issue. The growing economic crisis, with its mounting unemployment and wage-cuts and increasing evictions, is making its impact felt most heavily on the

Negro masses. In one Negro community after another, Negro women, the last to be hired and the first to be fired, are the greatest sufferers from unemployment. Struggles must be developed to win jobs for Negro women in basic industry, in the white-collar occupations, in the communities, and in private utilities.

The successful campaign of the Communist Party in New York's East Side to win jobs for Negro women in the five-and-dime stores has led to the hiring of Negro women throughout the city, even in predominantly white communities. This campaign has extended to New England and must be waged elsewhere.

Close to 15 government agencies do not hire Negroes at all. This policy gives official sanction to, and at the same time further encourages, the pervasive Jim-Crow policies of the capitalist exploiters. A campaign to win jobs for Negro women here would thus greatly advance the whole struggle for jobs for Negro men and women. In addition, it would have a telling effect in exposing the hypocrisy of the Truman Administration's "Civil Rights" program.

A strong fight will also have to be made against the growing practice of the United States Employment Service to shunt Negro women, despite their qualifications for other jobs, only into domestic and personal service work.

Where consciousness of the special role of Negro women exists, successful struggle can be initiated which will win the support of white workers. A recent example was the initiative taken by white Communist garment workers in a shop employing 25 Negro women where three machines were idle. The issue of upgrading Negro women workers became a vital one. A boycott movement has been initiated and the machines stand unused as of this writing, the white workers refusing to adhere to strict seniority at the expense of Negro workers. Meanwhile, negotiations are continuing on this issue. Similarly, in a Packard U.A.W. local in Detroit, a fight for the maintenance of women in industry and for the upgrading of 750 women, the large majority of whom were Negro, was recently won.

The Struggle for Peace

Winning the Negro women for the struggle for peace is decisive for all other struggles. Even during the anti-Axis war, Negro women had to weep for their soldier-sons, lynched while serving in a Jim-Crow army. Are they, therefore, not interested in the struggle for peace?

The efforts of the bipartisan warmakers to gain the support of the women's organizations in general, have influenced many Negro women's organizations, which, at their last annual conventions, adopted foreign-policy stands favoring the Marshall Plan and Truman Doc-

trine. Many of these organizations have worked with groups having outspoken anti-imperialist positions.

That there is profound peace sentiment among Negro women which can be mobilized for effective action is shown, not only in the magnificent response to the meetings of Eslande Goode Robeson, but also in the position announced last year by the oldest Negro women's organization, under the leadership of Mrs. Christine C. Smith, in urging a national mobilization of American Negro women in support of the United Nations. In this connection, it will be very fruitful to bring to our country a consciousness of the magnificent struggles of women in North Africa, who, though lacking in the most elementary material needs, have organized a strong movement for peace and thus stand united against a Third World War, with 81 million women in 57 nations, in the Women's International Democratic Federation.

Our Party, based on its Marxist-Leninist principles, stands four-square on a program of full economic, political, and social equality for the Negro people and of equal rights for women. Who, more than the Negro woman, the most exploited and oppressed, belongs in our Party? Negro women can and must make an enormous contribution to the daily life and work of the Party. Concretely, this means prime responsibility lies with white men and women comrades. Negro men comrades, however, must participate on this task. Negro Communist women must everywhere now take their rightful place in Party leadership on all levels.

The strong capacities, militancy and organizational talents of Negro women, can, if well utilized by our Party, be a powerful lever for bringing forward Negro workers—men and women—as the leading forces of the Negro people's liberation movement, for cementing Negro and white unity in the struggle against Wall Street imperialism, and for rooting the Party among the most exploited and oppressed sections of the working class and its allies.

In our Party clubs, we must conduct an intense discussion of the role of the Negro women, so as to equip our Party membership with clear understanding for undertaking the necessary struggles in the shops and communities. We must end the practice, in which many Negro women who join our Party, and who, in their churches communities and fraternal groups are leaders of masses, with an invaluable mass experience to give to our Party, suddenly find themselves involved in our clubs, not as leaders, but as people who have "to get their feet wet" organizationally. We must end this failure to create an atmosphere in our clubs in which new recruits—in this case Negro women—are confronted with the "silent treatment" or with attempts to "blueprint" them into a pattern. In addition to the white chauvinist implications in such approaches, these practices confuse the basio

need for Marxist-Leninist understanding which our Party gives to all workers, and which enhances their political understanding, with chauvinist disdain for the organizational talents of new Negro members, or for the necessity to promote them into leadership.

To win the Negro women for full participation in the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist coalition, to bring her militancy and participation to even greater heights in the current and future struggles against Wall Street imperialism, progressives must acquire political consciousness as regards her special oppressed status.

It is this consciousness, accelerated by struggles, that will convince increasing thousands that only the Communist Party, as the vanguard of the working class, with its ultimate perspective of Socialism, can achieve for the Negro women—for the entire Negro people—the full equality and dignity of their stature in a Socialist society in which contributions to society are measured, not by national origin, or by color, but a society in which men and women contribute according to ability, and ultimately under Communism receive according to their needs.

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IDEAS IN OUR TIME

HERBERT APTHEKER

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights^{*}

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

In the preamble to this Resolution two thoughts were expressed which I wish to note. One affirmed that the rights enumerated in the Resolution were of such a character that where a social order denied a substantial portion of them, man might feel "compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression." With this as a warning, the Resolution was suggesting that it would be well if the rights were established so that this "last resort" would no longer threaten. In this thought and this warning the Declaration of 1948 reminds one of the Declaration of 1776, our own revolutionary birth certificate.

Secondly, in that preamble the General Assembly, in proclaiming this Declaration "as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations," suggested that "every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance. . . ."

It is in the spirit of that closing feature of the UN Preamble, I take it, that we are gathered here today and intend to confer together. This Declaration of 1948 contains thirty articles detailing the rights concerned; just reading each of the articles, let alone commenting upon them, would consume the thirty or forty minutes at my disposal. I shall, therefore, focus upon one area of the Declaration, namely, its denunciation of discrimination, in law and practice, by dominant people against others held in subjection. Specifically, the Declaration denounces such discrimination reflecting itself in conditions of labor, the position of women, the neglect of children, the general social

^{*} The following is the text of an address delivered at Ramapo College in New Jersey on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

deprivation of the poor, and in those discriminated against because of racial or religious or national prejudices. And in focusing upon the anti-discrimination essence of the Declaration, I shall further center the focus by concentration upon that discrimination resulting from racism.

I do this the more willingly because as the Declaration itself shows, it is racism that plays a decisive part in the international discriminatory policies that help explain the impoverishment of the so-called Third World; it is racism that plays a decisive part in the oppressive conditions of labor, the maltreatment of children, the specially oppressive conditions visited upon women as well as upon those people of color who are avowedly the objects of racism as such.

Further, the United Nations itself and its original charter of 1946, as well as the preamble of this 1948 Declaration affirm that it is humanity's experience with the barbarism of fascism which is decisive in explaining the creation of the UN and the inspiration for the 1948 Declaration. It need certainly not be argued that a basic ideological source and bulwark of fascism was—and is—racism. This, again, justifies the concentration chosen.

Finally, we are meeting in the nation which, though born in a revolutionary manifesto affirming that "all men are created equal," meant by that—as one sees in the practice of the time—men and not women, propertied men and not non-propertied and propertied white men, not men of color—and certainly not Red men and not Black men. We are meeting in a land whose history is immersed in the ideology and the practice of racism and whose present condition is characterized by ghettos and barrios in North and South and in East and West and everywhere in between, too. We are meeting in a land whose racism is rivalled in its endemic, universal and awful presence only by the Republic of South Africa—that other bastion of what is hilariously called the "free world." This being true, it is especially incumbent upon us, in the United States, to examine the phenomenon of racism and in the spirit of the UN Declaration of 1948 to "strive by teaching and education"—and I would add, by action—to overcome it.

One should note, also, that the day before the Universal Declaration was acclaimed by the UN—that is to say, on December 9, 1948—the UN General Assembly approved and proposed for signature and ratification a "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide"; this convention was to enter into force on the day that the 20th state ratified it; that occurred on January 12, 1951, but as of this moment the United States government has not ratified the anti-genocide convention of the United Nations.

Combatting Racism in the U.S.

Permit now a few brief allusions to the history of the effort to combat racism in the United States, as inspired by and in accordance with the charter of the UN and the Declaration of 1948 on Genocide and Human Rights.

At the 10th anniversary meeting of the National Negro Congress—which at one time represented in its affiliated organizations three million Black people—held in Detroit, May 30-June 2, 1946—the delegates voted to present a “Petition to the United Nations on Behalf of the [then] thirteen million oppressed Negro citizens of the USA,” seeking, as it said, “the elimination of political, economic and social discrimination against Negroes in the United States.”

The major part of that petition was a statement of proof in support of it; that was prepared at the request of the Congress by me. This was presented to the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Trygve Lie, in New York City on June 6, 1946, by a delegation consisting of Paul Robeson, Revels Cayton and the present speaker. It went from there to the UN Economic and Social Council, but opposition from the U.S. delegation prevented its serious discussion. It was printed in one hundred thousand copies and sold throughout the U.S. and was reprinted in the millions in a dozen languages. In 1947, under the leadership of Dr. Du Bois—then back with the NAACP (briefly)—an appeal to the world in opposition to the racism in the U.S. was presented as a petition to the UN, with chapters detailing the facts in all areas of life and with an introduction by Dr. Du Bois. This received more publicity in the U.S. than the 1946 effort but again its consideration in the UN was blocked by the U.S. delegation with Mrs. Roosevelt playing a leading role in preventing its discussion.

In 1951 William L. Patterson, head of the Civil Rights Congress, took a book in the form of a petition to the appropriate committees' headquarters of the UN to Paris; this was the famous *We Charge Genocide* which created an international sensation by showing that the racism practiced in the U.S. violated several of the specific features of the antigenocide convention adopted by the UN in 1948 but not ratified by the U.S. This was at the height of the McCarthy terror in the U.S. and it was this act, as well as his whole radical life, which led soon thereafter to the jailing of Mr. Patterson for contempt of Congress, after the head of the Un-American Activities Committee had denounced Mr. Patterson as a “Black son-of-a-bitch” for refusing to show anything but contempt for that Committee of thieves, demagogues and racists.

The petitions of 1946 and 1947 and 1951 remain valid today. Details vary and some of these changes—especially the advances through struggle against the gross forms of legal racism and the blatant peonage of the 1930's and 1940's—are important successes. But the main and central fact remains, as stated, that this is a land of ghettos and barrios and reservations; it is, indeed, the land constituting the most powerful bulwark of what remains of colonialism and imperialism and therefore of the main intellectual facade of those systems of institutionalized superexploitation, namely the poison of racism.

As part of the transition from feudalism to capitalism there appeared the need for and the quest of colonies; with those came in the 15th century the beginnings of the ravishment of Africa. That ravishment and the slave trade that for four hundred years was its vilest reflection induced and developed the modern concept of racism. This affirmed the inherent, biologically transmitted, significant and immutable inferiority of colored peoples—and especially African-derived peoples—in moral and particularly intellectual attributes, with the standard against which the so-called inferiority is measured being set, of course, by the white rulers who simultaneously create, administer and evaluate the tests so concocted!

It is this poison—further developed and refined as capitalism became monopoly capitalism and as the system reached its final stage of imperialism—which has been of inestimable service to those who have ruled the United States—of service in terms of political, economic, psychological and social services vital to the maintenance of their rule and the profitability as well as stability of such rule. This is the root of racism and this is why it persists and is maintained despite mounting internal and international pressures against it.

The United States being one of the main homes of racism, and racism performing the vital functions for the ruling class that have been mentioned, ideologues in its service never fail to appear, no matter how often and how fully and compellingly the ideas and postulates of racism have been shown to be without any merit or substance whatsoever.

Seventy years ago it was Thomas Dixon and Madison Grant and John W. Burgess; fifty years ago it was Lothrop Stoddard and Ulrich B. Phillips; twenty years ago it was Frank McGurk of Villanova, whose findings were spread to the millions in the pages of *U.S. News and World Report* and the daily press; today it is Shockley and Jensen and Elkins and Banfield, whose poison is dispersed to the millions by the same *U.S. News and World Report* and by such "scientists" as William Buckley and such "savants" as the chairman of the Judiciary

Committee of the U.S. Senate, the honorable James O. Eastland, Senator from Mississippi.

And today platforms are provided and audiences gathered for these racists in the name of freedom—freedom of speech, of press, of scientific inquiry, God save us! And the chancellor of the City University of New York denounces those who protest this prostitution of the name of freedom by calling them ignoramuses who have not learned that the “folly of the centuries” is failure to allow freedom of speech and scientific inquiry.

The greatest “folly” of the ages is racism—in its name millions have been insulted and deprived and crucified. To defend racism in the name of “freedom” is to compound this “folly.”

Racism and Fascism

All this brings us back to the experiences of World War II and to the United Nations and its Declarations. The victorious allies—the U.S., France, Britain and the USSR—signed at Potsdam the treaty terminating that war against fascism, and this treaty is one that the U.S. did sign and it is therefore part of the law of this country.

The Potsdam Treaty of 1945 affirms that Germany shall be decartelized, democratized and denazified. And as part of the denazification Potsdam affirms that the people of Germany are forever prohibited from having fascist newspapers and organizations and clubs and parties and schools and that all ideas of fascism are outlawed—are made illegal. Is this violative of the freedom of speech of Germans, of the freedom of scientific inquiry—for example into the realities of the so-called rottenness of Jews and the inferiority of Gypsies and Slavs and Poles and the criminality of Marxism and the criminality of all Socialists and Communists? It was on the basis of such ideas that Hitler slaughtered tens of millions of people, including hundreds of thousands of Germans. Such inferior and congenitally criminal peoples had to be wiped out—“wasted,” as the U.S. Army puts it in reference to colonial peoples—and this had to be done as a kind of vast sewerage project, which is what the crematoria were considered by the fascists.

Only 90 years ago a leading U.S. physician argued in a leading U.S. publication—the *North American Review*, in 1883—that women must not be allowed in politics because their brains are inferior to those of men and because they were capable not of real thought but only of emotion and that they were chronically subject to hysteria as a basic part of their femininity. That was only 90 years ago. Shall we have a debate as to the validity of these ideas? Will Chancellor

Kibbee provide the platform for the scholars who would argue in these terms? Shall we have a scholarly presentation of the authenticity of the Protocols of Zion—reprinted by the millions only fifty years ago by no less a figure than Henry Ford and still believed in as reality by scores of thousands if not millions in the United States?

One must again note that the UN Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 denounces racism as a fraud and a danger; clearly it is not to argue for racism that freedom of speech exists. Furthermore the UN itself in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the General Assembly on December 16, 1966—not yet in force since it has not been ratified by the requisite powers (and the U.S. has not ratified this, while the USSR has)—says in Article 20: “Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.”

And in the resolution adopted by the UN International Conference on Human Rights held in Teheran on May 13, 1968, paragraph 8 reads:

The peoples of the world must be made fully aware of the evils of racial discrimination and must join in combating them. The implementation of this principle of non-discrimination, embodied in the Charter of the UN, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other international instruments in the field of human rights, constitutes a most urgent task of mankind at the international as well as at the national level. All ideologies based on racial superiority and intolerance must be condemned and resisted.

A final note in connection with UN declarations. In the Convention on Genocide the UN, in defining the act, included as number four in five points: “Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group”; and in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (December 16, 1966), Article 7 prohibits “inhuman or degrading punishment” and adds: “In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation.”

The fact is that no one can visit for a moment—let alone be incarcerated within—any of the prisons of the United States, especially but not only the city, county and state prisons—without knowing that they are characterized by “inhuman and degrading treatment.” Furthermore, experimentation upon human beings who are in no position to give meaningful consent has gone forward for many years and now goes forward upon children (including infants) and men and women, including the mentally incompetent and ill as well as those quite sane and mentally competent. The evidence shows without any ques-

tion that this involves thousands of human beings in dozens of institutions, hospitals and prisons throughout the nation. Furthermore, it is a fact that scores of thousands of people—mostly women and mostly Black and poor—have been surgically sterilized and that this has been done against their will or without their knowledge and that, in fact, several states now are considering bills which would make such sterilization compulsory for women on relief!

I close with a few suggestions for action:

1) A movement forcing the U.S. Senate to ratify the anti-genocide convention of the UN and the 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

2) A movement to prohibit surgery and/or medical treatment of any kind upon people without their full knowledge and consent and in no case upon people incarcerated or institutionalized.

3) A movement opposing any forced or induced sterilization of people for any reason.

4) The illegalization of any and all advocacy of racism in any form with severe punishment for the purveyors of this poison.

5) A mammoth and well-funded campaign to educate the people of the U.S. and especially the white people as to the realities, history and purposes of racism and why this poison hurts them and what they can and must do to assure its extirpation.

The poison of racism was important in making Germany fall prey to fascism; this brought disaster to the people of Germany and the world. The poison of racism has infected the United States; it has already caused misery and suffering of untold dimensions. But its persistence in the modern world makes the United States especially liable to fascism. A fascist Germany brought disaster to humanity; a fascist United States, given the realities of its power and the realities of the modern world, means catastrophe first for the citizens of the U.S. and then for all the world. With the meaning of Watergate it is clear that the tendency towards fascism is intense.

Nothing less than this is at stake as we consider how best to combat racism in our own country. Either it is extirpated or the extirpation of human life may well occur.

COMMUNICATIONS

BEATRICE FERNEYHOUGH

On "Confinement of Women to Housework As an Exclusion from Social Production"

A campaign is being promoted by the feminist movement in Italy, Britain and America particularly, under the slogan of wages for housework.

Wages, as we all know, are the money equivalent of the use-values (created by labor, but held by the capitalists) needed to purchase the products that maintain and make possible the reproduction of the labor-force, labor-power.

Wages, as we also know, are paid to service and maintenance workers as well as to production workers: that is, wages are paid not only to the workers who create real values, or goods consumable by people and by the industrial process, but they are paid out also for work in transportation, marketing, servicing, for professional and scientific activity. But married women get nothing for their work.

Yet, wages are not paid for housework, *if* that housework is carried on by the *wife* within her own family. If she does housework outside her own family, she can claim wages, however low. Even a mother-in-law, or some obliging male relative or friend or baby-

sitter may claim payment for doing housework within the family without too much social outrage being aroused; but the wife, never. Everyone knows, including the housewife, that housewives *do not work*, at least not for wages.

This enslavement, and the socially destructive lie that accompanies it, has been a boon to capitalist society. For this unacknowledged enslavement has supplied the exploiting class with a fresh supply of labor power in each succeeding generation, absolutely free of charge. The capitalist class has never paid a cent for this supply of the indispensable commodity, labor-power. Wives, chattel slaves, with the cooperation of their husbands, have placed this commodity gratuitously on the market.

Capitalism, of course, claims that it does pay for the family in the husband-father worker's wage. Another lie, for wages over the years have been standardized according to job classification, not according to marriage status.

Capitalism's claim, however, has been and remains that the worker's wage provides for the family in the wage of the family

member, male or female, whom the capitalist admits to *his* workshop, to the use of *his* property, *his* tools, *his* machines. Those not working in *his* workshop, so far as the capitalist is concerned, *do not work*, and cannot claim any pay from him, since they produce nothing to his advantage.

The working class historically has accepted this claim and all working persons, male or female, employed by a capitalist enterprise, assume themselves to be responsible for the costs of their own maintenance and education of other non-employed members of the family.

This most happy and most profitable ideological outlook, shared by capitalists and workers alike, is the chief source of superprofits to the capitalist class, more longstanding than monopoly capitalism's more recently acquired advantages.

Actually, the wage is payment for a specific application of labor power, for labor of a precise nature, such as that of the bricklayer, the toolmaker, the teacher, the ditch-digger, the stenographer. As we know, that pay covers not the value produced, but the value of the products needed to keep the worker returning to the job, day after day endowed with the specified qualifications. The range in wages varies with the cost of equipping the wage-earner with the required skill, and has no bearing on whether or not the worker is married or unmarried, has children or not. The wage law itself reflects the cost of the specifically skilled worker rather

than the human need, both in the individual and in the collective agreement as developed in labor's struggle.

The working-class housewife, therefore, confined to her responsibilities in the home, works without pay in the only workshop not run directly by capitalists. She works in cooperation with and as the chattel steward for her husband in conditions of natural economy. Together they keep the household functioning, not as free-holders, but as chattel slaves on the estate of the capitalist, to whom they pay rent and other tribute, make payment also of the product of their own being—the next generation of appropriately educated and skilled workers.

Until recently it was argued that higher wages for men was recognition of their family responsibilities. However, with the labor force now 40 per cent female or more, an increasing number of them heads of families, this lie is exposed; for far from wages for women tending to approach those of men for the same work, the gap between the wage level of men and the wage level of women is *widening*.

It is clear that the source of labor power is the chattel-slave *family*—the closed circuit, automatic, self-propelling, self-perpetuating, self-maintaining family unit, which without cost to the capitalist is maintained out of the earnings of wage workers, male or female.

The work done in the home by the working-class wife without pay is socially and economically

identical with that done by wage labor in society, with the exception that she works in more primitive conditions, without the technological and scientific aid of advanced production units geared to mass production.

However, by the magic of the Gordian knot of the bourgeois marriage contract this truth is obliterated. By this contract she is with her own consent excluded for life from independence and activity recognized as socially useful. Her skills as cook, nursemaid, decorator, manager, marketer, teacher, tailor (her total housekeeping talents and skills) which earned her a wage prior to marriage, she agrees (and her husband agrees also) cease to have social value under the marriage contract. She agrees to be reduced to a simple natural resource, together with her husband, who agrees to cultivate and make her fruitful.

What advantages does the capitalist class derive from this? For the price of a married worker the capitalist class gets, in addition to his labor, numerous unpaid services, that if done socially would cost it thousands of dollars annually in wages.

The capitalist class benefits in the following ways:

First, there is the surplus value it retains through exploitation of the worker.

In addition, it derives out of the worker's wage payment for production of the next generation of wage workers and domestic female chattels. All this is at no further cost to itself, for the work

involved is done by the wife in the home as chattel steward of her husband's resources, in return for that part of his wage which he chooses to make available to her.

A number of studies have been made of the value of the work done by housewives, among them one by the U.S. government, another by Canadian authorities, still others by women's magazines and individual authors.

According to the Canadian research, the average Canadian housewife, if she were paid for her work in terms of average Canadian wages for the varied skills she exercises, would earn \$204.25 per week. This represents \$204.25, more or less, worth of real values and essential services without which contemporary economy could not function. This work is carried on in society, under a social contract formulated in capitalist law, and therefore recognized as essential to the functioning of this social order. It illustrates the savings realized by the capitalist class at the expense of women.

For the housewife's work, the capitalist class pays absolutely nothing, for if the wage-earner were not married he would either have to do his own housework, or pay for every service he receives in his home at a rate that would give a living wage to some one, and he would not provide the capitalist with any new generation for production.

The superexploitation becomes clearer with the advent of women on a mass scale into wage earning, for all women, single or mar-

ried, with or without children, do their own housework and shopping after their wage-earning work, not by choice, but by reason of social training and generally lower than average wages.

Assuming, in our instance, that our bricklayer is paid \$4.00 an hour and his rate of exploitation is 50 per cent, and that he works 40 hours a week, then the surplus value to the capitalist from this worker's *home* is \$284.25 per week, the unpaid labor of the wife providing by far the major part that totally covers the \$160 in wages to her husband and leaving the capitalist class with \$124 clear gravy. It is the *class* subordination of the *family* to chattel slavery that makes this exploitation possible.

By the mirror trick of the marriage contract, single wage-earning women become the unpaid chattel servants in a *wage-earning family unit* that for the wage-slave income of the husband, provides the capitalist class with certain specific socially necessary labor, *plus* the maintenance of the present and of the up-coming generation of laborers.

It seems clear that the working class has been in error in seeing the working-class women alone as the doubly exploited and oppressed. The father-husband wage earner is also exploited and oppressed in a double sense. He is the fall-guy who, as a bricklayer, steel worker or whatever, serves capitalist profit-making directly, while as a working-class man in the home, where he reproduces his kind in cooperation with his wife,

in a normal, natural family relationship, he undertakes entirely at his own expense to supply and prepare the next generation of labor solely to the socio-economic and political benefit of the capitalist class.

The better the worker, the more the capitalist class gains, for the honest, conscientious, human, intelligent and loving man does a good job in the plant, cherishes and helps his wife and family at home, and so helps around the house, fixing, repairing, devising means of ameliorating the environment, and, as a father, takes a hand in practical ways in the care, training and education of his children. Such a man in such a family situation is a gold mint to profiteers, present and future.

Once class conscious, however, and clear in his perspective of seeking freedom from exploitation for himself, his wife and family as part of the working class as a whole, this man becomes a mighty power for social change.

Should he at the same time recognize the socio-economic value of his wife's work and the source of the handicaps under which they both work, he also will seek her cooperation in his struggles and will cooperate with her in a program such as his wife, along with other wives and women workers, would be moved to outline.

Surely, the great social humiliation of woman in contracting marriage is her total loss of personal economic independence, her

loss of wage-earning status, her retreat to chattel servitude, her *dependence on others* for the welfare of her children.

Her program, therefore, takes its starting point from this: immediate improvement of the *family* economic status, including recognition of it as a *social* not a *private* institution; consequent release of herself through social legislation from confinement to the home; from responsibility for child care in conditions of servitude and want; release from ignorance of and deprivation of safe contraceptive methods and from compulsory births due to unwanted or accidental pregnancy; a system of child maintenance allowances and network of creches and day care centers paid for by the state from taxation on excess profits; equal opportunity for education and for employment outside the home.

It is a fallacy that the economic independence of women will tend to break down the family. No parents have ever worried about the sexes *not* getting together; on the contrary. What breaks up families is impossible economic circumstances, and the ignominy of servitude.

In short, women demand equal freedom of choice with men in settling relationships with husbands in both the home and society. Women demand this and the further development of human society requires it.

In the July 1973 issue of *World Marxist Review* (p. 37) the following paragraph appears: "In his *Conditions of the Working*

Class in England . . . Engels formulated the labor movement's basic demands for women: equal pay for equal work, special health safeguards for women workers, recognition of motherhood as a *social* function and measures to enable women to combine motherhood with work. . . . The program formulated by Engels is still the basis of our emancipation efforts." (Emphasis added.)

It seems doubtful, however, that the characterizing of the *birth* of children as a *social function* has been sufficiently understood or appreciated by the working-class movement. Children are not the product of women; they are not the product of men; they are the product of an *association*, which has been persistently ignored by class society.

In *class* society, legally, children are the children of men; domestically, they are children of women. Domestically, traditionally, in class society, men have disposed of the offspring of marriage, the offspring being recognized not as the product of the association of man and woman, but as the offspring of man. In *class* society the children of women are, traditionally, *illegitimate*, they have no legal status, no social existence, they are beyond the pale of society, which is exclusively male. Class society has never recognized motherhood, only fatherhood. Here is the root of chauvinist male supremacy.

This situation has been ameliorated to some extent only with the growth of the working-class movement. The economic needs of

industry and the increasing impoverishment of the working-class home in the general crisis of capitalism have, over the years, forced establishment of free, compulsory public education at the lower levels and some health and other protective measures with the increasing employment of women. These and other developments recognize objectively capitalism's dependence on the *social function* of marriage and the family as the source of the essential commodity.

The working-class movement in the advanced capitalist countries, and particularly here in North America, now must formulate a program that unites the immediate demands of women in the home for their most urgent needs with the demands of the wage-earning male and female members of the working class. These demands must be mutually sup-

ported by men and women to forward the common emancipation of all working people. Such a program will unite parents in a fight for the rights and needs of children, for security, health, education, and social and cultural development at state expense.

Among the main ideological blocks to effective work for such a political movement are male supremacy concepts, which lie at the heart of all anti-labor class-collaborationist policies.

The "wages for housework" slogan retreats from rather than advances the involvement of women as equals in such a movement. But its appeal to liberals and petty-bourgeois radicals must be offset by a genuine, explicitly stated, well-implemented, ideologically sound revolutionary working-class reply to the economic and social dilemma and distress of women today.

HYMAN LUMER and WILLIAM WEINSTONE

Monopoly Capital and Fascism

James Lawler's article in the February issue, "Watergate: The Eighteenth Brumaire of Richard Nixon?" is of particular interest because he deals with a cardinal question, the trend of monopoly capital toward reaction and fascism, using Marx's historical writings to illuminate the question. He undertakes a class analysis of Watergate based on an analogy

with events in France between 1848 and 1851. We feel, however, that his effort does not succeed because he does not give adequate consideration to the differences between the two periods.

Historical analogy must be employed with great care and with due regard for the differences in widely separated historical periods. It must take into considera-

tion the whole of the class relationships in the periods under comparison. In the words of V. I. Lenin,

. . . By examining the *totality* of opposing tendencies, by reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various *classes* of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of a particular "dominant" idea or in its interpretation, and by revealing that, without exception, all ideas and all the various tendencies *stem* from the material forces of production, Marxism indicated the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the rise, development, and decline of socio-economic systems. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 57.)

We believe that Lawler does not fully adhere to this in his article and that hence his analogy is overdrawn.

He begins by stating that while there are important differences between the two periods, "there are striking similarities which make it especially worthwhile to compare the seizure of power by the French President with the present effort of the American President to establish his own version of personal power." He adds that there is one obvious difference. "While the French President succeeded in achieving his aims, the American President, for the time being, at least, has failed." However, in dealing with the reasons for this, he neglects certain basic differences in the two situations.

First of all, he overlooks the vastly enhanced role of the masses today as compared with 1848. This

was already recognized in 1895 by Frederick Engels in his Introduction to Karl Marx's *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*. He writes:

. . . [History] . . . completely transformed the conditions under which the proletariat has to fight. The mode of struggle of 1848 is today obsolete in every respect. . . .

The time of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious masses, is past. Where it is a question of complete transformation of the social organization, the masses themselves must be in it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going in for with body and soul. (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1950, Vol. I, pp. 113, 123.)

And indeed, a basic feature of present-day capitalism—of the era of state monopoly capitalism and the ever-deepening general crisis of capitalism—is precisely the mounting role and influence of the masses in the political arena. It is true, as Lawler stresses, that there is a growing tendency of monopoly toward reaction. But no less a hallmark of the present period is the unprecedented rise of democratic struggles and movements of the working class, of other toiling masses, of youth, students and intellectuals—for peace, for democratic rights, for an end to racial and national oppression, for economic well-being, for social progress. In these struggles and movements lie the seeds of an emerging antimonopoly coa-

lition. This side of the picture Lawler neglects.

Consequently, he underestimates the issue of democracy and the role of the people in relation to Watergate. He intimates that the Senate Committee, like the French Parliament in 1850, sought to center the issue in the "procedural aspects of the Constitution," that the Democrats did not bring forth the "roots of the Nixon crimes," namely, monopoly capitalism. This is, of course, true. Nor did they bring forth the biggest crimes—war, racism, destruction of the people's living standards, etc.

But despite their intentions the setting up of a secret supergovernment in the White House, the inter-relationship of the White House with the big corporations, the violations of law and of the Constitution, the commission of crimes and the attempts to cover them up, including the destruction of evidence, all came out in the hearings. Why did this happen? More, how are we to explain the exposure of the Watergate conspiracy in the first place?

Neither of these developments can be explained without reference to an aroused popular sentiment, which was aroused still further by the revelations of the hearings. This led to pressure on the Senate Committee to push the investigation further. As a result, Nixon was exposed as responsible for these crimes and was isolated. A mass movement for his impeachment developed, something unprecedented in U.S. history. The House of Representatives voted almost unanimously

to empower the Judiciary Committee to go ahead with impeachment investigations. Where Louis Bonaparte succeeded because of the demoralization of the masses caused by the fear of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements engendered by the 1848 revolution, today Nixon has failed because, in the first place, the popular masses have firmly opposed him. This is what is missing in Lawler's article.

Secondly, Lawler writes as though Watergate was an attempt at a fascist coup, to which the decisive sections of monopoly capital were committed. It is true, as Lenin wrote, that monopoly capital represents "reaction all down the line," whose extreme form is fascism. It is also true that the decisive sections of monopoly capital have backed Nixon, as is evident from the 1972 elections. But it does not follow from this that these sections are committed to fascism at this moment. It would be more accurate to place Watergate, in the words of Gus Hall, as part of "a creeping process of constructing a government within a government—a police-state structure within a parliamentary structure." ("Watergate and the Fascist Danger," *Political Affairs*, August 1973.)

Capitalism, as Lenin noted, employs two methods of rule: that of violence (which increasingly becomes the dominant method) and that of concessions. Or a combination of the two may be employed, depending on circumstances. Fascism, said Dimitroff in his famous definition at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist Inter-

national, "is the open dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital." (Georgi Dimitroff, *United Front Against Fascism*, New Century Publishers, New York, 1950, p. 7.) We believe it applies today. (This was affirmed by K. Zarodov, editor-in-chief of the *World Marxist Review* in a discussion on the subject held in Prague last year. See *World Marxist Review*, April 1973.) Dimitroff added:

The accession to power of fascism is not an *ordinary succession* of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* for one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie—bourgeois democracy—of another form—open terrorist dictatorship. It would be a serious mistake to ignore this distinction, a mistake which would prevent the revolutionary proletariat from mobilizing the broadest strata of the toilers of town and country for the struggle against the seizure of power by the fascists, and from taking advantage of the contradictions which exist in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself. But it is a mistake no less serious and dangerous to *underrate* the importance, in establishing the fascist dictatorship, of the *reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie which are at present being increasingly initiated in bourgeois-democratic countries*—measures which destroy the democratic liberties of the toilers, falsify and curtail the rights of parliament and intensify the repression of the revolutionary movement. (*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.)

It is not the seizure of power by fascism which confronts us in the

Watergate conspiracy but the dangerous intensification of reaction. It is the multiplication of police-state measures and the advancement of the trend to authoritarian power of the President at the expense of Congress and the people. Watergate is part of the "creeping process" which paves the way to fascism. This process is associated with the rise of state monopoly capital, which creates a tendency to concentrate power in the hands of the executive branch. This has been going on for a long time, under Democratic administrations (Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, Johnson) as well as under Republican administrations (Eisenhower, Nixon).

This is recognized by Lawler, but he adds that under Nixon the process has now entered a new stage. In the sense of adding facets to the creation of an apparatus for personal power and in the sense of carrying the executive branch to qualitatively new depths of corruption and criminality, this is true. But it is not a new stage in the sense of signifying a shift to an actual effort to establish fascism. We must not equate the rise of reaction, even the emergence of severe reaction, with fascism, which is the virtual wiping out of democracy.

Of course, monopoly capital will by its very nature continue to strive for the augmentation of the power of the Presidency and to tend in the direction of fascism. But it will now have to be done more subtly and more cunningly. For the exposure of the Watergate conspiracy has greatly sharpened the political consciousness of

the masses. As Gus Hall states:

The Watergate explosion has exposed to the millions the corruption, the total lack of social consciousness, the hoodlum mentality, the gangster morality, the acts of desperation which all reflect decay of capitalism . . . in the period of its general crisis—the crisis of its demise. (“The Conspiracy That Led to Watergate,” *Political Affairs*, June 1973.)

He cautions that a fascist-like movement could arise as a reactionary response to the Watergate revelations. But he adds: “It can happen here, but it can also be defeated! The Watergate explosion is an historic, shattering setback for the forces of reaction.” (*Ibid.*)

Lawler correctly argues that it is not enough to expose Nixon’s role in Watergate, that it is necessary to expose its real source: monopoly capital. But he tends to pose one against the other and thereby to underestimate the importance of the struggle to expose Nixon and to bring him to account. He implies that it is not the superstructure (the state) which should be attacked but the base (monopoly capital). Such a counter-posing of politics to economics, of superstructure to base, is erroneous. The government is an instrument for carrying out the policies of monopolies, and particularly so with the rise of state monopoly capitalism. The fight against Nixon is part of the fight to build an antimonopoly coalition. The fight to impeach Nixon goes hand in hand with the

fight against the power of the monopolies. To fail to conduct the struggle against Nixon leads to passivity, to mere agitation and propaganda instead of mobilization of the masses.

Lawler confuses the democratic struggles of today, directed against the power of the monopolies within the framework of capitalism, with the struggle against capitalism itself. He says: “Every struggle against the state must become a struggle against capitalism. . . .” This may be so in the long run but not in an immediate sense. The antimonopoly struggle is directed against the state. It is a struggle for an antimonopoly government but not yet against capitalism as such. This is the real essence of the struggle against Nixon.

What is involved is not only the exposure and ouster of Nixon, not only the exposure of the Democratic Party, and not only the fight against the prominent fascist elements—the Goldwaters, Wallaces and similar forces in both parties, but also the building of a mass people’s party in opposition to the monopolies and their twin political parties. In this democratic struggle lies the basis of the struggle for socialism.

It is this which is lacking in Lawler’s article, and this is why, despite its many good features, we believe its historical analogy proves unsuccessful and confusing. At the same time, we hope this exchange will help to stimulate the discussion we feel the article deserves.

MARY THOMAS

For an End to Racism in Housing

In the exchange of letters in the December *Political Affairs* between Naside Henderson, James West and James Dolsen, both West and Dolsen refer to racism in the construction industry and the need for fighting it. Dolsen says that "any CP program for such housing would, of course, involve the emphasis on opening such jobs to Blacks and other minority workers."

May I point out, for those who have not read it, that the housing program of the Communist Party of New York State, entitled "The House You Live In," does make this a major point.

It calls for an end to racism in housing—in construction, rental, home ownership, zoning relationships, etc., and calls also for jobs for unemployed or underemployed Black, Spanish-speaking and white workers.

As part of the second demand it calls for opening union books to minority trainees and journeymen. Many Black and other minority workers have developed construction skills and performed journeymen's work without being admitted to the unions or earning journeymen's pay.

In both demands, emphasis is given to the need for unity and to the fact that racism divides those who really have common goals. Racism divides tenants and small homeowners and "sets them to fighting each other instead of their real enemies—the slumlords, the banks and the real estate lobby."

It also divides workers who "must unite to demand more construction and enough jobs for all" as well as "no discrimination in hiring, upgrading, apprenticeships or union membership."

BOOK REVIEWS

LEON BAYA

Shakespeare: Interpreter of His Time

Who needs Shakespeare? According to the late Sidney Finkelstein, a fine Marxist critic, we the people do.* Socialists, in particu-

lar, find in the great dramatist the humanist-realist philosophy that is integral to socialism. In his work Shakespeare stresses

human values, and he is concerned with the reality of his own time. Shakespeare speaks of the way people are governed and the manner in which the rulers should conduct themselves.

. . . he was as critical of incipient capitalist currents as he was of the old feudal-minded order. He carried his concern for human values into the consideration of the central issues of the day, and in so doing encompassed in his art a range of characters from the highest strata to the lowest. He raised questions that capitalism was not able to answer, and that are still on the agenda today. . . . And now that capitalism in crisis becomes more savagely corrupt and inhuman and is being challenged by the rise of socialism, we need his humanity to illuminate these questions and to assure us that they are still central to the solutions that pave the way to human happiness. (P. 24.)

Finkelstein indicates that many bourgeois critics distort Shakespeare's philosophy of "humanized realism" and substitute instead their own prejudices or single-voiced obsessions. Thus, Freudians would have us believe that Hamlet's problems originate in his innately suppressed love for his mother; they eliminate the atmosphere of corruption, sycophancy and frivolity of the court, with its absolute bending of the knee before the subtle, wicked, all-powerful king who is hedged by divinity, no less. Jan Kott, the Polish critic and follower of the theater of the absurd, regards King Lear, for example, as a man whose life becomes futile and

meaningless, when the exact opposite is the theme of the play. For Lear becomes a better person once he learns what the poverty of the masses is like and what it means to be a victim of a society which offers so wide a gap between the wearer of furred gowns and those dressed in rags. Similarly, T. S. Eliot finds in Shakespeare a magnificent use of language, but he completely neglects the human beings and the environment in which they live.

These critics close their minds to the obvious: Shakespeare lived in a specific historical period in which monarchs reigned with absolute power, so that art was often "tongue-tied by Authority." The feudal system of production was steadily being dissolved, so that peasants were often tossed onto the roads to fend for themselves and their families. The attendant rise of a bourgeois class brought with it an obsession with commercialism and profit; its emphasis on work and on the Protestant ethic eventually brought about the closing of theatres, for these were a place of idleness and of ideas which questioned the goals and ideals of the bourgeoisie. In addition, as Finkelstein proves, nationalism, and with it a feeling of national pride, emerged. Both the newly-emerged bourgeoisie and nationalism were progressive developments when compared to the restrictive and obstructive feudal society. These

* Sidney Finkelstein, *Who Needs Shakespeare?* International Publishers, New York, 1973, \$3.25.

historical facts had significant effects on Shakespeare's thought and art, and to deny this truth is to limit his meaning for us today.

Shakespeare was, as a man of his time, profoundly influenced by the ever-broadening goals of the Renaissance which stressed the dignity of man, and which emphasized that life on earth rather than in an after-world was man's concern.

This survey of Shakespeare's plays, then, puts the playwright in an historical perspective and shows both the profound understanding that Shakespeare had of the issues of his time, as well as his limitations, since the only government he knew was an absolute monarchy to which he had necessarily to adhere. But Shakespeare still offered clear advice to these rulers, stressing that they should be generous and reflective, with a due concern for the masses of people, rather than cruel and capricious and indifferent to the plight of the commoners.

As one example, and there are many, of Finkelstein's analysis of Shakespeare's awareness of and relevancy to his own time, and frequently to ours, we might consider Finkelstein's approach to "The Merchant of Venice."

The play is not a mere study of Love and Hate, unconnected with the period in which it was written, as the editors of the Folger Shakespeare edition would have us believe. It is not "timeless." Instead we find in it a recurrent reference to money, for that commodity has become the single obsession of the emergent

bourgeoisie.

"Antonio," says Finkelstein, "owns a fleet of merchant ships but he doesn't sail them. He accepts the profits he makes when they arrive in the home port, but he despises profits made by lending money at interest." (P. 58.)

Of course, this last statement is in reference to the money-lender, Shylock, who as a Jew was denied work in the professions, was not allowed to own land, was not permitted to live in cities such as London, and was compelled to wear black gabardine and a yellow star over his breast. Shylock was thus compelled by circumstances to resort to money-lending, but the charge that he was the one with the greatest wealth was a patent falsehood, since the powerful merchant families such as the Fuggers and the Medici, for example, were the ones with the greatest accumulations of wealth. It is typical of Shakespeare's broad humanity that he is able to make us sympathize with the Jew, who was reviled, spat upon and called a cur by most of Shakespeare's contemporaries. "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, affections, passion. . . . If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" "Significantly," says Finkelstein, "Shakespeare has him add that he is only following Christian example: 'The villainy you teach me, I will execute.'"

In the play, Bassanio wishes to marry because he has run out

of money; belonging as he does to an aristocratic family, "he knew nothing about money except how to spend it. Where it came from, least of all that it was wrested from the backs of the peasantry, did not concern him." (P. 60.)

Money is on the minds of even lesser characters. Salerio tells Antonio that were he a merchant whose wealth was bound up in ships, he would never blow upon his soup nor see sand in the hour glass or rocks in a church building but that he would be reminded of the dangers his fleet would face because of wind, sand or rock.

The capitalist system relies upon the inviolability of a contract, and we see this vital fact in Shylock's insistence that his contract with Antonio be honored; we even find the judge in the case agreeing, for if a contract were to be pushed aside, the state itself could not expect domestic or foreign traders to carry out business with the Venetians.

The bourgeois state must uphold bourgeois contracts. The law, on the one hand, knows no race, religion or nation; on the other hand, it knows no humanity—only property or trade or profit. It is a principle that has had an interesting future since Elizabethan times. In the United States it was used to justify slavery and to uphold Fugitive Slave Laws. The argument was that however human feelings were lacerated by slavery, the slave was "property" and property was sacred. (P. 69.)

Another bourgeois practice to

be found in this play, as Finkelstein observes, is the seeking of loopholes in the law that will benefit the ruling class. Thus, Portia is praised because she finds one in the demand that Shylock, as he cuts away the pound of flesh, take no blood as he pierces Antonio's body. The cunning that has been used to evade taxes, to get depletion allowances and to get huge loans from the government (think of Penn Central and Lockheed) demonstrate how Portia's clever skill has been employed countless times by the bourgeoisie to add greater and greater wealth to their coffers. The play also shows "that the Jew, who could be useful at times to society, could also be robbed not only with impunity but with a lofty sense of righteousness." One need only think about the "capitalized blood of children" as well as men and women, not only in the capitalists' own lands, but in foreign-controlled ones to realize how painfully true that statement is. Thus, Shakespeare's play deals with a more concrete concept than one of Love and Hate; "its pervading theme is that of money and its effect on society, politics, and the concepts of law, justice, psychology and human relations." (P. 58.)

The final chapter of this study deals with "Humanization and Alienation." Here Finkelstein provides brilliant insight into the causes of alienation in our present-day capitalist society. He quotes pointedly from Engels and Marx to show that modern man in capitalist societies looks upon his labor with detestation because

it is forced work. In addition, labor tends to isolate people because it is performed monotonously and with the individual worker providing a small part of the total process of production. Because workers are forced to turn out a product that meets the saleability requirements of those who possess the means of production, we can understand how the notion that despair is "a natural law" originates. Finkelstein, however, demonstrates that in a socialist society, when human values rather than property values are part of reality, such debilitating and frustrating alienation disappears, and is replaced by hope, joy in work and a sense that man's potential of achievements is, as Lenin foretold, beyond anyone's projection. And Shakespeare's art can help us strive towards that desirable goal; as a man who humanizes reality, he can provide inspiration to all mankind:

. . . he educates them in the relish of life, the stature to which human beings can rise

through struggle, in the ability and the courage to face life, grasp and talk about the entire range of their social life—from the hidden patterns of government to the lives of the workers and the poor. He can strengthen people in their movement towards creating a society in which what he hoped for can be realized. For the knowledge of how it can be done is now at hand. (P. 257.)

As a survey of Shakespeare's works, as a study of their relationship to their own times and of their meaning for us today, with the essential humanism of their analysis of the realities of human life, this final work by this unusually perceptive author of books on art, music and culture in general will provide the reader with an approach not to be found in the bourgeois press. Sidney Finkelstein is no longer with us, but his insights and critical acumen have provided a clear road in the otherwise weed-cluttered criticism of the conforming capitalist interpreters of our present world.

(Continued from p. 6)

the interests of the working class as a whole in its struggle against capitalist exploitation.

Capitalism makes of the family an economic unit based on the domestic slavery of the housewife. The abolition of this character of the family can be fully achieved only with the ending of capitalist exploitation. That socialism does indeed remove the barrier to the emancipation of women is shown by the experience of the Soviet Union. Thus, Alexandra Biryukova, a top leader of the Soviet trade union movement, writes:

A half of all the material and spiritual values in the USSR are now created by the hands of women, by their intellect, knowledge and talent. More than 80 per cent of all able-bodied women are employed in the national economy. . . .

For Soviet women, work is more than just a means of livelihood. It also gives them a sense of civic pride and dignity, and serves as an economic basis of equality in the family and in society. Work is also a most important condition of the all-around development of the woman's personality. A Soviet woman cannot imagine life without work, in which she finds great moral satisfaction. ("Soviet Women: Creative Labor and Equality," *Political Affairs*, March 1971.)

Such is the direction that women's emancipation has taken under socialism. And such is the direction that must be fought for here. This struggle is not served by erroneous concepts of housework as a form of social production and of the husband as middleman in the exploitation of his wife by the capitalist class. It is served rather by the recognition that working-class men and women have a common stake in the class struggle and in the abolition of capitalist exploitation, and with this of racial and national oppression and the oppression of women.

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