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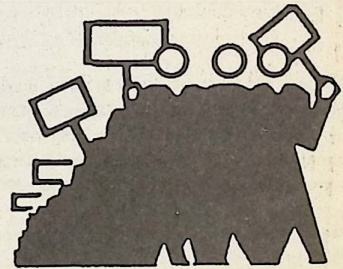
LABOR SAYS

NO



To The Gingrich "Contract"

YES



To The Union Contract

- ▣ Little Steel Strike - Hall
- ▣ New York Fight Back - Bachtell
- ▣ 50th Anniversary of WW II - West
- ▣ West Coast Strike Victory - Bechtel
- ▣ Thoughts on Socialism's Crisis - CP Greece



Political Affairs

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The Little Steel Strike & History's Class Struggle Lessons

Gus Hall

It is always easier to speak about history if one has in some way been a part of making history.

Let me tell you how it all started for me. One of ten brothers and sisters, I went to work at 15 in the lumber camps and iron mines. In my early twenties I left my home in Minnesota to make my way to the West Virginia coal mines.

Before I knew it I was fully involved in the struggles of Youngstown. And they were everywhere – the unemployed, the youth, the Black community, steelworkers – everyone was in struggle, demonstrating and marching.

In my case, I was fired from both the Truscan and Briar Hill plants of Youngstown Sheet and Tube. My father was not only fired but blacklisted by the same corporations. After 40 years on the blacklist he went back to work during the Second World War – after many, many lean and terrible years for the Halberg family. It was the class struggle that shaped and nourished our family tree.

Mine is the story of how a young lumberjack and ironworker named Arvo Gus Halberg stopped to visit friends in Youngstown and stayed and became a steelworker, a SWOC organizer, a strike captain and Gus Hall.

As I said, I had already been fired by the Briar Hill plant of Youngstown Sheet and Tube when I went to the Truscan steel plant to check it out. When I got there 200 men were lined up for jobs. Below the hill where we stood there was a long hourglass building where the company men did the hiring.

I was there only a few minutes when one of the bosses pointed his finger at me and motioned me to come in. I knew that meant a job offer.

Slowly, I walked down the hill, making some quick decisions on the way. One was whether to say I had experience. But more important, I knew that if I gave my real name, Arvo Gus Halberg, I would not last a day, because I was already known as a "trouble maker."

I made up my mind to try for the job and in desperation – just as I got to the company hiring hall – I

decided to cut both ends of my name and use what was left – Gus Hall. Well, I was hired.

Next morning, when I entered the department I was assigned to, I realized immediately why I was hired so quickly. Everyone in my department weighed 200 pounds or more. The job required lifting heavy pieces of steel. So, naturally, they were hiring only big strong men for that department.

Years later in Leavenworth (where I was serving eight years for the McCarthyite crime of "thinking") and other city and county prisons (where I served time for union activities), I thought a lot about that first steel job of mine.

The job was to weld the structure for rows of prison gates, the gates inside of prisons. I always looked for the gates I welded, but never did spot any of mine.

So, from my vantage point as a SWOC organizer, how did the "Little Steel" strike begin? It has always been the case that the corporations set the nature of struggles and strikes. This time it was Tom Girdler of Republic Steel who publicly declared that he nor the company would ever sign any kind of agreement with a union and immediately started to set up a network of scab workers.

And it has always been that most of the newspapers, most of the government officials, including local officials, and most of the sheriffs and police chiefs were anti-union, corporate stooges.

This set the stage for the militant class actions that took place. Thus, it was in response to a corporate declaration of war and the threat of replacing workers with scabs that led to the strike action.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF STRIKE: CLASS STRUGGLE ▣

There are many factors that influence labor history, in fact all history. It is important to take note of as many of them as possible when writing history, but one most always keep in mind they are secondary. Secondary factors influence, but do not determine the basic course of history.

To speak about our history and the history of the steel industry one has to talk about the basic nature of our capitalist system. It is this that has determined the nature of all struggles.

Gus Hall is the National Chairman of the CPUSA. Delivered at the Youngstown Museum of Labor and Industry on June 22, 1995.

The most basic characteristic is that capitalist society is divided into two basic, antagonistic and opposite classes.

The historic anti-working class, anti-union, anti-labor policies of the corporations were not then and are not today determined by secondary factors.

In the interest of historic truth, one cannot evade the primary fact that one class owns the industries and runs them for private profit. As a result they get rich. And their billions are all produced by the workers, who get poorer. The opposing class is the working class that is exploited by the corporations.

Thus, most everything is in one way or another related to the struggle between the two opposing classes. All struggles, all union organizing efforts are related to this class war, this basic fact of life under capitalism.

The struggle between labor and capital is inherent in the capitalist system. It is the sharpest manifestation of capitalism's most basic inherent contradiction. It is this basic, built-in flaw that is the grave digger of capitalism.

Whether one rejects or accepts this basic truth about capitalism is not simply of abstract philosophical importance. In a very basic sense it determines one's attitude to every day trade union struggles and almost every contemporary issue.

As is done every day, one can try to cover up or dismiss this class struggle by pointing to "joint partnerships," "labor-management teams," "profit-sharing, community-corporate ownership."

In the old days it was the "one big happy family" illusion. These denials led to the concept of collaboration between classes, that the class struggle is outmoded or dead. But the truth will out, and with it the class struggle.

It was the corporate ruling class, its stooges, its media and politicians-for-hire that fought the unions. And it is still the class of much bigger, much greedier industrial-financial multinationals that use all the formidable firepower at their disposal, including the political structure and the state, to prevent, to co-opt, to break unions.

And although they have succeeded in efforts at class collaboration, opportunism, anti-union laws and strikebreaking the trade union movement survives and remains the leading, progressive, most militant, most organized force for advancing the needs and interests of the whole working class, the oppressed and poor.

Today there are some new difficulties for the

trade union movement because we now have a majority anti-union, anti-working class, pro-corporate U.S. Congress. And, an anti-union, pro-corporate, anti-affirmative action right-wing Supreme Court majority.

However, when the point of reference is history, there is no doubt history is on the side of labor in its epic struggle. Progressively the working class gathers a consciousness and strength. The weight shifts against the monopolies.

But as is the case with all phenomena, within this longer-range process periodically there develop pressures that can result in either ebbs or flows in the struggle. These pressures feed either offensive advances or they can become a drag and thereby force periods of defensive struggles.

For U.S. labor, the period of 1937-45 was a span of offensive victories. In the ebb and flow of struggles and movements, it was a period of flow. It changed the economic, political and ideological fabric of the United States.

A very important result of these victories was the organizing of the steel union and the mass production industries.

Which came first is difficult to determine, the new level of Black-white working-class unity, or the unionization of the mass production industries. Because they are such closely interrelated processes one could not have taken place without the other. They were two parts of one process. Taken together the two processes gave the working class and the trade unions a new dimension of strength. It was more than class unity. It was a process of class integration. This process became an important feature of the period of advance for the U.S. working class.

Today, the negative balance of power in the favor of the multinationals has to be challenged by the anger, the militant strikes and struggles of the workers and their unions across this great land of ours.

This period, too, can be one of flow and victories for the working class in the never-ending struggle between the two contending classes – because history is on *our* side.

GREAT STEEL STRIKE ■ Let me give you some of the historic background of one of the greatest strikes in U.S. labor history.

It all began with the 1918 AFL convention that unanimously adopted a resolution to organize steelworkers. It set up the National Committee for Orga-

nizing Iron and Steel Workers that embraced some two dozen cooperating AFL unions, with a membership of about two million workers.

William Z. Foster, who introduced the resolution, became the secretary-treasurer of the organizing committee and the key figure from the first day of the drive.

It was an excellent moment for this drive because the First World War provided a golden opportunity for speedy organization of the steelworkers on a national scale. Uninterrupted steel production was imperative for war production. Steel company profits were at a new high level and the companies strove to avoid a stoppage.

The committee had to do battle with two key defeatist ideas:

- that it was impossible to organize workers in the basic, mass production industries; and
- the propaganda of the invincibility of big business and the steel barons.

Because of careful campaign planning – ideological, organizational and political – 250,000 steelworkers joined the union in the face of terror tactics, intimidation, murder, spying and mass firings.

After approximately one year, on September 22, 1919, 365,000 steelworkers went out on strike for:

- the right of collective bargaining;
- reinstatement of men discharged for union activities;
- the 8-hour day, 6-day week and abolition of 24-hour shifts;
- an increase in wages;
- double pay for overtime and Sunday work;
- the check-off;
- seniority rights in hiring and firing;
- abolition of company unions;
- abolition of physical examination of applicants for jobs.

The steel trust used every trick in the book against the steelworkers, who conducted a strike twice as big as any preceding one in the history of the country. It was a strike that was directed against the most powerful corporations in the land.

The steel towns were turned into armed camps as the federal, state and city governments went all-out against the strikers. The bosses used machine guns on the workers.

The reign of terror gradually broke the back of the strike and after four months the organizing committee called off the strike while at the same time calling for “a vigorous campaign of education and

reorganization until industrial justice has been achieved in the steel industry.”

This campaign set the stage for the next 17 years leading to the “Little Steel” strikes.

Foster’s book, *The Great Steel Strike*, showed that for tens of thousands of workers the strike was an eye opener about capitalism and the class struggle. It became a handbook of progressive trade unionism for a long time afterward.

Although the vicious terrorism set loose by the steel barons, by the police and troops succeeded in crushing the strike, the organizing campaign and the direction of the steel strike marked a great advance in trade union tactics and militancy.

One of the big lessons was that only industrial unionism, based on nationwide, simultaneous organization in all plants and on the organization of unskilled and semi-skilled, as well as skilled workers, Black and white, can do the necessary job of organizing the steelworkers in the United States and leading them in militant struggles for their needs and interests.

In his conclusion of the Great Steel Strike study, Foster showed that the steel strike was anything but a “lost” struggle. He said,

No strike is ever wholly lost. The steel strike has done more than serve as a warning that the limit of exploitation has been reached. It has given steelworkers a confidence in their ability to organize and to fight effectively, which will eventually inspire them to victory.

Well, “Little Steel” and history has fully confirmed these farsighted words. The “theory of the invincibility” of the monopolies against unionism was destroyed forever.

HISTORY’S LESSONS ■ The lessons of the Great Steel and Little Steel strikes have remained with the working class to this day, influencing all subsequent struggles of steelworkers.

The workers gained confidence in their united power. Workers became more conscious of themselves as an exploited class struggling for a better life. It gained a deeper understanding of the class struggle. These precious results were well worth all the hardships the strikes cost the steelworkers.

And, materially, the strike won abolition of the 12-hour day. But as soon as the steel barons gave this concession they immediately moved to speedup and mechanize the industry that the still-unorga-

nized steelworkers were not able to put up an effective fight against.

In 1929, the Great Depression struck its devastating blow. The unorganized workers in all mass production industries were helpless victims of the great economic crisis of the '30s.

The majority of steelworkers were laid off for long periods of time. Already by 1929 the wages of steelworkers were down 50 percent from 1927. In 1933, U.S. Steel announced that it had *no* full-time steelworkers on its payroll.

TUUL & UNEMPLOYED COUNCILS ■ The Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) led the steelworkers in many struggles and in 1932 reorganized itself into the Steel and Metal Workers' Industrial Union.

From the day of its birth, this union was engaged in one struggle after another, especially in departmental struggles.

The long list of militant strikes it conducted includes Republic Steel in Warren and Youngstown, Ohio, Empire Steel, in Mansfield, Ohio, and many in Western Pennsylvania and Indiana.

The Unemployed Councils that mushroomed in steel communities grew into the largest organization of steelworkers in the country. The Councils organized the largest body of steelworkers in active struggle since the 1919 strike.

The Unemployed Councils were militantly progressive, class struggle organizations. Through varied forms of struggle which won great mass support – hunger marches, demonstrations, delegations – these Councils were instrumental in winning the Works Projects Administration (WPA), the Civilian Works Administration (CWA) and many other programs of federal, state and local relief.

These struggles, too, prepared the steelworkers politically and organizationally for the bigger struggles to come.

When the economic crisis began to recede somewhat, the workers who went back to work showed a strong determination to organize new unions. A new wave of militancy was sweeping the working class.

The great strike struggles of the early and middle 1930s propelled masses of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, Black and white, most of whom had never before been union members, toward the organized labor movement.

After many fierce and bitter battles, U.S. Steel, the leader in the industry, was forced to sign a union contract in March 1937.

ORGANIZING LITTLE STEEL ■ The Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) then turned its concentrated efforts on organizing "Little Steel."

After the 1919 strike and all during the years leading to 1937, organizers kept building rank-and-file committees. These committees led many department strikes that I think were all defeated. The most famous of these was known as "The Finn strike" in Warren. There is actually a community in Baltimore, Maryland built largely by Warren's blacklisted steelworkers.

SWOC was mainly organized by small rank-and-file groups. These groups had to be secret. Every meeting had to be secret. A typical case was the organizing of the Briar Hill plant of Youngstown Sheet and Tube. Meetings were conducted in secret and many were held in the basements of churches.

I remember we had to convince John L. Lewis that it was possible to organize steelworkers. We did it by collecting thousands of rank-and-file signatures for the union, traveling to Johnstown, Pennsylvania where he was speaking and to present the signatures to him. Well, we convinced him. From that moment on, Lewis supported the drive with resources and organizers. I was one of them.

Lewis and Phil Murray never regretted their decision to hire Communists as SWOC organizers because we had already proven ourselves in the organization of the rank-and-file groups.

After the passage of the Wagner Act that made it legal to belong to unions, the steel organizing drive broke all records. The campaign broke through the steel wall of corporate spy systems, intimidation and terror. In just a few months 2,000 new members were joining the union daily. Whole departments of plants and groups of workers joined simultaneously.

The campaign creatively used all the methods the steelworkers learned in all previous struggles and the rich accumulated experiences of the working class in general.

Our main principle of struggle was to guarantee the full participation of the rank and file. Based on this principle we used the following methods: the "chain system" in which each union member signs up another member; the "list system" by which unionists provide lists of potential recruits to the staff for home visiting; the system of "key men," in each department; and the system of volunteer and

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The New York Budget Crisis & the Fight Back

John Bachtell

The working class is faced with a vicious corporate assault through the massive, intertwined tripled-layered budget cuts of social programs, corporate tax cuts and massive downsizing. The right-wing Republican-proposed federal budget cuts will dwarf anything passed during the Reagan administration. The New York state and New York City budget cuts are the largest in 50 years. These are anti-working class and racist cuts. They will bring tremendous hardship, especially for the poor, elderly and children. They are a prototype for the attack across the country. Illinois for example, has raw class struggle in the "war zone," of the Decatur strikes – and New York has a sharpening class war too.

The working class, trade unions, community organizations, churches, many elected officials and others have responded with a broad-based grassroots wave of opposition from one end of the state to the other.

While the New York state and New York City legislative compromises are very bad, they would have been much worse had militant mass pressure been absent. This pressure resulted in restoring some of the cuts to Medicaid and education. It also blocked attempts to abolish general relief and lower the welfare benefit ceiling.

This is just round one of a long bitter fight. The New York Party and YCL have been in the thick of it. We have been demonstrating, leafleting, marching, sitting in, getting arrested, and petitioning. The proof is in the pudding – over 300 new members have joined the Party and YCL since January!

LONG-TERM FIGHT ■ The fight to defend working-class entitlements is one that will be with us for some time. The ruling class understands the difficulties in destroying the very concept of social entitlements won by workers through bitter class struggle.

A recent report by J. P. Morgan Investment Services stated, "In the long run, the lesson of the next few years may be that New York is simply not

wealthy or economically vital enough to afford the extensive public sector that it has created over the post-Great Depression period. But dismantling it will take time: the new financial plans share a brand of shock therapy that may not be acceptable to the public." This statement sounds remarkably similar to what the corporate ruling class said only a few years ago about the dismantling of the basic social guarantees under socialism.

The federal, state and city budget crises are being used as a gun at the head of workers to force through further tax cut concessions to the rich, dismantling entitlements, imposing privatization schemes, and wrecking health and safety standards and pollution controls.

The real aim is a massive shift of wealth from the working class to the rich, to maximize corporate profits at the expense of workers. The ruling class wants a larger share of the surplus value produced by workers that now goes to social spending.

The federal, state and local budget crises were created as a result of right-wing and pro-big business policies. The corporate mass media wants us to forget that every level of government spending has been affected by the 1981 Reagan "trickle down" tax reform – the largest transfer of wealth from the working class to the ruling class in history. Taxes were cut in half for the rich and corporations. The trillions of wasted dollars spent on the military budget and debt payments to the banks, bailing out the savings and loans corporations and serving up "corporate welfare," created the monster deficits.

It was Governor Cuomo's 1987 tax cut to big business that led to a loss of over \$6 billion in revenues and a jump in local property and sales taxes and fees. The new \$4 billion tax cut agreed to by the Republican and Democratic state legislators will do more of the same. Most working people will see only a few dollars in tax cuts – the rich will get large breaks. Any tax cut workers get will be more than eaten up with higher fees, tuition, subway fares and local taxes they will be forced to pay as a result of the budget cuts.

The ruling-class mass media has sought to establish a class framework for the debate over the

John Bachtell is chairman of the New York State Communist Party. Based on a report to the NYCP state committee.

cuts by declaring that they are inevitable and there is no alternative. The only question is how deep and what will be cut.

Unfortunately many liberals, including many elected officials, accept this notion at face value. The issue of taxing the rich never comes up for discussion among elected officials or in the corporate mass media, even while there are apologies over the pro-rich character of the budget.

The Giuliani budget is dictated by high finance. Just as Moody's and Standard & Poor's intervened in Mexico and Canada, they are also intervening in New York City. They threaten to raise bond rates unless deeper cuts are made. This year 12 percent of city tax revenues went to the banks to pay for debt service. Next year it is projected that nearly 20 percent of city tax revenues will go to the banks.

Giuliani and the banks say we have a choice in closing the \$3.1 billion deficit – \$2 billion in either cuts or layoffs. Either way, every sacrifice will be made by the workers. Because Giuliani didn't get deeper state cuts in Medicaid and welfare, he sought \$700 million more in drastic city cuts.

The mayor says we must do this to make New York attractive to business. To sweeten the pot he has already thrown in \$400 million in corporate tax abatements this year.

Giuliani also says a lot of other idiotic things. For example, that the \$2 billion in cuts last year had no effect on services and the quality of life; or that young people should be getting an education and looking for jobs instead of demonstrating.

CONCENTRATION OF WEALTH ■ The budget cuts and tax breaks for the rich will accelerate the process of the concentration of wealth into fewer hands. The United States leads all capitalist countries in the concentration of wealth. Today 1 percent of American households owns nearly 40 percent of the nation's wealth. The top 20 percent have more than 80 percent of the country's wealth.

The buying power of U.S. workers has fallen by 25 percent, while productivity has risen over 30 percent from 1982 to 1991 alone. Consequently corporate profits took an unprecedented jump of 41 percent over 1993's previous highs.

About one in four New Yorkers, or 1.7 million, live at or below the federal poverty line, including nearly half of all African American children. A record 1.5 million New Yorkers receive some type of welfare benefits. Over one million New Yorkers

receive food stamps, up 4 percent from last year.

The consequences of the destruction of the entitlement programs – starvation, death, homelessness, deteriorating schools, infrastructure, health care and the loss of over 200,000 jobs – is of no concern to the ruling class and ultra right. The cold-hearted anti-working class and racist attitudes were expressed best by Giuliani when he called for poor people to hit the road. "Mobility is a good thing" he said. Everywhere right-wing governors and mayors have this same strategy. By lowering or abolishing welfare, they want to drive the poor out of state or into the new prisons being built.

Of the over \$900 million in New York City education cuts, schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines says, "With the billion-dollar shortfall we face this year ... major direct impact to the classroom is inevitable." This will include increase in class size, layoff of teachers and aids, reduction of supplies, shortening school hours and cutting kindergarten to half a day. Cuts could take such a devastating bite out of the system that this year could look like "the golden year of the New York City school system," said Cortines.

The city budget calls for \$600 million in concessions by city workers through early retirement, increased productivity and cuts in health and pension benefits. This is a battle still to be fought.

The cut in the city and state university budgets will mean a tuition increase of \$750, closed enrollment, and mass layoffs of teachers. Subway fares will be hiked to \$1.50 and free student passes will be wiped out. Medicaid cuts of \$500 million will mean thousands of layoffs and curtailed assistance. Workfare will be mandatory for half of the state's 377,000 Home Relief recipients. Benefits will be harder to get.

GROWTH OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS ■ As the rich have become richer and the poor have become poorer, the mass anti-monopoly, anti-rich sentiment has heightened. As Ed Cleary, president of the state AFL-CIO said of the Pataki budget, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. But the architects of the executive budget apparently believe that "blessed are the rich, for theirs is the New York state executive budget."

The budget fight has heightened the mass sentiment to tax the rich. Most unions say tax cuts to big business don't create jobs. This has created new opportunities for winning advanced progressive tax legislation. It requires left and Party initiative to

convince state legislators to introduce such legislation and the city council to pass resolutions in favor of reimposing a stock transfer tax.

A FIGHTING CLASS APPROACH ▣ The Communist Party and YCL are the only ones who will consistently advance a working-class understanding of the crisis and project working-class solutions. Liberals don't challenge the basic corporate assumptions because it means challenging the basic motivating force of capitalism – the drive for profits.

We reject the idea that workers must make concessions to business to create and preserve jobs. For all the concessions made to the corporations since 1980, 66 percent of the nation's top 500 corporations have left the city anyway. The state lost 700,000 jobs since the 1987 tax cut to the corporations. There is no end to the demand by corporations for concessions, because there is no end to the drive for maximum profits.

As one worker wrote in a letter to the editor in *New York Newsday*, "When will we be satisfied that we have cut enough? When we all drive to work on dirt roads? When it takes three hours to get an ambulance to our homes? When the city has sold every structure it owns to private business?"

The big business budget attacks come on top of massive downsizing and signs of another economic downturn. With joblessness increasing, the working class cannot rely on the corporations and the private sector to create jobs because the drive for maximum profits dictates massive downsizing.

We are for an end to all corporate tax abatements and demand that the state legislature and city council pass laws imposing stiff penalties for any corporation that decides to leave New York. And if they go – good riddance. We have to solve the unemployment problem through public works jobs. We call for the establishment of public authorities to take over and run the utilities, communications networks, insurance, etc.

We oppose any weakening of rent stabilization. We are for expanding the New York City Housing Authority. If a landlord can't make it on the rents they receive, which are already too high, let the city take over. Massive building of new public housing units is needed anyway.

The only way to solve the crisis of unemployment, housing, and schools is massive government intervention paid for by taxing the rich and corporate profits, canceling the debt and transferring money from the military.

Therefore we must raise the fight for the Martinez Bill, the Sanders Bill and other jobs legislation. We pledge to continue to gather petitions, initiate other actions and get New York Congresspersons to co-sponsor the Martinez Bill.

The New York Coalition for Public Works Jobs has a vital role to play here. No other trade union-based organization will spearhead this drive. Working-class, trade union, and left initiative is needed to build support for federal legislation. Otherwise the campaign won't move forward.

THE FIGHT FOR UNITY & COALITION BUILDING ▣

The budget cuts and attacks on entitlement programs have sparked tremendous opposition. This is a movement of labor and community groups, seniors, high school and college students, straphangers, elected officials, religious leaders – including the Catholic bishops – and some sectors of business; it is a multiracial movement of Black, Brown and white.

Demonstrations, rallies, walkouts, lobbying have been organized in every corner of the state. Coalitions have sprung up in communities everywhere. And where labor is leading, the demonstrations are the largest for example the March 1, demonstration of over 75,000 hospital workers against the Medicaid cuts.

Giuliani, Pataki and Gingrich are all dropping like lead in the polls. Giuliani has dropped 20 percent since December and Pataki is already lower than former Governor Cuomo was at his lowest. The Contract is bogging down in Congress. The tide is turning against the Republicans.

The tragic and criminal fascist bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City was also a serious setback for the right wing. In the minds of millions, the bombing is related to the atmosphere created by the Contract on America, the racism of *The Bell Curve* and attacks on affirmative action, the anti-immigrant hysteria, the militarism and the right-wing radio talk shows.

The bombing exposed the seeds of a fascist danger, its links to the corporate world and the military – something which the right wing and ruling class seek to cover-up. The overwhelming majority of people are horrified.

The politics of the state and nation are extremely fluid. Everyone and everything is being changed in the course of the struggle. People are open to developing new relationships and reexamining old

ones, including with the Party.

WEAKNESSES IN UNITY HINDER MOVEMENT ■

Despite the important steps taken and the new openness to working together, the ability to block the budget cuts is limited by insufficient unity and breadth of coalition in labor and between labor and community forces.

An all-encompassing coalition has not yet emerged either on a statewide level or a local level against all the cuts. Hence the movement is built around single issues and localized.

From the beginning we have called for a united, all-peoples coalition, led by labor and consisting of community groups, seniors, students, social agencies, PTAs, elected officials, churches – everyone opposed to the cuts. This is still needed. Where we have put this position forward it has received tremendous support.

Without united coalitions led by labor there will continue to be small demonstrations here and there around specific cuts instead of massive demonstrations that can rock the city and state against all the cuts.

The ruling class fears that this grassroots movement will get out of hand. Therefore they are doing all they can to contain, sidetrack and repress it. They seek to split it through intensified racism and the anti-immigrant hysteria. They seek to characterize the fight against the entitlement cuts as solely a concern of African Americans and Latinos. This was the meaning of Republican State Senator Bruno's racist statement that "Assembly leader (Speaker) Sheldon Silver is beholden to Blacks and Hispanics ... the people that have their hands out."

The use of the concept "angry white men" is an effort to influence white workers with racism and undermine class unity. It is an invention of the right wing. It obscures the fact that the majority of white workers either didn't vote in the last election or voted against the Republicans. It seeks to obscure the growth of an angry multiracial, male-female working class.

Another divisive idea being pushed by the corporate mass media is that public opinion toward Giuliani has hardened along racial lines. The fact is that while Giuliani has lost popularity among African Americans and Latinos fastest, he has lost among all racial groups including among whites. The polls also don't reflect that while Giuliani and Pataki get high marks from higher income and rul-

ing class circles, opinion among white workers has dropped – witness his cold reception in Staten Island and Bensonhurst.

On specific issues people are generally united. For example, 66 percent of New Yorkers support affirmative action. Eighty-one percent of those surveyed wanted spending on education to increase. Seventy-five percent are opposed to the cuts in Medicaid. Sixty-six percent favor more funds for health care. And while 70 percent want welfare cut off after two years, that figure drops to 16 percent if the person is unable to get a job.

We must continue to take initiatives to expose the use of racism and to counter it with initiatives that unite people in struggle. This includes fighting to preserve affirmative action and the defense of immigrant rights.

The ruling class is also stepping up police repression to break up the movement. There has been a growth of arrests, police presence – including riot-outfitted police and SWAT teams on campuses – and police infiltration of coalitions and provocation. The Party nationally is initiating a political defense committee to mobilize legal and mass support for those arrested in these class battles, for victims of police brutality and generally against the growing political repression.

The depth and breadth of unity of forces has been undermined by the ultra-left and other narrow forces. The May 6 demonstration organized by the ultra-left Workers World Party is a good case in point. The size of the rally was a reflection of the spontaneous response to this issue and the promotion given by WBAI. It could have been much bigger had organized labor been involved from the beginning. But the Workers World organizers are anti-labor and bypassed the trade union leadership in organizing the event. Most of the speakers were affiliated with Workers World.

No coalition with enough muscle to defeat the budget cuts can be built without the leadership of labor. The National People's Campaign, including its call for a national march on Washington, is basically running counter to the Emergency Coalition and any other labor-community coalition.

Opposition to the cuts is further limited by the total bankruptcy of the Democratic Party. The state legislature's Democrats boxed themselves in by rushing to implement the last year of the Cuomo tax cut and voted for a \$4 billion tax cut that primarily benefits big business and the wealthy. They have

proven incapable of offering a viable alternative to the Republican right-wing policies. They will not break with monopoly capital domination.

The Democratic Party's counter budget proposals were not much better than the Pataki-Republican budget on many key items. They represent the bottom line in order to maintain a coalition of right-wing, center and more progressive Democrats. The direction is the same - just slower.

A similar process took place with Democratic New York City Council Speaker Vallone and the Democratic Council majority. With few exceptions, they meekly went along with the vast majority of Giuliani cuts and corporate tax breaks. As Councilman Stephen DiBrienza (D-Brooklyn) said, "There's a sense, which I don't buy, that if we get this done fast it's less painful. There's an unhealthy sense of defeat."

Consequently the crisis of the Democratic and Republican parties has intensified. There is a growth in interest in Labor Party Advocates, the New Party, the Greens, and other political forces. The emerging coalitions are the basis for an all-peoples coalition, greater political independence and electoral challenges - just like the fight against Koch was a prelude to the Dinkins campaign.

We encourage the establishment of new formations, including elected officials and the building of LPA chapters and other independent political movements. In general we need initiatives that unite the various streams of political independence, both inside and outside the Democratic Party.

ROLE OF LABOR ■ The massive protests have had a positive impact on the labor movement. As President Ed Cleary said at the state AFL-CIO legislative conference,

If - for the first time in living memory - we have an [state] administration which, in the interest of a small circle of Wall Street millionaires and radical right ideologues, chooses to wage war on the working people, the elderly, the poor and the disabled then this administration will learn soon enough that New Yorkers know how to fight for their rights and organized labor is prepared to lead that fight.

For the first time in many years, trade unions are forced to mobilize the rank and file. There is a growing pressure from below to break with class partnership policies.

When trade unions have mobilized, the rank and file have responded, as in the AFSCME Local 420 demonstrations and the March 1 demonstration of hospital workers. However, the mobilization of the rank and file is still a new thing for many unions. Often only the staff and pie cards show up at demonstrations.

The struggle has also revealed the crisis of social democracy in the trade union leadership. There are still some trade union leaders who have illusions about what can be achieved through cooperation and class partnership. They feel their union will be spared the cuts and layoffs and awarded with special deals.

Some accept the idea that the money is not there to fund programs. They accept the idea that sacrifices must be made by the workers, but call for fair and equal sacrifices from the corporations and rich. These things are preventing the development of a mass militant fightback movement.

The central labor councils are in the best position to move the entire labor movement forward and to unite it with community forces. The sentiment from below is there. Our initiatives, even from one comrade, can make the difference in uniting left and center forces and moving the debate forward even under difficult circumstances.

The developments in the National AFL-CIO and the challenge to the Kirkland leadership will have an important impact on the central labor councils throughout the state and cities. Brian McLaughlin, Assemblyman from Queens will become the new head of the New York City central labor council in June. This could create new opportunities and openings. Given the new openness to the Party we propose that we apply for permission to have a contingent in this year's labor day parade. Let's see what happens.

The merging of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union creates a powerful new industrial union which will effect trade union developments. It will have an impact on organizing the tens of thousands of unorganized garment workers slaving away at starvation wages in New York City and the general trade union politics of the city and state. While we have been focusing on hospital and transit workers, we propose to adopt a garment shop for concentration, too. This will help to orient the Party toward manufacturing workers.

There is a growing left, militant sector in labor,

especially at the rank-and-file and secondary level of leadership. This is reflected in the activities of the various rank-and-file caucuses, CBTU, CLUW, LPA, the IUD conference and the recent Jobs with Justice Conference. There are many important developments among the left forces that we should be active in and influence.

Without greater initiative for mass militant united action, by the Party and other broad left forces in the trade union movement a vacuum of leadership will be filled by the ultra-left. The working class and people's desire to fight will have little organized expression.

NEXT PHASE IN THE FIGHT ■ This is a long-term fight because the attack on entitlements, massive downsizing and the chronic budget crises will be with us for some time. They are already saying that it is only a matter of time before the Pataki and Giuliani budget agreements fall apart at the seams. This means that further cuts and layoffs will be imposed in the next few months.

As *New York Newsday* reported about the Giuliani budget, "[Budget officials] describe a mongrel dog of a budget, with a life expectancy of a couple months. 'After this budget's finished, it's going to be a question of what piece falls apart first,' an official said."

Our strategic aim remains to build a united all-people's coalition led by labor against the next round of cuts, to restore those cuts already made and win a federal jobs program with affirmative action. An all-encompassing citywide labor-community coalition is needed. Such coalitions are needed in every community and borough; grassroots coalitions that can sustain pressure on the elected officials. We should try to unite all the single issue and neighborhood coalitions together into a citywide coalition.

We will continue to focus on the central labor councils. A united labor movement is the only force capable of uniting and leading this movement. We will continue to fight for this at delegate assemblies, retiree chapters, other labor organizations and community groups.

The formation of labor-community grassroots coalitions requires mass Party initiative. Some coalitions already exist. We should join them and help broaden them, especially linking them with labor. But where they don't exist, we should initiate them, including a city-wide coalition. We need to initiate more militant citywide and neighborhood mass demonstrations, speak-outs, picket lines, petitions

campaigns and sit ins.

This has been an exciting and active period for the Party and YCL. Just as people are openly joining the Party, we are openly and even warmly accepted in the new coalitions. Red-baiting and anti-Communism continues to decline. Any limitations on our involvement and initiative are largely self-imposed.

The Party in general and several clubs in particular have been strengthened. We are more active in coalitions and engage in greater mass ideological work.

The Party and YCL have joined in the broad actions called by the Emergency Coalition, the Same Boat Coalition and many local, community, seniors, and student coalitions throughout the state.

We participated in countless demonstrations, usually with a public presence consisting of Party/YCL banners, the mass distribution of the *PWW* and literature, table, etc. We issued a popular sticker against the cuts. We made a decision to focus on moving the CLCs into the lead of the fight against the cuts. We initiated six resolutions before union delegate assemblies, retiree chapters and mass organizations. Many were passed unanimously.

The comrades who ran terrific campaigns for local union office also helped influence the policies of their unions in the budget fight. We met with several trade union leaders and elected officials to exchange opinions. We roughly tripled the circulation of the *PWW* during this period and began sporadic distributions at several hospitals and transit facilities. The *PWW* has emerged as a voice of the opposition to the cuts.

We distributed 10,000 Party statements against the cuts. The Transit Workers club was the first club to issue a statement on the cuts. The Party and YCL initiated the May Day celebration which was also a mass protest rally against the cuts. The YCL participated in the CUNY coalition, citywide and statewide demonstrations; comrade AJ Quavez was one of 47 students arrested during a hunger strike at City College protesting the cuts. We circulated petitions and sent them off to Assembly Speaker Silver, Gov. Pataki and Senate President Bruno and have gathered thousands of signatures for a federal jobs bill.

We mailed our statement against the cuts and our brochure calling for a federal jobs program to over 400 trade union leaders and activists.

An op-ed piece by Comrade Hall on the Contract appeared in the *Daily Challenge* and we appeared on Buffalo radio, and on cable TV in Stat-

en Island, Brooklyn and Gloversville. The YCL spoke on New York's Channel 41. We testified at a City Council hearing on jobs.

We were doing all this while conducting Party and PWW fund drives, the Campaign for Advanced Wills and Gifts, a successful semester of the Workers School and several mass events.

CP'S INDISPENSABLE ROLE ▣ While more clubs are focused on the economic issues, we still have a ways to go toward involving the entire Party in this fight. We are active in peace, environmental, and Cuba solidarity issues which are all related to the economic issues and the fight against the right wing. But the primary focus for every club must be on the economic issues.

We need a greater appreciation of the indispensable role of the Party and YCL. No one else is putting forward our tactical concepts for all-people's unity with labor in the lead or a consistent class solution to the crisis.

Despite all the recruitment, we continue to underestimate the response to the Party and how others appreciate our work. We need a greater appreciation of Party and YCL initiative and how it can influence developments.

For example, witness the response to the Party around the successful May Day celebration. In just a short time we were able to organize the biggest May Day celebration in many years. Without much effort several trade union leaders, the Green Party, and Pastors for Peace agreed to speak. The entertainment included a group of young people from the Henry Street Settlement that performed street theater. The lesson from May Day is that there is a tremendous potential for Party-and-YCL-initiated actions and coalitions, whether on a district or club level.

We need more political and ideological work at the grassroots level as the most effective way to influence the leadership of coalitions and mass organizations. This means the mass distribution of the PWW, *Dynamic*, leaflets and other literature.

Our ability to influence this fight is related to our size and level of organization. The limits of the left, the labor movement and the mass movements are all related to the limited size of the Party. We must patiently continue to build and regain our strength.

Mass recruitment is now a regular feature of our work. There is a new quality to the 300 new Party and YCL recruits – the majority have been recruited

directly out of struggle at demonstrations, including 72 hospital workers.

More comrades are active in the recruiting, but the majority still come from initiative at the district level. Mass recruitment and consolidation has not yet permeated the ranks of the Party. We are not fully convinced of the new changes taking place among the working class and therefore the new possibilities for mass growth.

Being on the street, active in the budget fight and the fight for jobs is also tied to mass recruitment. These actions fit a mass party of action.

Many clubs have new members in attendance. This is forcing these clubs to change. And it also brings new challenges. The clubs must constantly organize activities to involve the new members. Without this they cannot be consolidated.

We have not mastered the consolidation process. We need the experience of the clubs to help find the answers. But it cannot be carried on without the club being involved in struggle, being public, meeting regularly, organizing regular activity, and PWW distributions etc. It can not be carried out unless we work with the new members. Perhaps 90 percent of the consolidation process takes place outside of club meetings.

The new members are also showing us the way. In the phone calls around the PWW phone-a-thon, several new members made pledges to the fund drive and explained how much they liked the PWW.

In our club, a new member was brought closer by her son who is a member of the YCL. She took petitions against the cuts and circulated them among parents and students in the neighborhood. She collected so many signatures that she was recognized by the principal of her son's school as an exemplary parent. This helped win her to the Party. But more initiatives are needed to further the process, otherwise she will be lost.

The new members respond to social and cultural activities, including dances, picnics, barbecues and potluck dinners.

We must fight to implement our focus on workers at hospitals and transit facilities and a garment shop. The focus includes shopsite recruitment of workers. But we must continue to recruit on street corners and at selected street festivals.

Our Party and YCL are on the march, shoulder to shoulder with millions. The future is bright indeed. As our new slogan around here goes, "not to worry – socialism is inevitable!" □

On the 50th Anniversary of WW II

Jim West

Fifty years have passed since the slaughter of over 50 million people came to an end with the defeat of the anti-Communist Axis powers – Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and militarist Japan. Celebrations observing that joyous day in May 1945 have taken place on all continents.

To be meaningful, to truly honor the memory of the dead and maimed and to prevent another world war it is obligatory to glean the vital lessons of the most devastating of history's wars.

The first and most urgent lesson of World War II is there must be no more Hiroshimas and Nagasakis (the U.S. atom bombing of the two Japanese cities which resulted in a death toll of hundreds of thousands, to say nothing of those permanently maimed). Without renewed and determined demands to destroy all nuclear and chemical weapons in all countries, the ceremonies marking WW II's end become pointless exercises in flag-waving and pious chants.

This is especially important today when armed conflicts waged in Europe, Asia, and Africa take place under the Damocles sword of genocidal atomic and chemical weapons. The combination of any of these "little wars" with high-tech mass destruction arsenals could result in the most massive slaughter threatening all life.

Thus, it is not enough to demand that all non-nuclear armed countries refrain from making such weapons while the U.S. France, Britain, Russia and other countries maintain huge stockpiles of atom and hydrogen bombs. The nuclear powers, first of all the U.S. must allay the fears of all countries that are held hostage to the demands of imperialism. No amount of peace demagogy from Washington can destroy the horrible memory of the U.S. as the first and only power to use nuclear bombs against civilian populations. Nor can the many times U.S. imperialism used the threat of using nuclear weapons to enforce its will on weaker countries be forgotten.

As long as U.S. imperialism fails to lead by example in total nuclear and chemical disarmament

the rest of the world will be distrustful of its foreign policy moves. It is deeds and not words alone that the people demand. Experience with all presidents in the past 50 years have taught masses here and abroad to expect broken promises, half truths and outright lies from the White House. The working class, all oppressed minorities, middle strata and nonmonopoly business interests can, by their united efforts, help restore our country's integrity in the eyes of the world by demanding and compelling a vigorous program of peace action to eliminate all nuclear and chemical weapons, starting with the U.S. itself. This would go far to ease the tense international climate and create a better atmosphere for the peaceful solution of conflicts between nations.

Obviously the absence of nuclear weapons in the 1930s did not prevent WW II. Was the Second World War inevitable? The answer will be found in an examination of the specific policies of the major powers involved.

The coming to power of Hitler's Nazi Party in January 1933 was an alarm signal that the German capitalist class, bent on revenge for its defeat in the First World War, was preparing to resume its march to world domination. It is generally recognized that Germany was the instigator of WW II.

Could Hitler have been prevented from gaining power? For the answer we turn to George Dimitrov's report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International which took place in Moscow in August 1935, the 60th anniversary of which is being observed this year. Dimitrov was a Bulgarian Communist who was arrested, imprisoned by the Nazis and tried, falsely, for setting fire to the Reichstag. During the trial he turned accuser and exposed the Nazi's responsibility for the fire as a pretext for coming to power. Upon gaining freedom, he was given asylum by the Soviet Union where he became the General Secretary of the Communist International. Concerning fascism's inevitability Dimitrov said,

Was the victory of fascism inevitable in Germany? No, the German working class could have prevented it. But in order to do so, it should have achieved a united anti-fascist proletarian front, and forced the Social Democratic

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leaders to discontinue their campaign against the Communists and accept the repeated proposals of the Communist Party for united action against fascism.

Why was it that fascism could triumph, and how? Fascism is the most vicious enemy of the working class and working people, who constitute nine-tenths of the German people, nine-tenths of the Austrian people, nine-tenths of the people in other fascist countries. How, in what way could this vicious enemy triumph?

Fascism was able to come to power primarily because the working class, owing to the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Social Democratic leaders, proved to be split, politically and organizationally disarmed, in the face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. And the Communist Parties, on the other hand, apart from and in opposition to the Social Democrats, were not strong enough to rouse the masses and lead them in a decisive struggle against fascism.¹

CLASS NATURE OF FASCISM ■ Unity of all non-fascist forces, beginning with the working class is essential for the defeat of fascism. Helpful to the unifying process is an understanding of the class nature of fascism. As in the 1930s so today there are erroneous concepts that fascism represents the interests of declassed elements, sections of the middle strata, disgruntled individuals among workers, etc. These false ideas have been given a new life by the mass media reports on the horrendous bombing of the Oklahoma City federal office building and the increased activity of far-out rightist groups. To be sure, fascism lures such people,

... with the most artful anti-capitalist demagogy, taking advantage of the deep hatred of working people against the plundering bourgeoisie, the banks, trusts and financial magnates, and advancing those slogans which at the given moment are most alluring to the politically immature masses.²

Whose interests are represented by fascism and whose are hurt? Even before the 7th World Congress, the Communist International declared when Hitlerism came on the world scene: "Fascism in power is the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital." Further, they declared,

Fascism is a most ferocious attack by capital on the mass of the working people; it is unbridled chauvinism and predatory war; it is rabid reaction and counter-revo-

lution; it is the most vicious enemy of the working class and all working people.³

History has shown that its victims include oppressed national and racial minorities, middle strata and even some non-monopoly segments of business. In a word, it is the enemy of the nation and of world peace.

The Soviet Union recognized fascism as barbaric and anti-human from the moment it raised its ugly head. That is why it worked tirelessly for the unity of all democratic, non-fascist countries to quarantine the fascist aggressors through a policy of collective security. This policy was rejected out of hand by all the imperialist powers. While the Soviet Union provided all forms of aid to the embattled Spanish people fighting Franco fascism, the U.S. Britain, France and other imperialist powers proclaimed their neutrality. This gave Hitler and Mussolini a free hand to help Franco defeat the legally-elected popular government of democratic Spain.

Had fascism been stopped in Spain, as the Communists proposed through unity of the people at home and the collective action of the democratic countries, it could have further strengthened the possibility of preventing the outbreak of WW II. Indeed, like German fascism, war could have been prevented.

What frustrated the realization of the policy of collective security against the fascist aggressor was the appeasement policy of the British and French imperialists, aided and abetted by the phony neutrality policy of U.S. imperialism. (Behind the mask of neutrality, U.S. monopolies were piling up big profits by providing the Axis partners with raw materials).

The roots of appeasement of fascism and of neutrality towards it was the imperialist hatred of the Soviet Union as a socialist state and fear of the working class expressed in the ideology of anti-Communism. Bourgeois historians deliberately ignore or shortsightedly discount the key role that anti-Communism played in facilitating the Nazis quick and easy victories in their blitzkrieg sweep.

The record shows that the Mussolini fascists took power in Italy in 1922 to prevent Italy from going socialist; in 1931, Japanese militarists invaded Manchuria and extended their aggression across the Asian mainland throughout the decade; in 1932, the extreme rightist Salazar seized power in Portugal; in 1933, the Nazis outlawed the Communists and put Dimitrov on trial. In the same year, Vidkun Quisling formed the Norwegian fascist party on a program of

suppressing Communism. His name was to become synonymous with the betrayal of one's country.

In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia and Franco's Falangists began their war to overthrow the democratically-elected Spanish government. It was in the struggle to defeat fascism in Spain that 3,000 U.S. Communists and other anti-fascists joined tens of thousands of volunteers from other lands to fight the fascist menace. In 1936 Metaxas established dictatorial rule in Greece, while Hitler and Mussolini formed the "Anti-Comintern Pact" later joined by Japan to threaten the USSR from east and west.

In 1938, near the Manchurian-Korean border and again in 1939 along the Manchurian-Mongolian border, the USSR defeated the military incursions by Japanese forces while the U.S. and other capitalist democracies provided Japan with raw materials for its war machine. Also in 1938 the Nazis invaded Austria and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain signed the infamous Munich Pact that gave part of Czechoslovakia (the Sudetenland) to Hitler. Later the same year the Nazis took over all of Czechoslovakia while Italy conquered Albania.

Hitler began his drive to the east with a blitzkrieg against Poland in 1939. The U.S. again proclaimed its neutrality. Hitler, convinced that England, France, and the U.S. did not want to, and would not stand up to him, shifted his awesome war machine westward. During the next year, the Nazis overran Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria.

The anti-Communist obsession of the ruling class in the bourgeois democratic countries paralyzed and immobilized them in the face of conquest by the Nazis. Hitler was able to use the combined resources of conquered Europe to bring France to its knees and begin to lay siege to England. It was then that he turned East again, expecting to get the support or neutrality of the U.S. and all of conquered Europe.

Like all imperialist powers Nazi Germany was out for world domination. With the conquest of France and the bombing of Britain, it dawned on the imperialists of London and Washington that their cherished aim of Germany and the socialist Soviet Union destroying each other had gone down the drain. Instead, they now faced the real danger of their own defeat at the hands of the Axis powers. It was only then that they reconciled themselves to the Soviet Union as an ally against Hitlerism. But even then, these countries made no serious effort to open up a second front against the Nazis until it looked like the

Soviet Union just might win the war single-handedly.

The conquered peoples of Europe were by no means quiescent. The patriotic and democratic forces, from Greece to France, from Portugal through the Scandinavian countries and the Balkans organized their resistance to the Nazis. Foremost in the front ranks of the anti-fascist guerrilla, partisan and underground organizations were the Communists in each and every country in Europe, including Germany and Italy themselves.

In honoring the memory of all who fought to defeat fascism let it be remembered that Communists were among the first to volunteer to fight Franco fascism in Spain; the first in battle in the Soviet Union where 27 million casualties included millions of Communists, the best sons and daughters of the working class; the first in the front lines of the more than 150,000 battles and skirmishes of the 14-year long Chinese people's war against Japanese imperialist aggression; and first among all the civilian resistance in the rear areas of the Nazi-hordes in Europe.

Communists have always been among the most consistent, resolute opponents of fascism by virtue of their consistent working-class struggle against racism, chauvinism, anti-Semitism, extreme nationalism and jingoism. All of these evils have their roots in capitalist exploitation and oppression and are stressed to the extreme under fascism.

The experience of all countries shows that fascism is anti-labor and anti-trade union by definition. The very concept of trade unionism is anathema to fascism. It has always sought to drive a wedge between organized labor and Communists. Fascism always used anti-Communism to divide and confuse the democratic, non-fascist forces, to hide its real role.

CONTINUING DANGER ■ While celebrating the 50th anniversary of the defeat of German Nazism, Italian fascism and Japanese militarism need we be reminded that both war and fascism have yet to be banished from the earth forever?

It came as a timely warning when, in the midst of the Cold War, Gus Hall characterized the resurgence of reaction in the Reagan administration as a "whiff of fascism." Hall's warning is fully appropriate to this day when the stench of the Gingrich-Dole GOP Contract Against America assails everyone's nostrils.

The reactionary offensive against our country unfolds on a very broad front encompassing the economy, ecology, health, culture, ideology and politics. It is targeted against the working class and its

trade unions, women, youth, and elderly, the African American, Mexican American, Puerto Rican and Asian and Pacific Island peoples. It is out to cut the ground out from under small business, family farms, professional peoples as well as all working people by shifting the tax burden on to their shoulders.

The general crisis of world capitalism increasingly is related to and finds a focal point in the crisis of U.S. imperialism. Instability in economic, financial and political matters has become characteristic. The tendency to deal with difficulties, problems and contradictions by means of force becomes ever more pronounced. At home this takes the form of regressive draconian measures and legislation. Abroad imperialism frequently resorts to arms as the first and preferred choice of "diplomacy."

Today no imperialist power can undertake a war of aggression without fascist-like measures to secure the home-front against anti-militarist uprisings. The specter of an overpowering peace movement as an important factor in U.S. imperialism's defeat in Vietnam, haunts the war mongers. That specter cannot be exorcised by Robert McNamara's belated admission of guilt for the 250,000 killed which he calls a mistake instead of the crime it was.

The warning about a whiff of fascism does not mean that fascism is imminent let alone already in control of the government. It means that unless fascist tendencies and fascist-like measures are nipped in the bud it can take power before we wake up to the danger. As Dimitrov said in his report:

The accession to power of fascism is not an *ordinary succession* of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* of one state form of class domination of bourgeoisie-bourgeois democracy by another form - open terrorist dictatorship. It would be a serious mistake to ignore this distinction, a mistake liable to prevent the revolutionary proletariat from mobilizing the widest strata of the working people of town and country for the struggle against the menace of the seizure of power by the fascists, and from taking advantage of the contradictions which exist in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself. But it is also a mistake, no less serious and dangerous, to *underrate* the importance ... of the *reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie at present increasingly developing in the bourgeois democratic countries* measures which suppress the democratic liberties of the working people, falsify and curtail the rights of parliament and intensify the repression of the revolutionary movement.⁴

The threat of fascism must be opposed on a case by case, issue by issue basis *before* it comes to power, to prevent it from ever coming to power.

ANTI-COMMUNISM AND THE FIGHT FOR UNITY ■

This calls for the maximum possible unity of all democratic, non-fascist forces, including the Communists. It calls for rejection and repudiation of anti-Communism and racism as the chief divisive weapons used by neofascists and the ultra-right to prevent victorious anti-fascist unity.

In the developing movements for a labor-peoples political alternative to the Republican and Democratic parties, the ultra-right forces uses red-baiting and anti-Communism to frustrate and defeat the trailblazing historically inevitable efforts of these movements.

For some in labor's top ranks and in other social movements, the Cold War has never ended. Their ongoing campaign to demonize the Communists plays directly into the hands of the far-right.

The need to know the truth about the constructive, anti-fascist, pro-peace, and democratic role of Communists arises not from some narrow, self-serving partisan interests. Rather, it is indispensable to the success of the united, coalition efforts of all non-fascist forces to defeat fascism and advance the common welfare. Truth is needed to allow the broad coalition to use the dedication, selflessness and consistency-in-action of Communists for the common goal.

Let us remember Dimitrov's analysis of why fascism came to power in Germany. Among the reason he included: "the Communist parties were not strong enough ..."

It follows that the growth of the Communist Party is not an end in itself but an urgent requirement for the defense of democratic liberties and world peace, for the defense of the working class and its trade unions, for the struggles for equality, against racism, anti-Semitism and extreme nationalism; to help make the planet habitable for humankind and nature. Mark it down as a big lesson of World War II: the country needs a strong, growing Communist Party - its best national interests are served by it. □

Reference Notes

1. George Dimitrov, *Against War and Fascism*, International Publishers, New York, 1986.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

A Victory that Defied the Odds

Marilyn Bechtel

Last April, after a brief 8-day strike and lockout, 32,000 northern California grocery workers organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) won a settlement from the Safeway, Lucky and Save Mart corporations that protected their excellent health benefits, improved the retirement provisions of some workers, and defeated a series of management demands for union-busting rules changes. However, their new three-year contract continues the former contract's wage provisions, which will mean a significant loss of real income by the time it expires posing the necessity of achieving substantial wage gains in the next contract.

The employers had demanded the give-backs in order to achieve a "cost-neutral" contract, even though Safeway has been experiencing record profits in the recent period. Among management claims was that the chains needed takeaways to compete successfully with largely non-union discounters such as Price/Costco and Wal-Mart, which pay much lower wages and benefits. Under the contract that ended March 4, supermarket checkers earned just under \$16 an hour, butchers over \$16 and courtesy clerks about \$6.50, not including benefits.

SWIMMING UPSTREAM ▣ The success of the grocery workers' strike, as with several other recent strikes including the recent GM parts plant victories, occurred despite longstanding economic and political trends and ruling class ideological drives at both a national and statewide level, which have made it more difficult for workers to organize and to win gains. The ruling class has also greatly stepped up its drive to split the working class in a variety of ways.

One such nationwide trend, since the 1970s, has been the 25 percent decline in U.S. workers' purchasing power, despite a 30 percent rise in their productivity and despite soaring profits of the major corporations. In the recent period the so-called jobless recovery has brought forced overtime and speedup to millions of workers at the same time that

millions of others have faced long-term unemployment. In addition, the "new jobs" touted as part of the "recovery" are contingent, temporary, low-wage and often part-time jobs totally lacking in medical or other benefits, or basic union rights including grievance procedures and safeguards against arbitrary layoffs and dismissals.

This assault has carried over into the political sphere, especially since the November 1994 election, and the right-wing Congressional Republicans' proclamation of the Contract on America. As one California labor leader said at a recent anti-Contract fight back meeting, it is not accidental that the right's assault focuses on organized labor's gains such as affirmative action, requirements that prevailing wages be paid, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. "They are trying to destroy the labor movement because they understand that organized labor is one of the few forces strong enough to take them on," he said.

Specifically in California, economic crisis has been severe for many years, largely because of the national and regional failure to plan for conversion from military production especially in aerospace, or conversion of military base facilities to civilian purposes. The right wing of the Republican Party, led by Gov. Pete Wilson, has engaged in the worst types of scapegoating of immigrant workers as being responsible for the state's economic problems. Gov. Wilson and his supporters led the fight for passage of anti-immigrant Prop. 187, which many analysts agree could have been defeated if a few more weeks had been available prior to the election. Now, the same forces are pressing to destroy affirmative action in the state, with Wilson having issued an executive order ending affirmative action provisions in state institutions, and an anti-affirmative action ballot initiative in the offing for the November 1996 election. Both these efforts aim to strengthen nationwide ruling-class effort to divide the working class along racial and national lines.

The right-wing assault in the state has also included an across-the-boards drive for anti-labor legislation, including efforts to scuttle prevailing wage requirements, to eliminate the minimum

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wage, and to confront state workers with "right to work" (for less) laws, to destroy occupational health and safety legislation. At this writing most of these bills have not gotten out of committee, but because the future balance of power in the Assembly is fragile, this picture could quickly change for the worse.

Against all these obstacles, the multi-racial, multi-national grocery workers – African American, Mexican American and other Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, Native American and white – stood together on the picketlines. Whether entry-level or experienced and skilled, whether lower paid or higher paid, part-time or full-time, these workers remained staunchly united and rejected all efforts by management to divide them.

SLASHING BENEFITS ■ Employers have also been pressing hard to cut workers' benefits, especially health and retirement benefits. Even as long ago as 1989, a U.S. General Accounting Office study found that 78 percent of striking workers took the action largely over health benefits. In 1993, according to the Employee Benefits Research Institute (EBRI) in Washington, over three-quarters of employee health plans nationwide that cover dependents required workers to pay part of the premiums, while about 90 percent required co-payments to see a doctor.

In 1980, EBRI said, over half of employees who worked at large and medium-sized firms and had families, had their benefits completely paid by their companies. But by 1993, only 21 percent of workers with dependents continued to have benefits completely paid by the employer. These trends have greatly increased public awareness of the necessity of universal, publicly funded health coverage.

Despite these challenging trends, the northern California grocery workers insisted on keeping their benefits that cost them almost nothing in employee-paid premiums, co-payments or deductibles. The union also worked to protect full-time jobs from being broken down into part-time positions, to preserve health benefits for part-time workers and ensure they have the right to advance into full-time positions.

Why were the grocery workers able to defend themselves so effectively in a very short strike?

Union leaders attribute what one top UFCW negotiator called "a major, major victory" to the virtual total solidarity of the grocery workers, the strong support they received from other unions, and the unprecedented solidarity of the great majority of

the buying public in an area of northern California ranging from Fresno to the Oregon border. The health benefits issue had broad appeal, among middle strata sectors of the population as well as the employed and unemployed working class.

TALKS PROVED FRUITLESS ■ When 18,000 workers struck more than 200 stores in the Safeway chain's northern California operation on April 6, members of 11 locals of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union had been negotiating fruitlessly with the three supermarket companies for weeks. Their three-year contract had expired March 4. Safeway's allies in the negotiations, the Lucky and Save Mart chains, retaliated by locking out their 14,000 workers at nearly 200 stores.

Other area supermarket chains had either already settled with the UFCW or had signed provisional "me too" pacts.

Among the giveaway demands the workers faced were elimination of any health coverage for courtesy clerks – the entry-level workers who earn less than \$7.00 an hour bagging groceries, checking prices and retrieving carts – cuts in benefits for present retirees and an end to health benefits for future retirees. Other demands included increases in deductibles and co-payments, reduced choice of health providers, making workers pay the full cost of dependent coverage, increasing the number of monthly hours needed to qualify for health benefits and at the same time, ending guarantees of hours to be scheduled.

Among provisions of the agreement was that any increases in costs of health benefits are to be deducted from reserves in the employees' health and welfare trust funds, which are made up of contributions by the companies. Union spokespersons said the reserves are ample to cover such costs for the duration of the contract and still maintain the reserve amount required by law.

The workers also faced more than 30 union-busting takeaway demands, including an end to several categories of overtime and premium pay, cuts in holidays and vacation provisions, reduced medical leave, an end to restrictions on stocking of shelves by vendors, extended probation periods, expanded duties for lower-paid workers at the expense of higher-paid categories, weakened grievance procedures and tightened disciplinary measures, removal of some categories of workers from the union contract, a change in the workweek to

four 10-hour days, and ending job injury pay provisions.

THE VALUE OF SOLIDARITY ■ Most important to their success, virtually all workers at the three chains stood solidly together. The employers' hopes to split checkers from meat cutters from courtesy clerks were soundly dashed. After the strike, the head of Butchers Local 120, UFCW, observed that these entry-level and often part-time workers who make up about one-fifth of union members in the average store "were the backbone of our picketlines. These are the young workers that the media likes to say have no interest in unions. Well, we have thousands now who know what a strike is and are 100 percent union."

In union-conscious, highly unionized northern California, solidarity from other unions, among them the Teamsters who refused to cross picket lines to deliver stock, was not surprising. A number of Teamster members who work for Safeway put their jobs at some risk, despite a contract provision that they could not be fired or disciplined for refusing to cross a picket line, when they were temporarily replaced by "independent owner-operators" after refusing to make deliveries.

In addition, members of a broad cross-section of unions, from transit workers to port workers, seamen, construction workers, teachers, health workers and others, helped walk the picket lines and swelled the crowds at UFCW rallies.

But to the delight of the grocery workers – and the astonishment of the owners – the overwhelming majority of the shopping public also backed the strike, even when they were inconvenienced by having to shop elsewhere. The UFCW estimated that Safeway's business was down by 90 percent – a conclusion borne out by journalists who visited the picket lines.

Speaking at a strike rally at Safeway's international headquarters in Oakland, John F. Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, which backed the strikers all the way, called the action "the greatest public workers' strike within the memory of the labor movement in California" because "the consumer public is with you." The same rally heard two Alameda County supervisors, representatives of several state legislators and members of Congress declare their full support for the strikers. Several of these elected officials specifically expressed concern that the grocery strikers

could end up joining the 6.5 million uninsured and 11 million underinsured Californians.

Though the UFCW targeted Safeway for full-scale intensive picketing while leaving many Lucky and Save Mart stores free of pickets, the two other chains also experienced a substantial decline in business because many customers avoided all three for the duration of the strike. Large numbers of Lucky and Save Mart workers joined the Safeway picket lines. All three chains kept their stores open, sometimes with reduced hours, by using management personnel and hiring scabs.

Customers recognized the unfairness of Safeway's demands with comments like "Safeway's making a ton of money and they want to take away people's benefits."

Some shoppers crossed the line, filled their carts and then thought better of it, leaving the contents of their carts to be dealt with by the scabs. "We had an attack of conscience," said one such shopper who entered a Safeway with a friend and several children. "We told the kids that believing in a principle is more important than getting what you want."

An outstanding example of community solidarity was given by the residents of Guerneville, a North Bay community where Safeway is the only supermarket. There, when the town was one of the hardest hit by northern California's winter rains and floods, the local Safeway manager and workers gave away \$100,000 worth of store stock to those driven from their homes. During the strike, the solidarity was returned with interest, as virtually all residents traveled long distances to shop at other stores. "Most people here won't shop there during the strike," said one resident. "Everybody's sick and tired of the corporations taking away from the working people. That's the feeling around here."

"They did a lot for the community," said another resident. "They gave us a lot of support, and now we're hoping the strikers get what they want."

Safeway managers were, of course, under pressure from both sides, the public and their top brass. Some openly expressed support for the strikers, and one assistant manager, who had worked his way up over eight years after he started as a courtesy clerk, actually quit his job and joined the pickets. "I resigned because Safeway is not treating these employees right," he declared.

An industry executive, quoted anonymously by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, acknowledged the pub-

lic's solidarity: "I've been in the supermarket business for 30 years and have been through four strikes, and I've never seen such public support. There's hardly a soul in a Safeway store."

Though Safeway officials would not make public an estimate of their losses during the strike, one spokesperson acknowledged that these amounted to "millions of dollars."

Officials of the UFCW observed that the public's solidarity with the strikers was far greater than in the last bay area grocery strike, which lasted six weeks in 1980. One official called the solidarity by the shopping public, the labor movement and workers generally the best he had seen in 21 years as a union representative.

A main reason for the public solidarity was voiced by one picket: "We're on strike to save our health care, and our customers can identify with that." That conclusion was emphasized by the release during the strike of a UCLA study showing that the number of Californians without health care has soared to 6.5 million of the state's 31 million-plus people. Some analysts pointed to the close ties many customers build up with store employees who regularly serve them. Others noted that many middle management and other non-union personnel had ample reason to identify with the grocery workers because they, too, had been stripped of benefits or had them reduced in recent years. But undoubtedly, rising class consciousness among workers, and a growing sense of identification with the working class by "middle strata" elements who are also losing out to the monopoly corporate drive, helped spur solidarity.

OBSCENE PROFITS ■ The strikers were particularly outraged by Safeway's mean-spiritedness at a time when the grocery chain's profits were zooming through the roof. In February, Safeway reported that its earnings more than doubled last year to \$250 million. The company's stock has more than tripled in value since October 1992, when it sold at \$9.625 per share. Safeway officials nonetheless claim that the margins are so small that the chain only makes a cent and a half on the dollar.

On April 13, as hundreds of grocery workers and their supporters were rallying at Safeway's international headquarters in Oakland, the company made public a report saying its first quarter 1995 earnings from more than 1,000 stores in the U.S. and Canada had risen 50 percent over the first quarter of

1994, reaching \$62 million. The report acknowledged that quality of customer service was a big factor in the soaring profits. It also said sales at stores open at least a year had jumped 5 percent, a figure economic commentators termed "remarkable." Overall, sales for the first quarter rose 3 percent. "The results surpassed Wall Street's expectations," said one business journalist.

Given much of the credit for the soaring profits was Steven Burd, who became CEO in 1992. Burd is a former executive at Kohlbert Kravis & Roberts, a New York investment firm which owns 60 percent of Safeway's stock. A major bone of contention by Safeway's workers was Burd's compensation, which last year reached \$1.26 million, up from \$1.09 million the year before.

At the same time profits and executive compensation were soaring, Safeway has been engaged since 1992 in a nationwide campaign to cut costs, lay off workers and sell stores.

CONCLUSION ■ Militancy, solidarity and determination resulted in a substantial victory for Northern California's grocery workers in their struggle against Safeway, Lucky and Save Mart. Their actions, along with those of thousands of other workers throughout the country who have waged and won sharp struggles against big odds, can serve as a beacon for countless other workers who face the corporate drive to snatch away their benefits and strip them of union protections.

As a prominent trade unionist said recently during a strike rally,

We're hearing a constant theme throughout the nation. In Washington, Gingrich wants orphanages for the children. Here in California, Safeway wants to destroy health benefits workers have fought to gain for years. It's not going to happen in D.C., it's not going to happen in California, because union workers are linked up with their communities and the lies and the arrogance aren't being swallowed any more.

As the California labor and people's movement gears up for the fight against the initiative to outlaw affirmative action and other reactionary anti-labor legislation next year, these sentiments must be translated into action capable of compelling additional victories. The lesson is there for all to see - labor and the people can win! □

Thoughts on the Crisis of Socialism

Communist Party of Greece

Editor's Note: This article is abridged from a longer study of the setbacks to socialism and its effects on the world Communist movement. It was prepared for an international theoretical seminar sponsored by the Greek Communist Party held recently in Athens. Political Affairs publishes it as part of our continuing coverage of views on problems confronting the world Communist and workers movement.

The policy of "perestroika" initially appeared in the slogans proclaiming the "renewal and restructuring" of socialism, a policy which would lead the way out of the economic and social problems that existed at that period in the building of socialism. Certain initial slogans were borrowings from previous efforts by the CPSU during the Andropov period or earlier. But quite soon it began to reveal its true counterrevolutionary face, as the specification and practical application of the initial slogans took on the content of "reforms" and "measures which affected and tended to reverse fundamental sectors of the socialist society, at the level of both the political system and the economy.

The essence of these "reforms" was the transitional transfer of the means of production to private ownership, starting with the agrarian economy and with the clear intention of extending it to all sectors. Their purpose was to eliminate social ownership of the means of production, to abolish socialist planning, to dismantle the system of delivery and distribution of consumer goods and services. Perestroika has been revealed as a policy for exporting counterrevolution through measures and options which abolished proletarian internationalism as well as fraternal, equal relationships within the framework of the socialist division of labor.

The great question which justly concerns those who occupy themselves with these developments is why the counter-revolution did not meet with any resistance from the people, and why the people did

not defend socialism and its gains.

WAS ANYTHING GOOD ABOUT PERESTROIKA? ■

Some people are of the opinion that the policy of "perestroika" started out with good intentions and somewhere along the way "went wrong," and became a vehicle for counter-revolution. We do not agree with this assessment. Not only because a policy must be judged as a whole and not fragmentarily, but also because it must chiefly be judged on the field of its concrete and practical application and not on the field of pronouncements and slogans.

This particular policy drew the support or tolerance of the people because of the combined occurrence of a number of basic preconditions:

- It was promoted by Party and government organs and relied on their authority and on the confidence of the masses in them.

- It used slogans known to all, such as "more socialism more democracy."

- The problems existing at that time were exploited and above all the common belief that some changes and reforms were needed within the framework of socialism, which would deal with distortions and delays in basic sectors of economic and social life.

In particular with respect to the Party and state leadership in that period the study of developments show that one section of the leadership consciously adopted the policy of restoring capitalism. Another section followed, under the influence of the revisionist and opportunist views which had gradually infiltrated the Communist Party. The picture of the Party and state leadership in other European socialist countries was certainly similar, if we take into consideration the decisive influence exerted by the policies and prestige of the CPSU leadership.

Sections of the people who, for various reasons, were strongly dissatisfied with or affected by the restrictive measures of the past, sided with the policy of "perestroika." It was likewise supported by significant sections of the intelligentsia who had been influenced by the delay in solving serious

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problems or because of the relatively low salaries in the health sector and in the social services more generally.

Other sections were influenced by difficulties and restrictions on travel abroad yet others by the growing and unsatisfied modern needs for consumer goods, the influence of the shop windows in the surrounding capitalist countries and the distortion of the consumer models which this environment cultivated. Sections of the youth, such as students, with their potentially radical and progressive elements, were initially influenced in favor of "perestroika," and then trapped by it, since there was no reliable information and they were not called upon to curb it.

A part was played, particularly in the other Warsaw Treaty countries, by the descendants of capitalists and landowners who had lost privileges and power and continued to retain a minor foothold. They were strengthened by the counter-revolutionary process.

This situation, in conjunction with the ideological influence of imperialism's open intervention, acquired dynamism under conditions of general apathy and alienation.

From then on events took their own course. The stratum of profiteers came into being, along with the neo-capitalists with their political and social associations who played an active role in restoring capitalism.

The "new thinking" in foreign policy was based on the mistaken anti-scientific position that the fundamental contradiction of our times is the cross-class, i.e. classless, contradiction between war and peace, in which all states may supposedly be interested, irrespective of their social system. Utopian views were put forward which denied some basic features and attributes of imperialism, e.g. that the latter would accept a world system of security when the Warsaw Treaty was dissolved. In essence, the imperialist position of "curbing Soviet aggressiveness" was adopted.

An attempt was made to de-ideologize international interstate relations and to dull their political content. The Leninist policy of peaceful co-existence was transformed into a policy of class and ideological conciliation.

"SOCIALIST" MARKET MASKS CAPITALISM ■ The policy of the "market economy" was linked with the "acceleration of socio-economic evolution," a

goal which had also been set by previous CPSU congresses. The "socialist market economy" was promoted with a view to "increasing the productivity of labor, strengthening incentives for the application of scientific and technological advances in production, allowing enterprises to be self-sustained." The aim of "correcting" mistakes and weaknesses in the economic mechanism and in the management of central planning was put forward. Discussions were deliberately held on the correlation of socialism and the market in order to abolish socialism and to impose the capitalist market economy.

The next step, which revealed the true nature of the "perestroika" economic program, came a little later, in 1987 when the law providing for and protecting private ownership and the modification of the labor force was passed. Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) was used as an example in the psychological and ideological preparation of the Soviet people, even though it had been applied at a different phase in the building of the socialist society and was a temporary measure.

ATTACK ON LEADING ROLE OF PARTY ■ The slogan "transparency in social and political life" was initially based on criteria and values identical to those of bourgeois democracy, while the slogan of struggle against "bureaucracy" took on a demagogic character. The nucleus of the ideological and political views which were put forward from one point on were clearly targeted at the Party's leading role and the country's political system as a whole. The famous "glasnost," a slogan which accompanied "perestroika," proved to be the chief means of falsifying and nullifying the history of the Communist movement and the Soviet people. At the same time, M. Gorbachev was keeping his "consultations" and agreements with the leaders of the imperialist countries out of the headlines.

The counterrevolution was pushed forward decisively by the general involvement of the imperialist countries, their governments and their secret services which obviously had the data and human instruments to carry out their plans.

The tactics and methodology of "perestroika" relied on magnifying the existing problems of Soviet society, on falsifying history, and on nullifying and slurring the 70-plus years of the new society, such as magnifying and making absolute the prob-

lems of central planning and bureaucracy, and weakening the center on the pretext of strengthening initiative by enterprises and the Union's republics.

Thus began the process of undermining the united character of the Soviet state. The way was paved for stirring up national chauvinist differences and conflicts which led to the early secession of the Baltic republics from the Union. Localism and chauvinism were reinforced, particularly through the programs of "economic aid and reform" generously promised by the developed capitalist countries in order to strike at the Soviet regime, to exploit and widen the first cracks in its foundation.

The leading core of the CPSU, which was consciously promoting the restoration of capitalism, took artful advantage of the disagreements and differentiations arising after the first stages of "perestroika." A characteristic example was the full reversal and distortion of the nature and content of the terms "renovator" and "conservative," "left and right." As a result of this, greater confusion and disorientation was created, which affected a large number of Communists. New parties and groups appeared which were openly propagandizing the rapid return to capitalism. Also the real nature of "perestroika" was obscured as were the dividing lines between the two social systems.

Nihilism, talk of mistakes and an ahistorical approach to the past – outside place and time and remote from a concrete analysis of the specific historical reality – replaced the need for a creative utilization of positive and negative historical experience.

With the help of the mass media and imperialist propaganda, the heroic story of socialist construction and the international contribution of socialism to the achievements of humanity were slandered.

GORBACHEV & BETRAYAL OF GDR ■ The phenomena of disorientation, confusion and apathy on the part of broad masses of the people accelerated under the influence of "anti-Stalinism" and "de-Stalinization" which served as the pretext to justify anti-Communism, anti-socialism and the tearing down of more than 70 years of heroic efforts on the part of the Soviet people. The "support" of imperialism was used to "restructure" the socialist system. The high-sounding words about the indepen-

dent responsibility of the socialist countries and rejecting the "imitation" of the Soviet model concealed a systematic effort to export "perestroika" to the Warsaw Treaty countries and to the parties in the capitalist countries. For the first time since 1917 the Soviet Union, with the responsibility of the Party and state leadership, abandoned its internationalist policy. All the evidence which has seen the light of day, and which is now being provided officially by U.S. agencies, proves that when Gorbachev and Bush met in Malta, they agreed to the annexation of the GDR and the creation of a united, capitalist Germany, as though it were the "democratic" solution to the German problem and a means of ending the Cold War. The annexation of the GDR accelerated the dissolution of the socialist system.

RESTORATION OF CAPITALISM NOT INEVITABLE ■

The reversal of socialism does not confirm the classic theories about the inevitability of the restoration of capitalism. This became possible because some of the fundamental elements of socialism were weakened, altered and hit, i.e. those regarding the vanguard role of the Party and its relationship with the popular masses, elements which constitute the safety valve in defending socialism against any mistakes and schemes either from within or without. Discussions of the underlying causes led to the study of a network of factors which influenced developments and created prerequisites for the social and political capitalist regression in the socialist countries. Another starting point is that the socialist society is not one that stands on its own but is a transitional one between capitalism and Communism.

The operation to restore capitalism to the socialist countries began from within and from the top, without being preceded by any military imperialist intervention to restore capitalism or any popular uprising or internal clash. The history of the revolutionary labor movement has known defeats but at different historical moments, when the outcome of the struggle had not been already determined. Under such circumstances, the clash developed in a straightforward way between the decisive action of the revolutionary masses of people on the one hand and the forces of the local and international bourgeois class on the other.

The conditions, methods and means used to restore capitalism make it compulsory to study the

problem with the subjective factor as the starting point, i.e. the Party and the state socialist system, as well as the total of primarily internal contradictions in the realm of social and economic relations. At that particular point in time when capitalism was restored, the other group of contradictions, concerning relations between socialism and capitalism, while exerting a considerable influence on the sequence and interdependence of the internal events that led to the counterrevolution, were not, however, decisive.

The vanguard, leading role of the Party as a ruling Party and the nucleus of the political system was gradually lost. It became lax, and the Party's principles and operating rules and policy for promoting cadres were blunted.

The fact alone that the threat of counterrevolution was not suspected demonstrates the alteration in the identity and character of the Communist parties in the socialist countries.

WARNING SIGNS ■ There were also specific events, especially in Europe, which should have been recognized as "warning signs" (Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the problems of Yugoslavia, Rumania and Albania, as well as the revisionist attack using Eurocommunism as the spearhead to strike the Communist movement in capitalist Europe). The phenomenon of splits in Communist parties in capitalist Europe also constituted a strong warning of the ideological pressure exerted by capitalism on the ranks of the workers' and Communist movements in the capitalist countries.

The Communist parties, as shown more clearly by recent developments, regarded their leading, vanguard role in the society as being given and incontestable. The successes building socialism and in the international field cultivated a spirit of smugness and complacency. Unity with the people and democratic relations with the working people and with social organizations – all that was most precious and necessary for socialism – ceased to be of interest and to be kept up and renewed continuously.

From a certain point, they became detached from reality, and lost their ability to grasp the people's mood, problems, needs and concerns. The Party organs and organizations were transformed into bureaucratic-type services which resulted in weakening the creativity and initiative of the people and their active participation in building

socialism.

Control over the Party, its organizations and cadres by the broad popular masses weakened gradually until it finally disappeared. The leading bodies of the Communist parties were responsible for undermining the process of criticism and self-criticism from above and below, resulting in the formal and schematic implementation of decisions, in a tendency to conceal and embellish true situations, in the lack of concern for the quality of work and results, and in a spirit where everybody covered for everybody else. A climate of tolerance was cultivated toward distortions of policy, violations of state discipline, and the quality of production.

Inner-Party democracy was violated, the way was cleared for careerism among cadres, for the exploitation of Party and government positions, for subjectivism in the selection of cadres. The principle of equality among Communists was violated, and during recent years the phenomenon of contempt for Party comradeship appeared and became stronger.

As a result of such developments, the doors were left wide open to cadres who had selfish motives, who suffered from a lack of political ability and farsightedness, or who were unable to understand and search out the suggestions and remarks of the working people or to distinguish dissenting viewpoints from anti-socialist propaganda. These phenomenon, incompatible with the nature of the Communist Party opened the way to undermining the Party's prestige among the people.

SEEDS OF REVISIONISM & 20TH CPSU CONGRESS ■ Theoretical viewpoints were cultivated which constituted deviations from our theory and violations of building principles. The front of struggle with imperialism and revisionism was weakened.

In some cases erroneous theories were adopted, which either did not correspond to reality or simplified theoretical issues regarding the building of socialism, e.g. theories which put forward the rapid transition to developed socialism and Communism, underestimating the complex and long-term character of the transitional period (see 20th Congress), theories about the "all-people state," "all-people Party" and "all-people democracy."

The directions of the 20th Congress toward "a variety of forms of transition of various countries to

socialism, under certain conditions" was utilized by the leaderships of Communist parties as a theoretical foundation of an offensive against the scientific theory of socialism. In the name of national specificities and particularities, the immutable laws of the socialist revolution were revised. Views were put forward that through structural reforms and "the policy of democracy" it would be possible for the capitalist system to be transformed into a socialist one, without a revolutionary leap.

Such views underestimate and underrate the fact that the exploiting classes, supported by militarism and the reactionary bureaucratic machinery, offer resistance, that any form of transition is subject to general laws and is the result of a comprehensive parliamentary and non-parliamentary struggle.

During the period that followed, influenced by the experience of Chile and Portugal and by imperialism's change of tactics, some of the viewpoints and ideas of the 20th Congress were set aside. Any changes in orientation relative to the 20th Congress took place silently in the sense that they were not accompanied by a more general theoretical, open, collective discussion in the countries and within the ranks of the Communist movement.

The strategy of ideological subversion – as can be seen in retrospect today in the light of experience – did not encounter the corresponding aggressive and united response from the Communist movement and from the parties and government leaderships in the socialist countries. Although in the parties' documents, especially those of the CPSU, reference is made to the dangerous nature of imperialism's new tactics, in practice insufficient efforts were made to sound the alarm and put the Communist movement on the alert in order to confront the new situation aggressively and convincingly.

AN INSIDE JOB ■ The bourgeois class, with the rich historic experience it already had from the first moment the independent labor movement appeared, skillfully shifted the focus of the ideological struggle from outside to inside the Communist movement and the socialist system. In its strategy and tactics, it utilized the rich historic experience in adapting and readapting acquired from its confrontation and cooperation with various classes, strata and political forces (absolute monarchy, con-

stitutional monarchy, parliamentary republic, fascist dictatorship, military coups). It utilized the mistakes, weaknesses and ambitions of leading cadres, and took advantage of the social and political climate that cultivated deviations and discontent.

We also believe on the basis of retrospective experience that in documents of the Communist parties of the socialist countries, the indisputable victories of socialism were overestimated, as well as the spectacular changes which took place in the world after World War II in such a way as to underestimate the complex new problems which arose during the course of developments.

In certain cases, the phenomena of the crisis of capitalism were presented as being absolute, and a simplistic viewpoint was cultivated with respect to the disintegration of the capitalist system. The ability of capitalism to apply new scientific and technological advances to production was underestimated, despite their contradictions and adverse effects on the life and rights of the working people.

SEARCHING FOR THE BASIS OF OPPORTUNISM ■

Deviation was not generated automatically, in a vacuum. There were new problems which did not find solutions, mistakes which were not revealed in good time or whose main cause was not identified, subjective and superficial assessments that evolved and slipped into deviation.

Certain erroneous or utopian views about the problem in international life and the confrontation between the two social systems expressed a tendency to back down under the ideological pressure of bourgeois ideology, despite the fact that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries did not hesitate to confront imperialism at critical moments in order to defend socialism and the countries who were waging wars of national liberation.

Whether directly or indirectly, opportunism opened the way for the weakening of the Communist parties. It constituted the ideological basis for imperialism's efforts to undermine and weaken socialism.

The problem cannot be solved by a formal exorcism of revisionist, opportunistic and liquidationist views and by denouncing their holders. The principles of the dialectical-materialist interpretation of history lead to the search for objective facts in social, economic and cultural life on the basis of which the

conditions may be created for the appearance of opportunistic theories and practices within the labor movement. This does not mean that the prevalence of opportunism is inevitable. When there is awareness of the objective factors which favor the phenomenon, then it is possible for the Communist movement to deal with problems, side effects and even temporary defeats.

Creative ideological and political work was weakened, as was multi-faceted educational activity aimed at developing socialist consciousness and at ensuring the constant growth and improvement of the new type of person required to build socialist society.

Socialist thought could and should have constituted the steering gear to the development of this new society, which had to chart new paths under conditions of intense confrontation with bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology, with opportunism and revisionism. The building of socialism requires a relatively high educational and political-ideological level among the broad popular masses, as well as a certain level of knowledge and consciousness, so that they may be able to respond to the complex creative and initiative-oriented political and organizational process.

IDEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS ■ Under conditions of sharp ideological confrontation with capitalism, and growth in the role of ideological activity within the socialist societies, this significant front of activity was neglected and not adapted to changing conditions because it was taken for granted that the working people were convinced supporters of the system. The complexity of the process of cultivating socialist consciousness through direct, active participation in solving the problems of building socialism and managing social/political affairs was underestimated.

The discussion of ideological and political problems did not mobilize the whole Party, its bodies, members and non-Party supporters and indeed the entire society. In this way, opportunity would have been provided for a broad expression of views and orientations, and erroneous views would have been confronted using ideological means and persuasive arguments.

The evolution of ideas does not automatically keep pace with social evolution. Progressive and revolutionary ideas give way in conditions under which the people's initiative and creative action is

blunted, lax and reduced, allowing anachronistic remnants, individualism, subjectivism and localism to enter and become stronger. Thus conditions are created which permit the conduits of infiltration and reproduction of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology, of compromise and lassitude in the face of the complexity of problems, to operate effectively. These inadequacies appear more pronounced today under conditions of general regression.

There was a delay in the creative evolution, development and enrichment of revolutionary theory by the experience of socialist construction and the action of revolutionary forces.

Without any intention of invalidating the scientific research and theoretical searchings in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, developments indicate that the Communist parties were responsible for the theoretical delay in the creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory in conditions of socialist construction and the contemporary world. Scientific studies being conducted by special research centers, some of which belonged to the Party itself, were either underestimated or overlooked.

Likewise underestimated was the need for socialism to be built through the constant development of theory, the renewal of knowledge, which in conjunction with active participation in management and administration, prepares the ground for the development of a new type of person.

The theoretical and scientific problems were not studied in advance so that difficulties could be confronted promptly, and so that new trends, contradictions and conflicts which needed to be resolved in a dialectical way could be identified. The success of the October Revolution, and the rise of the revolutionary movement that followed, proved that one of the basic elements of its success was the fact that for some time previously, a series of crucial theoretical issues had been studied by the classics. Giving experience an absolute character without having recourse to theory and scientific research can be detrimental. The Party, as the vanguard section of the people must perceive new problems promptly, must be able to anticipate, and not to lose track of the overall movement, the whole, in face of the immediate, the everyday, the partial.

DIALECTICS OF SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY ■ The dialectical relationship between direct and representative democracy became weak and failed to function with the quality and as required by the times and by the complex tasks of socialist construction.

It has not been possible, throughout the course of socialist construction to combine central planning with popular initiative to cultivate the feeling among the people that they are managing socialist ownership. From the 1970s on this phenomenon became more marked, and took on an acute form.

Problems appeared in the development of forms of socialist democracy and in their correct functioning, including excessive powers and such phenomena which could not all be justified by the objective nature of the problems and/or special conditions. The potentialities inherent in this particular system – whose basic criterion is the conscious participation of the people, social control over governments and administrative bodies, and the dialectical relationship and unit “Party-Soviet people” – were either not discovered or not utilized.

The loss of experienced cadres and fighters during the civil war and World War II, and the need to utilize the strongest most capable cadres on the front of socialist construction created gaps in the composition of the Soviets. Owing to objective circumstances, a new generation of cadres was promoted which did not have the experience required to solve problems in a democratic way and with the people’s participation and support. They were elected within a climate of laxness and careerism.

These consequences, while noted, were not dealt with effectively by the Communist parties and organs of state power, and thus the problems were reproduced in a more acute way.

The main problem which must be investigated further so as to make use of the relevant experience, has to do with the role and use of the soviets as a form of state power and the relations between local soviets and workers’ collectives.

Even though laws were passed which continuously gave new rights to the local soviets, to the working people and workers’ groups, in fact the procedures for popular participation and control were becoming formal in nature.

An equally serious issue which requires deeper examination was the status and role of the trade

unions and other mass organizations of the socialist society. Legally and institutionally, their role was consolidated through laws and decisions, and through participation in all social and political affairs. In practice their role was not developed to the highest possible degree.

The loosening of the Party’s links with the people and the detachment of the central organs from the working people had an adverse effect on the utilization of the mass organizations which should have constituted poles of attraction for non-Party forces, for the people, to engage in active participation and control of state and Party organs.

The primary, paramount responsibility for the above phenomena lies in the role and activity of the Communist Party which, by its nature and role, should have had the first concern for correlating its activity with the initiative of the people and cultivating participation by the people. It should have restricted and eliminated administrative methods and created the conditions required to increase the role of the direct and representative organs of the people in the economic and organizational functions of the socialist state.

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT ■ The negative phenomena and problems that appeared do not disprove the theoretical position that in the socialist society there is a political transitional period during which the state is expressed by the political term revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, implying a full and substantial difference between it and the dictatorship of the bourgeois class in capitalist society.

The criticism which was levelled at the socialist political system by anti-socialist forces in the capitalist countries, reformists and revisionists, started out from a consciously or unconsciously in some cases mistaken hypothesis, equating the criteria of capitalism and socialism, and from classless treatment of democracy and freedom.

One of the most characteristic views of this type is identifying democracy with the multi-Party system, with the number of parties that exercise power and take part in government. Socialism does not preclude the existence and functioning other parties. Their existence is mainly determined by objective criteria. The number, nature and role of the political parties under socialism, apart from the Communist Party, depends on national specificities

and traditions, on social stratification or on historical reasons (e.g. the Social Revolutionaries, although they participated in the first Soviet government, crossed over to the counterrevolution during the civil war).

DEMOCRACY AND CENTRALISM ■ The course of socialist construction showed the need at each phase, at each level of socialist development, to ensure the best possible combination of democracy and centralism in the economic field of society with the primary goal being to improve centralism and develop democracy.

Centralism must express the basic interests of the working people and democracy, the continuing presence of the people in the exercise of power. The most harmonic possible combination of the two, their dialectical interaction, constitutes a factor showing the ability of the socialist system to defend itself from mistakes and subversive activities.

The growth of centralism to the detriment of democracy caused serious side effects in economic development and in satisfying collective interests, and became a factor which weakened the defense of the socialist system.

Achieving the peoples' participation and social control over socialist ownership proved not to be an easy matter, as the socialist system is historically separated from Communist self-government. For the people to become the supreme and sole owners of the social wealth as a whole requires time and constant effort so as to secure, improve and widen the rights of control and to ensure the all-round development of the human personality.

Although this was of intense concern at Party congresses and specific relevant decisions and plans were formulated, it does not appear that this issue was dealt with effectively, on the basis of targets and needs. Apart from the objective difficulties, the mistakes, violations and deviations which can be summarized in the quality of the relation between the working people and socialist ownership and the presence of the working people in exercising the functions of power in harmonious relation with the increased significance of a central administration, influenced the problems that arose.

In the course of building socialism, the principle of "from each according to his ability, and to each according to his work" was substantially violated.

The system of economic and moral incentives

required constant improvements. To the extent that this failed to occur and was violated, the ground was prepared for indifference to work and to increasing productivity. These factors led to the creation of incomes which did not correspond to the quantity and quality of the work done. Despite the periodic efforts at economic reform in the socialist countries, the role of the economic methods and incentives in the economy did not finally become stronger, central planning became rigid and centralized. Problems remained in the transport of goods and in the prompt supply of goods to the market.

In this regard, discussions were held and critical remarks forward by Communist parties and Marxist economists, about the way in which the law of value, commodity-money relations was used in administering and operating enterprises, and the way in which workers' collectives were utilized.

Questions relating in particular to commodity-money relations, the quality of consumer goods and services, economic and moral incentives, social control and participation in planning and administration require further, special discussion. There are grounds for critical remarks, but special examination and greater depth are required. Studies need to be made, in cooperation with Communist parties and scientists of the experience of certain countries in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Hungary and Poland, in which experiments and applications were conducted. Some proved to be ineffective and are to be blamed for the appearance of capitalist ownership with side effects in the ideological and political realms.

STATE AND COLLECTIVE PROPERTY ■ Problems that appeared and which constituted deviations from theory, not only failed to refute, but even confirmed the general direction of Marxism-Leninism, i.e. that socialization and its two main forms, state and cooperative) could not go ahead during the period of socialism in the form of separate independent communities, but as state ownership, because of the need to develop the productive forces and to secure the collective interest during the transitional period.

The problems, weaknesses and mistakes which appeared in the dialectical relationship between democracy and centralism in the field of planning, in the local soviets and the worker's collectives,

cannot be used as an excuse to project, as a counterweight to socialism, the "market economy" and "free competition" and the policy privatizations or the utopian in the best possible case view of "self-administration" and "self-management" which would lead to splitting united, nationwide socialist ownership into ownership by groups of producers to the detriment of the social whole and the collective interest. Social ownership and central planning have been subject to constant attacks and slanders by anti-socialist forces. In essence, it is the abolition of class exploitation and the political power of the working class and its allies that is being targeted.

INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS ■ The system of internal contradictions in socialism, which constitutes the core of the materialist dialectic, was overlooked. The need to secure dialectical unity and interaction between the productive relations and productive forces at every phase and level of development was underestimated.

This may prove to be a key issue in many of the questions which concern us here with respect to the ground on which mistakes, weaknesses, deficiencies and finally deviations flourished. The problem of the contradictions in socialism did not become an object of theoretical studies nor of practical solutions, which resulted in adverse effects that were reflected in the economic, social and political fields. Some of Lenin's most basic thoughts were underestimated, according to which socialism is not free of contradictions and disagreements and that these, when they are overlooked, can take on the nature of a conflict.

The process of unifying the socialist society was overestimated or made absolute. Mistaken views prevailed which argued that contradictions lose their significance in socialism. The result was that inconsistencies, disharmonies and problems were not identified and dealt with to the extent required by circumstances.

At times, particularly during the 1970s and more intensively after the Polish crisis, intense discussions were carried out about the dialectic of contradictions in socialism, but these discussions did not continue. While issues were brought to the fore, practical solutions to this crucial problem do not seem to have been provided beyond theoretical discussions and studies carried out by various scientific institutes.

At every phase in the development of socialist society, under conditions where the scientific and technological evolution showed the organic link between social and technological progress, the Communist parties and state organs should have been directing their attention continuously to the following problems: improving productive relations developing the productive forces, achieving the optimum organization of the whole mechanism of the economy, raising socialist consciousness and increasing the cultural development of the peoples in the socialist countries.

Under conditions of socialist construction – as distinct from capitalism – the characteristic feature was the rapid and in some cases heady increases in people's material and intellectual needs; therefore the need for the development of the productive forces was constantly growing.

To the extent that these contradictions were not faced, conflicts arose between social production and consumption, between individual and social interests. In this instance, the contradiction could not be removed by cultivating and idealizing individual consumerism, nor of course by ignoring the growing trend in personal and collective needs. The course of socialist construction shows that problems were created and discontent was cultivated to the extent that there was no "yardstick" of balance on the basis of objective possibilities.

OVERLOOKING STRATIFICATION ■ The stratification of the socialist society was overlooked, a fact which prepared the way for contradictions between general, partial, special and local interests.

When the foundations of socialism were laid, class distinctions were abolished; distinctions and differences of roles between the working class and the other social strata of the population, peasantry and intellectuals, which were manifested in various forms (contradictions between town and country, physical and mental labor etc.) diminished, but were not abolished.

Other distinctions were associated with the eve of socialist development, with forms of socialist ownership, with historic, national and local specifics. Yet others, which appeared as differences of consciousness and orientation, stemmed from the survival of anachronistic viewpoints or from the pressure of bourgeois ideology under conditions of ideological attack by imperialism.

Contradictions in the socialist society are linked with the Marxist position on the nature of this society, which is described as a transitional period in the revolutionary transformation of capitalist into Communist society. It is a period during which full social equality cannot be achieved.

Historical experience has vindicated the positions of the Marxist-Leninist classics. It has provided a lot of new data for deeper study and for the development of concepts about the contradictions in socialism. It has confirmed that socialist society retains remnants, traditions, and deep traces of the society whose offspring it was.

CLASS STRUGGLE UNDER SOCIALISM ■ The class struggle does not stop with the victory of the socialist revolution. It continues and intensifies at critical moments, particularly during the period in which efforts are being made to socialize the main means of production, and lay the foundations for socialism. The exploiting classes do not give up easily, despite the fact that they constitute a minority and have lost some of their most basic economic and political supports.

The intensity, duration, sharpness and form in which the class struggle is manifested depends on the pace at which socialist relations are built, and on the international surroundings and balance of forces. During the entire period in which private capital and small commodity production exist, new elements of the bourgeois class are reproduced. The situation is also affected by the international balance of forces and the strategy and tactics of imperialism which is constantly looking for an internal foothold to promote the overthrow of socialism from within, since external intervention is not an easy matter.

Its sharpness and forms are not the same for all countries; the national specificities, the traditions of the workers' and Communist movement, the quality of the bonds between the Party and the people, the quality of the alliance between the working class and the other social strata who are fighting for socialist measures and transformation in that particular country all have a part to play.

It is obvious that as the socialist relations of production are consolidated, as socialist democracy develops, and as the self-driven, active popular participation in the building and administration of political and social matters increases the opponents of socialism will be minimized.

The widespread use in socialism of the advances of the scientific and technological revolution was delayed.

Congresses of Communist parties in the socialist countries repeatedly identified problems in the unsatisfactory implementation and utilization of new technologies. The scientific and technological revolution was applied and utilized unequally and selectively: in the military economy, in space, in some sectors of heavy industry and in large-scale projects; less so in the consumer goods and services industries.

SUBJECTIVE FACTORS & TECHNOLOGY ■ Apart from objective, historical factors the reasons for the relatively low utilization of science and technology and the equally low return on investments should be sought in the following factors: in the role of the economic administrative mechanism; in the forms and methods of administration and management; in the system of distribution according to the quantity and quality of the work; in the system of material and moral incentives; in the rational use of material, financial and manpower resources, and closely related to the participation of the people in the administration, management and control of planning and administration bodies.

These factors play a significant role in taking advantage of the potentialities of socialist ownership which cannot be put into practice by themselves without the human factor and the support of science and technology. The passage from extensive to intensive development is linked also with the forms and quality of socialist democracy, with the participation of the masses.

Another factor which should be studied with the help of the experience of Communist parties and scientists is the problem of the possibilities of socialist accumulation – in specific countries and under specific historic conditions – which acts as an objective factor, encouraging or restraining continued growth, and above all that of the comprehensive application of technological advances.

Perceiving the way in which technology has been used in socialism does not disprove the fact that the socialist relations of production provided a significant thrust to the growth of the productive forces and to the visible technological progress in countries which had started at the lowest point in comparison with the corresponding situation in the

developed capitalist countries. A series of studies and statistics have proved that in the socialist countries the productive forces developed, and that a considerable effort was made to develop science and technology. Discoveries and scientific research still retain their value in many fields. The USSR, in particular, periodically pulled ahead of the developed capitalist countries.

There are no grounds for the argument that is widely disseminated in the capitalist countries, namely that the delay in modernizing the productive forces was the decisive cause of the overthrow of the systems in the socialist countries.

These views that see the development of the means of production, technology and science as being the exclusive criterion for progressivism and democracy have proved to be one-sided. They overlook the problem of ownership in capitalism, as well as the position and role of the working people in the productive process.

The development of productive forces, despite their creative, revolutionary nature, is not the exclusive indicator of the creative aspect of human activity and the social status of the working people. Socialism, even with lower productivity, and especially when this is due to historic, objective reasons, is in a position to offer the working people more than capitalism because of the qualitative elements it brings to working and living conditions. Abolishing the exploitation of man by man creates a new system of human values which determines the quality of life and the ranking of criteria and needs.

Nevertheless the development of the material and technical infrastructure on the basis of scientific and technological revolution, the level of development of the means of production, and sophisticated mechanization and automation contribute to the development of productive relations.

ON PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM ■ The application of the principle of proletarian internationalism was weakened owing to the loosening of and the split in the international Communist movement's unity of action in the struggle against imperialism and revisionism.

At critical periods, the united strategy and tactics of the world Communist movement was not marshalled against the united strategy and tactics of imperialism. A particularly heavy blow against the unity of the international Communist movement

was the breach between the CPSU and the Communist Party of China, with repercussions in the international balance of forces and in the unity of action against imperialism. It had an adverse chain reaction on many Communist parties all over the world. It was exploited to step up anti-Communism and anti-socialism. The unity of the Communist movement was then further tried by the wave Eurocommunism, which signaled the infiltration of revisionist, defeatist, compromising attitudes within the ranks of the Communist movement in capitalist Europe.

The adverse effects and repercussions from the dissolution of the Communist International as a united center offering a forum for the exchange of views with other Communist parties need to be studied and understood. The new form of coordination that was established, with the help of international conferences, contributed up to a certain point in time to the common elaboration of strategy and tactics to joint action. Along the way, this too was substantially abandoned due to ideological disagreements and breaches in the ranks of the Communist movement. The bilateral and multilateral regional meetings mainly on international issues that replaced it were insufficient to deal with matters related to joint action or ideological and theoretical problems. The discussion and confrontation was of a more or less formal nature, a long way from lively, creative discussion about the essence of problems.

BARRIERS TO UNITY ■ There were periods when the discussion which was focused on ideological differences took on the form of an open breach and severance of relations of all kinds, resulting in widening the gap and divisions. In other cases, in the name of independent responsibility and non-intervention in parties' internal affairs, all discussion and criticism ceased, with the result that relations took on a strictly formal character in the exchange of views and opinions.

Both tactics ultimately led to the same result – to the loosening of unity or the facile alignment behind one or another view. The main thing was that the discussion of theoretical problems and the reasons for one or the other view or deviation was reduced or weakened.

There must be continuing efforts, through the exchange of views with other Communist parties on the basis of long-term positive as well as negative

experience, to deepen our understanding of the ways and means of conducting discussions about ideological matters and differences between the Communist parties, and about the type of relations that developed between them on an international and regional level.

When the discussion of the different viewpoints is conducted on the basis of Communist principles, not only is exploitation by the forces of imperialism precluded, but on the contrary the result constitutes a serious factor in confronting these forces.

MISTAKES FIGHTING IMPERIALISM ■ Mistakes were made in the strategy and tactics of socialism in its confrontation with imperialism. On the part of imperialism, the confrontation between the two systems was not just an ideological struggle, but a form of subversive activity against socialism.

The line of peaceful co-existence as it was developed during the early post-war years, and to some extent at the 19th and mainly 20th Congress, permitted the cultivation of utopian views, i.e. that it was possible for imperialism to abandon war and military means and to accept a new world order which would be based on the principles of mutual benefit and cooperation on an equal footing, and that it would be possible for imperialism to accept a peace-time economy and the utilization of the resources saved through disarmament by countries with development problems.

The radical change in the balance of forces, the constant progress of the international revolutionary process, and united, world action by the anti-imperialist forces can effectively prevent aggressiveness and military intentions and raids by imperialism.

At that particular phase in history, it was not noticed that the U.S. with its European allies was reinforcing the weaker links in capitalism, keeping them in the imperialist system with both overt and covert interventions in other countries' internal affairs using political, economic and military means. The main instrument utilized was the constant threat of the use of atomic and then nuclear weapons.

It is one thing to fight to avert war, especially thermonuclear war, and an entirely different thing to put forward the view under specific conditions that it is possible to eliminate war in general.

ROLE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY ■ A negative influence was likewise exerted by the assessment of the potential and role of social democracy during the post-war period.

A main element in the Communist strategy was to seek joint action and alliance with social democracy in the cause of detente and peace, but also more generally in the anti-imperialist struggle. The social democracy of Western Europe irrespective of its verbal proclamations and periodic superficial maneuvers, was in fact on the side of the imperialist forces in the anti-socialist, anti-Communist "human rights" campaigns. The European social democrats were responsible for breaking up the cooperation with the Communist parties, following U.S. pressures (through the Marshall plan) which required the expulsion of Communists from post-war governments.

At critical moments when the anti-imperialist, anti-militarist movement should have been strengthened and broadened, the policy of imperialism was condoned by attributing equal blame to the USSR and the USA for the arms race. The defensive Warsaw Treaty was identified with the Cold War, aggressive NATO. And indeed, certain social democratic parties, such as the SPD led by Willi Brandt, played an active part in the so-called "bridge" policy (ostpolitik), clearly aiming at the annexation of the GDR and the encouragement of anti-socialist activities from within. The rise of social democratic parties to government power offered much proof of the nature of these parties, and of the services they offered in support of the capitalist system and the management of its crisis.

The capitalist system could not retain and nor could it reproduce its power without the support of the ideology and policy of social democracy, which apart from supporting capitalism, proved to be a major factor in undermining the power and unity of the labor movement.

Today it can be seen clearly that there was a need for a strong, convincing and militant ideological front against the theories of social democracy, which at that time cultivated illusions that there is a so-called third road to socialism. □

The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, by Peter N. Carroll, Stanford University Press, 1994, 240 pp.

This "odyssey" of the almost 3,000 Americans, of the 40,000 people altogether from 52 countries who made up the International Brigades, is the most recent of what now amounts to a veritable library of books devoted to the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) more accurately, the war of intervention – and is not likely to be the last. However, this one ranks among the best of them.

By 1936, when the Spanish generals, led by Franco, revolted against the democratically-elected Spanish government, Europe was well on the way toward that "wave of the future" which Anne Morrow Lindbergh, echoing her husband Charles, so ecstatically looked forward to – fascism. Italy, propped up by Morgan money, had already shown, in Churchill's admiring words, "there is a way of fighting the subversive forces which can rally the people." Even at the price of destroying the League of Nations, Britain, first of all, supported by France, etc., in payment for proving that there is a way to fight "Bolshevism," allowed Mussolini to invade Ethiopia in 1935 in a belated effort to build an empire that would bring Italy into the league of the "big boys" of imperialism.

Fascist regimes had been set up in the Baltics, in Hungary, in Finland, and imperial militarism had triumphed in Japan which had invaded Manchuria in 1933.

Europe teetered on the brink of war. The entire political development in post-war Europe led in one direction: war, indeed, but war against the Soviet Union. Well aware of the danger in which it stood, menaced by Japan on the east and Germany on the west, the Soviets exerted every political and diplomatic effort with increasing apprehension to head off war, postpone it, or, if all diplomatic efforts failed, to confront fascist Germany with a modern army. The young USSR tried to gain as many allies in Europe as it was possible to organize. It sought mutual assistance pacts with Czechoslovakia and France and non-aggression pacts with its enemies

like Italy, Japan, Rumania and eventually – when all else failed – with Nazi Germany itself.

Efforts by the Spanish people to throw off the monarchy and to introduce a long overdue bourgeois-democratic political and social system had been fiercely resisted by Spanish reaction, supported by international finance capital, which funded and encouraged the revolt of an unknown Spanish general, Francisco Franco.

Nationalist forces, led by the Falange, the Spanish fascist party, and taking inspiration and support from Italian and more so German fascism, initiated and organized the revolt whose military phase began with the army under Franco's control.

It was treason supported by international reaction. The Popular Front election in February, 1936 was a triumph of the people's forces in Spain, a vindication of the strategy worked out by the Comintern at its Seventh Congress in 1935. (In France, too, the popular front would thwart the aims of the *Croix du Feu* and *Cagoullards* to establish French fascism.)

Behind all the political maneuvering, the death of the League of Nations, the rise of Mussolini and then of Hitler, and now of Franco stood England, embodied in the fanatical anti-Sovietism of Neville Chamberlain, who lived for only one purpose – to see the end of Soviet Russia. Beside him, despite his concocted myth as an anti-fascist stood Winston Churchill, an early admirer of Mussolini, a supporter who "understood" Hitler, a born-in-the-womb hater of the working class.

Through all the pattern of bourgeois deception, intrigue, and treason, the peaceful and progressive aims of the USSR stood clear. Through Maxim Litvinov it had denounced the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. It had fought inside and outside the League of Nations for "collective security," noting long before the outbreak of hostilities that the rise of Hitler to power meant war. It gave (along with Mexico) real aid and assistance to beleaguered Spain, and it was the Soviet ambassador to Spain, Marcel Rosenberg, who first initiated the idea of helping with the international brigades.

The moral force of the Soviet Union, particularly among the working class of the world, the Jewish

masses and (with its defense of Ethiopia) the colonial world, as well as extremely high. When the call came to rise to the assistance of democratic Spain it was answered by millions. The International Brigades were the result. And for the same reasons as propelled thousands of others from 52 nations, the Americans who were to make up the Lincoln Brigade (and other brigades) also responded. In doing so they wrote one of the most glorious chapters in the history of mankind's struggle for full liberation. In the almost 60 years that has intervened, that glory has not dimmed. History provides us with few instances whose purity and high moral purpose does not fade or deteriorate with time. This is preeminently one of them.

There is no wonder reaction would like to burn out the memory of what the Brigades did there. As the reactionary point man George Will put it bluntly enough when he recently declared that, "The American left ... still strongly colors the teaching of history, so discrediting the left is still important ... The people who portrayed the CPUSA darkly got it essentially right, though they rarely portrayed it darkly enough."

This book is largely based on interviews with Abraham Lincoln brigade survivors, who after more than half a century, are a dwindling group. Carroll picks them up at the point of their decision to go to Spain, and follows them through the most crucial battles. He follows the history of a representative cross-section from their birth in many industrial cities to their deaths among the olive groves in Spain, or in WW II or if they survived to the present where a handful now continue the fight. He takes us through the incredible obstacles the volunteers had to overcome so they could meet their death at Jarama, Belchite, the Ebro and many other spots now sacred to memory.

The volunteers had to first go to Spain secretly. Some never reached their destination as the ship in which they traveled was torpedoed by the fascists. Others had to cross the Pyrennes, which stood as a barrier between France and Spain, in the dark of night. And after they reached the Loyalist forces finally they were often plunged directly into battle with little prior training and often without proper weapons.

Half of them were killed. Of the remaining half hardly a man escaped unscathed. Carroll gives us a detailed account of how they fought, what their problems were, how they coped with questions of

discipline, morale, leadership, cowardice and desertion. They were tested in every sense. And the miracle was that they came through with flying colors.

After being finally withdrawn as a gesture by the Spanish government toward allaying the fears of England and France that the war was being fought to establish a socialist government, they returned home to face new trials and persecutions which followed them as soldiers in WW II and in the Cold War that followed.

It is no secret today that the International Brigades were created on the initiative of the Comintern which at its Seventh Congress with George Dimitrov as its chairman worked out the tactic of the united or people's front which played a key role in defeating German fascism. The CPUSA helped facilitate recruitment of volunteers, sending some of its finest leaders to Spain, where some of them, like Dave Doran, Joe Hect, Robert Merriman, Milton Herdon, to name just a few, died. Quite a number of Communists who went to Spain returned - one-half - to resume the struggle which had intensified, on the home front as labor organizers, CP functionaries, and some - surprisingly many - as anti-fascist writers and artists. Some remain active to this day.

In fact, no experience inspired so much literature and so many writers and artists as did the the Spanish war, bringing out of writers like Hemingway, Dorothy Parker, Vincent Sheean, and even William Faulkner, some of their best work.

The Brigades were a living experiment in international solidarity, dramatizing the connecting anti-fascist link that brought men and women from 52 nations, almost all of them at personal cost and even great danger, together in a common cause that has proven to be historically just. They represented the nucleus of a people's army. The Americans, for instance, provide the first example in U.S. military history of a predominantly white, but integrated military organization led by an African American, Oliver Law. Indeed, the "Lincolns" proved in action that integrated military outfits were not only feasible but performed well.

It must be remembered that the International Brigades, and most certainly the Lincoln, were made up of non-military citizens, for the most part. They were a people's army in the true sense of the word. Professional military men were rare. They made up for the lack of military skill with profound anti-fascist conviction, which, as the sociologist John Dollard would show in a study he made of the veterans

after the war was the rock on which their courage was mounted and which accounted for the fact that, unlike the run of the mill soldiers in WW II, and most notably in Korea and later in Vietnam, they suffered minimally from psychological combat and post-combat neurotic problems.

Spain was a school for the men who fought there. Some benefited, and some did not. It was also a school for the entire generation of the politically aware in that time who saw in Spain, and in the soldiers who fought there, the acid test not only of their conviction but of the sincerity – or the lack of sincerity, in fact the duplicity – of their own governments. This included the Roosevelt government, ostensibly “democratic,” but only too willing not only to jettison their own stated principles, but to stab a sister democracy in the back in the name of anti-Communism.

They learned that a Socialist government led by France’s Leon Blum could betray a sister democratic republic as well. They also learned on the field of battle just what it meant to be a Trotskyite or an anarchist.

I find little to quibble with in this book. Where I do, it’s with careless formulations that continue to swim along in vocabularies, like tainted fish in a clear stream of otherwise astute observers and commentators. Take this for example: “About half the members of the Communist Party in the 1930s ... were people motivated by necessity and pragmatism rather than by the theories of dialectical materialism emanating from Moscow.”

What in the hell are “theories of dialectical materialism emanating from Moscow?” I must confess, after a lifetime in the left, I wouldn’t recognize such a creature if I met it face to face in broad daylight. Nor do I subscribe to the notion that “Communism had provoked its fascist antithesis” – in Spain it was the victory of the Spanish republic at the polls that “provoked” the fascists (and their hidden allies in Great Britain, France and the USA).

And, once again, Stalin provides a handy scapegoat for evils he could hardly be guilty of. He was “prepared to sacrifice the revolutionary impulse of the Spanish peasant and working class” in order to defend the bourgeois democracy – a charge echoed from the Trotskyites. As for the CPUSA, it’s the author’s opinion that it was the the “doctrinaire” William Z. Foster who forced Browder’s ouster, “committed to the orthodox Leninist formula,” and doomed it to a “sectarian direction” by liquidating the ill-advised Communist Political Association,

whose slightly over one year’s existence had proven so disastrous, and resuming as the same party it had been for 25 years.

Although this book is not a sounding board for the dominant ideas of those in power, the author does reflect some of them in any case as though they were simply part of the language:

“The collapse of the Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe testifies to the disastrous failure of the movement’s theory and practice.” It is easy, therefore, he goes on to add some what patronizingly, “to dismiss those who followed the Communist standard as blind, malevolent and dangerous.” Which it must be added, the author himself does not do.

The jury is still out on exactly what was the reason for the so-called “collapse” of the USSR and leaves hanging the tantalizing mystery of why it was possible for men and women in the millions who were “blind,” etc., to win a war against the most powerful enemy mankind had faced in its entire history, to establish and defend successfully.

Nevertheless, this book is head and shoulders above what you’re likely to read on this subject. Carroll’s meticulous research and determination to avoid the already hardened-in-cement version of this moment in history, reconstructing as well the anti-fascist spirit of the times, pays off. This book will certainly take its deserved place as one of the best. And I say this without in the slightest adhering righteously to the latest Moscow line. In fact, that “line” now dovetails neatly with the enemies of everything the Abraham Lincolns fought for. □

Phillip Bonosky

Radical Representations – Politics and Form in U.S. Proletarian Fiction, 1929-1941, by Barbara Foley, Duke University Press, 1993

The Depression years of the 1930s in the U.S., the rise of massive struggles, the formation of the CIO, the unionization of basic industries and the crucial role of the Communist Party stirred the social conscience of many writers. A new literary genre emerged in an outpouring of novels, short stories, poetry and criticism, all from a working-class standpoint. It was a literature in direct opposition to “official” writing with its hundred bourgeois shad-

ings and subtleties.

This school of writing was given the title, "proletarian literature." Its prime spokesperson in the U.S. was author and critic Mike Gold who wrote for *New Masses* and the *Daily Worker*, although the term "proletarian literature" originated with Maxim Gorky during the stormy debates on which path art and literature should take in the new Soviet worker's state.

In this book, Barbara Foley has set herself the task of restoring the legitimacy of this form of fiction, and give it its due in the evolution of 20th century American literature. In doing this she takes on, challenges and effectively repudiates the legion of writers, critics and assorted "experts" with anti-Soviet and anti-Communist Party credentials who have built their careers as literary assassins, either of the right or the Trotskyite-influenced left. Many of them served the U.S. State Department, educational institutions and the media during the Cold War.

Because the focus of Foley's studies is on the specifics in proletarian fiction, its successes and problems, the wreckage brought upon it by the Cold War is dealt with marginally. It would have been instructive to the reader if the grand intrigue of the anti-Communist culture lackeys were ferreted out for all to see, even if this were done briefly. A short survey of the prose that was fostered to replace working-class literature during the 1950s and thereafter would have also helped. A comparison would have shown the fundamental difference between a working-class literary culture-in-the-making and the sophisticated middle-class-based literature of pseudo issues that came to dominate the cultural scene.

Nevertheless, the author has done a praiseworthy job in putting the spotlight on our working-class literary heritage.

Barbara Foley joins a growing number of scholars who have written books about this subject. Among these are Alan Wald and his book, *The New York Intellectuals*, the late Franklin Folsom who wrote *Days of Anger, Days of Hope*, and Serge Guilbaut's excellent book on painting, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*.

The subject of proletarian fiction is extensively explored by Foley in its many colorations. The Communist Party's cultural forces and their allies worked hard to develop literature and art as working-class weapons. The pages of *New Masses*, the *Daily Worker*, and a host books and pamphlets, were alive with polemics on culture, ideology and class. Debates were sharp and no punches were pulled. It

has always been paradoxical that people may have a unity of viewpoint on politics but wide differences on cultural questions.

It was a triple-edged fight. First, there was the confrontation between Communists and the mainstream conservative satellites of capitalism. Second, there was the fierce conflict between C.P.-led cultural forces and the band of Trotskyite intellectuals who, in the 1930s were grouped around the magazine *Partisan Review*, and third, there was a more friendly but principled debate among Party comrades themselves.

Foley delves deeply into the many characteristics and problems of the new literature. She opens by asking just what is proletarian literature, and cites the views of novelist James T. Farrell, who later moved to Trotskyism. Feigning puzzlement, Farrell sarcastically gives several definitions. To him it is fiction written by a member of the industrial proletariat, no matter what the author's political views may be. Or it can be fiction written by a class-conscious industrial worker only. Another definition is that it can be fiction about the working class written by an author outside that class. Still another is that it can be literature so politically advanced that it can only be addressed to the proletarian vanguard. Finally, it can be literature combining all or some of these features. There is literal truth to Farrell's definition, but this didn't call for a standoffish and derisive attitude. He evidently believed that the demands of proletarian literature would put him into a literary straitjacket, and the individualist in him rebelled. His was a narrow understanding of a complex question, an understanding that reflected itself in his novels.

The specific categories of proletarian literature dealt with in this book are each worthy of many books. The age-old question of art and propaganda evokes memories of the almost 20-year-long debate on this issue between George Lukacs and Bertolt Brecht, both Communists. On the one side came the declarations that literature was a highly advanced form of cultural expression that needed a long time to mature, that it could not be conjured up from nowhere by flag-waving and sloganeering (Lukacs). On the other side were denunciations of classic and traditional literature as hopelessly hypnotic and bourgeois. What was needed was a literature and art that would awaken the working class to action by exciting the imagination with new forms and means that were radical, comprehensible and entertaining (Brecht). On this point, Foley quotes left-wing novel-

ist Jack Conroy who defiantly says, "To me a strike bulletin or an impassioned leaflet are of more moment than three hundred prettily and faultlessly written pages about the private woes of a society gigolo." The Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, even more strident, once said that if art isn't propaganda, it isn't art. This is a fascinating subject that remains unresolved with Marxist critics and cultural workers.

Other topics, questions of race, class and gender in literature are handled in ways both sympathetic and critical. Here again is material for more books. Foley covers other areas in proletarian literature, such as realism and didacticism, proletarian fictional autobiography, the social novel and the collective novel (not collective in authorship but in method, where the class or group is the main force, not the individual, fiction where the collective "we" replaces the "I").

We are given a vast range of working-class novels and their authors, written during the 1930s and early 1940s, many of which Foley analyzes with critical perception. She discusses Mike Gold's classic *Jews Without Money, U.S.A.*, and the early novels of the not yet politically derailed John Dos Passos. *Black Thunder* by Arna Bontemps, *The Land of Plenty*

by Robert Cantwell and *The Disinherited* by Jack Conroy are also covered. The works of Black authors like Langston Hughes are referred to, albeit peripherally, and Chester Hines, Claude McKay and Ralph Ellison are just briefly mentioned. The author should have spent more time on Hughes and Ellison and the evolution of their art. A more thorough study is made of William Attaway's *Blood on the Forge* and Richard Wright's *Native Son*, *Twelve Million Black Voices* and *Uncle Tom's Children*.

Women writers on the left are well covered as Foley examines the works of Josephine Herbst, Agnes Smedley, Mary Heaton Vorse, Fielding Burke, Grace Lumpkin, Meridel Le Seur, Tillie Olsen and others. *Radical Representations* is a virtual panorama of working-class literature, most of which is out of print today, an unforgivable commentary on our times.

Radical Representations is a timely book, a reminder that literature about workers was once a staple commodity in our cultural lives. Critiques such as the one by Barbara Foley are a welcome tool in the long and complicated class struggle. □

Norman Goldberg

Hall, continued from page 4

part-time organizers. By using these techniques, the full-time staff became the center of a whole network of rank-and-file organization and activity.

U.S. Steel recognized the new mood of militancy which swept the masses of steelworkers and decided to sign a contract in March 1937.

Led by Republic Steel, the "not-so-little" steel corporations (Jones and Laughlin, Youngstown Sheet and Tube and Inland Steel) decided to continue the old head-on struggle against the union.

Tom Girdler, the ex-police thug turned corporation president, sounded the battle cry: "I would rather go to the farm and pick apples than sign a union contract." Negotiations broke down over the issue of securing a contract. On May 26, 1937, the SWOC was forced to strike the plants of "Little Steel" over this issue. The response of the steelworkers was 100 percent pro-union. Morale was high. All the plants were closed down. The steel corporations declared war.

After four months of sharp strike struggles, the

union was forced to retreat after the governor of Ohio called in the National Guard.

But this time the steelworkers were not demoralized or disorganized. The workers in the mills showed remarkable ability to reorganize their ranks. After a long period of court fights and NLRB elections, the corporations signed contracts.

The SWOC had finished its work. This organizing committee was transformed at the founding convention into the United Steelworkers of America. Now the steelworkers had a union. This was a tremendous victory. The corporations signed yearly contracts. Workers could not be fired for union activities. A system of seniority was established. Wages were increased with each new annual contract.

The union set up a grievance apparatus, and the steelworkers were in a position for the first time to do something about our extremely hazardous working conditions. We could now resist the inhuman speedup and win because we now had a union, our union, the United Steelworkers of America. □

TEL AVIV

An unprecedented agreement was signed by the Palestinian trade unions and the Histadut, the Israeli trade union center which strengthens the cooperation between the two organizations. The two centers held a joint May Day demonstration. Signs in Hebrew and Arabic called for peaceful solutions to the problems between Palestine and Israel and for defense of workers rights.

The Communist Party of Israel called on the Rabin government to cancel the confiscation of land in and around Jerusalem and in the West Bank and to immediately move toward holding elections to the Palestinian Autonomy Council. Stressing that the occupation, annexation and settlements have been disastrous for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, the CPI reiterates that just and viable peace can only be established on the basis of the occupied territories, including the Golan heights and Lebanon, and on the basis of the establishment of the state of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital alongside the state of Israel.

WELLINGTON

The first academic strike in New Zealand's history took place on May 31st when teachers at Victoria University walked off the job rejecting the university's last offer after nine months of negotiations.

AFRICA AND WORLD WAR II

According to Ethiopian government statistics, 700,000 Ethiopians died in combat during World War II, nearly one in every family. In Libya, about 50 percent of the 10,000 Gabonese troops in the French army were killed in battles with the Nazi General Rommel's troops. Between 30,000 and 40,000 African lives were lost in the campaign to liberate Italy. In addition more than 160,000 Algerian and Tunisian troops died in the battlefields of Europe. The remains of tens of thousands of Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan troops are buried in Burma and Malaysia. According to incomplete statistics, about 1.5 million African people were major components in the Allied armies against fascism.

JOHANNESBURG

South Africa's Constitutional Court in its first major decision, unanimously banned capital punishment. The 11-member court's decision ended five years of waiting for 400 prisoners on death row.

LONDON

Workers at three Rolls Royce aero-engine plants are continuing weekly two-day strikes. Five hundred workers at East Kilbridge are fighting company attempts to transfer their jobs to Derby while at Coventry and Bristol, the struggle is against enforced six-day work weeks and pay cuts. The two-day per-week strikes have been going on for five weeks.

ISTANBUL

May Day demonstrations this year displayed the unity of Turkish and Kurdish workers. Despite the illegality of May Day in Turkey and the fact that it occurred on a working day, 50,000 turned out in Istanbul and 20,000 came out in Izmir.

SYDNEY

Waterside workers walked off the job nationally on May 23rd in response to an attempt to smash the Maritime Union of Australia in Western Australia. The strike was sparked by the government's decision to hand over stevedoring operations to a notorious anti-union capitalist who had announced plans to hire non-union labor to work the ships.

COPENHAGEN

Bus drivers in the city of Esbjerg have been on strike for three months in protest against privatization of public transport.

SEOUL

More than 40,000 people took part in rallies across South Korea in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the Kwangju uprising when the military murdered 239 people. Riot police injured at least 30 demonstrators. A few days earlier the police and army units stormed the Hyundai auto plant at Ulsan to break up a strike in protest over the company's refusal to reinstate activists who had been fired in 1993.

International Department, CPUSA

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