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Journal
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Thought

Keep the Peace—
Keep out of Cuba!
Gus Hall



Brezhnev on Peace
Leonid I. Brezhnev

Open Letter
to the Washington Post
Fidel Castro

Nicaragua—
Defending the Revolution
Alexander Sukhostat

New York City Elections:
Rising Resistance to Reaganism
Si Gerson

The Web of Corporate Capital:
Critique
Eric P. Ross

American Writers Congress
1981

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Dear Friend,

Let me wish you a very happy holiday season on behalf of the Political Affairs editorial board and staff.

This year has been dangerous and exhilarating.

The Reagan Administration's talk of waging a "tactical" nuclear war shows the extent of the danger. The millions of people firmly saying "no" in dozens of languages to these insane schemes were a source of inspiration.

Reaganomics posed a grave danger and did much damage to almost fifty years of social programs. But there was also the Solidarity Day response, when the organized working class and its allies gave an unprecedented demonstration of their political power and their even greater potential.

There is danger to the rights of labor, symbolized by Reagan's attempted terrorist-style assassination of an entire union—the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. But rather than being cowed, labor's rank and file and ever-greater sections of leadership are rallying to meet the challenge.

The danger comes from the more aggressive, reactionary and racist policies of the dominant sections of Big Business. The spirit of resistance and struggle comes from labor, Black people—all the people of our country.

Political Affairs was with you at every turn of events—analyzing in class terms, searching for policies and tactics that would unite and mobilize, puncturing the Hollywood bubbles of illusion in which the mean-spirited, selfish and aggressive policies of our corporate rulers are being packaged.

Was there ever a time when a Marxist-Leninist journal like Political Affairs was more needed? You can count on us making our maximum contribution in the coming year also.

Very simply, we need your help. Please make the largest contribution you can, in money and in gift subscriptions, to Political Affairs

With warmest holiday wishes,

GUS HALL

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Reagan's Nuclear Trojan Horse

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Addressing the recent XIV Convention of the AFL-CIO, its President, Lane Kirkland, recalled that "Herbert Hoover was known as the Great Engineer, but wreckage was his legacy." He then noted that President Reagan is styled as the "Great Communicator" but what he does reveals "a cold heart and a hard fist." Not only has the Reagan Administration "drained the public purse to lavish welfare on the greedy rich" while some 9 million are jobless, and all hard-won social entitlements such as school lunches for the children of the poor and food stamps for the needy are slashed, along with all basic social services, but the "Great Communicator" also lavishes the wealth of the nation on the Pentagon and the monopolists with their imperial appetites for U.S. world domination.

President Reagan, dubbed by cartoonists as the "Hip-shooting Neutron Cowboy of the Wild West," has spurred the Congress into enacting the most colossal military expenditures budget in world history. The list of new weapons systems is as long as the lariat he steadily tightens around the neck of the peoples peace hope—headed by a new generation of Pershing II missiles for deployment in Europe along with hundreds of cruise missiles, it includes the MX intercontinental ballistic missiles, the B-I super-bomber, a school of Polaris nuclear-carrying submarines, a numerous addition to the fleet, etc.

Reagan himself, followed by Haig and Weinberger, has shared his thoughts in public print concerning the belief that a Euro-neutron bomb could be used as a weapon against the Soviet Union in Europe without triggering the retaliatory firing of ICBM intercontinental missiles.

The reaction to this disclosure of the Reagan Administration's first-strike strategic doctrine aspect was instant and massive, especially in Europe. A half million people in Amsterdam, Holland—one of every twenty people in that country—marched and demonstrated for banning the new U.S. atomic and nuclear bombs from Europe. Other hundreds of thousands marched in Berlin, Bonn, Rome, Madrid,

Paris, Copenhagen—all demanding an end to the insanity of the arms race which the Reagan Administration persists in spurring and for a return to the path of detente.

The broad masses of the people of our country are experiencing a great elevation of concern about the peril to peace that flows from the policies and foreign affairs moves of the Reagan Administration. The half million trade unionists who pilgrimaged to Washington to protest the anti-labor, anti-social, and racist policies of the Reagan Administration on September 19—Solidarity Day—reflected the understanding that all of their social aspirations were linked up with the struggle for world peace and opposition to the arms build-up, as revealed by the sea of banners for "JOBS not BOMBS" carried by the marchers. This aspect of the demands must be developed ever greater.

Confronting the crescendo of peace policy demands at home and abroad from forces whose dimensions could no longer be ignored, and facing the November 30 dateline for the commencement of talks with the Soviet Union in Geneva looking toward reduction of nuclear weapons on station in Europe, President Reagan—once again in the pose of the Great Communicator—took to the airwaves and TV world-wide networks to deliver a theatrical communication on the virtues of peace and the request that the Soviet Union dismantle all of its missiles covering its defensive positions from the European direction, in exchange for the U.S. withholding placing another generation of 572 multi-charged Pershing II missiles on sites in European NATO countries.

Reagan said nothing about removing a single one of the 7,000 nuclear warheads or 985 delivery systems—(missiles, cruises, submarines, warships, strategic bombers, etc., which are already on station in Europe and targeted upon Soviet cities and strategic junctures and defense sites). This speech of President Reagan's was by no means a serious invitation to disarmament talks. On the contrary, it was

mere con artistry and hollywood hype. The *New York Times* commentator Anthony Lewis observed that Reagan was seeking in his speech "to mollify the Europeans...and remove an obstacle to his planned nuclear weapons build-up." His speech was not conceived as a contribution "on how to approach the Soviet Union on arms negotiations with any realistic chance of success." (*New York Times*, 11/23/81.) The approach of the president was not serious, Lewis noted, because his "arithmetic simply left out of the balance a number of Western nuclear forces in the European theatre...American submarines assigned to NATO, with their ballistic missiles...The British nuclear deterrent...the French force...etc."

While Reagan perceives with anger that the rising tide of anti-nuclear bomb and peace sentiment in Europe is a threat to his plans for "defense," Leonid Brezhnev, the president of the Soviet Union, welcomes the expansion of the organized peace movement among the masses, for he views it as a mandate to leaders to advance along the path that can lead to lifting forever the terrible tension and awesome burden of the armaments race from the lives and backs of the working peoples of the world. Peace movements among the millions can not threaten socialist countries. On the contrary, they are allies of that social system which was born of the ideal and longing of humanity to liberate itself from the clutch of war and pestilence, hunger and ignorance, repression and racism.

"The Soviet Union," said Leonid Brezhnev in his interview with the editors of *Der Spiegel* in November 1981, "does not threaten anybody, it is not planning to attack anyone. Our military doc-

trine is of a defensive character. It rules out preventive wars and the 'first strike' concept." He continued: "Soviet-American talks on limitation of nuclear weapons in Europe lie ahead..."

"It would be better to abandon dreams of ensuring military supremacy over the USSR...It is by far more sensible and realistic to speak of preserving the parity which already exists and, as experience has shown, is a good basis for preserving peace..."

"We feel that there is no such field of disarmament and no such type of weapon on which agreement can not be reached. The problem of medium-range nuclear means in Europe can also be resolved in the interest of all European nations. Can and must be...providing all sides treat the construction of a lasting peace as the common task."

As Gus Hall stated in his response to President Reagan's Foreign Press Club speech:

"The only negotiating chip that Reagan placed on the table was that the U.S. would consider not adding the new nuclear weapons — the Pershing and cruise nuclear missiles — which, of course, would have already unbalanced the situation against the Soviet Union....Reagan's speech was an acknowledgment, and in a sense a concession, to the progressive and peace-loving forces of the U.S. and the world. It was a confession that U.S. foreign policy must now take into serious consideration the world's irresistible desire and demand for disarmament and a secure peace.

"A continuation of the mass upsurge can force the Reagan Administration to move toward a real step in the direction of a serious, realistic mutual arms reduction negotiating position."

Keep the Peace— Keep Out of Cuba!

GUS HALL

Once again they are beating the drums of war on the banks of the Potomac. Cuba has been targeted for yet another round of aggression.

International solidarity with Cuba can not remain a mere attitude, a state of mind, a mood of conscience. At this critical juncture it must find its effective channel of activity.

The Reagan Administration can not be permitted to go forward with the planned-for option of new aggression. Washington must keep its hands off Cuba!

All who cherish peace and respect the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," must make themselves heard in the Oval Office of the White House, the Halls of Congress, in the State Department's "foggy bottom" and in the Pentagon to keep hands off Cuba.

The national interests of the people of the United States and the cause of world peace demand the Administration and Congress renounce the operating policy of intervention and hostility toward Cuba and a return to the restoration of normal relations with the sovereign state of our Cuban neighbor.

End the Blockade!

- End the 20-year-old disgraceful economic blockade of the Republic of Cuba!
- Reestablish diplomatic, trade and cultural relations on the rational basis of mutual respect for the national sovereignty of each and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
- Cultivate friendly and non-belligerent and non-discriminatory relations with Cuba, our good neighbor of the Antilles.

It is urgent to take active measures to alert and in-

form the people — in their trade unions, churches, schools, communities — of the danger of a new crime of aggression being mounted against Cuba. The moment calls for an outpouring of demands upon the White House to "Keep the Peace by Keeping Out of Cuba."

Telegrams and letters from the people to the President and the newspapers should bombard Washington until a non-aggressive, peace and friendship policy toward Cuba is affirmed by President Reagan.

The mounting of new assault plans against Cuba is the centerpiece of a broader conspiracy and design for aggression in the Caribbean, Central American area, bullying threats of aggression and outrageous acts of intervention, subversion and destabilization against Nicaragua, Grenada and the democratic struggle of El Salvador's people, led by the Farabundo Marti Democratic Front.

Cease the Barrage of Lies

The demand must be made upon Washington to cease its barrage of lies, hate-mongering inventions and monstrous efforts at deception of the people of the Americas about the role and policies of Cuba in the hemisphere.

Socialist Cuba, in all the years of its existence, has been a lamp-bearer of peace and inspiration to all who strive for freedom from imperialist domination, democracy and social progress.

Let there be no more Playa Girons, ever again!
Hands off Cuba!

For peace and friendship with the peoples of the Caribbean, Central and Latin America, who are in struggle to secure the integrity of their independence and freedom.

Gus Hall is general secretary of the Communist Party, USA.
The above statement to the press was issued November 12, 1981.

Open Letter to the Washington Post

FIDEL CASTRO RUZ

The *Post* recently published an article by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak ("Bridge Over the River Lempa," op-ed, October 19) dealing with Central America, El Salvador and Cuba. The article was widely publicized.

It claimed that during the second half of September, Cuba had sent 500 to 600 elite troops with the purpose of becoming directly involved in the developments in El Salvador. It even sought to link up the guerrilla action that destroyed the Puente del Oro in that country with the alleged contingent of Cuban troops. When asked by different press organs, the State Department refused to confirm or disprove the news.

Thus an attempt was made to add another element to the campaign already under way for several weeks, concerning the situation in Central America and, particularly, in El Salvador, with regard to Cuba's alleged participation in recent arms shipments to the Salvadoran revolutionary forces and the sending of Cuban military advisers to cooperate with them. These totally false reports were officially issued by the U.S. State Department and by Secretary of State Haig himself in the months of July and August. On September 3, in a press release, the Cu-

ban revolutionary government publicly challenged both Mr. Haig and the government of the United States to offer one shred of evidence to back their slanderous assertions. Neither Mr. Haig nor the U.S. government has answered this denouncement.

The objective of the truculent and absolutely false article by Mr. Evans and Mr. Novak was to reenact and extend the campaign launched several weeks ago, which led to Cuba's refutation. There is an event, however, that adds more serious and dangerous elements to the campaign of falsehoods and lies. The U.S. government has informed third countries that it has detected the sending of 500 Cuban troops to Nicaragua and that it possesses the corresponding evidence, all the while wielding the usual threats against Cuba. These falsehoods and lies constitute one more step aimed at setting the stage to justify further actions that, as have been publicly reported, are being prepared by the U.S. government against our country.

We have challenged Mr. Haig and the U.S. government for the second time to give an answer about those totally false statements. We are still awaiting a reply.

Fidel Castro Ruz, Havana

Fidel Castro Ruz is the president of Cuba and the first secretary to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. Above is the text of his letter to the editor of the *Washington Post*.

Brezhnev on Peace

LEONID BREZHNEV

Q: East-West relations today appear burdened by strong tensions. How do you see the situation in the world and how do you see the fate of detente?

A: It is turbulent on the earth today. In several parts of the world trouble spots are arising. The arms race with weapons of mass destruction goes on. New kinds of arms are developed which are especially dangerous because they, as the experts say, lower the threshold to a war with nuclear weapons, that is, make its outbreak more probable. Especially insidious seem to be in this regard the utterances of some strategists and politicians in the West about the admissibility of a "limited" nuclear war and the possibility of winning this war.

But if one addresses the heart of the matter, a "limited" nuclear war can't exist at all. Once begun — in Europe or somewhere else — a nuclear war would unavoidably and irrevocably take on a worldwide character. Such is the logic that is inherent to war as such and the character of today's arms and international relations. That one has to see clearly and grasp it.

The Soviet Union is menacing no one and does not have the intention of assaulting anyone. Also, our military doctrine has a defensive character. It excludes preventive wars and the concept of "first strike."

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, we are, as I have already repeatedly said, seriously prepared to maintain normal relations with the United States based on mutual respect and taking into account the rights and interests of each. More than this, we wish to have good, friendly relations with the U.S.A. and cooperate with it in the interest of strengthening peace in the world.

Soviet-American negotiations about the limitation of nuclear arms in Europe are imminent. Following these, we hope, the SALT negotiations will

begin. President Reagan recently announced the readiness of the U.S. to discuss other problems where there are differences of opinion between the two countries as well. We welcome this readiness, because we have always considered negotiations the suitable means for the solution of international problems. But of course, what matters above all is that words are supported by deeds.

Regarding the dreams of reaching military superiority over the U.S.S.R., one would do better to drop them. If it has to be, the Soviet people would find the possibility to undertake any additional efforts and to do everything that is necessary to guarantee a reliable defense of their country.

A special role in safeguarding the peace and deepening detente devolves, of course, upon Europe. For one thing, it is the narrowest and most fragile of all the "houses" that would inevitably fall victim to a nuclear conflagration.

Weapons in Europe

Q: Medium-range weapons, Soviet as well as American, have come to be one of the most acute problems. Do you still see a way of stopping this development?

A: I have said that already more than once. We are of the opinion that there is no sector of disarmament and no category of arms about which one couldn't agree. Likewise the problem of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe can be solved in the interest of all European people. Can and must be.

From the 1950s on the U.S. stationed nuclear arms in Europe and adjacent waters in order to be able to strike at vital centers in the U.S.S.R. and its allies. These weapons were called "forward-based systems." At the same time or a little later, nuclear arms came into some other NATO countries.

Now put yourself in our position. Could we watch impartially as one surrounded us on all sides with military bases, as a growing number of carriers of atomic death in different parts of Europe were aimed at Soviet towns and factories, regardless in

The above is reprinted from the *New York Times* and was excerpted from an interview which originally appeared in *Der Spiegel*.

what shape: as sea-, or land-based missiles, bombers or the like? The Soviet Union had to build weapons to defend itself, not to threaten anybody, Europe least of all. We built them and stationed them on our own territory and in an amount that counterbalances the arsenal of those who have declared themselves our potential opponents.

Comparison of Weapons Units

Let's look at how the relationship of the nuclear forces in Europe really stacks up.

If one counts as medium-range weapons on NATO's side the main nuclear missile and air force units in territories of West European countries and waters bordering on Europe that can reach targets in the Soviet Union—that is, those with a range of a thousand kilometers and more (of course, below the intercontinental range)—as well as the Soviet arms of corresponding range stationed in the European part of the U.S.S.R., there is at present in Europe an approximate parity between NATO and the U.S.S.R. in such weapons.

The NATO countries have here 986 carriers of this type, of which the United States alone has more than 700 (F-111's, FB-111's, F-4's and airplanes aboard aircraft carriers in the seas and oceans around Europe). A further 64 ballistic missiles and 55 bombers are in the British force. France has 144 units (98 missiles and 46 bombers).

The Soviet SS-20

The Soviet Union has 975 units of similar arms at its disposal. The situation has not changed even as the Soviet Union has begun to exchange the obsolete SS-4 and SS-5 for the more modern SS-20 type. With the installation of a new missile we withdraw one or two old ones from our arsenal in order to scrap them together with the launch pads.

It is true that the SS-20 can carry three warheads. But their total detonating power is less than that of one of the old types. And so it follows that in the process of exchanging outmoded missiles the number of delivery systems at our disposal decreased and at the same time the overall strength of our medium-range potential was diminished.

But NATO's medium-range weapons are also constantly being improved and added to. In Britain, for example, aboard the Polaris submarines there

are modernized ballistic rockets with six warheads (instead of the three so far). In France, it is planned to replace the land- and sea-based missiles carrying one warhead with missiles carrying seven warheads. The number of French missile-carrying submarines will also be increased. And this even though NATO is already one and a half times superior in the number of nuclear warheads capable of reaching combat targets—a very essential criterion.

The Issue of 'Superiority'

These data show unmistakably that the fuss made by NATO about "unacceptable superiority" of the U.S.S.R. in medium-range weapons and the "necessity of rearmament" is without foundation. If anyone, then the Soviet Union should bring up the question of rearmament.

When almost 600 additional missiles are stationed in Western Europe, NATO will achieve a superiority of one and a half times in the number of delivery systems and a superiority of about two times in the number of nuclear warheads. Is it perhaps not obvious that it thereby could come to a significant disturbance of the existing approximate balance (considering all factors) and that a serious threat to the security of the U.S.S.R. and its allies would arise?

Talks to Begin in Geneva

Just think of how the U.S.A. reacted two decades ago when at the request of the Castro government a few dozen Soviet missiles were to be stationed in Cuba. Cries were raised in Washington: mortal threat to the U.S.A. But now one tries to persuade us that the forward-based American nuclear arms along our Western border are taboo and can not be a topic of discussion. What is undertaken by us is declared as being "in excess of the defensive requirements of the U.S.S.R." On the contrary, the intention to station in front of our door hundreds of the newest American missiles beyond all those already at hand is passed off as a "defensive measure."

Meanwhile, we have agreed with the U.S.A. on the resumption of the negotiations about medium-range nuclear arms. They will begin shortly in Geneva. The U.S.S.R. welcomes this agreement.

At the same time the following must not be passed over in silence: Even as the negotiations draw nearer, claims from the American side, and at a

rather high level, are made ever more frequently for a "special position" of the U.S.A.

It is hard to see the logic at the bottom of this attitude. In any case, it has not the least to do with objectivity or with realism.

Rather it is to be assumed that the originators of such "suggestions" in reality do not want negotiations at all, let alone successful ones. They need a failure of the negotiations as a kind of alibi for the continuation of the planned arms buildup and the intended transformation of Western Europe into a launching pad for new American missiles targeted at the U.S.S.R. They are building, from the very beginning, a dead end for the negotiations so that they can then say: See, the U.S.S.R. does not care about the opinions of the West, so there is nothing for the U.S. to do but station the rockets.

Ready for Reductions

Who is going to press the start button for the missiles? In which of the "two and a half" wars Secretary Weinberger is playing through will they be activated? To realize the essence of what is going on it is enough to pose these and some similar questions. We should take into consideration that the targets of the American rockets are strategic objects on the territory of the U.S.S.R. and that the new American carriers can be used as first-strike weapons.

As we said before: we would be ready to reduce the total of Soviet missiles in the event of a reasonable position being adopted by the U.S., if the NATO plans for new missile weapons were dropped. I will add: we would be prepared to reach agreement on very substantial reductions on both sides.

If it is a question of the necessity of taking into account the nuclear weapons potential of the NATO allies of the U.S. we simply suggest counting in what is already there. The Soviet Union does not insist on the reduction of this particular potential.

Precisely in order to make it easier to reach a practical solution of the problem we have also made the suggestion—and we make it again—of deciding on a moratorium on stationing new medium-range missiles by NATO and the U.S.S.R. effective on November 30 of this year, when the negotiations begin, to stay in effect until a treaty is completed. The NATO countries would install no Pershing-2 missiles, no cruise missiles and no other medium-range

nuclear missiles. The Soviet Union would stop installing SS-20 rockets.

Strategic Arms Talks

Q: President Reagan's Administration does not want anything to do with the SALT II treaty negotiated between Washington and Moscow. Do you think there is a realistic expectation of reviving it?

A: If I am asked about the SALT II treaty I always have to think back on the difficult and tedious negotiations on various levels that preceded its completion. The finished treaty reflected a precisely measured balance of interests of both sides. At the time of its completion, the Soviet Union had more warhead carriers, the U.S. had more warheads. But we said we were prepared to reduce the number of strategic weapons vehicles by about 10 per cent, or 254 units, when the treaty went into effect.

It is not our fault that the treaty — perhaps the most important of all arms control treaties—has not gone into effect.

In Washington, the refusal to ratify the SALT II treaty is justified by saying the U.S. was behind the Soviet Union, which supposedly had some great advantage in strategic weapons already or was about to achieve it. In reality, however, the treaty would rule out advantages for each side.

I declare quite emphatically: the Soviet Union has done nothing since the signature of the SALT II treaty in 1979 in the area of strategic arms which could lead to a change in the existing approximate situation of parity.

In contrast, new military programs are continually being approved in the United States. It looks as though in Washington they are not working toward reductions but toward increases in strategic arms and toward making the negotiations depend on the speed of the armaments assembly lines.

The Means of Verification

A little on the question of verification. In Washington they like to say that arms treaties should be subject to careful verification. Who is against that? We, too, want to be certain that the United States fulfills its obligations. Therefore we are interested in

Continued on page 38

The New York City Elections— Rising Resistance to Reaganism

SI GERSON

A New York City mayoralty election is a very special event and generally should be viewed in a national perspective. New York is the biggest city in the country, the center of finance capital and the hub of the communication industry. It is the workplace of 1,000,000 trade unionists and nearly half of its more than 7,000,000 population is Black and Hispanic.

For good or ill, what happens in New York frequently sends shock waves throughout the nation. New York was the first major city in this period to institute massive budget cuts requiring mass layoffs of city employees. It was among the first to close city hospitals and other municipal facilities. It was the first to come under the direct control of the big banks under an Emergency Financial Control Board.

Under Mayor Koch, the city administration has in fact adopted a Ronald Reagan line. As *Time* magazine put it :

Koch agrees with Reagan in principle, so he is not about to storm the White House. (June 15, 1981.)

This agreement "in principle" goes beyond budget cutting locally or meekly accepting slashes in federal aid (with only a few muttered pro forma protests.). In his attitude to labor, Koch stands with Reagan. President Reagan's brutal attitude to the air traffic controllers is paralleled by Koch's position towards the city's transit workers, as evidenced in last year's transport strike. *Time* magazine was eminently correct when it spoke of "Koch's basic political shift from repentant Democrat to 'secret' Republican."

Hence it occasioned no surprise that Koch received direct and indirect support from the Reagan

Administration and that the *Time-Life-Fortune* empire sought to make him a national model for mayors. (See the extravagant *Time* cover story in the June 15 issue.) Nor was it accidental that on Labor Day, just 72 hours before the scheduled primary and just when organized labor was parading up Fifth Avenue with anti-Koch slogans, President Reagan made his highly-publicized visit to Gracie Mansion, the mayor's official residence.

It is on this general background that we can perhaps best discuss the recent New York City elections.

It is widely conceded that the last four years, Mayor Koch's first term, saw a general decline in the quality of life in New York. Subway services have deteriorated drastically, the streets are dirtier, crime is on the increase and the infrastructure of the city — the bridges, highways, sewer mains, water lines, etc. — is in desperate need of repair or renewal. Meanwhile, services in hospitals, schools, libraries and other city institutions have been curtailed with some facilities closed entirely.

And all this in a period of generally mounting unemployment, soaring prices and out-of-sight rents — with the full impact of the Reagan budget cuts still to be felt. The Reagan axe will mean the closing of many child care and senior citizen centers, among other services, and the sharpest edge will bite into the Black and Hispanic communities.

A frank answer to Koch's standard question, "How'm I doing?" is simply, "Lousy!"

But it has also been a period of mounting popular resistance as shown by the great Labor Day parade in New York and the giant Solidarity Day demonstration in Washington September 19 of a half-million people among whom there were literally tens of thousands of New York workers and their allies.

• • •

What was the lineup in the recent elections?
On the one side, supporting Koch, were all the

Si Gerson chairs the Political Action Committee of the Communist Party, USA. The above article is adapted from a speech delivered to a public forum on November 12, 1981.

forces of big capital, the great banks and realty interests which benefitted from the Koch Administration and contributed lavishly to the Koch campaign fund. Just a few figures selected from the Board of Elections reports tell the story:

- Helmsley-Spear, the giant realty firm which received \$11.5 million in tax abatements for two hotels and one building, kicked in \$11,200.
- Goldman-Sachs and company (\$9.2 million abatement) — \$7,400.
- Fisher Bros. Realty (\$6.6 million abatement) — \$10,000.
- Jack and Lewis Rudin/Rudin Management (\$3 million tax abatement) — \$9,000.
- Sylvan Lawrence (Realty) — \$11,000.
- Time Inc. (Andrew Heiskell) — \$4,250.
- Bache & Co. — \$5,500.
- Chemical Bank (Donald Platten) — \$2,600.
- Dun & Bradstreet — \$3,000.
- Colt Industries (David Margolis) — \$11,600.
- Warner Communications — \$16,500.
- Con Edison (Charles Luce) — \$5,400.
- N.Y. Telephone Company (shared in \$19.2 million tax abatement) — \$3,200.

But the corporate rulers of New York were worried that lavish funding by itself was not enough, so they guaranteed that there would not even be token opposition within the two-party system. The Republican Party therefore designated Koch, the ex-Reform Democrat, making it the first time in city history that both major parties nominated the same mayoralty candidate.

This was more than a local quirk. It reflected the strategy followed in Washington by the Reagan Administration, that of building a reactionary bi-partisan coalition, as was done successfully in Congress on the Reagan budget and tax programs. It also was a payback to Koch for his de facto support of Reagan in 1980, his knifing of Democrat Elizabeth Holtzman in the U.S. Senate race that year and his endorsement of various Republicans for state legislative posts.

But Koch received more than campaign cash and bi-partisan backing. He got complete and shameless support from the monopoly-owned media. He was endorsed by the three major circulation papers, the *Daily News*, the *New York Times* and the *New York Post*, as well as CBS-TV and most of the other electronic outlets. There was hardly a night when you did not see Koch on the 6 o'clock newscasts on all

major stations. In short, there was a concerted effort by New York's real rulers to choke off or stampee any effective opposition. They wanted a coronation, not an election.

As a result leading politicians shrank from making the run against Koch. However, due to the initiative of some progressive groups and liberal middle-class forces an opposition was stimulated. The Committee for a Mayoral Choice, headed by labor arbitrator Theodore Kheel, began a search for a candidate. It later disbanded, but not before firing some solid shots against Koch. Meanwhile, a mass conference of 400 representatives of grassroots organizations in February entered the field. It proved more lasting and the Citywide Coalition to Defeat Koch was formed.

After some weeks of probing, a courageous candidate came forward to accept the challenge, a man of working-class and trade union background, an ex-longshoreman, Assemblyman Frank J. Barbaro of Brooklyn. He advanced a fighting program and attacked Koch on two central questions: subservience to the banks and big realty developers, and racist polarization of the city. His strategy was to build a people's movement — he proudly termed himself a populist — and his tactical position was two-fold: to fight Koch in the Democratic primary and also to run as an independent.

The rest, as they say, is history. The movement around Barbaro continued to widen. The peak came with the remarkable endorsement of Barbaro by the Central Labor Council, the first time as far as people can remember that the labor body took a position in a mayoralty primary. Barbaro also received strong endorsements from the *Amsterdam News*, the city's leading Black newspaper, the *Village Voice* and a few neighborhood papers.

As a result Barbaro achieved a remarkable primary vote, nearly 210,000 — 36 per cent of the total — against Koch's 344,000, despite the fact that Koch's campaign outspent Barbaro 10 to 1 and had the massive support of the major media. Barbaro carried 17 of the city's 65 assembly districts and was edged out in 10 districts by less than 1,000 votes. Most significantly, Barbaro swept all the Black communities and ran strongly in the Hispanic districts. In short, he ran strongest among the most oppressed, a fact which caused the *New York Times* on September 23, 1981, to warn Koch that he had better do something fast about his relationship with the

Black and Hispanic citizenry of the city.

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How does it happen that a virtually unknown candidate, with a tiny campaign fund and practically blacked out by the media until the closing days of the campaign, was able to pile up such an impressive primary vote?

The answer lies in the increasing resistance—particularly among workers, and the Black and Hispanic people—to the Reagan-Koch policies, a resistance reflected in another form, as mentioned earlier, in the great New York and Solidarity Day marches. The resistance reflected in this election included important sections of labor, the Black and Hispanic peoples, community organizations such as the Metropolitan Council on Housing, independent political groupings and ad hoc grassroots organizations which contributed the priceless asset of committed election workers.

This account would not be complete without reference to the splitting role of the Liberal Party leadership. Despite repeated requests from trade unionists and others, the Liberal Party leaders refused to support Barbaro, the only viable anti-Koch candidate. In this policy they were following their sordid tradition. In 1944, they split from the American Labor Party. In the '60s, they supported the Vietnam War until 1968 when it became politically impossible to do so further.

In 1968, however, they opposed presidential peace candidate Eugene McCarthy. In 1977, they refused their designation to peace activist Paul O'Dwyer for re-election as City Council President. In 1980, they opposed Elizabeth Holtzman in her race for the U.S. Senate, deliberately maintaining the hopeless candidacy of Jacob Javits, thus insuring the election of ultra-Rightist Republican Alphonse D'Amato.

And in 1981, they went further than rejecting Barbaro as a candidate on their line. They put up Councilwoman Mary Codd against him in the general election—and even went into the courts in a frantic effort to knock Barbaro off the ballot as a candidate on the independent Unity Party line.

Why their desperation? The Liberal Party leaders, patronage-hungry hangers-on of the major parties, fear that a real mass-based pro-labor, anti-monopoly party—the Unity Party—will emerge as a state-wide force, something like the American

Labor Party of the '30s and '40s, which frequently was the balance of power in the state. This prospect—which would mean their virtual elimination—obviously gives the Liberal leaders the shudders.

Thus they split the anti-Koch vote in the general election. However, they were properly rebuked by the voters, receiving only 43,000 votes, 3 per cent of the total, for their mayoralty candidate, who finished a poor fourth. Barbaro, despite the fact that he was virtually penniless and could buy no TV time, received a substantial 161,000 votes on the Unity Party line, 13 per cent of the total, running second to Koch, a remarkable achievement under the circumstances. As the *Village Voice* put it:

...Frank Barbaro, the only legitimate alternative to Koch, ran without the advantage of incumbency and couldn't even get the Liberal line. Blacks and Latins who wanted to vote for him had to go all the way over to the right of the ballot...[which] their eyes had been trained to ignore. The fact that thousands did—many more than have ever strayed from the established parties—is the real surprise. Barbaro got the vote with no money and a news stonewall that gave Hoboken more media time and space in the last few weeks of the campaign than this city.

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Two questions now arise:

1) Was Koch's victory a landslide and mandate to carry on the Reaganite anti-labor, anti-people's, racist policies?

2) What is the significance of the Unity Party vote and what is its future?

On the first question: Koch received *no* mandate from the majority of New York's registered voters. The figures tell the story. There are about 2.3 million registered voters in New York. Approximately 1.1 million voted, an estimated 46 per cent of the registered electorate, of which Koch received about 75 per cent. Thus, Koch has the support, at best, of three-quarters of the 46 per cent that voted—or perhaps 40 per cent of the New York registered electorate. In short, the majority of New York voters either stayed away from the polls or voted against him. Hardly an overwhelming mandate!

But apart from the figures, other points should be weighed. Koch had the united support of New York's corporate rulers which insured him the total support of the mass media and a campaign fund of about \$2

million. (One estimate is that Barbaro had only \$13,000 left for the general election.) Koch was on TV and radio literally every night in the closing weeks. Political observers of all shades agree that if Barbaro had even a fraction of the TV time that Koch bought the Unity Party vote would have been substantially higher.

But Koch had more than vast campaign funds. He had the power of his office, patronage, contracts and grants to employ, by direction or indirection. It is reported that Black and Hispanic leaders were virtually blackmailed into supporting him by the threat of withholding funds or other assistance to their districts.

Finally — and this you will rarely see discussed in the monopoly-controlled media — was the part played by racism in the campaign. We can say flatly that Koch deliberately fanned racist prejudice and fears, using a variety of code words and phrases to get his dirty message across. He systematically pandered to the basest of prejudices among backward whites in a city in which nearly half the population is Black or Hispanic.

We are not alone in this judgment. This is what the Coalition for a Mayoral Choice, a group of liberals, said about Koch last April 2 in answer to the mayor's statement that New York race relations "have never been better":

The truth is that race relations are more dangerously polarized in New York than ever before. Mayor Koch ought to know. He's done the polarizing. By every statistical measurement, from unemployment, to health care, to welfare dependency, to school desegregation, to crime and drug addiction, life in New York's non-white communities is worse today than it was four years ago.

The committee went further, charging Koch with actively spreading the poison of racism:

Through code words, symbolism and rhetoric, Koch communicates an attitude of hostility to minorities. Can this be the secret of his apparent and courted popularity with the white majority that votes? No doubt it is the source of a bitter white vs. minorities poison spreading silently through the city...Under Mayor Koch white racism has become more open, more legitimized, freer of guilt...

We might put the matter somewhat differently than did these liberals. Certainly we would point

out that there are substantial sections of white workers and others who reject and actively resist Koch's racist poison. But the essence of their charge is correct: Koch deliberately uses racism in the classic ruling-class fashion — to divide the people, especially the working class.

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Koch's record confirms the charges. Just a few examples:

- Despite wide community opposition, Koch closed Sydenham Hospital in Harlem, an area which reportedly has the nation's highest urban mortality rate.

- He has neither a Black nor Hispanic deputy mayor today. Those that were with him briefly left in disgust or were forced out.

- He has not used his political clout to change the lily-white character of the Board of Estimate, the city's ruling body. There was a chance this year to elect David Dinkins, a Black leader, as Manhattan Borough President. Koch, however, endorsed Dinkin's white opponent, Andrew Stein.

- Koch signed into law the racially gerrymandered City Council redistricting bill, a measure so bad that it was thrown out by the federal court.

- In his electioneering he constantly referred to his advocacy of the death penalty — a widely recognized anti-Black code phrase.

- He stooped to various disguised appeals to racism. Once he called in the City Hall press corps and played for them a tape of a radio spot attacking him. The tape came from a broadcast by Black Assemblyman Al Vann. As the *Village Voice* reporter described the incident, this was simply an appeal to white Forest Hills — "Come out and help me. The Blacks are beating up on me."

Not surprisingly, the private Ed Koch is no different than the public Ed Koch. Here is what Koch said some time ago on tape for an oral history project, as quoted in the September 1979 *New Yorker* magazine:

I find the Black community very anti-Semitic ... My experience with blacks is they're basically anti-Semites.

It is a tragic fact that with this sort of racist slander — plus his lavish funding — that Koch was able to score heavily in some areas: 82 per cent in Coop City, the Bronx; 85 per cent in Forest Hills, Queens and 88 per cent in Canarsie-Mill Basin, Brooklyn. Fortunately, as noted earlier, this was by

no means true elsewhere. However, it gives us some idea of the dimensions of the struggle against racism.

But it is the second question posed that is most important—that is, the emergence in the city of a substantial independent force. We can not underestimate the importance of 161,000 votes cast on an independent line for Barbaro against incredible odds. This was a highly conscious vote. To reach across the voting machine and pull the lever over Barbaro's name on Row H meant that 161,000 people are ready and eager for independent political action. (Nor should we forget the significance of labor's support of Barbaro in the primary. That was a big step forward whether or not all sections of labor were prepared to follow the logic of that step.)

It seems clear that there is the base for a new movement in New York, a united electoral coalition that advances an independent progressive program and selective candidates and yet maintains relationships with independent-minded people who still have ties with the Democratic Party.

The latter point perhaps requires some elaboration. Some examples may suffice. Barbaro is a member of the State Assembly, elected four times as a Democrat from his Brooklyn district. He also heads the Assembly Labor Committee. He will in all probability have to fight in next year's Democratic primary for re-nomination—and undoubtedly against the forces that Koch will summon to try to eliminate him from public life. The same is probably true for Black State Senator Major Owens, who stood staunchly by Barbaro, and perhaps some others.

Thus, supporters of independent political action will have the complex job of building their own organization while aiding those progressives still fighting within the two-party system. However, given the level of understanding and experience of progressive New York voters, this dual-track activity—which will have to be undertaken for some time—is not an impossible task.

Nor is this sole problem facing a new independent political body. There are, for example, existing political groupings such as the Citizens Party which want to maintain their own identity while cooperating with the Unity Party. Under these circumstances, it seems to me, the Unity Party will be not only an independent political coalition but something of an umbrella organization combining and unifying

various diverse forces on the electoral front.

What do we see as the next steps even as the Unity Party begins the process of consolidating itself?

First, there are the upcoming City Council elections, presumably in the next 90 days or so. These elections, it will be recalled, were postponed because the district lines drawn after the 1980 census were rejected by the court as racially gerrymandered. New lines are being mapped and the elections will be on the basis of new district lines with greater opportunity for widened Black and Hispanic representation. This is a big field for Unity Party activity.

Second, there is the fight to defeat any attempt by Koch to wipe out Barbaro and Major Owens and others who opposed him. It is a sure bet that Koch and his corporate masters will try to do just that.

Third, as the Unity Party builds at the grassroots and strengthens its base in labor and among the Black and Hispanic peoples, it may well seek a role in the 1982 gubernatorial campaign. This opens the prospect of becoming an established party with a regular place on the ballot by winning the required 50,000 votes for governor. It can then move onto the national political scene to help build a national anti-monopoly party in which labor and Blacks and Hispanics, allied with the family farmers and urban middle-class supporters, are the major forces.

The Unity Party, it must be emphasized, was a name on the 1981 ballot. It is by no means yet a full-fledged party. It is today an issue-oriented coalition that expects to support progressives in the Democratic primaries and advance its own independent candidacies in selective spots. Its leading figures see its emergence to full party status as a *process*, not an accomplished fact.

But this will not come about simply through electoral means. The Unity Party will have to be closely associated with the mass struggles against the Reagan-Koch anti-labor, anti-people's policies. It will have to be a visible, active factor in the struggles of labor, of tenants, of Blacks and Hispanics in the fight for the people's welfare, against racism and for peace. Its outreach will have to be broad, its tactics flexible but at all times it will have to be seen as the party that unites people in struggle against bankers, bosses and landlords and their two-party prison.

That way lies the path of progressive independent politics.

AMERICAN WRITERS' CONGRESS, 1981

For a Heroic Writers Movement

TONI MORRISON

I thought, some weeks ago, when I was asked to address the American Writers Congress, that I would help issue some clarion call for change: change in the status of writers, change from the low esteem in which the writing community is held, change that would restore to us the primacy that has been snatched from us, forbidden to us or that we have lost through carelessness and inattention. But your presence here in numbers of over 3,000 means that the change is already taking place.

There is fever here, and while we try to diagnose causes and prescribe measures for healing, it is wise to keep in mind that fever is a sign of deeply disturbed life—but life nonetheless. The life of America's community of writers is under attack. I thought it would be difficult to convince large numbers of us that it was so. I need not have worried. The thunder in your response to the call to the Congress proves that we know full well that the picture of "vitality in the arts" that promoters like to talk about is a false picture. As Michael Kuston reported in England about art in America, there is "an alarming instability beneath the dazzle." Behind the headlines of blockbusters, in best-seller columns, gossip columns and the columns of balance sheets, at the edge of the set in the talk shows, underneath the froth of book fairs and right in the middle of the world of books, something is very wrong. Unpublished writers are struck dumb, previously published writers are canceled, financially "successful" writers are harassed (internally and externally) to stay "successful" at all costs. The bigger the claim of brilliance and the more excessive the boasts of printings, the more obvious is the contempt in which we are held. We are toys, things to be played with by little kings who

love us while we please, dismiss us when we don't.

Something is wrong. The puddle of public funds allocated to writers (always the least amount of all the arts) has been reduced to drops. Government support has been so blasted that it is at the moment a gesture of nickels and dimes so humiliating, so contemptuous of writers, that one is staggered by the sheer gall.

Editors are judged by the profitability of what they acquire, not by the way they edit or the talent they nourish. Major publishers — for whom mere solvency is death — are required to burst with growth or attach themselves to a parent bursting with growth. Otherwise they wither. Small presses that do not starve hang on — hungry, feisty and always in danger of eclipse.

* * *

That this notion of the writer as toy — manipulable toy, profitable toy — jeopardizes the literature of the future is abundantly clear. But not only is the literature of the near future endangered; so is the literature of the recent past. This country has had an unsurpassed literary presence in the world for several decades now. But it will be lucky, in the coming decade, if it can hold its own. What emerges as the best literature of the 1980s or even the 1990s may be written elsewhere by other people. Not because of an absence of native genius but because something is very wrong in the writers' community. Writers are less and less central to the idea and subject of literature. Whole schools of criticism have dispossessed the writer of any place whatever in the critical value of his work. Ideas, craft, vision, meaning — all of them are just so much baggage in these critical systems. The text itself is a mere point of departure for philology, philosophy, psychiatry, theology and other disciplines.

Toni Morrison, editor and novelist, delivered the above keynote address to the American Writers Congress in October 1981.

The political consequences for minority writers, dissident writers and writers committed to social change are devastating. For it means that there is no way to talk about what we mean, because to mean anything is not vogue. Just as to feel anything about what one reads is "sentimental" and also not in vogue. If your works are prohibited from having overt or covert meaning — if our meaning has no meaning — then we have no meaning either.

The literature of the past is endangered not only by brilliant intellectualism but also by glaring anti-intellectualism. Apparently there are still such things as books (already written, already loved) that are so evil they must be burnt like witches at the stake for fear of contaminating other books and other minds. Censorship in new and old disguises is rampant. And contempt gives way to fear. There has been a ritual spasm of book snatching—rivaling that in South Africa for pernicious oppressiveness.

I think it is our sense of that danger to both the future and the past that has brought us here. What is it? Does the danger really come from the monolithic publishers or are they symptoms of some larger malady? It is perhaps the mood of a terrified, defensive, bullying nation no longer sure of what the point is? A nation embarrassed by its own Bill of Rights? Burdened by its own constitutional guarantees and promises of liberty and equal protection under the Law? A country so hungry for a purely imagined past of innocence and clarity that it is willing to subvert the future and, in fact, to declare that there is none, in order to wallow in illusion? If that were the case, if the country as a whole decided to have no future — then one of its jobs would be to stifle, fetter and dismiss the artists it could not whip into market shape. Because a writer let loose on the world, uncompromised and untamed, would notice what had become of the country, and might say so.

You can not have unmarketable writers roaming around if you have opted for an improved past in exchange for no future. After all, the future is hard, even dangerous, because it may involve change and it may involve loss. And writers would say that too.

We are, some of us, significant individual writers in the cultural life of a group or of an institution, but as writers we are no longer central to the cultural life of this country.

Is that the reason? The mood of the country? The times we live in? Have we given over our power and our primacy to others? Or is there something frail in

the nature of our work? Much of what we as writers do and how we do it is shaped by our belief in the sacredness of the individual artist and his freedom. Individualism in its particularly interesting American form may be at the heart of our dilemma. The idea of the individual in the artistic arena has its own ambivalence and contradiction, just as it does in the political arena: governance by many committed to preserving the rights of a few. Ralph Ellison said: "In the beginning was the Word—and its contradiction."

* * *

The idea of the artist as a free individual is like a mother who has spawned two descendants who swear they are not related. One is populism and one is elitism. Each claims "individual artistic freedom" as his true progenitor and believes the other to be alien. Populism, anti-intellectualism, marketplace mentality, commercialism — whatever the word, it rests its case on numbers. How many approved it, bought it. If the numbers are large enough, it must be good.

Elitism rests its case on the conviction that that which is rare is better than that which is plentiful. Elitists do not consider the possibility that that which is rare may simply be scarce (like smallpox), not better. If the numbers are small enough, they believe, it must be good. Both elitists and populists have a wonderful faith in quantity as arbiter of the good; the most or the least. Both champion individualism — either the literary Darwinism of the marketplace or the individual uncontaminated by the taste of the masses. The result of this fratricide is muddle, bitterness and the sad defenselessness that is rife among us. It is this muddled idea of individualism that (misunderstood, misapplied, romanti-cized) has given us the much-loved portrait of the struggling artist willingly martyred. The portrait of failure, indifference and rebuff has become so dear to us that we support and enfranchise not the artist but his struggle. We applaud not the artistic triumph but the deprivation that preceded it. God forbid you should do it brilliantly and successfully the first time out. We believe so strongly that knowledge comes from pain that we assume knowledge is pain. I am not convinced. For a true genius, it may be easy.

But pain has become part of what we mean by excellence, by achievement. It's such a loved picture—

the alienated, isolated, individual writer, beleaguered but fiercely alone. A loved picture, but a truly lethal one. Because if we buy it completely, it keeps us single, weak, disconnected, vulnerable. Ours is a special kind of work. The solitude we need in order to work can be used against us to play up our view of ourselves as loners. Our work is special also because we cannot display it on our own; we need an establishment to publish and distribute it. And our work is vulnerable because we have no sovereignty in the industry that we nourish—we have no real place in the business of our business.

And as lone individuals we never have. Even as heroic individual writers we will never have it. Publishing is a competitive, profit-making industry committed to competing for more profits. And I suspect we would despise it if it were anything else. It is a system that does what it does best because it has had practice at doing it. It is a system that works when it works—and does not work when it doesn't. And it is important to remember that it works the way it does because it is permitted to.

We live in an age of advanced capitalism, disintegrating into banditry. And being published in that atmosphere is debilitating. It tempts us into games devised by other people for more other people, into definitions of our work culled by other people; into professional and personal antagonisms that benefit other people; into knee-jerk vindictiveness; into vanity without pride; into celebrity without status; into a quivering acceptance of the "given-ness" of the marketplace.

. . .

Romanticized and misapplied, individualism keeps us self-indulgent. It keeps us ignorant of contracts, of money, of benefits, of rights, of how the partnership between author and publisher ought to work, of the areas that threaten both publisher and writer. It keeps us in an adversary relationship at certain junctures where such a relationship is counterproductive. Individualism can also keep us dependent on foundation largesse, grants, fellowships, campuses, cloisters and handouts. And if things go on in this manner, individualism will idle us—it will keep us from the work we have chosen to do. The political philosophy of the country chants its love of individualism, the nature of our work makes us prize it, and the corporate compulsion of the industry fosters it.

But it is not as individuals that we are abused and silenced; it is as writers. When the gates close, the keeper will not ask whether we wrote for private gratification or public service. He will simply slam down the bar. When books are plucked from shelves or thrown into bonfires be quite clear on one point: the flames will destroy criticism and fiction, poems and history, the eclectic and popular. And the work of a writer who took a lifetime to do one perfect poem will burn just as fast as that of a hugely successful Gothic novelist. When libel suits are filed, the evidence will not turn on whether we were funded by public or private funds or whether our families lent us a tide-me-over.

We may be dreamers or scholars, we may need tranquility or chaos—we may write for posterity or for the hour that is upon us. But we are all workers in the most blessed and mundane sense of that word. And as workers we need protection in the form of data. Who are we? And how many? What do we earn? What is earned of us? What are we entitled to?

We need protection in the form of structure: an accessible organization that is truly representative of the diverse interests of all writers. An organization committed to the rights of the few. And we need protection in the form of clarity, a knowledge of the limits of individualism and the private, indulgent suffering it fosters. We have to stop loving our horror stories. Joyce's *Ulysses* was rejected fourteen times. I don't like that story. I hate it. Fitzgerald burned out and could not work. Hemingway despaired and could not work. A went mad, B died in penury, C drank herself to death, D was blacklisted, E committed suicide. I hate those stories. Great works are written in prisons and holding camps. So are stupid books. The misery does not validate the work. It outrages the sensibility and violates the work. All that those stories mean is that solitude, competitiveness and grief are the inevitable lot of a writer only when there is no organization or network to which he can turn.

We need what I believe we have; 3,000 writers gathered together. To insure freedom of expression we need collective power. If we achieve it, it means our destiny will not leap or languish at the whim of public taste, academic fiat or paraded ignorance. We are already at the barricades. Perhaps that is because what we do is not entirely secular. The emotion that print can produce, the association of the

word with superhuman power, drags us to the barricades whether we wish it or not. Anyone writing a primer on oppression would identify writers first and early as those to be watched. And they would be right. Language is holy. To destroy a culture you first denigrate its language. You prohibit its spoken use and limit its printed form. You screen it and filter it until it accommodates itself to the presiding language, the one that has the biggest navy, and the most guns. To control future generations, you must

control the word and the books that contain it.

We don't need any more writers as solitary heroes. We need a heroic writers' movement—assertive, militant, pugnacious. That is our mission and our risk: we have chosen it. It is also our power: we have earned it. If just one resolution comes from this Congress, let it be that we remain at the barricades where we belong. We must be more than central. We must be sovereign.

Great Audiences Await Our Work

MERIDEL LESUEUR

I was born in 1900. I was there before the First World War when artists and writers opposing war put up a tremendous struggle. I was at the trial of the *Liberator*, great socialist magazine of protest. I was at the trial of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman and the anarchist magazine *Mother Earth*. I was at Madison Square Garden where, with John Reed, we put on a great pageant for the Paterson strikers. I was eighteen and every young man I knew never came back from Europe. I was netted in the Palmer Raids. My mother chained herself to the White House gates for women's suffrage. I was at the Sacco-Vanzetti and Tom Mooney trials. I was in the debacle of the 30s and the organizing of the Unemployed Councils and the Workers Alliance.

I was at the 1935 American Writers Congress. I saw how solidarity there helped develop the writers', artists' and theatre projects on the WPA, and against fascism in Spain and how the congress opened up a vibrant concept of the social and creative relationship between the writer and a broad people's audience.

I am here from the dismembered past to remember. I come from a deep Midwest root. I have survived with others of my people a bloody century. Survival is a form of resistance, but when millions have been destroyed in my time, it is not enough

merely to survive...it is a mandate—a responsibility of love—to be present with job and banners, to converge in a community of bonding with others in a global world.

* * *

Only the old root can evoke the continuity of living history. We meet here under heavy dangers, but we are not without ancestors or without a history of culture: from the first revolution, when we broke from the umbilicus of Europe, creating our own culture in the bloody dark of history.

In that struggle before the First World War, artists and writers opposing the war went to jail. Artists held the American Exhibit at the armory. Steiglitz put up a sign, "American Place." A magazine called *Seven Arts* was edited by Randolph Bourne, Paul Rosenfield, James Oppenheimer and Waldo Frank and influenced by John Reed and the upsurge of American labor. *The Liberator*, the old *Masses*, *Mother Earth*, and many other magazines throughout the country began to express the democratic struggle of the American people against monopoly. In Fort Scott, Kansas, the Little Blue Books which fit in the overall pocket educated a whole era of American workers. *The Appeal to Reason*, supported by the socialists and the IWW, could circulate a million copies. Debs got over a million votes even when he was in jail. The IWW brought poetry on the freights, the wheat fields, in prison. Great winter and summer moonlight schools in Oklahoma, Dakota and Montana educated a whole gen-

The above is an abridged version of a keynote address to the American Writers Congress in October 1981. Meridel LeSueur is a well known novelist and poet.

eration of workers and farmers.

I want to suggest the continuity of these writers and artists, who kept alive and nourished the people's culture and in many ways prepared the structures for the New Deal and the WPA.

Our congress today has not just sprung from the head of Zeus.

The congress of 1935, held in the midst of the crash of American economy, the emerging fascist threat, the civil war in Spain, brought together the leading writers and artists alerted by the terrible dangers of that time. It was clear that writers, not only in America, but in the world had to organize and speak out against savagery and barbarism and for the very life and continuity of global humanity.

The call for that congress said, "Never before have the writers in America come together for fundamental discussion. The congress will be devoted to the exposition of all phases of writers, in the struggle against war, the preservation of civil liberties, and the destruction of fascist tendencies everywhere. ... We must solidify our ranks. ..." The signers of that call should be honored and remembered.

It was the time when millions stood before closed factories. There was no welfare, no social security, no unemployment insurance, no mortgage moratorium. The congress brought us together, in pain—even agony—of searching for our roots. Who were we to be with and for? What was our organic function? For days and nights we struggled and found a new reality...the beautiful moment was revealed where there is only one choice. You die in the corpse of the old society or you are born with the new.

. . .

Many movements grew from the Congress, not measurable, as each went back to their cities, villages, farms, factories.

There were similar congresses held in Chicago and San Francisco and small meetings reporting all over the country. Some of those attending found new audiences, new community, new relationships to each other, what to write about and for whom.

I would like to name a few of them and show how they extended the subject matter of American Literature and its audience.

Nelson Algren, factory worker and tramp; Langston Hughes, Black from Joplin; James T. Farrell of *Studs Lonigan*; Leanea Zugsmith from Kentucky; Grace Lumpkin of *To Make My Bread*; Myra Page

writing about the mine and mill; Josephine Herbst, *The Dynasty of an Iowa Family*; Vardis Fisher of the West; Ruth McKinney, of Industrial Valley; Lloyd Brown, Black railroad worker; Henry Roth, author of *Call it Sleep*; Jack Conroy of *The Distinherited*, editor of the famous *Anvil*; Pietro Di Donato, *Christ in Concrete*; Leonare Erlich, or H.H. Lewis, the "Mississippi Hog Caller"; Nathaniel West, of *The Day of the Locust*; Meyer Levin, *Millen Brand*; Mike Gold, John Howard Lawson, Tillie Olsen; Albert Hapern; Kenneth Fearing; Albert Maltz and many others. All these enriched our feeling of community in the terrible days of reaction, attack and destruction.

Waldo Frank, one of our most prophetic and now neglected writers, was elected chairman of the Writers Congress of 1935 and he said this, "We will find a way. We will come to know, looking with open eye upon ourselves, that there is no solitude, for we will behold cosmos within our selves, eternity within the instant. Having accepted mortal loneliness we will grow aware of others in the American chaos. If there is one there will be more. We will flare little fires to each other. We will draw close. We will commune and converge. We will create a group that can live. Its individuals will be men with no self interest to rot their commerce. There will be action in this group. The deed of its luminous body. There will be leadership for the blind American plasm. We are the process from which may issue birth. Let us do our part!"

This is not 1935, but it is a continuation of the growth of multi-national imperialism which our writers spoke out against before the First World War. It is the time of nuclear world power. It is the time our government declares its willingness to sacrifice 50 million of its own citizens in a holocaust beyond belief, of terror and desolation, destroying even the genes of our future children and bringing about serious mutations of the human race if not its extinction.

The madness of these greedy delinquents in power today makes the 30s look like a rehearsal. The legal acts in preparation for fascism and global monopoly make the Smith Act and the McCarran Act and the UnAmerican Committee and McCarthyism seem only a preface. The Bill of Rights will be abridged if not cancelled. The aids and social and human organizations like social security and unemployment insurance and relief for the oppressed are

being destroyed, pared down to hunger levels. Milk subsidies and children's lunches are denied while the money is given to the military.

The First Amendment can be abridged by making communication impossible. The high price of paper, of stamps, of distribution and the time of censorship will make publishing impossible. But if the book burners are back again, they are back with a qualitative difference. They can now incinerate whole cities, civilizations. Our books would be vaporized together with ourselves in an atomic war.

* * *

The new political and economic oppression makes it necessary that writers organize and defend themselves, along with workers, farmers, Indians, Chicanos, Blacks and women. The attack is on us all. If we do not know our social and political importance, the oppressor does.

When the writers are suppressed it allows the people to be won over to the oppressive ideologies. In Germany writers were jailed, exiled and killed. The great singer, Lorca, was murdered in Spain. Victor Jara, the Chilean singer, had his hands cut off and kept singing until he was killed. They silenced Albert Parson for crying out for an 8-hour day and as they put the black hood over his face before hanging him, he cried out, "Let the voice of the people be heard!" Soldiers in the trenches in the Spanish Civil War wrote out Neruda's poems in their own blood.

Our fight now must be fought on broad political lines with the struggles of all the people in the country. No more lone writers. No more the hollow men stuffed with straw. No more whimper instead of a bang. We can not ever go back. We must not be caught defenseless, isolated as we were in the McCarthy period. We must never let that happen again. We must not be separated to be devoured by the wolves.

I think the Writers Congress of 1935 underestimated the power of the enemy. We allowed them to destroy our solidarity, pick us off one by one. Guilt

by association made it impossible to correspond. Our mail was opened. I was quarantined in my community. I could not teach or sell my stories, and even my children's books were blacklisted, sold under the counter. We had no financial or moral support or even ways of discussing strategy, what to do, how to fight. This must not happen again. We must defend each other.

We have simpler choices now. The terror is more enormous, more visible. It was Engels who said there are only two subjects for the artist, the moribund, the corpse of the old, or the viable, the birth of the new.

Tolstoy said, "In the future only works that draw people together toward fraternity, unity and shared feelings will be considered real art. Much art is harmful to humanity... We have no right to term their work science or art because it does not have the good of society and humanity as its goal."

The great sagas are waiting to be given back in great dramas. Great audiences are waiting. It is the time of World Congress, the coming of all men and women into one fate, to live not in the dark of the world market but in the luminosity and solidarity of all people on the global earth, to be here and partake of the celebration of our strength, our endurance and our beauty. The death and agony of our time are great but we shall not cease. We are ignited, sparked under the hooves of oppressors passing over us.

Here the dismembered will be remembered. The murdered, the starving, the polluted, poisoned will be represented by us.

We do not have the right to ask if we will fail. Death can not win. The bomb is not even a choice. There must be no doubt in our strength to live over this kind of death given our powerful common sense, our numbers, the logic of our strength, the right of our ancestors and our children.

As Waldo Frank said at the first congress, let us say now: "Let us meet in communion, converge and appear in human solidarity."

The Web of Corporate Capital: Critique

ERIK BERT

The "critique" of monopoly capitalism expressed in the studies under review is essentially petty-bourgeois.

The congressional staffs responsible for the studies examined here judged capitalism from the petty-bourgeois standpoint of "free enterprise," and find, not surprisingly, three-quarters of a century after its emergence, that monopoly capitalism is un-"free"; and does not measure up to the staffs' standards of competitive independence.

The Interlock study makes the "independence" of the epoch of free competition the measure by which it judges the legitimacy of monopoly capitalism.

A basic ethic of American business is, and has always been, independence: independence to buy a better product or service at a better price; independence to borrow or to invest; and independence to do business which meets popular needs and demands. (ID-3.)

In a truly arm's-length free enterprise economy one might at least expect to find the largest companies relatively independent of each other. After all, they have enormous resources with which to buy and produce and sell on a competitive basis. (ID-28-29.)

But a computer analysis of the interlocks among the 130 corporations in the ID-universe, which constitutes the bulk of the study, "raises serious questions as to whether such independence really exists among those companies" (ID-29).

Knowing what monopoly capitalism is, in no small measure as a result of their own research, it is difficult to imagine a monopoly capitalism in which the largest companies [would be] relatively independent of each other. (ID-28.)

This is the last of two articles based on a manuscript completed by Erik Bert shortly before his recent death. We wish to again express our sorrow at his passing. Sources cited in the above article are listed in the first article, which appears in the November 1981 issue of *Political Affairs*.

The emergence, penetration and overwhelming of the U.S. economy by monopoly is viewed myopically as the "destruction of competition," and is interpreted as the noxious fruit of interlocks.

Surveying the web of corporate relationships, in the center of which are the great banks and other financial corporations, the Senate committee staff wonders whether the giant corporations are truly "independent" and "competitive." It asks about the automotive industry specifically:

How independent and competitive are these automobile companies in their determination of policies with respect to price, quality, design and innovative automotive features?

It should have become clear — after several decades — that that question is irrelevant; that pursuing it is diversionary. It bemuses the people, without interfering with monopoly and provides employment, at great cost, for battalions of government antitrust attorneys, to no purpose, and for more battalions of attorneys defending the corporations.

Banking Interlocks & Corporate Independence

The Interlock study alludes in passing to the pressures exerted by the financial institutions on the other giant corporations, apart from those arising out of interlocking directorates. It views, with alarm, these normal impositions by the banks and other sources of credit as "restraints" which violate the staff's image of what corporate "independence" ought to be.

The staff fears for the "independence" of the airline and energy corporations. Are they "sufficiently independent so that they can shop around for the least expensive financing, the least interference of the lending institutions in the management of their affairs? Are these companies reasonably free to build their plants and buy their equipment as they see fit, or are they subject to undue controls and influence of the lenders, as to their use of the bor-

rowed funds?"

The solicitude of the staff for the "independence" of the giant airline and electric utility corporations is grotesque.

The standard of "independence" which the staff applies to contemporary monopoly was appropriate to the period of competition which came to a close around the turn of the century, but it is alien, and becoming ever more so, to contemporary capitalism.

There has been a tendency not to "make waves" about monopoly or, in particular, about the role of finance in contemporary monopoly capitalism. Thus, the Patman report, in 1968, describing the influence of commercial bank activities on the American economy was "the first attempt ever made to obtain comprehensive data on bank trust department activities" (CB-2).

When the Interlock study was published in 1978, 65 years had elapsed since the first analysis by Congress of the "overall effect of corporate interlocks on economic and social policies" in the Pujos committee's probe of the "Money Trust" in 1913.

This disinterest by the federal government and its agencies to concern themselves with the growth of finance capital, and the increasing domination of the U.S. economy by monopoly, are reflected in their failure to collect relevant information, including that which the law requires that they gather.

In preparing for its study of interlocking corporate directorates, the Senate subcommittee staff found, upon inquiry to 33 major federal agencies and departments, "an extraordinary reluctance to obtain and consider interlock information in connection with their duties, even when laws and regulations required such concern" (ID-3).

The Senate subcommittee staff's conclusion was that "there is no way for any citizen to know who currently sits on a major company's board, with what other companies or firms (s)he is similarly affiliated, unless such company or person provides the interlock information voluntarily" (ID-10).

Directorate Influence on Government Policy

The Senate subcommittee had addressed its query for information to 33 government departments and agencies. The single agency which responded to the "model code for corporate reporting" was the Inter-

state Commerce Commission, but its rules did not go into effect until 1978 (ID-11). The results, if any, have not been disclosed. There are, however, "mounting problems resulting from economic concentration," the Corporate Ownership study conceded (CO-11). These are not only topical but basic.

Thus, the "multiple levers of corporate management available to institutional investors present fundamental questions regarding public policy," the Corporate Ownership study staffs declared. "Together they present questions about the nature of our industrial society—how it will be directed and controlled" (CO-2).

The facts uncovered "raise fundamental issues," the Interlock study suggests (ID-33, 280).

And, then, there is something called a "moral judgment" on contemporary capitalism. Thus, the "primary objective" of one analysis in the Interlock study is to make possible a "value judgment" as to the "potential for concentration and anticompetitive behavior," in an economy where concentration is pervasive and monopolistic behavior is normal; let alone to consider making, or not making, a "value judgment," no less, on monopoly capitalism.

What the staffs consider "fundamental issues," "fundamental" or "moral" questions about the nature of our society are, in fact, questions as to how monopoly capitalism (which they call "industrial society") functions. Its continuation is assumed.

Specifically, the interlocks among the largest corporations "can impact on corporate decisions as to the type and quality of products and services to be marketed in the United States and overseas" (ID-281).

The "top 13 corporations in the country," in addition to being "very large," hold "an enormous potential for directing and influencing industrial and financial policies with respect to each other and among the other major companies" (ID-33).

The study says:

They can...possibly control the shape and direction of the Nation's economy. (ID-281.)

...interlocking directorates among the Nation's very largest corporations can have a profound effect on business attempts to influence Government policies....(ID-281.)

This is a facet of state-monopoly relationship that has been notorious for decades.

We are assured that "Congressional committees, Federal agencies and scholars" are considering the "substantive issues" which have been "created by the dominant role of institutional investors—bank trust departments, insurance companies, pension funds... in major corporations" (CO-1).

The evidence of the studies under examination testifies that, as far as dealing with "substantive issues" is concerned, the congressional committees, federal agencies and scholars have long since declared bankruptcy.

The fundamental question to which the studies refer in name, if not in fact, is: Can the "extraordinary concentration at the top of the structure of industrial and financial America... such conglomeration of economic and political power... permit a free and competitive enterprise system?" To which the Interlock study has nothing more penetrating to say than: "The answer to this question lies in further investigation and analysis" (ID-33).

That is a characteristic response of the congressional analysts to the mountain of evidence they have uncovered about the development of monopoly capitalism, especially its financial institutions. *More facts!* is the battle cry. Even the most gullible might be perplexed by this invitation to amass more evidence of what is readily apparent.

The first step is to acquire more facts, the Corporate Ownership study suggests, a "more solid data base than is now available." These activities, we are assured, will yield "answers to basic questions—answers that will provide the framework for reasoned public policy" (CO-2).

But the staffs disregard questions about the nature of our capitalist "industrial" society to which they allude. Instead, they worry, on the one hand, about "conflicts of interest" about the "legitimacy" of the influence exercised by the financial institutions; about democracy for the smaller stockholders vis-a-vis the big stockholders and financial institutions, and about reforming monopoly capitalism.

Analyzing Conflict of Interest

Thus, the subtitle of the Patman report's "Recommended Areas for Inquiry" is "Need for Legislative and Administrative Action" (CB-7). But only five years later Senator Lee Metcalf and Senator Edmund Muskie (more recently Secretary of State),

declared, in their Letter of Transmittal of the Corporate Ownership study, that they were not even thinking of legislation, let alone disturbing the system of state monopoly capitalism.

"Much can be done toward reaching the objectives suggested," they assured the Congress, the public, and the corporations, "without new legislation," although they admit that the great financial institutions play a "dominant role in major corporations" (CO-1), and, thus, in the nation's economy.

They fear that a "conflict of interest" might arise as a result of the multiple role played by capitalists, members of corporation boards of directors, corporation officers and the like—when these so-called "conflicts of interests" are, in fact, integral to the structure of monopoly capitalism.

For a historic perspective on "conflict of interest" the Interlock staff looks back six and a half decades, to 1914, to the childhood of monopoly capital, and recalls the golden words of Louis Brandeis (Supreme Court Justice, 1916-1939). Brandeis was concerned mainly about the conflict of interest in multiple directorships. He feared that the distractions facing men who were directors of several corporations would affect corporation profits negatively. He said that corporate directors must be "free from any conflicting interests" for "no man can have such detailed knowledge of the facts of many enterprises" as to function efficiently. In 1915 he said that the limit of knowledgeability was "one large corporation." Brandeis saw the corporation directors acting not only "in the interest of the stockholders, but in the interest of the community" (ID-236).

The monopolists disregard such petty-bourgeois fears; they know best what is good for capitalism or, at least, better than petty-bourgeois ideologues do.

The Interlock staff expanded on Louis Brandeis' fears for the souls and minds of corporate directors, in two respects.

The moral principle which it adopted was, naturally, maximum profit—for the stockholders. "Every director sitting around... the board table of a large corporation... has a direct fiduciary responsibility to the others (shareholders) for the proper management of the company" (ID-4).

The staff is concerned that the manifold interlocks may cause too many conflicts and too much responsibility for one person to bear (ID-236). The

concern of the staff is clearly irrelevant. The dominant corporation stockholders who elect the directors are not worried about "conflicts," or that these multi-board directors have "too much responsibility for one person to bear."

'Good Business...'

In order to put a better face on things, the staff abandoned the simple goal of profits and cited also the directors' "general responsibility to the public, in accordance with appropriate Federal, State and local laws and regulations" (ID-4).

The appropriate federal, state and local laws and regulations notwithstanding, there is no capitalist responsibility to the public. The only responsibility capitalists acknowledge is to augment their capital. The "general responsibility" which the staff evokes is a mirage. The staff considers the interlock structure of contemporary monopoly capital from a petty-bourgeois moral standpoint. Thus: "the interlocking directorate can be both good business for corporations and bad business for the public" (ID-279). It is "good business" for the corporations in that it is monopoly capital; it is "bad business" for the public because it is monopoly capital.

Though interlock directors may, and probably do, engage in petty collusion, self-interest shenanigans, and the like, one should expect that, in keeping with the importance of the corporations they represent, their collusion is played on a much higher level—to the end of maximum profits of the corporations on whose boards they sit.

The congressional staffers who have unearthed the massive evidence of the structure of monopoly capital ask — of the legal structure that monopoly has produced — whether monopoly capitalism, finance capitalism, is "legitimate," "legal."

The staff study sees, in the large corporations' interlocks, the "machinery by which the country's largest corporations could have communicated essential information and coordinated corporate policies with each other," that is, the "potential for corporate concentration" (ID-32).

The study warns, similarly, that the interlocks "may provide mechanisms for stabilizing prices, controlling supply and restraining competition," all in the antitrust vein (ID-33).

Through the same prism the staff wonders whether "interlocks between actual or potential

competitors...provide a linkage for communication and discussion which can result in common action (with or without agreement) and a consequent elimination of competition" (ID-6).

The study proclaims its refusal to "make any allegations" about such "predatory" actions. Very little is lost by that shyness. The essence of the study is its description of the "general patterns of corporate concentration," and in that it has not been surpassed hitherto.

The staff worries, thus, that interlocks might lead to collusion ("with or without agreement"). The substantive question, from the point of view of science, is the relation of competition and collusion in contemporary monopoly capitalism; and through what channels (including interlocking directorates) and how is the collusion among the monopolistic and other corporations effected.

Contravening Competition is Illegal

The linking of competing corporations, contravening free competition, is barred by law. It is attained by circumventing the law — through indirect interlocks, as the Interlock study concedes.

However, history testifies that state and federal laws provide only "limited constraints" on the concentration of economic power. They deter "the most blatant of interlocks — common directorships between direct competitors." But these constraints are, in fact, guidelines for legal integration through interlocks. They have "provided respectability for a wide variety of other kinds of interlocks which may have similar but more subtle, abusive effects" than those deterred (ID-279).

The staff smells possible illegality in: (1) the direct interlocks between the giant corporations and their customers, suppliers and bankers (it cites General Motors as an example) and (2) in the indirect interlocks between the Big Three competitors in the auto industry.

After detailing the "direct interlocks between GM and its customers, suppliers and banking organizations," the staff considers that these, while possibly not within the prohibitions of section 8 of the Clayton Act, might be of "sufficient consequence to constitute an unfair trade practice under section 5 of the FTC Act" (ID-78).

Direct interlocks among the Big Three "would surely be illegal under section 8 of the Clayton Act,"

but it adds, "being indirect, they are apparently outside the prosecution of that law."

The Voting Rights study, championing incorporated democracy, demanded, on the one hand, that the smaller stockholders should be heard and, on the other hand, that the financial institutions should not be allowed to vote the stock they hold but do not own (VR-4). The Voting Rights study declared that institutional investors should be "required to pass through voting rights to other people's stock to the beneficial owners, or to withhold votes if pass-through is not practical" (VR-4). "Stockholders deserve effective voice and choice in corporate elections, including convenient procedures for nominating candidates for the board of directors and for communicating with other stockvoters within a corporation" (VR-4).

The congressional staffs involved in the preparation of the studies under examination propose—without a by-your-leave to the corporations—to reform capitalism. Since the regulation, reform, antitrust and other efforts go back a century (to the railroad monopolies) the present efforts require that they disregard the lessons of past failure, even as they recount the efforts that were made.

The Patman report included 14 "staff recommendations for legislative and administrative action," to meet, presumably, the "snowballing economic power" of the commercial banks, described in the study. That "economic power...with its literally thousands of interlocking relationships, is a situation which can only be ignored at great peril" (CB-5,9).

The futility of these recommendations is evident in the report itself (CB-10).

1. "Heavy emphasis in the above recommendations has been given to providing for disclosure of information previously not available." This can lead to "further proposals for legislative and administrative action"—like a dog chasing its tail.

2. "These recommendations are...designed to maintain and create a more competitive environment among financial institutions and among other competing corporations which are interlocked through financial institutions"—that is, to recreate the competition which the development of monopoly destroyed.

3. "They are so designed to maintain financial institutions as investors and stop the trend toward

financial institutions, particularly commercial banks, gaining control over other corporations"—that is, to reverse the course which monopoly capitalism has taken.

Bowing to Reformism

The Voting Rights study implies that we have heard all that before—and the regulatory agencies are either paralyzed or asleep or have abandoned any interest in containing monopoly. It calls on "somnolent commissions" to wake up and act, at least, be "motivated," and to warn the Congress and the public about untoward influences in the corporations they oversee. The White House and the regulatory agencies should require the regulated corporations to provide accurate reports (VR-4).

This would "vastly simplify the job of regulatory commissions and provide Congress with basic information which it always needs but never has" (CO-11).

The Corporate Ownership study argues that "a great deal more information about institutional holdings" is necessary as a "basis for public policy" (CO-133).

The high road of such "public policy" is "preserving competition"—i. e., free competition—which has long since vanished.

The low road is on the more familiar ground of "protecting investors" (CO-133). That latter cause is propounded repeatedly by the congressional staffers who view the world through the eyes of 24 million or so stockholders in the U.S.

The Patman report cites "the serious disadvantage that the average investor acting by himself has as against a bank trust department which is in a position to obtain inside information about a corporation" (CB-30).

Such discussion makes one think of the discussion between the Walrus and the Carpenter, the parties of the first part, and the Oysters, the parties of the second part:

O Oysters come and walk with us!

The Walrus did beseech.

A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,

Along the briny beach.

And thick and fast they came at last,

And more, and more, and more...

Now if you're ready, Oysters dear,

We can begin to feed.
I weep for you, the Walrus said,
I deeply sympathize,
 With sobs and tears he sorted out
 Those of the largest size
 Holding his pocket-handkerchief
 Before his streaming eyes...
 But answer came there none—
 And this was scarcely odd, because
 They'd eaten every one.

The petty-bourgeois position of submitting to, but complaining about, monopoly capitalism is expressed, almost classically, in the Voting Rights study: "The hands on the levers of control of giant private corporations must be visible to the public for its own protection" (VR-4).

The challenge of monopoly will be met, they believe, if the curtain is removed so that the audience can see the puppeteer pull the strings activating the marionettes, and the ventriloquist is compelled to permit the audience see his lips move.

Lenin dealt, in his *Imperialism*, with proposals to reform monopoly capitalism — which were already being peddled three-quarters of a century ago:

Bourgeois scholars and publicists usually come out in defense of imperialism in a somewhat veiled form; they obscure its complete domination and its deep-going roots, strive to push specific and secondary details into the forefront and do their very best to distract attention from essentials by means of absolutely ridiculous schemes of "reform," such as police supervision of the trusts or banks, etc. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 286.)

In face of the mountain of evidence, of increasing monopolization and concentration, and of growing domination of the economy by the great financial institutions — which the studies bare — the congressional staffs chart a course for reform, as if monopoly, finance capitalism, were not the embracing and dominant fact of our contemporary economy. Monopolistic domination of the economy is depicted as a looming peril, possibly imminent although not yet, merely an "implication" of present circumstances, as "potential."

Monopoly capitalism is presented as "implication," as "potential" — in face of the fact that the

studies depict it as contemporary reality.

The competition whose preservation is a major plank in the platform of the Corporate Ownership study and similar enterprises is pre-monopoly competition. It ceased, decades ago, to be characteristic of the economy in the advanced capitalist countries.

The Interlock study asks whether the "extraordinary concentration at the top of the structure of industrial and financial America," the "conglomeration of economic and political power," can "permit a free and competitive enterprise system" to exist (ID-33); — that is, whether monopoly capitalism is consonant with a non-monopoly capitalist system. One might ask, similarly, whether a system of chattel slavery is consonant with a system of free, competitive enterprise.

More amazing than the question which the staff asked is its answer. "The answer to this question," it says, "lies in further investigation and analysis" (ID-33). That denotes either evasion or intellectual bankruptcy.

The Corporate Ownership study, too, presents as "implication" that the "enormous size of institutional holdings of stock in major American corporations ... have or *can have*...vast influence" in "financial markets of the country and the management of these corporations."

The Harsh Reality of Monopoly Capitalism

The Interlock study presents, *as a possibility*, that these great aggregations of capital may have significant impact on the economy based on capital. Similarly, the Patman report describes "interlocking directorates" as a "serious problem related to concentration of economic power and substantial restraint on competition by banks and other institutional investors" (CB-24). The "problem" is "serious" in terms of free competition which vanished long since; the "problem" is the development of monopoly and finance capital, i.e., the development of monopoly capitalism.

The Interlock staff considered that "concentration of economic or fiscal control in a few hands" might result in their "charting the direction of production and investment" (ID-6). This, it sees, not as the natural development of monopoly, as a "danger," but the result of "personal interlocks between business leaders," of a "business elite, an ingrown

group, impervious to outside forces, intolerant of dissent, and protective of the status quo" (ID-6).

The Patman report speaks of the "potential restraints of competition" that might be the consequence of "bank influence over corporations" (CB-1) as though free competition existed in the major branches of industry.

The Patman report expressed concern that the banks, "particularly in New York City, led by Morgan Guaranty Trust Co., have acquired such large stockholdings in major national corporations in competing industries that serious potential problems of restraint of competition rise" (CB-4). Concentration and monopoly, in banking, and the domination of finance over industry create "problems of restraint of competition." In fact, monopoly has wiped out free competition; modern competition is monopoly competition, nationally or internationally.

The decisive influence which the financial institutions exert in the economy — which all of the studies analyzed here disclose — is reduced to a possibility.

The "potential" is not potential but, as the study itself reveals, the harsh reality of monopoly capitalism. This does not arise from the hydra-headed boards, whose directors communicate "essential information" from one of the giants to the other, it is the result of their coordinating corporate policy with one another.

The staff sees the "potential" primarily in terms of petty-bourgeois consumerism, that is, consumer sovereignty has been subverted by the giant corporations.

The reality of finance capitalism — which is exposed in the studies in commendable detail — is denied in effect, by depicting its operation a "potential." The purpose is to establish the validity of reforming monopoly capitalism. Reform would be counterfeit, clearly, if monopoly were admitted to be a stage, the latest stage—let alone the last stage—of capitalism.

The critique of monopoly is expressed also in anti-trust legislation and in antitrust litigation.

Decades of effort have just about exhausted the possibilities of writing new antitrust legislation. The main antitrust thrust has been expressed, therefore, in the work of regulatory commissions (whose "anti-trust" intent is frequently difficult to discern) and in

litigation (to conduct which large battalions of attorneys have been enlisted by the government and the monopoly corporations).

To proffer "preserving competition"—under the dominion of contemporary (monopoly!) capitalism—as an attainable goal is preserving a world of make-believe and, thus, either conscious deception or self-deception.

Conclusion

The program for reforming monopoly capitalism reflects what Lenin called, in his *Imperialism*, the "petty-bourgeois point of view in the critique of imperialism, the omnipotence of the banks, the financial oligarchy, etc." Its advocates "contrast imperialism with free competition and democracy..." But, "capitalist monopoly...has grown out of capitalism." The "concentration of production and capital... gives rise to monopoly. And monopolies have already arisen—precisely out of free competition!... Free competition has become impossible after it has given rise to monopoly" (CW-22, 288, 277, 290). The program for reforming capitalism is a program for returning monopoly capitalism to the womb, whence it emerged almost a century ago.

On occasion, when the facts stare one in the face, the congressional staffers declare that the monopolistic implications of the facts are beyond their purview. Thus, the Interlock study asks innocently—in respect to the concentration of power in the eight energy corporations, and the interlocks among them — these "fundamental questions":

To what extent do these extraordinary corporate linkages provide a mechanism for stabilizing prices, controlling supply, and restraining competition?

What is the effect of major energy company interlocks on industry attempts to influence Government policies?

What is the impact of the energy companies' potential boardroom powers to influence decisions on the kinds of energy-consuming products and services marketed by major companies with whom they interlock?

These "questions...have yet to be answered," the study says (ID-94). But it ducks them all—for someone else to answer. "These are factual questions for examination beyond the scope of this study" (ID-94). It concedes, albeit cautiously, that monop-

oly might be reflected in monopolistic practices.

The passing of the era of free competition, and the monopolization of the economy, have been identified, unfortunately, by some Marxists, as identical with the ending of competition. Free competition has been succeeded, in their view, by total and exclusive domination of a market by either a single corporation or a small confederacy of giants.

However, there is competition among the greatest aggregates of capital. One need cite only the U.S. automobile industry, dominated by the Big Three, and the bankruptcy of one of them, Chrysler.

They present monopoly, metaphysically, as "ultra" or "super" monopoly, in which all aggregations of capital have been consolidated into one homogeneous mass.

The reality of the capitalist system is, as Lenin pointed out, that the "even development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries is impossible under capitalism" (CW 22-295, Lenin's emphasis).

This unevenness is characteristic of contemporary monopoly capitalism and generates competition between trusts, branches of industry — albeit on the monopoly level.

There is uneven development among the great aggregations of capital.

Lenin's analysis showed the contradictory nature of capitalist development: (1) competition is integral to capitalist production; (2) monopoly contradicts the essence of capitalism; (3) capitalism evolves into monopoly capitalism in which (4) monopoly dominates the economy and (5) financial capital dominates monopoly, while (6) capitalism gives birth continuously to petty, or small-size enterprise, albeit in a world increasingly dominated by big capital, by finance capital.

Lenin pointed out that "certainly, monopoly under capitalism can never completely, and for a very long period of time, eliminate competition in the world market." "This, by the way, is one of the reasons why the theory of ultra-imperialism is so absurd." (CW-22, p. 276).

The development of U.S. capitalism in recent decades shows that capitalism, i.e., monopoly capitalism, can not eliminate competition in the domes-

tic market. Elimination of competition on the domestic market (as in the world market) would imply a kind of peaceful coexistence among the greatest aggregations of capital. But passivity is alien to capital, whose soul lies in aggression—for maximum profits.

Competition does exist: monopoly competition, competition among the great corporations in industry, commerce, and finance.

The most obvious evidence of this competition is the massive waste of social resources in advertising. That the advertising is overwhelmingly, if not completely, wasteful, that it is intended, essentially, to deceive the consumer does not make it less competitive.

Let us consider what the implication is of accepting the validity of the thesis that, with the end of free competition, competition ceased, specifically as between the greatest aggregates of capital; that competition and monopolization are mutually exclusive; that monopolization doomed competition to extinction.

To conclude that the end of free competition meant the end of competition means concluding that there is no longer any struggle between capitals over the plunder, over the surplus value that is squeezed out of the workers; that each of the great aggregations of capital has resigned itself to increasing its share at the expense of the smaller capitals; that between the greatest aggregations of capital there is a truce, an armistice, a non-aggression pact. It means that the greatest aggregations have renounced, by common consent, struggle among themselves, for maximum profit, have renounced their nature, have renounced the essence of capital, the drive for greater profit as the means to self-expansion.

The notion that, with the demise of free competition, competition among capitals died and was succeeded by a kind of ultra-monopoly is, theoretically, akin to Kautsky's "ultra-imperialism," It, too, is divorced from reality of capitalism. It is, as Lenin said of Kautsky's "ultra-imperialism," "ultra-nonsense," and like Kautsky's, it is a "lifeless abstraction" (Lenin, *Imperialism*, Ch. VII).

Nicaragua — Defending the Revolution

ALEXANDER SUKHOSTAT

Only recently an epitome of arbitrary rule and rabid reaction, Nicaragua is today a source of pride for progressive people throughout Latin America. The revolution in that country has fortified the determination of the continent's freedom fighters. It shows that in the present international situation the "heavens can be stormed" also in Central America, long regarded by the U.S. imperialists as their unchallenged domain and immediate strategic rear.

By reaffirming many universal laws of the liberation process the Sandinista revolution is a further reminder that new paths of deliverance from imperialist and oligarchic oppression must be sought (and found). It is now confronted with many questions for whose answer there must be flexibility and prescience. Let us recall Lenin's words that "no revolution is worth anything unless it can defend itself" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 124). In the case of Nicaragua this means: first, to defend the revolution economically, in other words, to rehabilitate the devastated economy, to draw into its restoration the forces (including the patriotic bourgeoisie) that had taken part in overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship; second, to defend the revolution politically, i.e., to create the political guarantees for social changes, for consolidating the new power, and for the vanguard of the working people; third, to defend the revolution militarily, i.e., safeguard it against the armed provocation of internal and external reaction.

History has set many peoples analogous tasks. That these tasks are urgent in Nicaragua is noted by the keen observer even from a great distance. But direct contact with reality allows seeing common features in what is specific to each nation and how these tasks are being tackled under the concrete conditions of a given country.

The Economic Front

Opposite Government House in the center of Managua building workers were arguing angrily. I

asked what it was all about. The answers came thick and fast: wages were meager, many workmates had been discharged, and housing was not even promised.

Everywhere there were the cosmetically touched up traces of the 1972 earthquake that took a toll of 10,000 lives and destroyed a large part of the city. The gaping windows of a semi-demolished cathedral were covered with a huge portrait of Augusto Cesar Sandino, the national hero who led the people's rising against U.S. interventionists and their local flunkies at the close of the 1920s. It was his slogan "Freedom or Death!" and black-and-red banner that were adopted by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, under whose leadership victory was won two years ago.

That evening a Sandinista I had been introduced to commented on the street incident:

The grievances of these workers are justified. But what is one to do? The government does not have the means to satisfy all grievances at once. Some people do not appreciate this. They feel that since there has been a revolution there must be prosperity. All of us hope that that will come to pass. The building near which the workers had their meeting can be quickly restored from the battering it got from an elemental calamity. But it is quite a different matter to restore the economy of a country that Somoza pillaged and tyrannized for almost half a century with the blessing of the U.S. imperialists.

A bitter legacy was left to the revolutionary power from the former regime. This concerns not only the economy in the literal sense of the word. In only its last year of rule the Somoza dictatorship killed 50,000 people, crippled 160,000 and orphaned 40,000 children. For a population of two million this was a ghastly price. In the economy the losses were enormous. Hundreds of production facilities, communications and neighborhoods in many towns were levelled to the ground. One-third of the plantations growing basic agricultural crops were destroyed. The army of unemployed grew steeply and the food problem was aggravated to an incredi-

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ble extent. Judging from some key indices, at the time the revolution triumphed the nation had been thrown back to the 1962 level.

In order to defend the revolution economically the main thing the Sandinista National Liberation Front has to do is to provide jobs, food and housing. Their first tangible results are to be seen today. Most of the factories and plantations have been restored. Agricultural cooperatives uniting small and medium producers have been set up. More than 110,000 jobs have been created within a little over a year and this has halved unemployment. The inflation rate has dropped by more than 75 per cent.

The Sandinistas define the basic task today as "production and defense." A digression has to be made to give a clearer idea of this dual definition.

The Nicaraguan revolutionaries are seeking to develop a social structure that would satisfy the broadest sections of the population — where possible, all who had fought the Somoza tyranny. This is no easy task in view of the heterogeneity of class and political forces, which has now grown more marked.

This brings to mind words spoken by Georgi Dimitrov. In analyzing the civil war in Spain he said that a new power could be born in its crucible. Its aim would be not "to end private ownership once and for all," but it would nevertheless enforce sweeping reforms that would lead to the "organization of production with the participation and under the control of the working class and its allies." This type of power was regarded by Dimitrov as a phenomenon of the period of transition, as an advance toward the socialist stage of the revolution.

Something of the sort is to be observed in Nicaragua. The question of immediately expropriating and socializing capitalist property is not being raised. The state is still not strong enough economically to ensure the normal functioning of production. In the obtaining situation the enlistment of the local bourgeoisie, of the positive economic initiative of those of its groups that have no links to imperialist monopolies, is helping to promote the economy and improve the material condition of the masses. This is what is inducing the government to make the fullest use of the means and expertise of local entrepreneurs to develop the productive forces and, as far as possible, limit capital's exploitative tendencies and protect and extend the rights of the workers.

There are many small and middle entrepreneurs. The government encourages their activity and hopes

that the useful functions of small-scale industry will be maintained for a long time to come. Efficiently operating small facilities makes it possible to compensate for the difficulties of starting capital-intensive industries and ensure the output of basic commodities. And the most important thing is that they substantially increase employment.

The Sandinistas are inclined to let foreign capital into the country on the condition that its activity does not prejudice the nation's sovereignty and independent economic development. They are introducing rules for regulating foreign investments that allow receiving a profit and provide commercial incentives.

However, the revolutionary forces can establish their "rules of the game" and guarantee the observance of these rules only if they hold the command positions in the economy, i.e., possess real economic strength. The foundation for this exists in Nicaragua.

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A large public sector accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the nation's gross product has been formed on the basis of property expropriated from Somoza and his henchmen. Foreign trade, banking, insurance and natural resources are controlled by the government. Prior to visiting Nicaragua I met with Tomas Borge Martinez, the only surviving founder of the Sandinist National Liberation Front* and now the nation's Minister of Internal Affairs. In reply to my question about the possibilities for economic coexistence with the bourgeoisie, he said:

It is not so much a question of political coexistence as of an economy combining private, mixed and public property. With the consolidation of the revolution and the growth of the people's consciousness we shall extend public property without, however, aggravating relations with that section of the bourgeoisie that accepts revolutionary changes.

The idea of a tri-sector economy is appreciated by the small and medium entrepreneurs and is, on the whole, acceptable to the bourgeoisie. This is the foundation for social relations in Nicaragua and for organizing economic life. On the basis of these three

*The others lost their lives. They include Carlos Fonseca Amador, who was the acknowledged leader of the SNLF. New Nicaragua's only order bears his name.

forms of property the state participates in international economic relations.

Obviously the defense of the revolution on this front is not limited to property relations. It is vital to give the working people managerial expertise, to train managers and other economic executives. This is understood not only by the nation's leadership.

"You want to know what the workers think?" asked Alberto Alvarez and Rafael Santan, who head the Ronaldo Altamirano trade union at the San Antonio private sugar refinery, the largest in Central America. "Let's go and talk to them."

Our jeep jolted over the endless ruts along a wall consisting of two-meter-tall sugar cane. This is a typical plantation and is called Adela Nueva. We braked at tiny huts made of old boards and palm leaves. Each houses from 8 to 10 persons. There is neither electricity nor running water. Clothes are laundered at the refinery's drains.

I spoke to many of the workers and their collective reply may be summed up as follows: use should be made of all the potentialities of cooperation with the bourgeoisie, experience must be gained of managing the production facility, and those workers still siding with the owners should be weaned away from them.

This is not easy to do. Relatively recently the owners of the San Antonio facilities induced nearly 500 people to resign from the trade union by all sorts of promises and threats. They are opposed to extending workers' rights or allowing them to participate in decision-making concerning production. But pressure from below is getting them accustomed to the new developments. The first results are on hand — a more equitable collective bargaining agreement has been signed.

Cane cutter Nicolas Umana put it in a nutshell:

You've seen the conditions under which we live here. But we know that things can not be changed overnight. We are patient. But if the owners do not learn to respect the revolution and do not change their attitude to us, we'll say: Enough! And we'll have total workers' control. They tell us we don't have the expertise. But we say that we'll learn — faster than some people think.

These are the sentiments of the revolutionary masses. Of course, while the SNLF takes all this into account it is guided not by emotions but by sober political calculation. Its leaders are conscious opponents of artificially hastening the revolutionary

process.

The Sandinista slogans call for promoting production in order to defend the revolution and, at the same time, for understanding the difficulties and restricting demands (they do not engage, however, in hypocritical tub-thumping that recommends that only workers should tighten their belts). Nobody promises paradise tomorrow. The revolution does not need rosy illusions. It has already given the people what is most crucial, namely, a sense of dignity. This is a factor of great mobilizing power.

Lenin warned time and again that in the economy it is dangerous to hack and hew, that it needs stable conscious headway in production. In this sense cooperation with the bourgeoisie may prove to be constructive, although it not only does not reject but compounds the class struggle, spreading it to the economic field. When Lenin called upon the working people of Russia to compete with the bourgeoisie, he said: "The test is a crucial one... Either we pass this test in competition with private capital, or we fail completely" (CW, Vol. 33, p. 277).

In Nicaragua the private sector is itself interested in economic progress. There is practically no segment of society that has not been hit by the destructive effects of the civil war and by the impoverishment to which society was brought by the greed of the Somoza clan, by its barbarous treatment of the nation's economy. The bourgeoisie remaining in the country sees that the only way to improve its own economic condition is actively to join in economic life. This is reinforced by the fact that it is becoming convinced that it is the considered policy of the people's government to cooperate with small and medium entrepreneurs on the basis of a long-term program.

Of course, the terms and forms of this cooperation are a concrete question. What is seen as the ultimate prospect? For the Nicaraguan revolutionaries the ideal is not confrontation with private enterprise but its integration in the public system of economy. This drawing together and fusion can be achieved by constantly strengthening the public sector, improving the state's economic activity, and controlling the operation of private capital. These are key conditions for defending the revolution on the economic front.

Time is needed, of course, to adjust the relations between the forces taking part in the solution of this problem. Much depends on how the relations of the

SNLF shape up with other political groups and on whether the Sandinistas will be able to master the process discussed below.

Political Consolidation of the Revolution

In Managua and other towns there are eye-catching placards everywhere. A Sandinista placard reads: "Sandino yesterday, Sandino today, Sandino always!" In opposition to it there is a placard of the Social-Christian Party, declaring: "Christ yesterday, Christ today, Christ always!" "The Conservative Democratic Party is Nicaragua's only hope!" states yet another placard. Near it a voice insinuates: "Nicaragua needs God, order and justice." There are many placards with appeals from the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement, which is the most militant political organization of the reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie.

This placard polemic is striking evidence of the pluralism that the SNLF guarantees in politics. Only the Somoza supporters are denied free expression of their views. The new power seeks to keep all public activity within the framework of the law and achieve political stability, without which there can be no radical changes. To defend the revolution politically means to cut short the activities of the counter-revolutionaries, neutralize the Right-wing bourgeois parties, win the healthy forces, unite the Left-wing groups and, above all, set up a close-knit political vanguard of the people on the basis of the SNLF. The complexity of consolidating the revolution on this front lies in the extremely wide spectrum of forces that helped to depose Somoza—from bourgeois conservatives to Left-wing movements.

The Right-wing parties have taken the new realities into account. After a short period of confusion caused by a climax they had not anticipated*—the Sandinista victory—they steered a course toward splitting the popular movement and spreading anti-government feeling in the country. The revolution's adversaries are misrepresenting the government's decisions and trying to sabotage their fulfillment. They have brought reaction's tested weapon into the battle—social demagoguery, which still finds a response among politically unconscious sections of the population.

*Until very recently they hoped to preserve the existing system without, of course, Somoza and his clan, who had, in many cases, kept an iron grip on the bourgeoisie itself.

Using the experience of the Chilean putschists, the Nicaraguan reactionaries are hypocritically posing as champions of small and medium entrepreneurs and—under that cover—are seeking to keep the foundations of exploitation intact, asserting that private property is the basis of democracy. They intimidate the bourgeoisie by saying that there is a threat of "economic totalitarianism" and the establishment of a "Communist regime." This tactic has all the earmarks of an attempt to take revenge and, if that fails, to steer the process now under way into the channel of bourgeois reformism.

They do not stop at provocations and sabotage. To illustrate, I heard many complaints against officials of some ministries (lack of attention while concerning themselves with extraneous matters) and against doctors (who would write prescriptions for unavailable medicines and when the patient returned they would say that this was not the case before).

Moises Hassan, coordinator of the State Council, spoke of this in a television program entitled "Facing the People":

The revolution has been magnanimous to many Somoza people and irresponsible and corrupt elements. It has given them the chance to earn a pardon by honest work. But some of them evidently see our generosity as weakness and try to use it for counter-revolutionary purposes. They calculate that a person offended by something, for example, mistreatment by a specialist, will think that this is what the revolution is all about.

Reactionary bourgeois groupings, notably the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement, the Conservative Democratic Party and the Social-Christian Party, have lately begun to coordinate their activities on a growing scale. Evidence of this is their joint statement on the nation's basic problems and their boycott of the State Council, the nation's highest organ of power. Backed up by large financial resources, relying on foreign assistance and utilizing the mass media, they are telling the people that the nation is on the brink of catastrophe and are trying to sow distrust for the SNLF and discredit its policy of national unity.

The Sandinista policy toward the bourgeois parties is clear-cut: on the one hand, it gives no quarter to conspirators in their ranks and, on the other, it keeps the activities of these parties within the frame-

work of the law and seeks a dialogue with sober-minded personalities. This policy is yielding results. Last April, pressured by public opinion, the Right-wing forces had to agree to negotiations with the SNLF and concede that today it is vital to prevent foreign armed intervention. Time will show whether this is just another ploy.

One of these personalities, member of the Executive Committee of the Conservative Democratic Party R. Cordoba Rivas, who is a member of the government Leadership Council, stated the motivations behind his stand, saying: "If we are to be a tangible political force we can not close our eyes to the changes taking place in the nation and in Central America as a whole. We can not box ourselves up in disagreement with the SNLF. We must strengthen national unity."

This view is shared by others. In Nicaragua there are bourgeois political groups that understand and accept the fact that the revolutionary process is irreversible. These include the Independent Liberal Party and the People's Social Christian Party. They were among the first to join the Patriotic Front of the Revolution set up a year ago under the leadership of the SNLF. These are not the only parties that speak of the need for radical changes in the country. Their posture is most eloquent evidence of the profound ideological change that has taken place among the petty bourgeoisie. This gives a further stimulus to the political defense of the revolution.

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The Patriotic Front has been joined also by some Left-wing organizations. Its constituent manifesto proclaims the defense, consolidation and development of the revolution as the principal task. All the parties that signed this document recognize the vanguard role of the SNLF in the revolutionary process.

The Sandinistas themselves realize that the earlier they turn their military-political movement into a party, the sooner will the revolution be consolidated politically. As yet the SNLF lacks a precise structure and a smooth interaction among its various links. Integration,* however, is possible only for those who ideologically see themselves as a close-knit body and soberly assess the prospects for and aims of the struggle. A lucid political and ideological program is of great importance in this process. These problems

*This is precisely how the question is formulated by the SNLF.

have long had the attention of the most politically conscious members and leadership of the SNLF.

"During the war against the tyranny," said Tomas Borge Martinez, "our Front acquired considerable experience of guerilla and insurgent warfare. After victory we have been engaged mainly in state construction. Today, however, we are faced with the acute problem of laying the foundations of a working people's political organization that would have a scientific foundation, understand its leading role in society, and have a high morale and a clear political strategy. The main thing is to build the party solidly. Of course, this is not easy because all of us lack political training and experience of organization."

Commandante Marxos Somarriba, one of the SNLF leaders, spoke of how these plans are being put into effect.

"The first steps toward turning the SNLF into a party have already been taken," he said. "The Sandinista Assembly, a democratic consultative body consisting of 67 Front leaders and militants, was formed a year ago. This Assembly has been charged with drawing up the future party's program and rules. At its sessions it considers key issues of foreign policy, the economy, the defense of the revolution, organizational work among the people, and the education and training of cadre. Moreover, the SNLF National Leadership now has a Political Commission. The formation of a party structure has commenced. Leading committees of the Front are functioning in all of the nation's 16 departments.

To a large or lesser degree the representatives of Left-wing parties whom I met in Managua realize that there must be close organizational cohesion among all the revolutionary forces. But in some cases the impediment is personal ambition or an "underestimation of the Sandinistas' ideological and political capabilities," to quote Alvaro Ramirez, former leader of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party. (At the close of last year it merged with the SNLF.) Disagreements among Left-wingers who had been members of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party or its youth branch compound the burden of the past. Those who at the time adhered to different orientations do not find it easy to be above "momentary truth" and look somewhat farther ahead. But life, chiefly the stepped-up activity of internal and external reaction, insistently demands the formation of a united vanguard of the revolution.

The Sandinistas do not regard other Left-wing forces as chance fellow travellers. Developments and the need for defending the revolution politically constantly pose revolutionaries with new tasks that inevitably stem from any, even a short, advance. Practice itself introduces corrections into political programs. Upon joining in the process of social changes, people and organizations abide by its objective laws. Parties and groups, and also those of their members and leaders who try to go against the logic of history, lag behind or are swept away in the course of the revolution. The Sandinistas do not consider that truth belongs to them from the first step to the last. They are prepared to understand the exigencies of each moment, and are conscious of the fact that the revolution will teach them. Their allies in the struggle will learn together with them, while the sincere striving for truth will lead not to division but to greater unity.

Under conditions of political pluralism it is, of course, inconceivable to form a vanguard party without a struggle for the masses, without enlarging the social base of the revolution. And here there has been progress. In Managua, where it is sometimes hard to find one office or another, anybody will tell you the address of the National Leadership of the Sandinista Defense Committees (SDC). The doors of its headquarters in a one story building are hardly ever closed. People go there with questions, offers of assistance and suggestions. Among these very many are young people. Patricia Roco, the SDC general secretary, is also young.

"Our organization," she said, "was formed a year before the revolution on the initiative of the SNLF and the parties that joined in the struggle against the tyranny. At the time it was called the Civil Defense Committees and its job was to mobilize the people against the dictatorship. Committees were set up where the revolutionary struggle was most acute. These provided the guerrillas with people possessing essential professions such as gunsmiths, paramedics and cooks, and taught the population how to protect itself from bombing and shelling. Many of our comrades took a direct part in the fighting. Of course, after the victory there was a change in the functions of the committees. They now have nearly half a million members and more than 15,000 locals. These explain the aims of the revolution and tasks of the economy to the people and make sure that the decrees of the government and the resolu-

tions of the Sandinista Front are carried out. Our chief task is to defend the revolution and for this we are prepared to give our lives."

"These committees," added Veronica Roliga, the SDC secretary for international relations, "have become a bulwark of the forces laying the groundwork for the formation of a vanguard party of the revolution. For enemies they are a sore in the eye. There have been cases of our activists being assassinated.* But it's not so easy to frighten us. If you want to meet our people I would suggest you go to the assembly of the local committees of the central district of Managua."

Some 30 persons gathered in an airy one-story school building. These were coordinators of local organizations. The sitting began with the singing of the national and the Sandinista anthems. Then they got down to the agenda, discussing the question of adjusting the committees to the new situation. It was important to explain to people the SNLF policy toward the bourgeoisie, what was causing shortcomings in the work of some state agencies, and why there had to be a united vanguard force of the revolution. In short, this was a businesslike and frank discussion permeated with a sense of responsibility for the nation's future.

The Sandinistas foster a spirit of unity and cohesion also in other mass organizations, the trade unions in the first place. There is now a Sandinista Trade Union representing more than 220,000 people; moreover there is a Trade Union Coordinating Committee with nine large trade unions affiliated to it. In this way the mass base of the revolution's political defense is being enlarged.

The efforts of the Sandinistas in the economic and political fields are creating the foundation for the successful fulfillment of the third task, namely, the organization of armed resistance to reaction. The tragic experience of Chile has reaffirmed the Marxist-Leninist proposition that this is one of the key conditions for the revolution's progress and the fulfillment of its creative plans. In the struggle for its assertion, the new system relies on:

*The reactionary media are constantly attacking the SDC. In some cases these are nothing less than provocations. For instance, on December 21, 1980, the newspaper *La Prensa* wrote that a census questionnaire was being circulated in one of the capital's districts and alleged that "filling it in is tantamount to joining the SDC and pledging political support for the Sandinistas." This transparent lie only raises a smile. But there are people who hope that slander "will take root" and injure the revolution.

The Strength of the Armed People

In the course of the long guerrilla war the SNLF set up a small but effective military apparatus. This allowed forming a new type of army quickly.

"You should have seen our troops during the initial days after the revolution," said a Sandinista officer. "It would be hard to recognize our present-day soldiers in the variously dressed, unshaved and long-haired guerrillas. Today the vast majority are soldiers in the true sense of the word — smart and disciplined."

The constant danger of attack from without made it imperative to accomplish within months what usually takes years. The people's army is steadily growing stronger in continuous training and in almost daily clashes with Somoza terrorists infiltrating from neighboring Honduras. But is it strong enough to repulse aggression?

"Singlehanded, the army can not ensure the country's defense," said Commandante Dora Maria Tellez. "It is not our intention to have the largest armed forces in Central America. We can make our country secure against an external threat in another way, by calling upon the entire people to rise in its defense."

Last February it was decided to form a mass home guard, the Sandinista People's Militia. The most popular catch-phrase today is: "Every conscious Nicaraguan is a member of the SPM." Age is no obstacle. In one of the battalions I was introduced to 70-year-old Julian Canales (he had been with Sandino in the 1930s) and his 13-year-old son Marcos. Both are quite skilled in the use of weapons. I asked them what made them join the militia. The former replied that he had no intention of dropping behind his 25 children, all of whom are dedicated Sandinistas, and that the soldiers of the revolution had to be aided; the latter declared that he wanted to help the revolution.

In itself, this is an outstanding fact—a large family had become soldiers. But this unity of generations is characteristic of the spirit of the revolutionary fighters—working people of all ages are ready to defend the revolution against its enemies.

"In Nicaragua today," said Humberto Ortega Saavedra, member of the SNLF National Leadership and minister of defense, "there is an integral organization that embraces the army, the people's militia, the security forces and the police. Within the space of a little over a year they have, by com-

mon effort, uncovered and liquidated more than 30 gangs of counter-revolutionaries and criminals, and brought to light several conspiracies. Many faithful fighters died in the discharge of their duty."

Ortega did not accidentally name the security forces after the army and the people's militia. They play an extraordinarily large role in a situation marked by constant enemy provocations. These forces are headed by Commandante Serna.

"In our work we depend entirely upon assistance from the people. Our hands are clean and, where possible, we give our work publicity. The Sandinistas hold open trials, the most important of which are broadcast live on radio and television. The accused are told that their sentence depends not only on the gravity of the crime they have committed but also on whether they are still hostile to the revolution or are sincerely repentant. Members of the press, the judiciary and the public can interview prisoners on the fourth or fifth day after they are arrested and see for themselves that no physical violence has been used against them. The principal aim of this complex work is to reshape the people's attitude to the security forces. Let decent people respect, not fear, us. Let the enemy, the enemy alone, be afraid of us.

"The revolution's magnanimity," Serna notes, "is a very sensitive weapon. There are cases when we do not agree to the release of one criminal or another, but we never forget that the security forces are no more than a political instrument of the revolution's leadership. More than 500 former Somoza guardsmen were amnestied recently. Some for reasons of health, others on account of their advanced age, and still others for various valid reasons. Of course, most of the released are not particularly dangerous. Nonetheless, some may be drawn into conspiracies. But we take the risk deliberately, for by sacrificing operational interests we benefit politically."

The revolution makes it clear that it does not seek to wreak vengeance, that it is guided by lofty humanism. It extends its hands to those who have stumbled and even committed a crime, for it believes in people.

The Sandinista police operate in close cooperation with the security forces. Its chief, Rene Vivas Ludo,* spoke of the problems that had to be tackled after the victory over the Somoza regime.

*He is now deputy minister of the interior.

"Apart from organizing the service itself, it proved to be a very intricate matter to delineate the functions of the security forces and the police. It is sometimes hard to distinguish criminals from counter-revolutionaries. All are killers and brigands. On the other hand, there was our lack of experience, because recruits for the police were former guerrillas and underground workers. Mistakes in the initial period were therefore natural and easily explained. But we have learned and rapidly restructured our work. The Sandinista police are now fighting crime, particularly 'new' crime, much more effectively."

Seeing that the word "new" puzzled us, Vivas explained:

"Take the situation that obtained under Somoza. The law was flouted in everything, beginning with traffic rules and ending with vendetta killing. Corruption and blackmail were rife. Innocent people were taken into custody on any pretext and held for ransom. But criminals were set free—it was enough to give a bribe to a police officer, a prison warden, or a judge. Some vices of the past are so deep-rooted that they are not condemned morally. For instance, contraband was always regarded as harmless. When we began fighting it, we had to deal not only with hardened criminals but also with ordinary citizens who simply could not understand why people were punished for 'trivial' offenses. I believe that the main damage done by the dictatorship to the people was the moral corruption of part of the nation. The consequences of this corruption are now called the 'new' criminality. We regard the struggle against it a matter for the whole nation."

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For the political and economic predominance of U.S. imperialism in Latin America, the revolution in Nicaragua was the most staggering blow since the victory of the Cuban people. The Nicaraguan people want nothing so much as peace and normal relations with all countries, including the USA. Even a single visit to Nicaragua will quickly make it obvious that Washington's charges against the SNLF are both false and irresponsible. "They do not surprise anybody," said J. Alanisa, the Nicaraguan representative on the UN Human Rights Commission. "As soon as an oppressed people rises anywhere in the world, the USA raises a hue and cry about foreign interference, international terrorism and other sins."

On the pretext of preventing the spread of the Communist epidemic in the region, the USA is speeding its preparations to destroy the Sandinista revolution. Armed units are being trained in the mountainous areas of Honduras for an invasion of Nicaragua. These are being reinforced with mercenaries from Miami and Guatemala. The counter-revolutionary gangs consist of thousands of thugs and these are only waiting for Washington to give them the green light.

Honduran newspapers carried a paid report to the effect that a certain J. Carlos, calling himself the commander of the "liberation army of Nicaragua," was pledged to overthrow the Sandinistas and establish a "democratic, republican system." This "army" acts in close cooperation with another organization calling itself the Nicaraguan Democratic Union. It is headed by J. Cardenal, who until recently represented the private sector in the State Council of Nicaragua. He speaks openly of his sympathies for the Somoza supporters and of his readiness to help anybody starting a rising in the country. Reaction is seeking to rally its forces. JRN, the Honduran radio station, goes so far as to call for a united front against the "Sandinista plague."

The Nicaraguan people reply to these threats by closing ranks, heightening vigilance and joining the people's militia *en masse*. They have the support of all the forces of progress and peace. Reaction will not catch the revolution napping. Despite difficulties it is strengthening its ranks and has learned and is prepared to defend itself militarily as well.

There are many problems in Nicaragua. Its achievements are unquestionable and the difficulties are obvious. When one acquaints oneself with the country one clearly sees what is paramount.

The revolution will be able to defend itself economically only by broadening the foundations of the new power, deepening democracy, extending the people's participation in the management of public affairs and utilizing the positive activities of all the patriotic forces.

The revolution will be able to defend itself politically only by forming a close-knit vanguard and rallying around it all the supporters of social changes.

The revolution will erect an armed barrier to reaction and imperialist aggressors only by strengthening the army and the people's militia and relying on international solidarity.

BOOK ENDS

Roots of Oppression: The American Indian Question

JOHN PITTMAN

Roots of Oppression: The American Indian Question by Steve Talbot. International Publishers, New York, 1981. 215 pages. Cloth, \$14, paper, \$4.75.

In *Roots of Oppression: The American Indian Question*, Professor Steve Talbot offers explanations and suggests solutions for a number of questions confronting all Americans.

The book's factual content alone, if conveyed to the younger and upcoming generations of Americans, would help to lay the ideological basis for a deep-going democratic renewal. The liberation of Native Americans is a profoundly democratic goal. But among authorities on Native Americans, official and unofficial, Indian and non-Indian, there is agreement that one major obstacle to the attainment of that goal is the absence of fundamental information and understanding about Native Americans among other Americans. This fact is emphasized in the final report of the Congress-mandated American Indian Policy Review Commission after two years of investigation and study. The report, issued in 1977, said: "One of the greatest obstacles faced by the Indian today in his drive for self-determination and a place in this nation is the American public's ignorance of the historical relationship of the United

States with Indian tribes and the lack of general awareness of the status of the American Indian in our society today."

The historical relationship of the United States with Indian tribes and the status of the American Indian in U.S. society today form the substance of Professor Talbot's work. The uniqueness of the American Indian question unfolds in the book's detailed evidence. And the essence of this uniqueness is the recognition by the United States of the sovereignty of Native American nations, nationalities, peoples and tribes, their recognition as sovereign political entities, possessing all the rights, powers and privileges of any sovereign state, including the right of self-determination. That is the special relationship, the special political relationship incorporated in some 400 treaties, approximately 5,000 statutes and an entire body of court decisions and Indian law. However, although the treaties are the cornerstone of Indian law, executive, legislative and judicial interpretations handed down during the two centuries of United States existence have reflected changes in ruling-class policy which resulted in imposing limitations of the sovereignty of Native American nationalities and tribes.

Talbot describes how the sovereignty of Native American nationalities and tribes was first limited to sovereignty over internal tribal matters. But even this limited sovereignty was gradually eroded as Congress assumed plenary, or absolute, powers over Native American

nationalities, such as the power at any time to qualify their sovereignty by modifying or whittling away the rights and powers inherent in sovereignty. This undermined the special relationship. And Congress, together with the executive departments, became the chief instruments with which U.S. ruling circles implemented their policies of genocide, ethnocide and the seizure, by force and by fraud, of the Native American land base.

It is important to note especially that the undermining of Native American sovereignty opened the door to the massive theft of their land base by non-Indian corporate and individual private interests. This process of stealing the Native Americans' land and its resources continues at the present time with the active assistance of the U.S. government. As Talbot says—

Transnational oil corporations have seized the oil treasure belonging to the Alaskan Eskimos; timber companies have expropriated Klamath and Menominee forests; corporate farmers and ranchers have tied up millions of acres of land belonging to the impoverished Plains Indians; giant concerns affiliated with copper and oil multinationals intend to strip-mine at cheap rates huge portions of the Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Hopi reservations and the Navajo Nation; electric power utilities in league with agricultural interests and the government itself are stealing Indian water... The U.S. government thus betrays its trust responsibility for Native American lands and resources. In fact, the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs), along with the agencies of Reclamation, Mines, Commercial Fisheries, Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, and more recently, the Department of Energy, do not act in

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the Native American interest in land, resource and water transactions, but rather in the interest of the corporations and multinationals to whom they are in fact beholden. (Page 10.)

This situation helps us to understand why Native American leadership today places such stress on the restoration of treaty rights, that is, on the preservation of the rights and powers of sovereign political entities, including the right of self-determination. Although the Indian movement mobilizes for struggle around demands for their land base, for the development of their own culture, and for the right to govern themselves, it is the struggle for self-government which they view as the key right of sovereignty.

• • •

"Indian self-government is seen as the means by which the dispossession can be halted and a beginning made toward restoring economic viability to the reservation, the means also by which racism and impoverishment can be dealt with more effectively," says Talbot (page 72). So that the present strategy of the movement is directed against national oppression above all, although implicit in this strategy is the struggle against dispossession and impoverishment.

The author views the Native American struggle for self-government and all other rights and powers inherent in the right of self-determination as many related national struggles. Much of his elucidation of the national aspect of the American Indian question will be seen to be applicable not only to the 1.4 million Native Americans (1980 Census), but also to the 3.5 million Americans of Asian and Pacific Island origin, the 14.6 million Americans of Spanish descent and Spanish-language affiliation, and the 26.5 million Americans of African descent.

All these Americans, approximately one-fifth of the U.S. population of 227 million, are subjected to subordination and exploitation irrespective of class status. Among them, of course, workers

and their families suffer class exploitation as well, and suffer it more intensely than other social layers. Yet it is the deprivation of rights and privileges enjoyed by the population's majority, the unequal treatment accorded all members of these ethnic groups, regardless of whether they are well-off or impoverished, whether employers or workers, which makes clear the fact of their national oppression. And this oppression is intensified by the added dimension of racism, one of the most inhuman and reactionary forms of national oppression and chauvinism.

However, the conditions and status in U.S. society today of no other ethnic component of the population subjected to national and racial oppression so incontrovertibly exposes the empty formalism of U.S. capitalism's promises of freedom, equality and democracy as do those of Native Americans. And not only because, as the report of the government's American Indian Policy Review Commission said—

From the standpoint of personal well-being, the Indian of America ranks at the bottom of virtually every social statistical indicator. On the average he has the highest infant mortality rate, the lowest longevity rate, the lowest level of educational attainment, the lowest per capita income and the poorest housing and transportation in the land. (Vol. 1, page 7.)

Besides these manifestations of discriminatory treatment, such data also prove the United States' betrayal of its trust premised on the doctrine that "in appropriating to ourselves their territories we have brought upon ourselves the obligation of providing them with subsistence." As explained in the final report to the American Indian Policy Review Commission of its Task Force One: Trust Responsibilities,

The principles of law adhered to during the entire treaty-making period required that lands should not be taken from the Indian people to the extent that tribes would be left without the resources for their liveli-

hoods and their economic, institutional and other community needs. In diminishing the capacity of the Indian tribes below their ability to maintain their societal obligations to themselves in providing for the health, education, welfare, and economic advancement of the various communities, the United States became duty bound, upon its own declared premises, to substitute its means and assurances to satisfy that capacity with an equivalency of present and future resources and aid. (Page 3.)

In 1975 Congress gave legal sanction to the Native American struggle for self-government with enactment of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. If administered and implemented even in conformity with the liberal capitalist understanding of the right of self-determination, this Act would mean a restoration and renewal of the special relationship between the United States and the more than 400 nationalities and tribes of Native Americans.

It would mean real self-government, the restoration of their land base and the assistance, including the funding, of the development of their resources and their culture for the 289 Native American nationalities and tribes who live on 268 reservations in 26 states, on 24 state reservations, in 219 Alaskan villages or reservations. However, if present-day developments indicate the effectiveness of the government's implementation of the self-determination law, the struggle to realize its promise is just beginning. Since the Act's enactment, further restrictions on Native American sovereignty have been made, the theft of Indian land and resources is continuing, and far from acting to promote Indian economic and cultural development, the Reagan government has acted to slash the funding for Native American programs.

• • •

November 24-30 of 1980 in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, the Fourth Russell Tribunal on the Rights of In-

dians of the Americas heard charges from a number of Native American nationalities. The charges provide evidence of the gap between the United States promise and its performance in relation to the right of self-determination for Native Americans. Directed to an international tribunal, the charges evoked unfavorable contrasts of the United States behavior on this question with the record of the countries of existing socialism, particularly that of the Soviet Union with its comparable number and diversity of nationalities formerly subjected to national oppression before the October Russian Revolution in 1917.

Among the charges of Native Americans were those of the Hotevilla Hopi asserting that the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 had foisted tribal governments on that nationality

in violation of their right of self-determination; the Lakota Treaty Council, also claiming violation of their independence and right of self-determination; the Indian Law Resource Center's general case concerning the violation of the land rights of the Iroquois, Lakota, Hopi, Seminoles (Florida) and Shoshones (Nevada); the Iroquois Confederacy charging violations of treaty rights and theft of lands; the Indian Law Resource Center for the Ganienkheh Mohawk Community, concerning violations of treaty and land rights.

Despite the absence of progress in implementing the Self-Determination Act, Professor Talbot inclines toward a positive view of its future. He stresses the continuity between the Indians' resistance in the past and that of today. If that resistance to genocidal efforts in

the past compelled the United States to negotiate treaties with the Native Americans, today's struggles of the Indian movement deserve the main credit for whatever progress has been made. That the Indian Self-determination and Education Assistance Act was enacted in 1975 was not unrelated to the 1968 blockade of the international bridge at St. Regis by the Mohawks to protest violation of their treaty; the 1969 takeover of Alcatraz; the Broken Treaties Caravan of 1972 with its occupation of the BIA offices and its program of 20 points; the 1973 demonstration on the Pine Ridge Reservation of South Dakota. Talbot sees a heightening of Native American struggles in alliance with the struggles of the working class and other oppressed minorities as the key to Native Americans' liberation.

Brezhnev on Peace

Continued from page 8

verification no less than the U.S.—and maybe even more.

But in the U.S., plans of various kinds are being discussed in all seriousness for concealing intercontinental missiles more thoroughly and excluding them from verification by the other side's technical means.

Not in the Soviet Union, but in the U.S., scenarios for a surprise pre-emptive nuclear strike are being rehearsed.

Our position is to abstain from a nuclear first strike. We, just like the U.S., have experience with

verification of the SALT I agreements. We are convinced that each side's own means guarantee the necessary verification.

The effectiveness of these means of observation, including space technology, is continually being improved so that the applicability of national means is increasing. The American Administration certainly knows this. But if mutual trust is achieved, other forms of verification can also be developed. But in any case, national means of verification have to have priority for they correspond better to the security interests of each side.

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