

Political Affairs

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DUMP THE ULTRA-RIGHT



- Wake Up Call - Hall
- Independence - Gerson
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- Vietnam's Socialism - Muoi
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Political Affairs

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A Wake-Up Call to the People of the U.S.

Gus Hall

The Republican Convention is a wake-up call to all the people of the United States. It was a made-for-TV convention, produced, directed and financed by corporate America and its Congressional lobbies, with the Christian Coalition forces pulling the extreme right strings from behind the scenes. It was a four-day ideological crusade of Republican and ultra-right rhetoric. It was a four day marathon of GOP hypocrisy and demagoguery, with a hidden agenda that raises the level of the ultra-right danger and the stakes in the 1996 elections.

The hidden agenda was camouflaged with slogans and codewords like "God," "family," "honor," "duty," "country" and the demagoguery of "restore the American dream."

The hidden agenda was concealed beneath an extravaganza of pomp and hype, sparkling red, white and blue hoopla, sprinkled with GOP entertainers straight from Capitol Hill, like Trent Lott's "singing Senators" and Gingrich's bit-part appearance to introduce the beach-volleyball gold medalist as "the essence of what freedom is all about."

It would have been just a sometimes funny, mostly boring, over-written and over-acted screen play - if it weren't so real, so deadly serious and threatening. Because if you have a healthy class instinct, a good memory, some political common sense and a keen sense of smell, you could just sniff that same 1992 "whiff of fascism" coming from the podium, as speaker after speaker gave us a frightening glimpse of the face of fascism, USA.

The foul-smelling odor of the "Contract on America" filled the air, although the Contract itself was never mentioned. These words were written out of the convention script, together with the Buchanans, Robertsons, Schlafleys, Reeds, and especially Gingrich, because they had become synonymous with the "Contract," with extreme right politics and everything that has gone wrong in our country.

Also forbidden and censored were the mere

mention of the main issues on the minds of the great majority of working people. Incredibly, the words homelessness, hunger, poverty, unemployment, mass layoffs, downsizing and privatizing were never uttered.

It is being aptly labeled a "stealth" convention because they tried to fly their hidden agenda by the people undetected, underneath low-lying clouds of demagoguery and deception.

A CONVENTION OF CORPORATE AMERICA ▣ It was a political convention of the very rich, mainly white male, small and big businessmen - 38 percent with incomes over \$100,000, over 25 percent millionaires and only 2 percent working people who made less than \$25,000. Less than 20 percent were women, and only 3 percent were African American, Latino and Asian.

The heavily-weighted parade of minority and women speakers, with the aid of camera crews focusing on the minority delegates, created an illusion of "inclusion and diversity."

They used African Americans and Latinos in the most vulgar, racist way. Colin Powell, a born-again Republican, was presented as the model moderate of the Republican Party.

It was all designed to reverse the image of the Republicans as the political party of Wall Street, to win over the undecided, the middle class and even some women and minority voters.

In this sense, Powell's speech, attacking all entitlements, welfare, civil rights and the African American people was perhaps the most reactionary and the most damaging.

The fact that he drew boos from the delegates on his support for affirmative action and abortion rights revealed that the delegates do not represent the majority of Republican voters, but the extreme right wing.

The monopoly-controlled TV networks followed the script blindly and drew only 22 percent of the viewing audience. However, the illusions created by the demagogic use of smoke and mirrors evidently fooled enough of the people to narrow the gap between Dole and Clinton.

Gus Hall is the National Chairman of the CPUSA.

The corporate masters of deceit, with a lot of help from their Christian fundamentalist, pro-fascist friends, crafted the hidden agenda, the Contract on America platform. It is their master plan for the future of the United States.

Then their professional image-makers took this real Party line and shaped it into a softer, more moderate script that projected onto the TV screen a patriotic, caring and humane party of all the American people who would "restore the American dream." The show producers used every known trick of the political trade to project a new, "moderate" image.

THE REAL DOLE & KEMP STOOD UP ■ But in spite of it all, their Party's nominees just couldn't resist nature's call, the call of their reactionary core constituencies to let their hair down, throw moderation to the winds, and let the real Dole and Kemp stand up.

In his acceptance speech it almost seemed as if Pat Buchanan's angry voice was finally heard – from Bob Dole's mouth. He dropped the warm and cuddly face the Republicans have been trying to peddle to the American people for four days and went into attack mode.

Instead, his scathing angry words exposed him as a mean-spirited confirmed right winger, deriding the Clinton administration as a clique of permissive, immature elitists who want to seize the wealth of ordinary Americans and use big government to replace the family and common sense.

He painted the U.S. under Clinton as a nation "paralyzed by crime," in danger of nuclear missile attack and under the thumb of a large and uncaring government that wants to take families out of child-rearing. He resurrected the divisive notion that America stabbed its own troops in the back in the Vietnam War, seven years after Bush tried to bury the Vietnam controversy in his inaugural speech.

Echoing Buchanan and bowing to the right-wing militias and the talk show loonies like Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern, Dole denounced the United Nations, its general secretary, and the World Trade Organization.

Even more foreboding was his searing attack on the teachers' union and his promise to work for "choice," "school vouchers" and privatization.

Dole was at his mean-spirited best when he red-baited Hillary Clinton and accused her of advocat-

ing the "collectivization" of child rearing. He said "children are not raised by villages. They are raised by families," a total distortion of her position and, even worse, an insult to African culture.

Dole's so-called "across the board 15 percent tax cut" is anti-working class. It is a class issue. It will cut the capital gains tax and the taxes of the filthy rich. The larger the income, the larger the cut. Since Dole won't cut the military budget or increase taxes on the rich, it will mean a drastic cut in social services, i.e, implementing the Contract on America. What Dole is really saying, is "We'll give you a \$1,000 tax cut, but your Medicare will go up and your Social Security will go down."

Such an anti-people tax cut could precipitate a bankruptcy crisis that they could then use to cut and eliminate social programs. Remember they didn't hesitate to close down the federal government and they wouldn't care if the government went into bankruptcy.

Jack Kemp, who was selected for his youthful, energetic moderate image, no sooner got the nomination than he began to repudiate his past positions (on affirmative action and abortion) to prove that he will truly be Dole's "right hand man."

A JARRING WAKE-UP CALL ■ The Republican Convention should be a jarring wake-up call to all progressive, democratic forces in this country. It should be a wake-up call to Clinton, to all the delegates at the Democratic Convention. It is a golden opportunity to counter the Contract, to speak to the urgent issues confronting the working class.

The Democratic delegates have an electoral opportunity-of-a-lifetime to write a pro-people, pro-labor, pro-civil rights platform that promises to undo the wreckage wrought by the ultra-right Republican majority in Congress and convince Clinton to veto the anti-family, anti-children welfare bill.

It is an opportunity to convince the 20 percent undecided voters and the 60 percent non-voters of 1992 to come out and vote against the 73 Contract Republicans and Dole-Kemp – to convince the great majority of working and poor people that there is a difference.

Especially because of the justified anger about the welfare bill, it is important to remind ourselves that Clinton did veto most of the Contract legislation that reached his desk. And, after bitter floor fights and a nationwide "America needs a raise" campaign by labor and its allies, the minimum wage

bill was passed and signed by Clinton.

There was a massive campaign of calls, E-mail and petitions flooding the White House, demanding that Clinton use his veto power on this criminal bill.

Clinton's opportunism, his tendency to cave in to the right, can only be checked by massive pressure from the people against the Contract.

THE POLITICAL REALITY ▣ We know that the "lesser evil" concept promotes illusions about the two parties. However, in light of the Republican Convention, the political reality of the moment, the danger of the ultra-right and the higher stakes, we have to recognize the differences, that there is a greater evil in this election, and go out and defeat every Contract politician.

The anger, frustration, cynicism and pessimism of so many is understandable. Americans have become more anti-government, anti-monopoly and alienated from electoral politics than ever before.

And in some ways that is good. This higher level of class consciousness among working people can lead to real political independence, a new political party led by labor. However, losing to the ultra-right in '96 can set back political independence for years.

Thus, at this critical moment cynicism and pessimism can translate into no votes. The stakes in this election are much, much too high to stay home, or vote wrong for spoilers and give votes to the greater evil. We have to join with labor and conduct a massive campaign to convince people that it is in their vital self-interests to vote in this election.

The Republican Convention should have erased all doubts, any overconfidence that the election is in the bag. It should have confirmed our worst fears that there is a fascist danger lurking in the '96 elections. And that this danger must be exposed and defeated.

If the gang of 73 maintain their majority in Congress, and if Dole-Kemp capture the presidency, the hidden agenda will become a wide open, extreme reactionary agenda, a poisonous brew of policies imposed by the most reactionary elements in the ruling capitalist class.

If the ultra-right and religious right retain their power over the political structure and win the White House, the door will be open even wider to the anti-democratic forces. The attacks on the entitlement programs will become all-out. The corporate assault on the working class will sharpen.

Democratic and civil rights will be eroded. Racism will take on a new head of steam. Medicare and Medicaid will be liquidated. All the existing regulations that preserve our environment and natural resources will be eliminated. The public school system will be destroyed. Privatization will take root and grow like a disease, eating up the public sector, every public service and institution. The reactionary policies on issues like abortion, immigration, crime and punishment will win out. Downsizing and mass layoffs to further maximize the obscene profits and billion dollar executive salaries will continue. More industries and factories will be closed, destroying lives, families and communities.

The multinationals will accelerate shipping their plants to countries like Indonesia, India, El Salvador, Guatemala and South Korea, where children working 14 hours at \$5 a day will continue to replace U.S. workers, union wages and working conditions.

WHAT IS THE FASCIST DANGER? ▣ We should remember that fascism came to power in Germany after the fascists had blocked regular operation of the democratic government, after they had put the blame for the economic and social crises it.

The Nazis called their political party the German National Socialist Party to fool the people. They also used demagoguery, the ideology of a superior master Aryan race and loyalty to the German fatherland to throw the working class off guard. When the people heard the wake-up call it was too late to save the world from the death and devastation of fascist enslavement, the Holocaust and World War II.

The basic causes of WW II and the rise of Nazi Germany are still with us today. As long as monopoly capital is the ruling class, fascism remains a potential danger.

Wars, poverty and repression are not products of people. They are products of the capitalist system and corporate rule. So long as the capitalist system exists the danger of corporate rule giving way to the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary elements in the capitalist class remains.

Fascism is an outgrowth of capitalism. It does not invent a new ideology. It does not give birth to a new set of values, or a new morality. Fascism extends the ideology, values and morality that monopoly capital gives rise to.

For example, to accept the practices of discrimi-

nation, segregation, anti-immigration and other barriers to equality for African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Chicano-Mexican American, Asian American and American Indian peoples is to accept racism and chauvinism.

Fascism takes this racism and chauvinism, rooted in the capitalist system, and extends it to acceptance of mass murder and genocide.

FASCISM AMERICAN STYLE ■ Thus, we should be very clear about the fascist danger in this country. Especially at this moment it is important to be able to recognize fascist developments in a uniquely American guise.

Many consider fascism synonymous with Hitler and Mussolini. But fascism in our country develops in typically U.S. fashion. It arises out of the kind of developments and organizations that have come to dominate the Republican Party, the Congress, the Supreme Court, the federal court system, the mass media and many of the state governorships and legislatures – and the Republican Convention.

The clearest expression of the fascist danger is the Contract on America and its backers. The Contract is an open, brazen attack on the standard of living of the majority of our people. Not only would it eliminate all government programs, but it would wipe out completely the whole concept of entitlements and the long-standing principle that government is responsible for the welfare of the people.

The Contract on America is racist, anti-labor and anti-people. The thinking behind the Contract is fascist-like. It would strip the people, especially labor, the poor and oppressed, of every safety net – economic, political and social – won in the heat of class battles over more than 60 years.

The seeds of fascism also lurk in the FBI anti-Communist harassment and persecution campaigns,

the CIA death squads of subversion and aggression, with the aim of dominating the world to plunder the resources and labor of other lands, especially in Third World countries, and in the transnationals' insatiable search for bigger and bigger profits.

Thus, if we can rid Congress of the Gingrich gang of 73 and their Democratic bedfellows, we will have gone a long way toward getting rid of the whiff of fascism that is poisoning our political structure and eating away at the fabric of our whole society.

WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO WIN ■ We are in complete agreement with the electoral policy and activities of the trade union movement. But it will take the united strength of labor and the people to win.

Defeating the ultra-right will send a signal to the pro-fascist forces nationwide (including the militias, the church-burners, the terrorists, religious right and pro-fascist fringe) that the people of this country will not tolerate reactionary politics, politicians, and their policies.

Such a people's victory will take the wind out of the right-wing sails. It will force the ultra right, with its fascist-leaning and corporate supporters, to back off and pull in their fangs.

To answer the wake-up call, labor, together with people's organizations, mass movements and working-class communities, must build electoral coalitions that will demonstrate, march and speak out on issues everywhere and every day from now until election day.

We can only turn our country around and go forward as a people by defeating Dole-Kemp and cleaning the Gingrich gang of 73 out of all positions of political power.

It is the only answer we can give to the wake-up call. It is a call and a challenge we must accept as our number one priority from now until the polls close on November 5th. □

Defeating the Ultra-Right is the Best Way to Promote Independence

Si Gerson

In mid-July I was discussing with a friend who is a Green Party leader in New York the report that famed consumer advocate Ralph Nader might be his party's presidential candidate. "I'd love to vote for Nader," my friend said, then he paused. "But I'm afraid of the consequences."

"What consequences?"

"A split in the anti-Dole-Gingrich vote permitting the Republicans to capture the White House along with the Congress," was the prompt answer. "We can't let that happen."

On August 1, the day after President Clinton announced he would sign the "welfare reform" bill – acidly termed the "welfare repeal" bill by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, (D-NY) – I received a phone call from my Green Party friend. "I've changed my mind," he said breathlessly. "I'm not voting for Clinton after what he did. I'm gonna vote for Nader after all."

"Is that the reason you called?" "Well," he answered somewhat abashed, "I thought you could dissuade me." My wife (who was on the other phone) and I didn't work hard at dissuading him. Rather we thought to cool him and get him rethinking the problem. We told him the criticism of Clinton on the issue was entirely justified, that it was shared by millions and that the supporters of Clinton in the labor movement and the African American and Latino communities were also sharply critical. And, further, if their indignation was mobilized there was ever the possibility to change the situation beginning with Congress' returning from the summer break after Labor Day. My friend finally said he might reconsider his position and we left it there.

An unscientific survey of a few others drew substantially the same reaction – sharp criticism of Clinton's waffling and yielding to the right. There were some who said they wouldn't vote for any candidate – certainly not for Dole – but quite a few said they would vote for Nader if he was on their state ballot.

Obviously, this is another twist in an already complex electoral situation. On the one hand, we have an organized labor movement and its allies in the African American and Latino communities and other people's movements. They are at this historical moment supporting a centrist president despite some sharp differences, as for example, over NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement).

On the other hand, there is the massed power of corporate wealth, including some of its most extreme elements, with its political front, the Republican-Dole-Gingrich-Christian Coalition gang, now controlling both houses of Congress and hell-bent on capturing the executive branch of government. There is, of course, the Reform Party, controlled by billionaire Ross Perot, whose core policies, stripped of their demagogic disguises, are not far from those of the Dole-Gingrich mob.

Where is the Green Party in all this? It is a series of loosely allied, but mostly autonomous state parties doing considerable grass roots work on ecological and other social issues. It claims currently that it has elected 28 elected officials at local levels in 12 states with 16 in California alone. Now the Green Party is seeking to create a truly national party organization by going all out for presidential nominee Ralph Nader who enjoys wide name recognition and is something of a favorite in liberal circles. Nader's formal nomination was set for its national "Green Gathering '96," at the University of California, Los Angeles, Aug. 15-19, which was given the subtitle, "Building the Critical Mass." In the invitation to the gathering, the initiators explain the term:

"Building Critical Mass" was chosen to reflect the fact that the United States is undergoing a rare period of political realignment; there is a great receptivity among Americans for a new politics, and Green and kindred movements have an opportunity to influence this change as it occurs. We hope that Green Gathering '96 will be a building block in the transformation of U.S. politics, bringing together Greens and others from around the U.S. and internationally to challenge the corporate dominance of society and offer a just democratic and ecological alternative.

Si Gerson is a member of the National Board, CP USA.

Earlier, a Draft Nader for President Clearinghouse with offices in Washington, D.C., was set up and has some outreach. While technically independent of any official campaign committee, the Clearinghouse is raising money, has an 800 number, a Nader bumper sticker, and is spreading the word and handing out legal advice on ballot access queries and other electoral problems. Nader is on the ballot at this writing in nine states — Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah, with petition collections on in 20 other states.

A SERIOUS EFFORT ■ In short, a serious effort. The respected field polling organization of California reported in its survey that Nader would draw 8 percent of the state's vote if the election were held in July. Since about 11 million Californians voted in 1992 that would amount to 880,000 votes. Even if he only drew 2 percent, that would be about a quarter of a million, possibly enough to tip the balance in a close election. And that would mean that California's 54 Electoral College votes, 20 percent of the 270 required to elect a president, might go to the Republican Dole. Nader and the Greens would be branded as "spoilers" responsible for helping to hand the executive branch of government to the ultra-right.

This is a concern even in circles close to Nader. *Boston Globe* staffer Michael Kranish, reporting from Washington June 23, writes that Nader "dismisses the concern of his closest friends that his bid could siphon off liberal votes and indirectly elect Republican Robert Dole." Nader may shrug off the worries of friends and allies but they won't be silenced. Stephen Brobeck, director of the powerful Consumer Federation of America, told the *Globe* correspondent that "like many Nader admirers, he thinks Nader should pull out of the presidential race because he has made his point." A similar view was voiced by one of Nader's co-workers. Reported Kranish: "Joan Claybrook, who heads the Public Citizen group Nader founded, said she feared Nader's candidacy would draw votes away from Clinton in California and possibly throw the election to Dole." Further, Claybrook said Nader's reputation would suffer. "When the issue of the Green Party fell into his lap, I'm not sure he realized how high the stakes would be. A lot of people said that this will hurt Ralph."

While Nader enjoys wide respect for work in

the consumer field, it is significant that not a single prominent labor figure or outstanding personality in the African American or Latino movements has come out for his candidacy. Even in middle-class and professional circles there is at best mixed feelings about the Nader candidacy in present circumstances. This was indicated when the July 8 issue of *The Nation* carried a lead article by Nader and polled some liberals about his candidacy.

Feminist organizer Gloria Steinem wrote: "I welcomed his campaign populist consciousness raising ... But if it attracts even one vote, it heightens the danger of a Congress and a White House controlled by, in his phrase, 'the cruelest rogues who ever crawled up Capitol Hill' — and that would be a tragedy." Steinem added: "So if I were in Nader's shoes, my campaign slogan would be: 'Listen to me — but don't vote for me.'" Ramona Ripston, executive director of the Southern California ACLU, said that nine months earlier she had signed a letter urging Nader to run for president because she was "profoundly disillusioned" with President Clinton's position on civil liberties issues, welfare and immigration. "All that said, I will vote for Bill Clinton," she wrote. "Today the stakes are too high to start a new people's movement six months before an election and once again turn the nation over to the right wing."

Daniel Cantor, national organizer of the New Party, called Nader's analysis of the two-party system correct but termed "his strategy wrong" and warned that his "marginal category of votes ... will prove either trivial or destructive." Cantor stressed that Nader's campaign

is inattentive to and not supported by organized labor and the Black community, the two central constituencies needed to build a progressive movement. And if it does produce a Dole presidency, the space for independent politics now opening in the labor movement would disappear...

Supporters of the Nader candidacy queried by *The Nation*, indicated some uncertainty. Former Rep. Dan Hamburg (D-Calif), now a registered Green, struck a curious note: "It's time for progressives to leave the shore. Hopefully, adrift, we will chart a new course toward a more just and harmonious society." John Rensenbrink, Green candidate for Senate from Maine, wrote, "I implore you, Ralph. Do it! And make your people

do it."

It is clear that while there is strong sentiment for independent political action in Green Party ranks there are still pockets of doubt about the wisdom of the Nader candidacy at this time. Obviously, some Green voters are thinking hard about the consequences of splitting the anti-Dole vote. The example of the Green Party primary in New Mexico is some indication of this. With a reported registration of 5,000-plus, a total of 1,439 voted in the primary. Nader received 948 votes (66 percent); Socialist Mary Cal Hollis 391 (27 percent), and Uncommitted 110. (about 7.5 percent).

UNLIKELY YES, IMPOSSIBLE NO ▣ Undoubtedly, some Green voters had the national picture in mind. Could, for example, a substantial Nader vote in California tip the scale in a close race and give Dole the state's 54 Electoral College votes? Unlikely? Yes. Impossible? No. At this point, with Clinton far ahead in the polls it seems like a highly improbable scenario. But wait a bit. There may well be a four-way race with Clinton, Dole, Perot and Nader. By Election Day, if previous experience is any guide, the gap between Dole and Clinton will be much narrower than current polls indicate.

That's a horror scenario, of course. But it's the kind of scene that the labor movement and the Black and Latino community leaders will move heaven and earth to avoid. Rep. Bernard Sanders of Vermont, the only Independent in the House and the chairman of the House Progressive Caucus, has some sober words on the matter. He gave his views to a reporter for the *Progressive* magazine which published the interview in its May issue. Speaking of Clinton, the Vermont congressman said:

Clearly, I'm not very excited about him. But here's where it becomes very difficult and requires a great deal of maturity. As I sit in Congress seeing what these extraordinarily right-wing people - who literally do not even believe in the concept of government in a democratic society - want to do, I think, what happens if you get a Republican president who will not veto or speak out against these devastating cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, environmental protection, women's rights and so forth?

Let us not minimize what that will mean for America.

You will be talking about efforts to have open shop legislation for the entire United States - destroying the trade union movement ... You will be talking about monumental setbacks in environmental protection. You will be talking about a Constitutional amendment to ban abortion. This is really devastating stuff and people should not minimize that. That's what a Bob Dole presidency would mean.

A few months earlier a similar warning but in greater detail, was issued by Gus Hall, national chairman of the Communist Party at the Party's 26th national convention in Cleveland. In his keynote address on March 1, Hall warned against any surrender to the belief that nothing could be done about the ultra-right. "The takeover of our country by the ultra-right is not imminent or inevitable," he said. "But we must not underestimate this new danger."

Hall mapped out a policy of struggle against the ultra-right in the 1996 elections stressing the need for the widest common front against the ultra-right, the Dole-Gingrich-Christian Coalition.

Our approach and attitude towards Clinton and the Democratic Party is not a point of simply supporting Democrats. We know what Clinton's views and policies are... We know he wavers - Clinton's waffling can only be checked by massive pressure from the people.

And on the "lesser of two evils"- the usual taunt flung at Communists and other progressives who seek to build wide coalitions to defeat the ultra-right, to change the composition of the Congress, and prevent the right from taking over the executive branch of government, Hall said,

We should not see the electoral struggle simply as a Dole vs. Clinton contest. The important thing is the lineup of forces behind the candidates. We are not campaigning for Clinton. We are focused campaigners against the ultra-right in every race...

We have to keep in mind that this tactic is only for this election... We should educate people about the ultimate need for a new political party led by labor outside the two-party system...

Hopefully, some of the many Green members will ponder these thoughts. □

The Struggle for Mexican American Equality

Mexican American Equality Commission

Because so many Mexican Americans, Mexicans and other Latinos are presently joining our ranks, I think it proper to utilize the theoretical journal *Political Affairs* to help explain our Party's position views and attitude on this all-important question. Central to this is how to achieve the greatest unity possible with the working class as a whole. I will try to focus on our Party's views and what led us to certain conclusions and resolutions. Finally, I will include some thinking prepared for the 26th National Convention by comrade Evelina Alarcon, Secretary of our Mexican American Equality Commission.

The latter document is an update on where we stand now and some of the major problems facing us as a people. Much of it focuses on the cutbacks carried through by the 104th Congress and the immense bashing and scapegoating directed against the Mexican American population by right-wing politicians.

There really isn't very much good literature on the long history and development of Mexican people here in the U.S. – it is as if we had never existed. It is a widely known fact that a very large section of Northern Mexico – about half of the country – was stolen in the Mexican American war of 1848. This was U.S. imperialism at its best.

Nonetheless, both the literature on this subject in the national libraries and attention to it in the news media is very limited. If it does exist it is very often presented negatively, with an anti-Mexican tone. Much of this information is completely false from the perspective of Mexican Americans. This extensive lack of attention to our history feeds the urge to write our true history.

Our Party's approach to Mexican American equality was set forth at our 1972 National Convention. The framework for our work is based on the deep roots of Mexican American communities dating back hundreds of years. We are the second oldest population to set foot in what is now the United States of America. The Native American Indians are the only people with a longer history and thus more claim to U.S. territory than our Mexican American or Spanish ancestors.

Secondly, we recognize that the Mexican American population now in the United States evolved from a mixture of European and Native American Indians already here at the time that the Spaniards arrived. From then until the present times there have been mixtures with other peoples and nationalities, among them Europeans and African Americans. Third we recognize that the Spanish language and Mexican culture have been continuously replenished by succeeding waves of immigrants mainly from Mexico but from many other Latin American countries as well.

We also recognized that while historically speaking the southwestern United States had been the principle area of settlement such regional distinctions were not true in 1972 and are even much less so now as we move into the 21st century. Mexican Americans reside throughout most of the states and regions of the country. Therefore we concluded that Mexican Americans are an integral part of the U.S. nation.

We have also taken note that the working class composition of the Mexican American population is around 90 percent. This factor, plus an examination of the areas of employment in the basic industries of the U.S. economy, led us to the conclusion that we are an integral part of the U.S. working class. As such, the struggle for equality is the concern of the whole multinational and multiracial class and therefore not only the responsibility of the Mexican American population itself. The resolution adopted in 1972 put the issue this way:

Chicano liberation is not a question of narrow concern only to Chicanos or the southwestern part of the United States. Chicano liberation is a question of major importance to the entire working class.

The organized workers, their unions and all their members face a common enemy – the capitalist ruling class. The total liberation of the Chicano people cannot be separated from the struggle for economic security of all workers. The key to victory in this joint struggle is unity of the entire working class.

One more comment: in our 1972 resolution we

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placed special responsibility for carrying out the program on the white members of our Party. It outlined five special points as a guide for their contributions.

The purpose of our studies and resolutions is not only to critique, analyze and set goals, all of which we do in the course of our everyday work. The purpose is to move forward and into the future toward a socialist society. As was said by Karl Marx, our purpose is not simply to record history – the object is to change it. Have we succeeded? Has it worked for us?

Unfortunately, not all districts and/or sections of our Party work evenly. Thus the results are also uneven. Both the efforts and results range from excellent to good. By all measurements I think the Southern California district has done the best job, though good and even excellent work is being done in several other districts.

Overall, I think the goals that we set ourselves in 1972 have worked very well. For example, in 1972 the AFL-CIO had an anti-immigrant position and there were very few Chicanos in executive positions of the U.S. labor movement. That is not the case at present. Now the AFL-CIO position on immigrants is very supportive and positive. There are Mexican American men and women in executive positions from the national to local level in most of the unions in our country. The political arena shows similar progress.

Due to a very busy schedule, the Mexican American commission has not been able to meet. What we have done is to incorporate the policy of defeating the right wing into our overall Party and trade union approach. This is in keeping with the approach developed by our 26th National Convention. Its basic features are to continue recruiting, building a mass Party, continue to work for working-class unity and the elimination of racism in all its forms.

Lorenzo Torrez

The Mexican American people are victims of class, racial and national oppression. Over 90 percent are workers. Mexican American men earn 56 percent of what the general population earns. Over 10 percent are unemployed. Over 28 percent live in poverty, with 48.3 percent of Mexican American youth under 18 years of age living in poverty.

While thousands of Mexican American workers

lost their jobs due to downsizing and plant closure, they still remain highly concentrated in the manufacturing industries in both heavy and light manufacturing. The largest proportion of Mexican American workers are blue collar workers – 33 percent are operators, fabricators and laborers.

During the last decade growing population and a growth amongst Mexican immigrants has resulted in Mexican American/Mexican communities in every state of the nation. Mexican Americans are the largest Latino group in 40 states in the U.S.

LABOR LEADERS ■ Mexican American struggles are emerging on the national scene in every area: political, economic, social, and cultural. However, the most dynamic is their national participation and visibility in the labor movement. Cesar Chavez, a labor leader, was the best known Mexican American in our country. Juan Chacon of *Salt of the Earth* fame and Emma Tenayka are also part of our labor history legacy.

More Mexican Americans have been elected to trade union leadership than in any past period. This includes the election of Linda Chaves-Thompson, who, as part of the John Sweeney-Richard Trumka slate, became the first Mexican, first racial minority and first woman to be elected as an international officer of the AFL-CIO.

The Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) increasingly plays a leading role within the labor movement because its membership has grown substantially by the emergence of grassroots Mexican American and Puerto Rican trade union leaders who come fresh from class struggle battles in industries in city after city.

In struggle after struggle, the labor movement has emerged as the most solid ally of Mexican Americans. In the ferocious battle against Prop. 187 in California, the labor movement came forward as the leading force alongside Mexican Americans to battle this anti-immigrant measure. The alliance produced the largest demonstration in the history of Los Angeles with over 130,000 people protesting against Prop. 187. An attempt by Save our States forces in Arizona failed to collect enough signatures to qualify for the '96 ballot.

This demonstration, along with an explosion of anti-Prop. 187 marches, rallies, and sit-ins which took place throughout California, was the most compelling reason why Judge Mariana Pfaelzer recently ruled Prop. 187 unconstitutional.

Being part of the multiracial, multinational working class by their overwhelming majority is the most dynamic force driving Mexican American people. This objective dynamic pushes Mexican Americans not only into unity with their multiracial, multinational class brothers and sisters but also into closer unity with African Americans, other Latino peoples, Asian Americans, Native American Indians, and other racially and nationally oppressed peoples. Black, Brown and white unity is growing in response to the racist challenge of the Gingrich gang.

Just a few decades ago Mexican American representation on the national level was virtually nonexistent. Today there are 17 Latino members of Congress. Latinos hold over 5,000 elected offices, and in the last ten years the number of Latina women officeholders has increased as well. Mexican Americans hold the largest number of these elected offices. This new political clout is now being mobilized into fighting the Gingrich agenda, including battling the attack on political representation for racial minorities.

EFFECT OF CONTRACT ON AMERICA ■ The Republican agenda and their Contract on America strikes against Mexican American both ideologically and programatically. Anti-Mexican racism and chauvinism is the main ideological basis of their anti-immigrant policies. This has encouraged a rise of police brutality in Mexican American communities, with more Mexican Americans being killed by police while in custody.

Outrageous chauvinism drives the Republican call for English Only, which would incite more discrimination against Mexicans and all Americans whose first language is not English. Republicans want to go back to the years of forcing people to speak English, where Mexican American children were severely punished in school for speaking another language, where merely speaking Spanish was treated as a crime and a sign of inferiority. U.S. history includes a time when it was common for Mexican Americans to be shot and killed because they were not understood by police.

Republicans are pushing to end bilingual education which, if achieved, would destroy quality education for Mexican Americans, who already suffer from the highest school dropout rate in the nation.

The right-wing effort to eliminate affirmative

action will destroy most of the hard-won gains of Mexican Americans in employment, job promotions, education and in the professions. The proposed cutbacks of welfare and other vital safety-net programs will inflict great suffering on Mexican American people, especially women, seniors and children. Immigrants will be denied most of these programs altogether.

POLITICAL ACTION ■ It is this life-and-death danger which is mobilizing Mexican American organizations of every kind in the 1996 elections. Mexican American college students in California have joined multi-racial student coalitions in hunger strikes and demonstrations for affirmative action. Students recently took over a building at UCLA holding it for hours in protest of the racist California "Civil Rights" initiative which would destroy affirmative action.

Mexican American organizations are active in a national voter registration drive called "Latino Vote USA" which aims to register one million Latinos in this election. In Los Angeles, LCLAA has organized voter registration of thousands of Latinos and held citizenship ceremonies. Mexican American trade unionists play a leading role in labor's efforts to place initiatives on the ballot to increase the minimum wage and tax the rich, as well as in electoral forms like labor-to-neighbor.

And no less significant is the fact that hundreds of Mexican American and Latinos have joined our Party all over the country. Tabling in Mexican American communities has shown that the grassroots are looking for real solutions and see our Party as that action vehicle. We have to organize that enthusiasm into multi-racial, multinational mass action in protest of Republican policies.

The Mexican American Equality Commission should produce an electoral literature piece exposing the Republican right-wing danger and projecting a program for Mexican American equality. This would help mobilize masses of Mexican Americans into electoral activity and at the same time win our whole class and people to reject and mobilize against the racist, chauvinist Republican assault. □

Evelina Alarcon

Vietnam's Path to Socialism

Do Muoi

The VIIIth National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam convenes at a time of great historic significance. The process of all-round renewal initiated by the VIth National Congress has unfolded for almost 10 years. In the course of those years, our country has seen vast profound changes. The VIIIth National Congress has the task of reviewing the past five years' implementation of the VIIth National Congress Resolution, summing up 10 years of renewal, mapping out upcoming objectives, orientations and tasks of our entire Party and people in the new stage of national construction and defense, the central task of which is to speed up the cause of national industrialization and modernization.

From the end of the '70s when our country began grappling with a socioeconomic crisis, our Party had, on the basis of a review of our practical work and our people's creative experience, mapped out many policies of a partial renewal nature. However, the weaknesses of the then model of socialist construction were in the main not yet overcome. The country was subjected to blockade and embargo. While implementing renewal measures, new errors were committed, as a result of which the socioeconomic crisis persisted acutely with the inflation rate reaching 774.7 percent in 1986.

At the end of 1986, at its VIth National Congress, with the resolve to "look straight at the truth, accurately evaluate the truth and spell out the truth," our Party seriously reviewed its leadership, reasserted our achievements, analyzed our errors and mistakes, and charted the policy of all-round renewal. As a result the course of socialist construction in our country reached a turning point.

After the VIth National Congress, renewal was vigorously put into action. However, we were faced with a complex situation fraught with, at times, seemingly unsurmountable difficulties: triple-digit inflation for three consecutive years; a sharp decline in the living standards of wage earners and people on social welfare; many state enter-

prises and small industry and handicrafts cooperatives slipping into stagnation and suffering losses, barely maintaining production or even being forced to close down; hundreds of thousands of workers forced to leave their enterprises; tens of thousands of teachers giving up teaching; credit funds collapsing in many places. Complex international developments had an adverse impact on the situation in our country.

In such circumstances, our Party, state and people clearly showed their staunch mettle, did their utmost to overcome difficulties, firmly maintained political stability, tackled urgent socioeconomic problems, thus step by step translating the Resolution of the VIth National Party Congress into life. Whereas in early 1988 famine struck several parts of the country and inflation still stood at 393.8 percent, from 1989 onward we exported each year from 1 to 1.5 million tons of rice; inflation slowed down to 67.4 percent in 1990. The implementation of the three major economic programs made visible progress. The multi-sector commodity economy, operating along a market mechanism with state management began to take shape. The people's living conditions were improved and democracy was promoted in society. National defense and security were firmly maintained and foreign relations were broadened, gradually moving our country out of its state of blockade and isolation. Party building made progress. And the people's confidence was restored step by step.

However, the results obtained still showed limitations and remained unsteady; a host of pressing problems had emerged. The VIIth National Party Congress reached this conclusion: the process of renewal has recorded very important initial achievements, but our country has not yet come out of the socioeconomic crisis.

The VIIth National Congress set the overall objectives for the five years between 1991 and 1995, namely, to overcome difficulties and challenges, ensure socioeconomic stabilization and development, strengthen political stability, and reduce negative phenomena and social injustices, taking our country out of its present state of crisis. The Con-

This article is excerpted from the report of Do Muoi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam at its recent Congress.

gress solemnly declared, "Vietnam wishes to be a friend of all countries in the world community, striving for peace, independence and development."

After our VIIth National Congress, the Soviet Union's disintegration exerted a profound impact on our country. A large number of our officials and population were worried - some even wavered, doubting the prospects of socialism. Our economic relations with our traditional markets were upset. In the meantime the United States' embargo continued. A number of hostile forces stepped up their activities, attempting to cause political instability and incite rebellion and subversion. Our country once more stood before perilous tests and trials.

Our Party and people have persevered in pursuing our line of renewal, done their utmost to implement the Resolution of the VIIth National Congress, surmounted difficulties and obstacles and scored new and great achievements.

ACCELERATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■ The average annual growth rate in the 1991-1995 period was 8.2 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) (against a planned target of 5.5 percent). The inflation rate decreased from 67.1 percent in 1991 to 12.7 percent in 1995.

Scientific and technological activities have become more closely associated with the needs of socioeconomic development and are progressively adapted to the market mechanism.

Relations of production have been adjusted to better suit the development needs of the productive forces. The multi-sector commodity economy operating along a market mechanism with state management and a socialist orientation, continues to grow.

The material conditions of life of the majority of the population have been improved. The number of medium income and wealthy households has risen, while the percentage of poor households has decreased. Each year over one million more working people have found employment. Many houses and roads have been upgraded or built in both rural and urban areas.

The intellectual level and the extent of cultural enjoyment of the population have been heightened. Education, training and health care, cultural, artistic and sports activities, mass communication, family planning and many other social activities have seen development and progress.

Working people, liberated from bondage and

having their dynamism and creativity promoted and having the right to be masters, show greater initiative in seeking employment, generating additional income, and taking part in community activities.

The policy to pay the nation's debt of gratitude to those with meritorious service has elicited nationwide support; the campaign for eradication of hunger and the alleviation of poverty and philanthropic activities continues to expand, becoming a new and fine feature of our society. The confidence of the population in the political system and the future of the country, and in the Party and state, has heightened.

We have firmly maintained our political stability, independence and sovereignty and the peaceful environment of the country, creating fundamental favorable conditions for the process of renewal.

The Party has defined clearly the orientation, tasks and guiding approaches for the defense of the Homeland in the new situation and has effectively continued the adjustment of its strategy for national defense and security. The demands of consolidating national defense and security and improving the life of the armed forces have been better met. The combat quality and strength of our army and security forces have been enhanced. The system of all-people's defense and people's security has been consolidated. And the preservation of political security and social order and safety has been strengthened.

On the basis of the program for national construction in the period of transition to socialism, we have step by step concretized the line of renewal in all fields. The Party [has been] consolidated politically, ideologically and organizationally, promoting its leading role in society. [We have] promulgated the new Constitution of 1992, amended, revised and promulgated many important legal documents, undertaken initial measures of reform of the state administrative system, and continued our efforts to build and perfect the law-governed state of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The Fatherland Front, [and other] political and social organizations have step by step renewed the content and mode of their activities, achieving more practical results. The people's right to be their own masters in the fields of economy, society, politics, ideology and culture has been promoted. People of various ethnic groups and different walks of life have grown united around the cause of building a prosperous people, a strong country, and an equitable and civilized society. More and more overseas

Vietnamese are turning to the Homeland, moved by that common great goal.

MISTAKES AND WEAKNESSES ■ Together with an accurate assessment of achievements, it is necessary to clearly identify mistakes and weaknesses.

Our country is still poor and underdeveloped. However, we have failed to observe proper economy in production and thrift in consumption so as to focus available capital on development investment.

To this day, our country remains among the poorest countries in the world, with low levels of economic development, labor productivity, and production and business efficiency, a backward material and technical base, and a heavy degree of indebtedness. While our need for capital for development investment is very large and pressing, a number of state and Party institutions, people's organizations and economic organizations, as well as a segment of our officials and population are spending wastefully, consuming more than they can produce without saving for intensive development investment. The state is yet to adopt policies which can effectively mobilize capital resources among the population.

Many negative phenomena and unsolved problems still beset the social situation. Corruption, smuggling and the squandering of public property have yet to be checked. Serious wrong doings persist within the state and Party apparatuses, people's organizations, and in state enterprises, especially in the fields of land and housing, capital construction, investment cooperation, taxation, import and export, and even in the operation of many law enforcement bodies. Unemployment remains acute. Polarization of wealth has rapidly increased between the various regions, between urban and rural areas, and between different segments of the population. The conditions of life of part of the population, especially in a number of former revolutionary and resistance bases and in areas of ethnic minorities remain very hard. The quality of education, training and health care is quite low in many places. Poor people cannot afford medical treatment and send their children to school, while financial sources from the state budget and other available resources that can be mobilized to respond to social welfare requirements remain both limited and poorly utilized. Traffic congestion, eco-environmental pollution and the destruction of natural resources all keep growing. Noxious cultural arti-

cles are widespread. Social ills are on the rise. Many complex problems still beset public order and safety.

Guidance in building the new relations of production has proved somewhat confused and lax. We have been slow in doing away with impediments so as to provide the impetus and favorable conditions for state enterprises to improve their efficiency and their leading role in the national economy. Slowness has been shown in the experimental equalization of state enterprises. Inadequate attention has been paid to summing up practical experiences in order to devise timely orientations and measures to renew the cooperative economy, resulting in the disintegration or mere nominal subsistence of cooperatives in many localities, thus hindering the development of production. Experience has failed to be drawn in time, and assistance has not been extended to encourage growth of new cooperative forms. A number of policies aimed at providing incentives for the private economy to promote its own potential have not been properly handled, and at the same time, management of this economic sector leaves much to be desired. There have been many loopholes in the management of enterprises involved in cooperation and joint ventures with foreign countries.

The state's socioeconomic management is still weak. The system of laws, mechanisms and policies are not yet well coordinated, consistent and strictly implemented. Operations in financial, banking, pricing, planning, construction and land management have shown many weaknesses. The pace of renewal in administrative procedures is slow. The state trade service is not yet effectively bringing to bear its leading role on the market. The management of import-export operations has revealed many loopholes, giving rise to negative phenomena, some of which have adversely impacted production. Income distribution still suffers from many irrationalities. Budget overexpenditures and the trade deficit remain large. Inflation, though curbed, is still unsteady.

State management over activities in science and technology, protection of natural resources and ecological environment, education, training, communication, press, publication, culture, literature and the arts has left much to be desired.

Many weaknesses remain in the political system. The competence and efficacy of the Party leadership, the effectiveness of state management and

administration, and the efficiency of the activities of political and social organizations have not been brought up to par with the requirements of the situation. The apparatuses of the Party, state and people's organizations have been slow to reorganize, streamline and improve in quality. There remain many instances of bureaucracy and serious violation of the people's democratic rights. The recruitment, upgrading, change and replacement, rejuvenation and preparation of personnel to ensure succession have been indecisive and slow. The competence and integrity of the corps of functionaries are not yet up to the requirement of their tasks. Particularly preoccupying is the fact that the revolutionary ideal has been fading among not a small number of Party officials and members. Their integrity and morality have become debased. The combativeness of a number of grassroots Party organizations has weakened.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT ■ After 10 years' implementation of the policy of all-round renewal and five years implementation of the Resolution of the VIIth National Party Congress, our country has weathered a period of acute challenges. In a situation fraught with extreme complexities and difficulties, our people have not only firmly stood ground but even risen above to make outstanding achievements in many respects.

The process of renewal has over the past 10 years recorded great achievements of very important significance. The tasks set by the VIIth National Congress for the 5 years from 1991 to 1995 have been essentially fulfilled. Our country has come out of the socioeconomic crisis, but a number of aspects remain unsteady.

The task set for the initial phase of the transition period, which is to prepare the ground for industrialization, has in the main been completed, allowing for a shift to a new period, that of pressing ahead with the industrialization and modernization of the country. The path to socialism in our country has been more and more clearly defined.

From an overall point of view, the elaboration and implementation of the line of renewal over the past years is basically correct and in line with the socialist orientation, despite the fact that in the course of implementation, a number of prolonged major mistakes and errors have resulted in deviations in one or another field and of varying degrees.

Reviewing the course of renewal of the past 10

years, we may draw the following main lessons:

To persist firmly in the goal of national independence and socialism throughout the process of renewal; to firmly hold on to the two strategic tasks of national construction and defense; and to persevere in Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts.

It must be made clear that renewal is by no means a change in the socialist goal, but a more correct understanding of socialism and the realization of that goal through appropriate forms, steps and measures. It is a combination of persistence in revolutionary principles and strategy on the one hand, with tactical flexibility and creativity and a quick grasp of the new on the other.

Renewal must be carried out on the basis of preserving, inheriting and promoting the valuable traditions of the nation and achievements of the revolution. Due criticism of mistakes and errors must be coupled with an assertion of correct undertakings, without making a blanket denial of the past nor becoming confused and disoriented, nor moving from one extreme to another.

To closely combine economic renewal with political renewal from the start, with economic renewal as the focus, while step by step conducting political renewal.

From an overall perspective our Party in fact started the renewal process by renewing its political thinking in charting the political line and domestic and foreign policies. Without renewal in this field, there could have been no renewal in others. Yet the Party has been right in focusing first of all on successfully undertaking economic renewal and overcoming the socioeconomic crisis, thus creating the necessary material and intellectual premises for firmly maintaining political stability, building up and consolidating the people's confidence and creating favorable conditions for the renewal of other aspects of social life.

In renewing the organization and operational mechanism of the political system, we have taken prudent and steady steps, starting from the most urgent problems where conditions were ripe for a solution, bearing in mind an understanding that although it was highly necessary work to do, it was also so complicated and sensitive that any haste and misstep would cost dearly and might cause damage beyond repair.

The main objective of the renewal of the political system is to properly exercise socialist democra-

cy and fully promote the people's right to be the master. A great lesson we have learned is that democracy must indispensably be coupled with order and discipline. [We have learned] to overcome violations of the people's right to be the master while countering tendencies of extremist and fanatic democratism. [We have learned] to thwart resolutely all attempts to abuse the issues of "democracy" and "human rights" to stir up political trouble and sabotage our regime, or to interfere in our country's internal affairs. [Another lesson] is not to accept pluralism and multi-partyism.

USE OF MARKET AND SOCIALIST MANAGEMENT ■

Our application of the economic forms and methods of market economic management is aimed at making use of their positive aspects to serve our own objectives of socialist construction and not to deviate to the capitalist path.

A market economy contains negative aspects which are contradictory to the nature of socialism. There are trends of polarization between the poor and the rich and the cult of money which tramples upon ethics and dignity. While engaging in a market economy, it is necessary to struggle resolutely to overcome and minimize these negative trends.

In order to develop the productive capability, it is necessary to promote the capabilities of all economic sectors and recognize the fact that exploitation and rich-poor polarization still exist to some extent in society. However, it is necessary also to always care for the interests of the working people, encouraging lawful collection of wealth, combating illegal fortune making, while attaching importance to eradicating hunger and alleviating poverty step by step achieving social equality and moving toward enabling everybody and every household to become better off.

Revolution is the cause of the people, for the people and by the people. The opinions, aspirations and initiatives of the people are in fact the roots that shape the Party's line of renewal. It is also because the people have embraced this line and courageously undertaken renewal in spite of untold difficulties and trials that our renewal has recorded today's achievements. To continue taking the renewal forward to still greater achievements, it is necessary to broaden and strengthen more effectively all-people's unity, both at home and overseas, promote democracy and maximize the strength of the entire nation for the goal of building

a prosperous people, a strong country, and an equitable and civilized society.

TO ENHANCE THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY ■

The revolutionary cause of our country is led by the Communist Party. Ours is the ruling party. All successes and achievements, failures and losses of the revolution are thus closely linked with the responsibility of the Party. In the course of national renewal, the Party must in all seriousness look at its errors, mistakes and weaknesses, renew and rectify itself, and enhance its combativeness and leadership capability. The forces hostile to socialism and national independence have always aimed their attack at the Party, trying to sabotage its ideological foundation and organization. Their usual method is to distort history, deny revolutionary achievements and refute the sacrifices and contributions made by the Communists, exaggerate errors and mistakes made by the Party, demand the exercise of capitalist-style human rights and democracy, demand a depoliticization of the state apparatus, press for a pluralistic and multi-party system with a view to stripping the Party of its leadership role. They have made use of political opportunists and traitors or those who have deteriorated ethically to sow division, weaken the Party and undermine it from within.

Well aware of the new requirements of the revolution and the above-described schemes and maneuver against our Party, we have determined that in the present stage, economic leadership is the central task and Party building key.

Our cause of renewal and national construction and defense is moving ahead in the context of the rapid, complex and highly unpredictable evolution of the world situation. Its salient characteristics are:

The collapse of the socialist regime in the Soviet Union and East European countries has driven socialism into a temporary regression. However, that has not changed the nature of the times; mankind is still in the era of transition from capitalism to socialism. The basic contradictions in the world still exist and continue to develop, growing more acute in some respects, and assume many new content and forms. National struggle and class struggle continue to unfold in diverse forms.

The danger of an annihilating world war has been pushed back, but armed conflicts, local wars, national, ethnic and religious strife, the arms race, intervention, subversion and terrorism still occur in many places.

The revolution in science and technology continues to develop at an increasingly higher level, rapidly increasing productive forces while accelerating the process of shifting the world economic structures and the internationalization of the economy and social life.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW PERIOD ■ All the achievements and shortcomings of the renewal process are closely linked to the leadership responsibility and operation of our Party. The leadership and operation of our Party constitute a decisive factor for the renewal achievements. Meanwhile, it is precisely in the course of leading the renewal process that the Party has constantly grown and been able to realize its own weaknesses and take remedial measures.

Successes of renewal have proved that our Party is capable of continued preservation and further promotion of the will-power and experiences gained during the previous stages, and of fruitful leadership over the course of national construction and defense in the new and extremely complex situation.

In general, over the past 10 years, the following achievements have been made in Party building: the Party has initiated and gradually amended and complemented a judicious and creative line of renewal, charting ever more clearly the path to socialism in our country.

Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts have been confirmed as the ideological foundation and compass for action of the Party. At turning points of the revolution, faced with complicated developments the Party has mapped out in time correct ideological and political orientations, rectified deviations in perception, countered hostile allegations, thus creating the basis for unity of thought in the whole Party and among the people.

The principle of democratic centralism, collective leadership and individual accountability has been firmly maintained. Progress has been made in the exercise of Party internal democracy and in leading the exercise of democracy in society, promoting collective wisdom and the aggregate strength of the bloc of great national unity.

Policies and measures have been taken to renew and streamline the Party along with socioeconomic development and enhancement of the political system. A step has been taken in renewing organizational and personnel work, raising the capabilities and combativeness of the Party membership. The

degradation and weakness of many grassroots Party organizations have been checked. The leadership style of work has been initially improved. Progress has been seen in the control over implementation of principles governing Party organization and life, the control over maintenance of integrity and revolutionary morality by Party officials and members, and the observance of Party discipline.

WEAKNESSES ■ However, many shortcomings have been detected in Party building. Certain major problems are emerging. Given conditions of a market mechanism, a multi-sector economy and open-door relations with the outside, when Party officials and members are day in, day out, exposed to very complicated factors, including anti-Party activities, the question of firmly preserving the working-class nature of the Party is confronted with new challenges. Yet, the Party has failed to adequately prepare itself for such developments and to pay due attention to the education and forging of Party officials and member's political integrity and morality. Self-forging is absent among a by no means small section of Party officials and members, their ideals are fading, their sense of vigilance is declining, their determination dwindling, their sense of discipline weakening, and their morality and lifestyle is becoming debased. A few have politically degenerated and, despite their tiny number, their activities have had extremely negative effects.

The Party's general knowledge and leadership capacity in some respects have not been up to the requirements of renewal. Many theoretical and practical issues have yet to be clarified.

Grassroots Party organizations are feeble in many localities, and paralyzed in some others. Their leadership style and activities are confused lacking both democracy and discipline. A number of Party officials and committees fail to respect and properly exercise the principle of democratic centralism. Bureaucracy, authoritarianism, departmentalism, local-mindedness, jealousy, abuse of power and individualism have increased. Internal disunity is serious in not a few places.

Control by the Party over implementation of its line, viewpoints, directives and resolutions has not been duly attended to.

To achieve the targets and tasks set by the VIIIth National Congress, our Party should continue renewing and streamlining itself, further strength-

ening its leadership capacity and combativeness and overcoming shortcomings, negative practices and weaknesses. The Party must be strong from the center to the grassroots, at all levels, in all fields of activity.

A WORKING-CLASS APPROACH TO THE PARTY □ In Party building, the following key content should be constantly grasped and properly implemented.

- To firmly maintain and enhance the working-class nature of the Party. This is a task of primordial importance for our Party. In today's conditions, maintenance and enhancement of the Party's working-class nature means:

- To persist in the objectives of national independence and socialism. Whatever the eventuality, we must not waver and depart from those objectives.

- To persist in, to creatively apply and contribute to developing Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts, on the basis of the realities of Vietnam, considering them a basis on which to work out sound line, policies and decisions.

- To firmly maintain the principle of democratic centralism, exercise collective leadership and individual accountability, conduct regularly self-criticism and criticism, and maintain unity and unanimity of views in the Party.

- To constantly carry out education and forge our political stance, viewpoints and sense of working-class organization; to shape Party officials and members in line with the working-class approach.

- To consolidate our close relationship with the people, to strengthen the great unity of the entire people. To care for the life of the people, to promote their right to be masters.

- To be loyal to international working-class solidarity, to combine the strength of the nation with that of the time.

Throughout the process of revolution, the interests of the working class are identical to those of the nation. The Party represents the interests of the working class, at the same time representing those of the whole nation. The strength of the Party lies in a harmonious combination of the advanced ideology of the working class and the finest values, traditions and prowess of the nation. All this culminates in Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts.

On the basis of the political program and Party resolutions [we must] regularly inculcate Party officials and members with the Party's line and policies,

fundamental issues of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts. [We must also inculcate] our fine national traditions, new knowledge of the times and ensure political and ideological unity in the whole Party.

Theoretical work should first target the questions posed by life, clearly identify the scientific grounds for solutions, forecast trends of development amend and complement the Party line and shed more and more light on the path to socialism in our country.

All Party officials and members, first of all key leading officials, must have plans for regular study to raise their political and theoretical qualifications, general knowledge and practical working capacity. Study is compulsory for every Party official and member, and must be institutionalized. Laziness in study and in thinking, and failure to frequently acquire new information and knowledge are also signs of degeneration.

Deviations in perception, vagueness in approach, unsteadfastness in ideology and decline of confidence in socialism and the Party's leadership must be rectified. Erroneous and hostile viewpoints must be criticized and rejected. Party members are entitled to express their views within the organization and have reservations; but they must execute Party resolutions, refrain from disseminating viewpoints contrary to the Party's viewpoints and line, or revealing Party and state secrets. Party organizations should exercise control and take timely disciplinary measures against Party members who violate Party principles or abuse democracy for anti-Party propaganda.

A decline in morality among a section of Party officials and members must be overcome. Party officials and members must be exemplary in self-forging, endeavoring to raise their revolutionary morality in practicing "industriousness, thrift, integrity, public-mindedness and selflessness," and overcome individualism. They must not capitalize on incompatibilities in legislation and defects in mechanisms and policies to conduct illegal business or dig into public property. Party organizations must undertake regular education and control of Party members, including high-ranking officials.

Areas related to private business or employment for foreigners where involvement is barred to public functionaries must be identified.

Strict regulations [must be] issued on gift-taking and visitors' receptions and regulations must

be introduced for officials, functionaries, Party members in the first place, key office bearers at all levels, to report, and be subject to control about their incomes as well as their assets. Cases of abnormal accumulation of wealth must be subject to control by Party organizations. Responsibilities of Party officials and members with spouses or children involved in illegal business must be defined and business activities barred to spouses and children of incumbent key office bearers at the central and local levels must be determined. Party members must not engage in private capitalist economic activities by themselves or through their relatives.

Degenerate Party officials and members, no matter who and what they are, must be subject to timely and scrupulous discipline.

ADHERENCE TO DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM ■ Concrete stipulations must be worked out ensuring the participation of all Party members in discussions and decisions on the work of Party organizations. Majority rule must be instituted. All collective decisions shall be taken by majority vote and shall be executed by all individuals in the collective.

Party members and officials must train themselves in the sense of organization and discipline, voluntarily submit to control by Party clubs, take part in all the latter's activities, and observe Party discipline. No Party member shall remain outside control by the organization.

Self-criticism and criticism must be scrupulously practiced and formalism and failure to mend mistakes must be combatted. Retaliation against and suppression of critics as well as abuse of criticism for slandering purposes, personal smearing and internal troubles must be strictly prohibited.

Proper punitive measures must be taken against all manifestations of disorganization, lack of discipline, and non-execution of the directives and resolutions of the Party, and divisive and sectarian activities.

The unity and unanimity of views in the Party,

firstly in the leadership, is of decisive significance for the success of the revolution. Party officials and members should preserve the unity and unanimity of views in the Party on the basis of its political line, organizational principles and comradeship. Efforts must be focused on solving the serious disunity in certain sectors and localities. Its causes have to be accurately analyzed and appropriate remedial measures taken.

Differences of views during discussion and debate within the Party organization should not be equated to disunity. In the course of development of the revolution, there are many complicated or unclear theoretical and practical questions which require discussion and debate in the Party. All Party officials and members should listen to and respect each other's ideas, sincerely submitting to the truth and reason. Meanwhile, formalistic and easy-going "unity," indulgence and fear of criticizing should be avoided.

The VIIIth National Party Congress is the Congress of continued renewal along the socialist path. The above mentioned orientation and tasks demonstrate the concretization and further development of the line of renewal which has been worked out at our Party's VIth and VIIth National Congresses. Successful implementation of the orientation and tasks provides the best preparation for our nation to firmly step into the 20th century, overcoming hunger and poverty, and forming an impetus for greater strides in national construction and defense.

Our entire Party, army and people are closely united to promote the glorious traditions of our nation and the wisdom and prowess of the Vietnamese people, uphold the spirit of independence, sovereignty, self-reliance and resilience, firmly grasp opportunities and surmount all difficulties and challenge. We are determined to translate the resolutions of the VIIIth National Congress into fact of life, materializing triumphantly the objectives of a prosperous people, a strong country, an equitable and civilized society, step by step advancing forward toward socialism. □

Class Struggle and the Trade Unions

Alvaro Cunual

I want to express my satisfaction at being here with trade union leaders and activists, in the home of CGTP-IN, the great trade union center of glorious traditions which is the creation and accomplishment as well as a source of real pride for Portuguese workers. It is particularly gratifying to have the occasion to speak in this series of talks devoted to the assessment and analysis of the serious and complex problems which confront the working class, all working people and their organizations, in particular the trade union movement.

The world situation at the end of the 20th century is characterized by profound changes. The growing socialization, reconversion and internationalization of productive processes, the disappearance of the USSR and the ensuing radical change in the balance of forces as well as imperialism's global offensive to reestablish its world-wide domination and hegemonism on the economic, social, political, cultural and military levels, are prominent traits of the new situation which exists at the end of the century.

Capitalism's social-economic system has itself undergone and is undergoing major changes. The scientific and technical revolution and the new and revolutionary technologies have brought radical changes in the dynamics of the productive forces and in the social composition of society and of the working classes.

The international division of labor, a growing uneven and unbalanced development, the creation of gigantic transnational economic groups the creation of zones of economic, political and military integration and of supranational bodies led by big business and governments that defend and represent it, the interferences and diktats of the IMF, the World Bank and of a UN converted into a tool of imperialism, are all new elements and characteristics of capitalism.

These changes of an economic nature express themselves through a universal process of reformulation and reorganization, with sudden changes in

the relation between fixed capital and variable capital and bring about equally profound changes in the labor relations and in the social composition of the working class and of working people in general both in numerical and in professional terms.

THE NATURE OF CAPITALISM ▣ Such transformations, however, do not change capitalism's nature as a social and economic system. Capitalism preserves and in some cases strengthens its exploitative, oppressive and aggressive nature. These are worldwide characteristics of the system which we see confirmed here in Portugal.

Its exploitative nature. Workers vital rights, won through a heroic struggle of many generations, are restricted or liquidated outright. Privatization, the restoration of big monopoly groups and their domination, the destruction or dismantling of large companies and the shutdown of many thousands of smaller ones, the liquidation of the agrarian reform, deindustrialization – all have led to the loss of thousands of jobs and of the very right to employment. Cases of dismissal without just cause have proliferated, collective bargaining is refused, deregulation, the imposition of longer working hours, wage freezes, a denial of the minimum wage, greater discrimination against women and young people, and a deterioration of social security and of the social services [have all increased].

Its oppressive nature. The bosses and their government confronted with the resistance and struggle of the workers and in particular of the trade union movement have intensified repressive measures targeting the CGTP. Trade union activities are banned in hundreds of companies. Union leaders and shop stewards are discriminated against, sacked and forced into compulsory retirements. General assemblies are banned. And when the worker's firm struggle challenges the bosses offensive, the police forces are sent in by the government.

Its aggressive nature. With a view to reestablishing worldwide domination, imperialism through the actions of the U.S. and other more developed countries are using powerful tools to control, guide and interfere such as the IMF, the World Bank, NATO,

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the European Union and even the UN. [The goal is] to submit, corrupt or destroy the forces which oppose it. They also utilize them to interfere in other states, overthrow governments, impose regimes, redraw borders, enforce economic blockades, organize terrorist actions, unleash aggressions, military interventions and wars.

“CIVILIZING” CAPITALISM ■ Capitalism’s defenders, however, deny these realities and present capitalism in these latter days of this century as a system which, rather than being historically outdated and doomed, is a renewed, democratized, progressive system which knows no alternatives. With such an attitude towards reality there are those who go so far as to say that the workers should undertake the goal of “civilizing” capitalism. They then say that the trade union movement must be completely “refounded,” must lose its class nature, must become a “civilized” or “civilizational” trade unionism, to be sociable with “civilized capitalism.” They say the trade union movement must become an institutional component, integrated in and collaborating with the established order and the capitalist system, or else, fade away as a mere episode in history.

It is as if there were no longer exploited and exploiters in the world. As if there were no longer governments at the service of capital. As if there were no longer states that guarantee the interests and the impunity of big business and which impose working and living conditions upon working people, through anti-democratic laws and through force and violence. As if we lived in a world where classes no longer existed, in a world of human beings which could be united in labor relations by bonds of true solidarity. These opinions cannot be considered a utopia. They are a gross distortion of the truth which seeks to justify the worker’s docile acceptance of capitalist exploitation, the trade union movement’s capitulation as a working-class movement and a movement of all working people, its abandonment of consistent struggle in defense of their interests and rights.

Our stand is opposite to that of capitalism’s defenders. Workers live in difficult conditions and more difficulties lie ahead. But capitalism does not have an easy road ahead of it either. Besides the system’s many contradictions in its offensive to reestablish its worldwide hegemony it faces and will face the growing struggle of the workers, peoples and

nations it exploits and submits. This includes states which feel their options and independence are affected including those which insist on building a socialist society.

In this context where in spite of profound changes capitalism retains its exploitative, oppressive and aggressive nature and where it not only does not solve but rather aggravates worker’s problems and is liquidating vital rights won in the struggle, the trade union movement as a mass movement is more necessary than ever.

MONOPOLY & TRADE UNION INTERGRATION ■ With the internationalization of economic relations and the productive apparatus, the formation of zones of integration emerged as an objective necessity of development. Capitalist economic integration zones naturally and inevitably have characteristics determined by the socioeconomic system. Capitalist economic integration – as is the case of the European Union – is determined by the interests and profit-motive of the great monopoly groups, particularly the transnationals. They have as a structural element the exploitation of workers. Even greater exploitation is considered as a precondition for reorganizing and converting the means of production as required by technological advances or by the imperative of competition.

To secure such objectives, the forces of capital need to weaken, limit if possible, dominate and crush workers resistance and struggle and this means the worker’s class organizations – especially the trade union movement. This explains the reason for a situation that deserves to be a central point for reflection: the institutionalization of big business rule in the European Union includes among its objectives disintegrating and disrupting the working-class and trade union movement, achieving its capitulation and turning it into an instrument of the capitalist economic integration system.

This offensive against the workers and trade union movement is mirrored by a line of theory and practical actions that view achieving as one element of economic integration, what we can call “trade union integration.” The purpose is to create – just as with economic integration itself – supranational bodies that would represent workers of all member countries of the community with decision-making powers binding on the respective trade union movements.

This would be not the road to an effective defense of worker's interests, but the path to what would amount to subordinating worker's organizations to the imposition of the forces of capital. An integrated trade union movement – with supranational structures – would itself be an element of capitalist economic integration, would impose on workers and the trade union movement of the member countries the defense of internationalized demands that in effect would undermine, contain, oppose, betray the struggle for the legitimate demands of the workers and their trade union organizations in various countries.

IDEOLOGICAL PRESSURES ▣ Such conceptions, plans and projects are devised at an international and European level. As regards Portugal, the CGTP-IN is subject to a host of pressures of an ideological and not just an ideological nature. It is interesting to note that a whole series of people holding high-level jobs and responsibilities in the state, well-known leaders of right-wing parties, academics who cogitate in their offices, historians (who, by negating or omitting essential facts, try to rewrite history) have all very categorically stood up in defense of such integration.

The terms in which such advice has been given to the trade union movement are many and varied. But both generic statements and concrete proposals amount to the same idea and the same kind of ideological pressure. We are told that in a globalised society and economy, the only answer the workers have is the internationalization of their own organizations and demands through structures that are able to represent them at a European, regional and, according to some, even world level. We hear them clearly advocating supranational trade union structures. We hear the same meaning in a more prudent language that defends the construction of a "common home" bringing together trade unionism on a European scale.

Some pundits in their hurry are already putting forward the false idea and forlorn hope that CGTP-IN's membership in the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) means its "political subordination." Revealing [the true meaning] of this concept of "trade union integration," as an element of capitalist "economic integration" within the framework of the European Union, is the fact that those who advocate the formation and institutionalization of supranational bodies for the trade union move-

ment also argue that the trade union movement in all the European Union countries should support the Maastricht Treaty.

The fundamental aspects of the treaty are known. It strengthens a federal structure with supranational bodies in which effective power lies with the richer and more developed countries to the detriment of the interests and rights of the less developed and poorer ones such as Portugal. It provides for the subordination of member states' policies to "common policies" decided upon in supranational bodies. It imposes the notorious and poorly known "nominal convergence" concept with its inevitable repercussions of worsening the situation of workers. If it is not revised, the Treaty for Portugal would represent a policy that will continue to worsen the working conditions of workers, increase unemployment, the removal of social rights, and the exclusion of vast sections of society.

Contrary to this theorizing, we advocate that monopoly capitalism's economic, diplomatic and military integration, above all in the establishment and institutionalization of a federal type of political integration, requires that workers and more particularly the trade union movement resist unfavorable conditions, strengthen their class character, organization, unity, and struggle.

CLASS STRUGGLE TRADE UNIONISM ▣ But let us be clear. The rejection of trade union integration and subordination to the binding decisions of supranational trade union structures does not mean that the internationalization of the economy, economic integration, the transnational character of the largest companies that actually dominate the capitalist world, do not require, as in the traditions of the class-based trade union movement – *the best traditions* – the cooperation, understanding, common action, even creation of international structures in which the trade union movements of the various countries participate (specifically and very importantly, in the European Union).

But class internationalism and the cooperation and unity of free and independent trade union movements cannot be confused with submission to supranational bodies dominated by positions of capitulation to and collaboration with large-scale capital. To defend the interests and rights of workers, the trade union movement (and speaking here at CGTP-IN headquarters, the CGTP-IN deserves a mention) must guarantee absolutely its indepen-

dence, its objectives and not accept supranational decisions that limit, oppose or impinge on its formulation of the demands of Portuguese workers and direction of their activity.

THE "TRADE UNION CRISIS" ■ The working-class movement and particularly the trade union movement, at the close of the 20th century are experiencing new and serious problems. They are passing through serious difficulties and obstacles that demand sober reflection with an aim to determining their direction, activity and prospects. This situation that brings with it such problems, difficulties and obstacles has been dubbed "the trade union crisis."

The issues that are generally presented are the decline in trade union organization and membership, the weakening of grassroots structure and their connections with the masses of workers, the lower level of commitment to accepting organizational responsibilities, the lower readiness for struggle and the financial difficulties in maintaining current levels of organization. In assessing the expression "trade union crisis," it is worthwhile considering what are its most direct causes. Let us point out two:

The first (of an objective nature) is the profound changes in the social basis of the workers' and trade union movement. [This is caused] by economic change and the development of capitalism and the means of production arising out of new and revolutionary technologies, the mobility of productive processes at national, European and world levels, the conversion and restructuring of sectors and enterprises and the resulting quantitative and qualitative changes in the composition of the working class and the mass of salaried workers.

The social basis of the workers' and trade union movement has thus become more fragile, unstable, and changeable and there have been drastic reductions in some sectors that were and continue to be particularly militant and possess a highly developed class consciousness. The second direct cause of the difficulties confronting the trade union movement is the repression of the worker's and trade union movement that accompanies imperialism's great world offensive, with the imposition of a greater degree of exploitation and the liquidation of worker's rights. Reactionary employers, with an impunity guaranteed by governments that in effect repre-

sent them, impose anti-democratic laws or ignore the law altogether, ban workers' and trade union activists' meetings at the workplace, discriminate, persecute, sack trade union representatives and activists.

The two causes of an objective character are sometimes underestimated but rarely disputed. The great controversy concerns the trade union movement considered within the vast context of the world and especially Europe at the closing of the century. Here in Portugal it naturally is concerned with the particular emphasis of the Portuguese trade union movement.

NEW FORMS OF CLASS COLLABORATION ■ Around this central idea there are naturally nuances of opinion. But generally all set out by accepting that not only is capitalism consolidated once and for all as the system that will resolve human problems, including those of the workers, but also that capitalism has changed its very own nature, become something different and better, that "civilized capitalism" of which some speak. Before, these heralds of capitalism proclaimed the need for class conciliation. Now they speak of "solidarity" (distorting its meaning, including its Christian origin) by having this word mean conciliation and collaboration with the forces of capital. Following these ideas, there are those who go so far as to declare that the trade union movement has lost its *raison d'etre*, that it should be replaced or even disappear altogether. Perhaps by the year 2000 as someone has already claimed.

All this theorizing is not only presented and elaborated upon in general abstract terms. It is put forward in concrete terms and aimed at the CGTP. It is inseparable from the conception (which we have referred to above) of CGTP's "trade union integration" within the framework of the European union's economic integration. This theorizing is also inseparable from the contention of the CGTP-IN as a class-based, autonomous, unitary, and democratic trade union confederation, an identity that lies at the heart of its history, strength and unparalleled role in the defense of workers' interests and in the establishment and institutionalization of the democratic regime after nearly half a century of fascist dictatorship.

One of the questions that has often been presented as a cause of the "trade union crisis," and according to some is the worst of the Portuguese

trade union movement's evils (explicit reference is made to the CGTP), is what they call "the party-politicization of the trade unions." One theorist in his haste and blinded by his own idea, goes so far as to ascribe the "lack of unionization" to this "party-politization." It is a well-known fact that these opinions do not refer to those parties that organize and advertise their party trade union tendency and which as such have already publicly taken up positions against such and such decisions of the CGTP. No let us be blunt (for those who put forward those ideas are also blunt), the accusation of "party-politicization of trade unions" and "party-political hegemony" refers to the PCP and to the Communist's great influence in the Portuguese trade union movement.

There are those who have put forward as one of the factors of the "trade union crisis" the fact that the PCP has brought to the trade union movement what they called the "PCP" crisis. But if it is in these terms you wish to speak, it would have to be said that the truth is there are some who wish to bring their own personal "crisis of political options" into the trade union movement. What they strive for in the end is not to strengthen the CGTP-IN by reducing the Communists influence and role, but rather to weaken the PCP itself by weakening its influence in the trade union movement. There is one pundit who triumphantly proclaimed that "without the CGTP-IN, the PCP will disappear."

The Communists influence in the trade union movement does not result from any imposition or political interference. It arises in historical terms from the role Communists played in the organizing and promoting the workers struggle under the harsh conditions of fascist repression during dozens of years. It comes from the role (which many forget and others are very keen to ignore) of Communists (alongside workers of other political tendencies whose role we have always valued highly and continue to do so) in the creation, promotion and activity of the CGTP-IN. It arises – not from outside imposition and much less from anyone's desire that pressure from above should stifle the expression of will from below – but from the trust that the workers continue to place in their Communist workmates.

In our view, the difficulties and new problems confronting the trade union movement do not result from its class character, identity, or courageous struggle in defense of workers, nor from the influ-

ence of Communists to who undoubtedly workers and the trade union movement owe a valuable contribution for their success and their strength.

In our view to overcome the so-called "trade union crisis," what is necessary is not a "total renewal," a "refoundation" of the trade union movement eliminating aspects that we consider essential to its identity. On the contrary, it is a matter of finding the strength, initiative, and creative responses to the new situation and new problems by strengthening basic features of its identity and specifically its class character, autonomy, unity and internal democracy.

CLASS-BASED TRADE UNIONISM ■ The insistence of those who deny the most obvious realities of capitalist society – incorrectly and modestly labeled the "market economy," – is such that it is difficult to conclude whether they say these things because they have no wish to see reality or whether they see reality, but deny it in theory because of their practical objectives.

Give unto Marx that which is Marx's. Discoveries that according to he himself had been made earlier by others should not be attributed to him. Such is the case of the division of society into classes and the class struggle. The expression "class struggle" is treated by some as an offensive expression, as some revolutionary notion that Marxists wish to bring into a society where no such thing actually exists. Meanwhile there it is in front of their very eyes at places of work, in everyday political and social life, in the nature of decisions and actions of governments.

From this reality – which the evolution and changes in social-economic structures have not altered – we conclude that workers' trade unions, deeply linked to the masses and with mass participation are not just necessary – they are more necessary than ever.

Naturally this is not the opinion that is being pushed in the great offensive against the trade union movement. Inseparable from proposals regarding "trade union integration" within the framework of the European union and "refoundation" or "total renewal" of the trade union movement, one idea emerges with full clarity: that the trade union movement's class character is a thing of the past, that since the world has undergone great changes, it is no longer possible to speak of the class struggle and that the main objective which should

also be the aim of workers is for a "civilized capitalism."

It is astonishing. We hear no objections against the right to run class associations of capitalists from the same people who consider the existence of a class-based trade union movement obsolete. Some of their conceptions are especially revealing.

WORKERS AS "CITIZENS" ■ An attempt is being made at the close of the century to transform the trade union movement into a movement through which workers may intervene in society, not as workers as such but as "citizens." It is said that the "labor experience" will have to be supplanted by the "citizenship experience," from which "a gradual transfer of worker identity to citizen identity" will result. To this end they set themselves the goal of liberating trade unionists -- through a process of education -- from the "abstract idea of the boss as an enemy."

The same idea expressed in other words is that the trade union movement should have as the "object of its activity the *person* rather than the class or the social group," or in yet another formulation, "the human being is a person and it is as such that he is considered and should be considered in terms of the law."

Trade unions would cease to be worker trade unions, class unions, to become above all a union (if this name should continue to be the appropriate one) of "citizens," or "persons," or even of "individuals," as one theorist has underlined. Having put aside the capital/labor, management/worker, capitalists/workers, bosses/workers oppositions, workers would in their organizations become merely "citizens," merely "persons," merely "individuals."

These theoretical conceptions have very real and immediate aims. We may point out two of them. One is the joint responsibility directly assumed by workers and by the trade union movement in capitalist development.

Taking for granted the inevitability of "conversion" and "reorganization" of the productive apparatus because of the technological revolution, and that objectively and inevitably this will require reeducation they indicate to the trade union movement as a route to its "refoundation" acceptance of the class sacrifices that are involved.

From this some conclude that a company is a public interest entity in whose results capitalist and workers are equally interested. [They conclude] that

a company's productivity and competitive position "are no longer just a problem of bosses" but also of the workers and that -- an this is the main idea -- workers must accept the situation collaborate with the bosses.

Some dub this attitude of conformity and capitulation as the creative way to "participation." From this logically follows the idea (very explicitly upheld as the second way offered to the trade union movement) that the struggle for workers' and trade union demands should give way to collaboration with management.

It would be a "serious diversion," for example, to insist upon salary increases when an increase in unemployment is forecast. Unemployment without guarantees of new work for laid-off workers should be accepted because many enterprises "should be closed down as they are not viable." The Portuguese trade union movement, and specifically the CGTP, is criticized (and some directly blame the PCP) for giving priority to "a trade unionism of conflict," and warn that "conflict trade unionism runs the risk of disappearing altogether." To struggle for workers' demands would be "to attempt to preserve a doomed productive system."

From this a third idea follows, in connection with the trade union movement's "refoundation:" the use of state-sponsored negotiations to replace collective bargaining and the struggle for demands within enterprises. State-sponsored negotiations would be the principal forum for labor relations to be understood -- as they have been understood by the present system -- as a negotiation among three parties: the workers by means of the trade unions, the bosses through their employers' organizations and the government -- a government that is in no way a "referee" or "neutral," but rather a defender and representative of employers' interests.

The trade union movement would be assigned the function of collaborating with the bosses, of giving up "conflict trade unionism," the struggle for demands, collective bargaining and giving in to the employer/government wishes in state-sponsored negotiations. Naturally it is justifiable in the current situation for the trade union movement by its own decision to participate in the state negotiation council -- without entering into schemes of class collaboration but to defend workers interests and rights. This participation is all the more useful for workers the more the trade union movement proclaims itself and shows itself to be a class trade

union. This is one of the characteristics of the Portuguese trade union movement and of the CGTP-IN that we have always considered as elements of its identity along with autonomy, unity and internal democracy.

To finish allow me to say a few words about these three elements that together with its class character constitute the fundamental and irreplaceable elements of the unitary trade union movement. Trade union movement autonomy and independence means in our opinion above all autonomy and independence in relation to the forces of capital including the governments that defend and represent them. There are numerous examples in the international workers' movement of union organizations that are actually instruments of the bosses, and at times even their agents and supporters against workers' rights. In some cases they are directly commanded by the forces of big business. Such organizations have nothing to do in our understanding with the reason why workers trade unions are organized and exist.

This first aspect of the trade union movement's autonomy and independence is naturally achieved not only through strong opposition to governments that serve and impose the real interests of capital; not only in decisions and concrete actions in defense of workers' interests, but also in the ideological sphere, by opposing and explaining to workers the meaning of all this theorizing which seeks its destruction as a class movement.

A second aspect and this is almost the only one generally referred to is the trade union movement's autonomy and independence in relation to political parties. This aspect of autonomy and independence means above all in our view that the trade union movement should not receive instruction from parties, should refuse to be an instrument for parties, a "transmission belt" of this or that party, and should decide for itself through its own instructions and according to its own approach and activity.

INTERNAL DEMOCRACY ■ Actually this important element of identity does not rule out, but rather considers it inevitable, desirable and natural that workers of different party affiliations and options be involved in the trade union movement and its structures including leadership at all levels. But in

their organizations in their involvement and in their voting they should participate not as members or supporters of this or that party not as political factions but as trade unionists. This question necessarily raises another that cannot be separated from it: the trade union movement's internal democracy.

Internal democracy means not only full freedom to express opinions not only the right to vote and to be elected to the various bodies and posts, but also the right to participate in the establishing guidelines and in decision making.

The organization and public expression of political trade union tendencies, intervening as such in union affairs and advertising their positions as tendencies within the CGTP-IN in our view does not strengthen but jeopardizes internal trade union democracy and not only does not strengthen but contradicts the movement's unity. If each party were to organize a trade union tendency acting as such in union affairs and as a political tendency to publish its opinions regarding the movement's approaches and decisions, trade union democracy would be practically destroyed.

Autonomy and independence in relation to political parties are in our view contradicted by the formation of party tendencies or factions, organized and acting independently in the confederation and even publicly against the confederation. Any project whereby parties and social and religious sectors active in the trade union movement would reach an understanding in "summit" agreements regarding a division of influence and even of positions of responsibility in the trade union movement is something that should be opposed.

Internal democracy without party conflicts is an element in the normal life of the unitary trade union movements structures. These structures should be strengthened from the bottom up, contrary to some ideas according to which they should be dissolved into the working mass and cease to have any organization boundaries. The class character, autonomy and internal democracy are the factors that can best guarantee the trade union movement's unity.

CGTP-IN has been throughout the years an example in the present world of a strong and truly unitary trade union movement. □

The Modernist Trend in Art

Norman Goldberg

One consequence of the counterrevolutionary overthrow of socialism in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in Europe has been the unleashing of a new wave of ideas and trends in philosophy and science. Systems of thought and concepts long disapproved and discredited by the advance of materialist thinking have resurfaced as "new truths" in the attempt to reaffirm individualism, idealism, exclusivism, metaphysics and racism.

For most of the 20th century, modernism in art has drawn its nourishment from the crosscurrents of philosophical idealism, and with the "defeat" of materialism (socialism), it has taken on a new lease on life. Post-Modernism, conceptualism, deconstructionism and other categories in modes of expression are but hybrids of the old modernism, updated to serve in the never-ending ideological class war.

Modernism entered the terminology of art shortly after the first World War. Philosophically, it was a loose and pragmatic outlook that was open to new experiments and avant-garde trends in all the arts, brought on by the anger, pessimism and disillusion felt by so many as a result of the war. As a school of art, Modernism has always had a fugitive character to it, elusive and slippery enough to carry a grab bag of confusion and contradiction in its assorted assertions.

When we hear the words "Modern Art" we imagine abstraction in painting, off-beat dramatics and staging in theater, esoterics and incoherence in poetry and music and visual unorthodoxy in film. But problems of precise definition arise. As an example, Mariane Moore's poetry is modern, as are Harold Pinter's plays and Robert Motherwell's paintings. Likewise, Pablo Neruda's poetry, Lorraine Hansberry's plays and Rennato Guttuso's paintings are modern. These are all modern artists, but in a fundamental sense, Mariane Moore, Harold Pinter and Robert Motherwell are as different from Pablo Neruda, Lorraine Hansberry and Rennato Guttuso as capitalism is from socialism.

The definitive point is that Modernism in art is

essentially a bourgeois property, concerned only with formal sight, sound and textuality, distanced from the external world of reality and social concern. It has a social history worth reviewing, however briefly, to help counter the avalanche of ideological perversion so rampant today.

ORIGINS OF MODERNISM ■ The philosophical sources of modernism may be traced back to the 19th century and the pronouncements of Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher and founder of modern irrationalism. Nietzsche, disturbed by the crass commercialism and bourgeoisieification of social life coming from growing industrial capitalism and its destruction of traditional values, proclaimed in his epic work, *Thus Spoke Zarathrusta* that God was dead, and that he was being replaced by the self-worshipping bourgeois philistine of his time. Nietzsche called for a new man to arise, a man with the "will to power" a higher human order to overcome the decay of social life and culture, and to create a new and superior culture unattainable and unreachable to bourgeois manipulation and corruption. This was the initial fanfare welcoming a new race of "supermen," later treasured and put into practice during the 12 years of Hitler fascism.

Another source of Modernism is found in the philosophy of nihilism, a term first coined by the late 19th century Russian writer Jacobi. Nihilism grew as a movement in Czarist Russia, also proclaiming the non-existence of God, then going on to reject all positive ideals and cultures, past and present. Nihilists frequently appeared as characters in Russian novels, such as in Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*. By burying the past and rejecting the present, nihilism opened the door to the only "meaningful" path left for living, individual thoughts and acts totally free of restraint, reason and responsibility. This was its credo for art. As a political movement beset by a program of chaos, violence and assassinations, nihilism was rejected by masses while it was adopted by groups of embittered and disengaged intellectuals.

Still another source of Modernism is found in anarchism which arose in Western and Eastern

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Europe as a revolt by intellectuals against both capitalism and the church. There is a similarity here between anarchism and nihilism in that both were hostile to authority but there is a distinct difference between the two. Anarchism established political doctrines addressed to the working class and the peasantry, organizing political parties in a number of countries. It based itself on an extravagant notion of individualized democracy, with absolute hegemony and final authority resting in the hands of each person. The political unit was the individual, not the group, with each responsible only to himself. The mass was seen as the crystallization of the sum total of individuals, only formally responsible to each other and the whole, but fundamentally thinking and acting according to personal "democratic" interests.

The leading anarchists, Stirner, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin were involved in the political struggles of their day, but their actions were hopelessly naive and destructive in actual practice. However, the individuality syndrome of anarchism caught the fancy of some artists and writers who saw in it an appealing combination of liberation politics and individualized creative sanctuary. The French Impressionist painter Camille Pissaro was attracted to anarchism, and he attempted to organize his colleagues into art collectives based on its principles. Others attached to forms of anarchism in the arts include the writer and early feminist Camilla Cullet, the poets André Breton and Jean Cocteau, the painter Man Ray, and for a short period, the artists Fernand Leger and Pablo Picasso.

INFLUENCE OF EXISTENTIALISM ■ From the mid-20th century to the present Modernism in art has been affected by the philosophy of Existentialism.

Existentialism is a theory of life that is still popular today, but it is not a singular mode of thought. It has a number of variations. Its roots are found in the writings of Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher who dealt with phenomenology, a science concerned with the nature of natural and social phenomena. These phenomena were seen as autonomous specifics by Husserl, separate from their external conditions. By this separation, he was able to break down and rationalize away the external factors (natural and social) as haphazard and accidental, denying the theories of evolution and progression.

The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard cre-

ated a theory of existence, showing the individual as a groping lost soul, out of touch with God, who has become too mystical for human comprehension. Thus was born early existential man existing in a meaningless void. Later, existentialism took a quasi-religious turn as philosopher Nicolai Berdyaev, Gabriel Marcel and Karl Jaspers tried to resurrect the lonely individual, transforming him into a positive image as a doer, one who by force of will, could reach up to God even rescue Him from his mystical retreat. Then, in unity with God, existential man regains his humanity and lives meaningfully. This quality is noticeable in the literature of Sholem Asch, Jacques Maritain, Evelyn Waugh, Jakob Wassermann and Graham Greene.

Another form of existentialism is expressed in the viewpoints of Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre. In their own ways, each developed a "positivist" approach to the human condition. They saw the problem as one of "being" as opposed to "existing." In concise terms, they saw static man as one drifting in a sea of unknown depth, an existing and impotent figure. Calling for a renunciation of this unknown sea, which is a pseudonym for the real world, they advocated a summoning up of the individual will to overcome this state of suspended animation, thereby revitalizing estranged man. Through the act of subjective self-will, man is transformed from existing to being. The existentialist explanation of the human condition has been a powerful influence in literature, such as in the novels of Camille Huysmans, Boris Pasternak, Gabriela Mistral, Stephen Spender, Iris Murdoch and Edna O'Brien. It is the underlying tone of Eugene O'Neill's plays, as well as the plays of Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee. It is evident in the films of Stanley Kubrick and Ingmar Bergman. It comes through in the music of Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg and Gian Carlo Menotti and in the painting moods of Oskar Kokoschka, Edvard Munch and the sculpture of Henry Moore.

The more active and positive side to man, "Being" man, as distinct from "existing" man is seen in the writing of Albert Camus. In his novels, *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *Man in Revolt*, Camus shows us the horrors of capitalism, with man in struggle against it, but in an unorganized, individualized and non-class way. This leads to eventual defeat and the surrender of life into a world of absurdity. The concept of life as pointless is depicted in the theater of the absurd, plays by Ionesco, Beckett, Genet,

Weiss, Dürrenmatt and Stoppard.

Jean-Paul Sartre's works, *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, *Existentialism and Humanism*, *Being and Nothingness*, and in plays like *The Flies* and *No Exit*, also deal with man's ability to overcome external social oppression by physical and mental effort, but again, it is individual man opposing evil. Existentialized art rests on the subjectivity factor between the conflicting protagonists – man and society. It is a weakness that affects the works of otherwise good writers such as Sheila Delaney, Alan Sillitoe, Alice Walker, James Jones and Nelson Algren. Existentialism's undertones have affected the sometimes equivocally conceived paintings of Eric Fischl, Jenny Holzer, Ida Appelbroog, Leonard Baskin and Leon Golub.

FREUDIANISM ■ Looming over all the philosophical sources that have nourished Modernism, Freudianism, with its belief that psychic activity is essentially independent of the outer social process.

Freudianism approaches all human behavior as psychologically driven primarily sexually derivative, with unawareness of an inner self. This is obviously too big a subject to deal with here, but it is worth noting that while Freudianism has lost much of its influence in psychiatry and neurology, it remains a prevalent force in the arts. Repressed and irrational sexuality is a bill-of-fare in films, television music and pulp literature, as well as the more "elevated" novels of Henry Miller, Vladimir Nabokov and many others. A goodly portion of semi-abstract painting and sculpture has been likewise shaped by the sexual element. In his book on Picasso, John Berger devotes a large part of his appraisal of the artist as a predominantly sexual type, and other books along the same lines have tried to affirm this point. In a magazine article on art and sexuality, an abstract expressionist painter put it this way:

In work, I release my inner self, my inner drives. Painting releases me from all logical restraint. After all, logical restraint is a suppression of the human ego. Creativity is impossible without a free ego. Painting resembles a sexual encounter with naked truth. That is why the successful completion of every stage of painting requires me to smoke and have a drink.

These are the major philosophical schools of thought that have conditioned Modernism in art.

There are others, but they are more or less assorted theories that are derivative of the philosophies covered. A Marxist analysis of Modernism cannot get very far by rushing in and doing pitched battle with Nietzscheism, Irrationalism, Nihilism, Anarchism, Existentialism and Freudianism. It would lead to endless forays in philosophical jousting and skirmishing. It requires beginning somewhere else and not remaining on a philosophical and ideological plane. It has been demonstrated that Modernism has fed on philosophical schools of thought, but what fed those philosophies?

Philosophy and social science receives its food for thought from the political stage of society and ultimately from the material base, the economy.

In a fundamental way, the seeds of Modernism were planted in the heat of 19th century industrial capitalism. Industrial capitalism was the most explosive event in the history of European civilization, radically changing the face of the continent (and North America) in less than one century. Industrial capitalism was at one and the same time the most progressive and most brutal event in European history. Here is how Marx and Engels put it in *The Communist Manifesto*:

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has gotten the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his natural superiors and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has stripped of its halo every occupation honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science into its paid wage laborers.

This could have been written yesterday.

Rapid industrialization under capitalism disrupted and revolutionized the labor process. It created a collectivized laborer working under a common roof, called the factory, and engaged in the cooperative manufacture of finished goods. Under the capitalist system of production, two phenomena arose unknown in any previous economic system.

The first phenomenon was in the mass produc-

tion of commodities by workers functioning in team-like fashion, but with each worker doing only a snippet of production. This resulted in the worker having no human relationship to the total product. It created a state of detachment, of labor being a mere unit of production process the worker had no power or say over. Labor became abstract to product, both to the whole production process and to the individual fragmentary part. The worker as well had to endure it all at the lowest possible wage. This abstract relationship separated worker from product, resulting in a state of alienated labor which robbed it of its humanity.

The second phenomenon was in the simultaneous creation of mass production and mass distribution, but interrupted by economic crises of "over production" leading to economic slowdowns, mass unemployment and misery. With production so developed, the spectacle of mass want in the midst of plenty created a social paradox which continues to this day. This was thoroughly analyzed by Marx in *Capital* and if read and studied creatively, it is as true for modern times as it was a century ago.

Industrial capitalism did not change the life and thinking of workers and artists in the same way. It was the economic and class character of both that determined their social behavior. Mass unemployment, oppressive working conditions, low wages and long hours instilled in the working class a collective class consciousness that came from their shared experience at work. United struggles took place, trade unions were formed, social and political agitation led to labor parties and to socialist revolution in some countries. The capitalist system of production automatically creates a class-conscious working class.

CAPITALISM'S EFFECT IN ART ■ The deadening effects of industrial capitalism radically altered the art process. In the literary world, writers were put in harness to fill the pages of the new printing presses, churning out daily, weekly and monthly reading matter, with the writer cranked up to meet continuous deadlines. The thinking process of the writer was controlled by the clock, the editor, the publisher and later, the advertiser and the stockholder. Moreover, the competitive nature of publishing resulted in economic insecurity for the writer, driving down pay rates and increasing the vulgarization of the written product.

Painters were at the mercy of the new modes of

purchasing art. The previous system of advance commissions was being replaced by buying only after seeing the finished product, which gave the buyer the advantage of driving down the price on some pretext or other and forcing artists to succumb to the demands of crass pedestrianism in order to please the bourgeois customer. It should be kept in mind that artists, writers and composers of the 19th and 20th centuries who are considered important and who were able to fend off the pressures of commercial mediocrity, were relatively only a few. Thousands of creative artists were highly talented but because of reasons beyond their control, they had to compromise in order to live. Most are forgotten names today.

For the worker, life was one of mass production, oppression, alienation and class struggle. For the intellectual and the artist, life was one of chaotic production, ideological separation, and individualized oppression.

The class struggle influenced the artist differently. This was and is so because the artist's plight comes from working alone, producing a singular art product and separated from other artists by the private nature of art production. Individualized labor involving the mind and the emotions (art) produced in isolation in an indifferent and hostile social environment, inevitably sets up defense mechanisms in the form of rationalizations about life, and is the unhappy breeding ground of idealist philosophical musing of the types covered here.

There is no class-consciousness here, because there is no class of intellectuals or artists, only individuals, each defending the integrity of a private product. An individualized rationalization for artistic integrity that is blind to social reality, turns inwards, worships at the altar of "artistic purity," and becomes fair game for the assorted reactionary anti-social philosophies used to sustain contemporary Modernism's ideology.

Art, moving on its own momentum, detached from the banal demands of the capitalist-created market, hostile to that market, but having no socially wholesome replacement for it, can only move on a lifeless track and celebrate itself. The preoccupation with the "artist-self" or "spiritual self" was philosophized by Max Weber as the "extreme self" and as the "core self" by Catholic philosopher Roman Guardini.

Artists and art were thought of as entities unto themselves, autonomous and insulated from other

corruption and the true protectors of culture.

Preoccupation with self, looking inwards, so to speak, reveals not the real world, but a blurred and distorted image of it. Life here dissolved into cerebral speculation and fantasy led to Dadaism and Surrealist art in the early 20th century, continued today in the Modernist and Post-Modernist period. All developments in the arts that belong to the Modernist school are typified by the artist's withdrawal from society and supported by a philosophy of "self."

The long and rocky road of artistic evolution has generally reflected the political and cultural changes in society. Despite the setbacks in Eastern Europe, this is hardly a real victory for the "free world." Capitalism, now a globalized system, is growing and rotting at the same time. No large or medium size investment or commercial undertaking can be done without debt financing. World capitalist debt including government and consumer debt is estimated to exceed 20 thousand billion dollars, which can never be repaid, in principle or interest. Capitalist profits are mainly derived from financial maneuvering – mergers, buyouts, stock and bond manipulation, currency trading – to which may be added super-commercialized sports, sleaze entertainment, sales promotion, advertising drug trafficking and criminal activity on every level. The take from all this far surpasses profits made from production. Paper profits and debt financing supply the system with artificial wealth to give it the appearance of health and growth.

These are years of social, moral and intellectual baseness, and they infiltrate into the arts. Modernism, in all its novelties and fads, is the last fortress of bourgeois ideology in aesthetics and it has been so since the 1950s. An art that realistically reflects and is sensitive to the lives of working people is the best antidote to Modernist and Post-modernist sterility, and in a variety of ways, this has been so since the formation of the modern working class.

ART & STRUGGLE ■ Emile Zola an admirer of the early paintings of Edouard Manet, a naturalist who influenced impressionism, wrote enthusiastically of him:

What business have I with philosophical abstraction!
What business have I with the perfection a small group of
people dream about! As a person, I am interested in

human nature, my great for mother; human creation, the work of art touches and delights me insofar as I discover at its basis an artist, a brother, who shows me nature in a new aspect with all the strength or all the tenderness of his personality. A work of art, seen from that point of view, tells me the story of a soul and body speaks of an entire epoch, an entire people.

This was written in 1870, an early defense of the humanist underpinnings in art, one that later matures into modern social and analytic realism, and of course, Socialist Realism.

Karl Marx once noted that under capitalism true freedom is struggle. The true freedom of the cultural worker in bourgeois society depends on the degree to which he is able to resist the anti-human tendencies of this society, the degree to which he is able to rise above the interests of the ruling class and not bow down and prostitute his art for money, an exceptionally difficult obstacle in this period. Nevertheless, the artist cannot achieve freedom by running away from the overtly and subtly overbearing environment of bourgeois society into a haven of "pure art" abstraction and its 100 assortments.

When the artist devoted his ideas, feelings and talents to the struggle for working-class liberation, society gains. The artist joins the ranks of such true creative figures like Pablo Neruda, Jorge Amado, Paul Robeson, Carlo Levi, Käthe Kollwitz, Richard Wright, Lorraine Hansberry, Sergei Eisenstein and other creative allies of the people. The conflict between the artist and capitalist society is a progressive one from the standpoint of the working class, in as much as it brings art into the class struggle, and it matures the artist into a full political human being. The more this fact is appreciated by the artist, the more his talents will come into their own, and the more aware he will be on his true freedom.

The British artist and formalist critic Roger Fry expressed the detached nature of Modernist aesthetics very well as far back as 1920, when he argued for the separation of art from life. He believed in removing the "purely aesthetic" elements from their accompanying "accessories" (separating form from content), and this was a defense of the artist's right to withdraw from the problems of life, and the justification for the isolation of art from society. While Fry recognizes that art is communication and therefore social, he bases his analysis solely on what he perceives to be the psychology of the individual and of man as generic, not class-based.

Fry compared art to life when he stated that in ordinary life, perception is followed by responsive action, such as our flight from a bull rushing towards us. In artistic perception it is another matter. Here, Fry says that artistic perception is something we experience when we see the bull not in flesh, but on the screen in the cinema. We may enjoy the feeling of fear because it is unreal, and we need not act upon it. As he puts it, action implies responsibility (personal, moral, social political). Artistic contemplation, being removed from action, it free from outsider responsibility. This of course is the old theory of art for art's sake.

Bourgeois art has two components: mass art and elitist art. Both serve to defuse social insight by means of "spiritual" pacification and acceptance of things as they are. The far more powerful mass art is used as mind control to make the people into passive recipients of capitalist propaganda and active consumers. Vulgarized television, cinema, radio, tapes, newspapers magazines, pop literature and comic books do their works here. Elitist art or "high art" presumes to preserve the refined qualities of aesthetic pleasure in the theater, concert hall, the art gallery and the book store. Elitist art is the shrine of the cultured intelligentsia, for whom it is a refuge from the ravages of mass art (where incidentally, many of them work and profit). In its most rarified form, Modernism has become an arcane spiritual exercise, appealing to fewer people. They divide into heretical sects, debating over this or that artist or new theories of art, unusually in obfuscated language intentionally used to create a climate of advanced erudition. It is a modernist Tower of Babel.

Modernism has dominated cultural life since the 1950s where it was used as a cultural weapon to "deMarxify" art and destroy its working-class essence during the anti-Communist Cold War. Billions of dollars have been made from it by galleries, museums, publishing houses and stock brokerage firms. The Cold War may be officially over, but the cultural rulers of our country will not give up this handy and profitable enterprise, which has become a world-wide industry.

There is much in modernist technique that has been absorbed into socially conscious art. Its forms

and experiments have been effectively used in cinema, theater, literature, poetry and music. It has also had some positive effects in architecture and utilitarian arts. Socially conscious art is free to adopt modernist forms and techniques, but it cannot accept its ideology and philosophy.

REALISM ■ Finally, some thoughts on realism as an artistic philosophy. Marxism recognizes realism to be greatest force in artistic creation. But the Marxist definition of this realism is in its truth, not its techniques. In literature, life-like dialogue, social observations, credible plots, character development and the accurate description of material facts are methods of achieving truthfulness, but they are not the only ones.

Fairy tales with their witches, dragons, giants and elves have a truth of their own. The story of Romeo and Juliet is certainly improbable, but this does not invalidate it as work of realism – it tells the truth about the tragedy of lovers in a divided world. A satire like *Gulliver's Travels* and an allegory like *Pilgrim's Progress*, both possessing fantasy and symbolism are valid methods of exploring reality. Realism is not necessarily achieved by a realistic style only. The principles of Marxism, its dialectical method and its theory of opposites perpetually in conflict, synthesizing and then creating new conflicts, is the road that best reveals new truths in human society, nature, science and art.

Of course, socialism is the only answer to the low physical and moral state of contemporary society, a time when art will be an integral part of life. Meanwhile, art must struggle along side the working class to eventually achieve socialism.

As the 19th century English socialist artist and poet William Morris said:

If these hours be dark, as indeed in many ways they are, at least do not let us sit deedless, like fools and fine gentlemen, thinking the common toil not good enough for us, and beaten by the muddle; but rather let us work like good fellows trying by some dim candlelight that tomorrow, when the civilized world, no longer greedy, strifeful and destructive, shall have a new art, a glorious art, made by the people and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user. □

In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents by Anatoly Dobrynin, Times Books-Random House, New York, 1995.

The Soviet Union that Gorbachev inherited in 1985 was a global power ... strong and united and one of the world's two superpowers. But in just three years, from 1989-1991 the political frontiers of the European continent were rolled eastward from the center of Europe to the Russian borders of 1653, which were those before Russia's union with the Ukraine. How did all this happen?

Anatoly Dobrynin raises this cardinal question and supplies some of the answers. Basic are the betrayal of Gorbachev, his capitalist ideology, and his skillful manipulation of power to destroy socialism in the USSR.

For 25 years Dobrynin was Soviet Ambassador to the United States, from 1962 to 1986. But even when he was recalled and appointed to a higher post, he remained active in foreign affairs. In his account of his Washington years, Dobrynin related the historical events that took place during his tenure, the cast of characters, his evaluations, and where pertinent, his involvement. He was ambassador during the terms of U.S. presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan.

Particularly interesting are his accounts of the contradictory aspects of U.S. presidents' attitudes toward the Soviet Union. Possibly Dobrynin emphasizes USSR-USA relations during the Nixon Administration because the SALT Agreement, the most important arms control pact, was concluded then and a policy of detente became significant on both sides. America's reasons for this stand are explored and note is taken of the leading role of both Nixon and his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger. However, Dobrynin came to the conclusion:

... that they were not really thinking in terms of bringing about a major breakthrough in Soviet-American relations, and of ending the Cold War and the arms race...

... both Nixon and Kissinger sought to create a more stable and predictable strategic situation without reducing the high level of armaments, which remained the basis of a policy that was essentially based on military strength. (p. 195)

Soviet leaders were well aware of Nixon's history and were hoping that Humphrey would beat him. "[Nixon's] career was imbued with anti-Sovietism, anti-Communism, and militarism, and he had skillfully used irresponsible and demagogic attacks on his political rivals to advance his political ambitions." (p. 196)

Richard Nixon was a crooked, vicious anti-labor red baiter and a political manipulator. Still, Dobrynin shows that as president he took important steps toward improvement of Soviet-American relations, which displeased major sectors of the ruling capitalist class. And this trend antedated the Watergate scandal. One can speculate whether this trend may have been a factor in raising the scandal to the level of impeachment!

Perhaps the most significant pages of this revealing book relate to what happened after Dobrynin left Washington. His report of this later period is all the more remarkable in that he shares much of Gorbachev's "way of thinking." He writes:

The roots of the demise of the Soviet Union must be found mainly at home, in our political struggles, in our competent but highly ambitious leaders, and in the unbelievably quick chain of domestic events in which the great majority of the population did not participate and still does not really understand. (p. 615)

In 1985, at the start of Gorbachev's leadership, Yegor Ligachev was the No. 2 man in the Political Bureau. He was in charge of ideology as well as principal advisor to the General Secretary. According to Dobrynin: "Ligachev was orthodox, never wavering in his adherence to the principles of Marx and Lenin." (p. 617)

But Gorbachev indicated to Dobrynin that Ligachev did not go along with his "new thinking." Alexander Yakolev, who was Ligachev's assistant,

... won Gorbachev's confidence, and being an intelligent and well educated person, established a high intellectual level in his private conversations with the general secretary. This enabled Yakolev to become Gorbachev's trusted conversation partner and to infiltrate Ligachev's ideological domain. (p. 617)

He ultimately displaced Ligachev "... after Gorbachev made him a full-fledged Politburo member and his closest associate." (p. 618)

Similarly, step by step, Gorbachev replaced Marxist-Leninist members of the leadership until he had a Politburo in tune with his "new thinking" and personally accountable to him.

Yakolev became Gorbachev's evil mastermind in inducing him to destroy the very structure of the party that upheld Gorbachev's power. (p. 618)

A decisive blow to Gorbachev's political power was the disintegration of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union... The party, with its local branches throughout the country, was the governing backbone from the high leadership in Moscow to the villages and factories. As general secretary of the party, Gorbachev was the country's undisputed ruler, and he therefore continued until 1989 to emphasize the leading role of the party in all things, including his own reforms. (p. 637)

But criticism of Gorbachev's "reforms" from within the party mounted, and Gorbachev tried to substitute Parliamentary rule with himself as president. However, these "essentially backroom political maneuvers ... served only to weaken Gorbachev's position, until in August 1991, the Parliament banned the party and threw its support to Yeltsin," ending Gorbachev's rule. (pp. 637-38)

Dobrynin has little to say about the economic situation in the USSR, or about economic questions generally. But his limited comments are revealing:

"Gorbachev also played a prominent role in launching the ... liberalization and democratization in our country, and of the turn toward transforming our centrally planned system into a market economy." (p. 636)

Gorbachev's use of the term "democratization" conforms to one of his pet slogans and is ironic in view of his moves to destroy all democratic mechanisms while making himself supreme ruler. Remember also, that the term "market economy" has become the code phrase for capitalism. Dobrynin notes:

His policy was one of convergence of socialism with capitalism... He never mentioned the word "capitalism" while describing his economic plans, and his successors in the Russian Federation continued avoiding the word... he did not understand economic problems and the policies to deal with them. He was always looking for advice, especially from foreigners and academicians. (p. 636)

Most prominent among the foreigners were right-wing U.S. economists, including former presidential advisers. Naturally, whether formally employed by the CIA or not, these Americans were aiming at the destruction of socialism and the imposition of capitalism. Dobrynin continued:

From 1986 to 1989, when I worked in the Politburo and participated in its deliberations, I never heard Gorbachev present any broad and detailed plan for reforming the economy... There were always improvisations, sometimes after his trips abroad or his talks with famous economists and prominent Western industrialists. (pp. 637-38)

By 1988 reforms encouraging private provision of some services and trades, which would have been helpful in the context of an overall plan and limited by strict party control, became an instrument for creating a significant faction of capitalists, resulting in inflation instead of improved supply. The new capitalists became a major force in destroying the Soviet Union, socialist industry and collective farming. "From 1990, Gorbachev's popularity fell rapidly in the party, in the army, and among ordinary people; it was propelled further downward by the country's economic problems. Abroad, however, his popularity soared." (p. 627)

This "popularity" was enthusiastically projected in the capitalist media and readily accepted by liberals and social democrats, who looked on Gorbachev as a man of peace.

In 1986 Dobrynin was recalled to Moscow and promoted to head the International Department of the Communist Party.

I had thought the department played an active and important role in Soviet foreign policy, but I soon realized that it dealt mainly with Communist and other left-wing parties as well as radical international organizations and mass movements, both in the West and in the Third World. (p. 619)

He considered this task inferior to "real" foreign policy negotiating with capitalist powers on disarmament and other issues. An example is his belittling of the U.S. Communist Party (p. 196) and his apparent lack of knowledge of its important history and influence, and of the lengths to which Nixon, McCarthy and other Cold Warriors went to destroy it. Clearly he was wrong to downgrade the significance of his job. Nothing was more important than

maintaining contact and unity among the world's Communist parties, which had been crucial in bringing about revolutionary victories in many countries after World War II. The downgrading of these relationships, the abandonment of the Comintern was a vital factor in the defeat of the revolutions in developing countries, in the triumph of Eurocommunism – a social democratic ideology – in West European countries, and in the decline of mass international pressure on U.S. imperialism for effective disarmament measures.

Dobrynin persuaded Gorbachev of the "absurdity" of concentrating solely in relations with foreign parties and movements, and had the International Department's character revised in May 1986 to "... deal with cardinal questions of foreign policy and questions of all international relations in general." (pp. 619-20)

This was in addition to maintaining its contacts with foreign Communist and other progressive parties, but clearly such contacts were relegated to secondary importance in Dobrynin's thinking. He persuaded Gorbachev to have key personnel transferred from the Foreign Office to his expanded International Department. Its main efforts were shifted to focus on disarmament negotiations and support of Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign policy.

As Secretary of the Party, Dobrynin attended all Politburo meetings and had all of the privileges of a Politburo member:

I was allocated four personal bodyguards, a large Zil limousine with radio telephone, and a state-owned country house ... The Pines... On the premises were a tennis court, a sauna, and a greenhouse, as well as a fruit garden. All this was more than sumptuous by Moscow standards. (pp. 615-16)

For trips around the country he had the use of a special squadron of airplanes: "Each of us had two local and one international 'hot lines' through which we could get in touch with any Soviet official wherever he might be." (p. 616)

Excessive privileges separated Soviet leaders from the Soviet people and were widely resented. They were provided, on a less ostentatious scale, to district leaders of the party and the government. Along with this was the failure to take strong action against black marketeers, currency speculators and other wrongdoers. Quite a few of the former privileged bureaucrats have now "graduated" to become wealthy capitalists,

having managed to seize state property.

Gorbachev did not see the capitalist class as the mortal enemy of the Soviet Union (nor did Dobrynin) as illustrated by the following:

On the eve of the Geneva Summit of 1985 his mind was still fastened on some of the class mythology and ideology that obscured the world ... but at Geneva he quickly realized the prime importance of constructive relations with the United States. (p. 620)

This was the period when Gorbachev was beginning to formulate his "new thinking" on foreign policy and started talking about the "spirit of Geneva" and "a non-nuclear world by the year 2000." Dobrynin was still in Washington. But Gorbachev's "new thinking" was never reciprocated by American leaders:

Boris Ponomarev, head of the International Department of the Party's Central Committee, drafted the foreign policy section of the Politburo reports to the Twenty-Seventh Congress early in 1986. But the editing committee criticized it for failing to reflect the new approach and our "new thinking" on foreign policy and falling back on old clichés. Indignant, Ponomarev replied, "What new thinking? Our thinking is right. Let the Americans change their thinking. What Gorbachev says abroad is meant exclusively for them, for the West." (p. 575)

Apparently this was when Dobrynin was recalled to replace Ponomarev as head of the International Department.

Gorbachev's betrayal of the Soviet Union's military position began as soon as he came to power. The issue at that time was Afghanistan. Soviet troops had entered that country in 1979 to preserve the revolutionary government and to protect the southern borders of the USSR. The Carter Administration used this action to justify extreme anti-Soviet measures, which were subsequently intensified by the Reagan Administration. Increasingly the Soviet troops were faced by mercenaries – trained and lavishly equipped by the United States – who conducted raids from a base at Peshawar on the Pakistan border. A decade after the event, Reagan admitted that in 1985 he committed an extra \$5 billion for an all-out effort to defeat the Russians in Afghanistan. This may have been after his discussion with Gorbachev at his first meeting with the Soviet leader:

Reagan as usual strongly denounced the Afghan War. But professional diplomats from the American side were surprised by Gorbachev's low-key, emotionless defense of Soviet policy in Afghanistan, as if saying that he had no personal responsibility for it. (p. 590)

By October 1985 Gorbachev announced to the Politburo his decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. This was accomplished over several years. Dobrynin strongly condemns Soviet actions in Afghanistan. He does not recognize the aggressive role of U.S. imperialism there, or the atrocities of the counterrevolutionary forces which were reported even in the U.S. press prior to the revolution, and continued after the revolution but were then suppressed by the U.S. media.

An important step in Gorbachev's implementation of his "New Thinking" was his dismissal of Andrei Gromyko, the internationally respected veteran foreign minister. He was replaced by Eduard Shevardnadze who had no reputation in international affairs, but was personally close to Gorbachev. As foreign minister he acted as toady to Gorbachev, helping him to achieve one-man control of foreign policy, cutting out the Politburo and the party:

This could clearly be seen from his handling of strategic arms limitation talks with Reagan and Bush. Gorbachev increasingly improvised and without consulting our experts would agree to sudden compromises which were often regarded by our military as one-sided concessions to the Americans. (p. 623)

For example, the initial agreement with the United States excluded from reduction the short range Soviet SS-23 missiles, important should there be fighting in Europe. U.S. Secretary of State Schultz kept pressing Gorbachev to give up on the SS-23. In April of 1987, "Gorbachev, to the great surprise of Akhromeyev and myself, said to Schultz, 'It's a deal.'" (p. 623)

But our military, as well as some members of the political leadership, were decidedly unhappy about Gorbachev's zeal in making deep concessions in order to achieve agreements with Washington. They also saw that Gorbachev was greatly encouraged by Shevardnadze, who was in permanent conflict with the Defense Ministry. (p. 624)

The victory of the counter-revolutionary forces

in the USSR was accompanied by similar overthrows throughout Eastern Europe, and the stage was set for the installation of U.S. military bases in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia – via NATO – for aggression against Russia, still the prime target of U.S. imperialism.

To the surprise of the West, during a blitz meeting with Chancellor Helmut Kohl in July of 1990, Gorbachev removed all his conditions and agreed to Germany's membership in NATO as a unified nation, even though there was still fairly strong opposition within the Politburo. I was later told... that Kohl was, in his own words, stunned by Gorbachev's sudden agreement ... On the flight home [Kohl] and his entourage celebrated this historic event... Washington did not conceal its pleasure, either. The issue of German unification was of paramount importance to the Americans, and they also had been expecting more bargaining with Moscow. (p. 631)

There was an attempted coup against Gorbachev in August 1991, apparently an attempt to save the USSR from complete destruction. Dobrynin, apparently was aware of it, but gives no details of that event or of the breakaway of the union republics that led to the dissolution of the USSR. Gorbachev was thrown out in December 1991. And Dobrynin concludes his book with a homily about the "common interests" of the United States and Russia, and the potential alliance of the two countries.

The book does not cover the rapid decline of Russia's economy and in the living conditions of its people "after the fall," or the loss of its international political-military position. Dobrynin refers to "the end of the Cold War" with neither winners or losers. Of course the reality is quite different. He writes that the course of Soviet-American relations "... resembles a tricky game of chess, with only one essential difference: in reality, it ended with both rivals losing the game and the policy of detente in ruins." (p. 376)

That's one way of evaluating the situation. But in reality, the view that U.S. imperialism won the Cold War and is now the sole superpower, is motivating the aggressive actions of the United States in all parts of the globe. Certainly there can be no question that not only the Soviet Union, but also the cause of socialism and the interests of the international working class are the losers.

Moreover, is the Cold War over? Has U.S. imperialism relaxed its pressure against remaining social-

ist countries? Or, for that matter, any other countries it regards as "rogue states?"

Dobrynin was a good "diplomat." But was he a good ambassador for socialism, for Communism, for the Soviet Union? Consider this:

I can think of no better example of the president's [Reagan] unique way of thinking than one episode involving me personally. When Schultz informed him in March 1986 that I was being promoted to the rank of Secretary of the Communist Party ... Reagan, amazed, asked 'Is he really a Communist?' He and I gradually developed a friendly personal relationship, and the president did not seem to know... that all Soviet diplomats without exception had to be party members. Intentionally or not, the sentiments underlying the question surely were complimentary... (p. 594)

How was it a compliment to represent a Communist country and not be known to a clear enemy of his country his personal devotion to its basic ideology?

Dobrynin and Kissinger were on first name terms, despite Kissinger's known anti-Communism and anti-Soviet attitudes. In fact, there's much in common between Dobrynin's and Gorbachev's way of thinking:

Reagan's entourage left no doubt that he came away with a positive impression of Gorbachev as a leader who differed from all predecessors and was even ready by their second dinner in Geneva to address him by first name, a typical American accolade of friendship. (p. 593)

Dobrynin, in discussing various issues that arose, generally takes an "even-handed" position, like that of an impartial umpire. And in a number of cases he definitely says his government was in the wrong, as in the case of the war in Afghanistan. Earlier the U.S. media made anti-Soviet hay out of the war in Angola between the Marxist-oriented MPLA and the South African-backed UNITA-FNLA. President Ford, in conversation with Dobrynin, called on the USSR to stop sending arms and otherwise supporting the MPLA government:

Ford said the Soviet Union had established an impressive arms airlift to Angola and it was also being used to transport Cuban troops who now constituted the main striking force of the MPLA... The United States had established a similar airlift and it was not difficult to recruit foreign mercenaries for the FNLA, he said. But was it

really necessary for both of our countries to challenge each other in such a faraway place which was of no particular value to either of them? (This was, I admit, a very good question.) (p. 361)

So Dobrynin accepted the approach that what was involved was a clash between two imperialisms.

The U.S. economic warfare against the USSR was a major factor throughout Dobrynin's ambassadorship. He does report on this, as well as his friendship with specific American capitalists who sold grain and Pepsi Cola to the USSR. But the embargo involved essential machinery, technology and products the USSR desperately needed to advance its overall economy. But when, during Nixon's administration, there was Henry Ford II's project to build a plant on the Kama River, he discovered "...upon his return that the project had been vetoed by the administration." (p. 208)

There was no indication that Dobrynin, as ambassador, concerned himself with this issue, as he did with arms control.

Anti-Soviet actions were stepped up sharply as was U.S. military spending during the Carter administration. This was doubtless due to a considerable degree to the influence of Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's national security adviser. Brzezinski was a fanatic anti-Communist and anti-Sovieteer. But Dobrynin writes of him: "He impressed me as an interesting, emotional, and highly intelligent interlocutor, although his outlook was markedly ideological." (p. 383) Dobrynin and Brzezinski called each other by familiar nicknames, Zbig and Tolya.

Dobrynin does not mention any meetings with U.S. Communist leaders, nor does he have anything to say about any contact with trade unionists or leaders of struggles of oppressed peoples. This is in marked contrast to U.S. diplomats' open and publicized meetings with and support for dissidents in the USSR. But his recollections of capitalists he met were sharp. He says of Dwayne Andreas, chairman of Archer-Daniels-Nidland, largest supplier of grain to the USSR:

"I would like to do justice to Andreas, a consistent champion of better relations between our two countries... We have long been friends, and our families remain in contact with each other." (p. 562)

Clearly he recognized the role of capital in American politics. At dinner at David Rockefeller's, with Brzezinski, during the 1976 election campaign:

I came away with a strong impression of the Rockefellers: they were running a virtually no-risk political game. Irrespective of which candidate won, they would be able to have their views known to him through the people they supplied. Nelson Rockefeller, the Vice-President, was well known as Kissinger's patron, and here was his brother, the famous banker, supporting Brzezinski for a high position in the Carter administration. (p. 377)

Dobrynin ascribes the acceleration of anti-Sovietism and the accompanying rise in military spending under Carter to "personalities:"

"Personally, I respect Carter and his high spiritual and moral convictions." But: "The policy of human rights, aimed against the Soviet Union and the socialist community, was launched by Carter from his very first days in office, to cement the West's foreign policy under the leadership of the United States." (pp. 374-75)

He credits the anti-Soviet ideological campaign with helping the United States "to overcome the deep split left by the Vietnam War and Watergate ... at the expense of Soviet-American relations." (p. 376)

This situation was exacerbated, according to Dobrynin, because "The elders of Soviet leadership persisted in pursuing their conservative domestic

policy." (p. 376) His formulation accepts the U.S. terminology of calling pro-socialist policies "conservative" and pro-capitalist policies "liberal" or "progressive."

Anti-Soviet code phrases such as "totalitarian regime" and "evil empire" are used without quotation marks. Quite possibly the American editors are responsible for such details. But such technicalities distort the meanings and Dobrynin must take responsibility for letting them slip by.

Why did the pre-Gorbachev regimes keep Dobrynin in Washington despite his dubious ideology? It is likely that he kept his negative opinions to himself, and he was an accepted, respected dean of the D.C. diplomatic corps. He was also a major source of important "insider" information.

Despite its shortcomings and the probable input and influence of the American publisher, the book is obviously Dobrynin's account of his years as Ambassador from The Soviet Union to the United States. It covers in detail an important period in history and especially in U.S.-USSR relations, including much data not previously published.

If one can put up with the ideological weaknesses of the author, the book is interesting and informative. □



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